

Dear delegates of the Medical Cannabis Europe Conference,

I am very pleased to represent the Portuguese Pharmaceutical Society at this conference. Over these two days, it is expected that the multifaceted landscape of cannabis in medicine will be explored. But before we delve into the wealth of knowledge that awaits us, I'd like to address a fundamental principle that underpins the medicinal use of cannabis: the imperative of achieving a positive risk/benefit balance.

The notion of a "positive risk/benefit balance" is not just a technical term; it is the ethical compass guiding our endeavours in the realm of medicinal cannabis. It embodies the idea that while we seek to harness the remarkable healing properties of this plant, we must also rigorously evaluate and manage the potential risks it may pose to patients.

In our pursuit of medical breakthroughs, we must ask ourselves some critical questions:

1. **Efficacy:** Does cannabis genuinely offer a tangible benefit to patients, and if so, under what conditions and for which specific medical conditions?
2. **Safety:** What are the known and potential risks associated with cannabis use, and how can we mitigate them to ensure the well-being of patients?
3. **Regulation:** How can we strike a balance between facilitating patient access to medicinal cannabis while maintaining strict regulatory oversight to prevent misuse?
4. **Research:** What gaps exist in our current knowledge, and how can we advance research to fill these gaps, ensuring that we base our decisions on sound scientific evidence?
5. **Patient-Centered Care:** How do we ensure that the patient's perspective and experience are at the heart of our efforts, tailoring treatment plans to their unique needs and preferences?

As we explore these questions over the course of this conference, let us remember that one's primary goal is to improve the lives of those who suffer from debilitating illnesses. Cannabis may play a role here. But this role comes with great responsibility - to rigorously evaluate, to ethically administer, and to prioritize patient well-being above all else.

Let this conference be a beacon of knowledge, compassion, and progress, illuminating the path toward a brighter, healthier future for patients worldwide.

Thank you

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