



Arno Hazekamp (1976, The Netherlands), independent consultant for cannabis R&D projects under the name Hazekamp Herbal Consulting.

Bachelor's from the School of Biology and Master's from the School of Pharmaceutical Sciences of the University of Leiden.

Conducted the first PhD study into the medicinal properties of the cannabis plant in the Netherlands (2001–2007).

Actively participated in the medicinal cannabis program of the Dutch Health Ministry. Board member of the International Association for Cannabis as Medicine (IACM) (2009–2011).

Head of Research and Education of Bedrocan International, the only legal cannabis grower in the Netherlands (2011–2017).

Since 2011, he has organized the Masterclass Medicinal Cannabis, an annual, week-long training event in the Netherlands that covers all aspects of medicinal cannabis use.

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I often describe myself as a cannabis “myth buster”, helping to separate fact from fiction about cannabis. I recognize the promising medical potential of the plant, but do not see it as a miracle cure. The current growth of interest in medical cannabis will subside to more manageable proportions in years to come. We will learn when cannabis medicine works, and when it is smarter to choose other treatments, so that cannabis can find its proper place among other medicines.

As a scientist, I believe in patient-inspired research: *How* we do studies is a job for trained scientists, but *what* we study can and should be inspired by what actual patients care about. It is the responsibility of researchers in this field to contribute to the education of consumers, physicians, and policymakers alike, for this is sorely lacking at present. Leaving cannabis education in the hands of commercial parties turns information into mere advertising.

To better understand the healing effects of cannabis products, it is crucial to establish their efficacy over the

course of time. Extensive clinical trials are necessary here, but this will take time. Meanwhile, there is much we can learn from simply asking current users a lot of smart questions. I therefore find well-designed surveys just as important as chemical tests done in a laboratory.

For clinical trials to be meaningful, we need to establish commonly agreed measurements and standards – and these are virtually absent at present. Detailed chemical profiling of cannabis strains is necessary, along with a standard classification system, the accurate labelling of products such as cannabis oil, and a uniform system for capturing and analyzing patients' views and experiences. This cannot happen so long as individual laboratories and scientists, within individual territories, continue to work in isolation from one another, each hoping to achieve a great breakthrough. Standardization in scientific methods is a crucial prerequisite for medicinal cannabis to succeed and for us to develop a common language for discussing its benefits and risks.