

A hand holding a syringe with a blurred person's face in the background. The image is split horizontally, with the top half showing the hand and syringe and the bottom half showing a person's face.

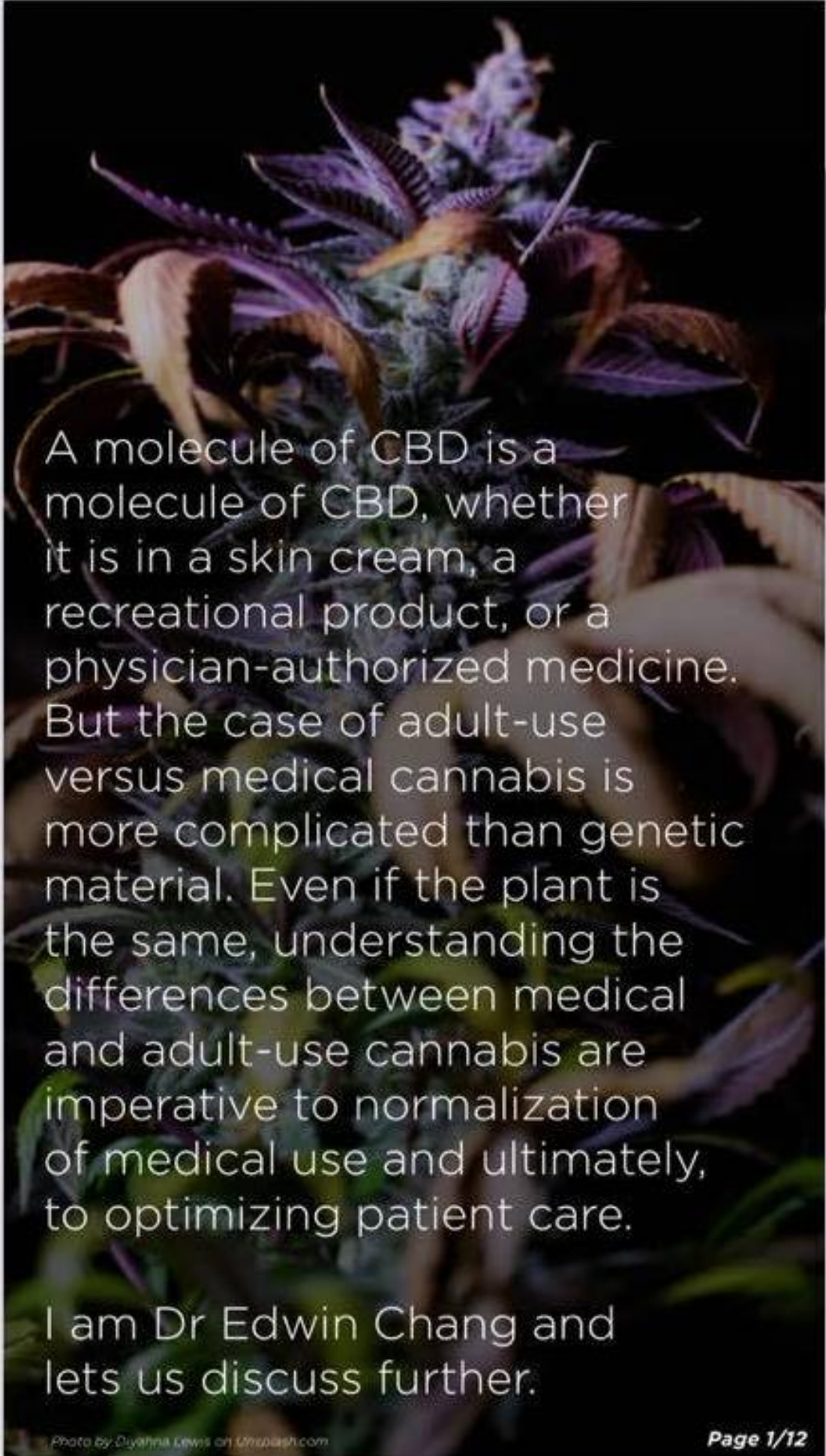
**MEDICAL  
CANNABIS**

VS

**RECREATIONAL  
CANNABIS**


*by*

*Dr Edwin Chang*



A molecule of CBD is a molecule of CBD, whether it is in a skin cream, a recreational product, or a physician-authorized medicine. But the case of adult-use versus medical cannabis is more complicated than genetic material. Even if the plant is the same, understanding the differences between medical and adult-use cannabis are imperative to normalization of medical use and ultimately, to optimizing patient care.

I am Dr Edwin Chang and lets us discuss further.

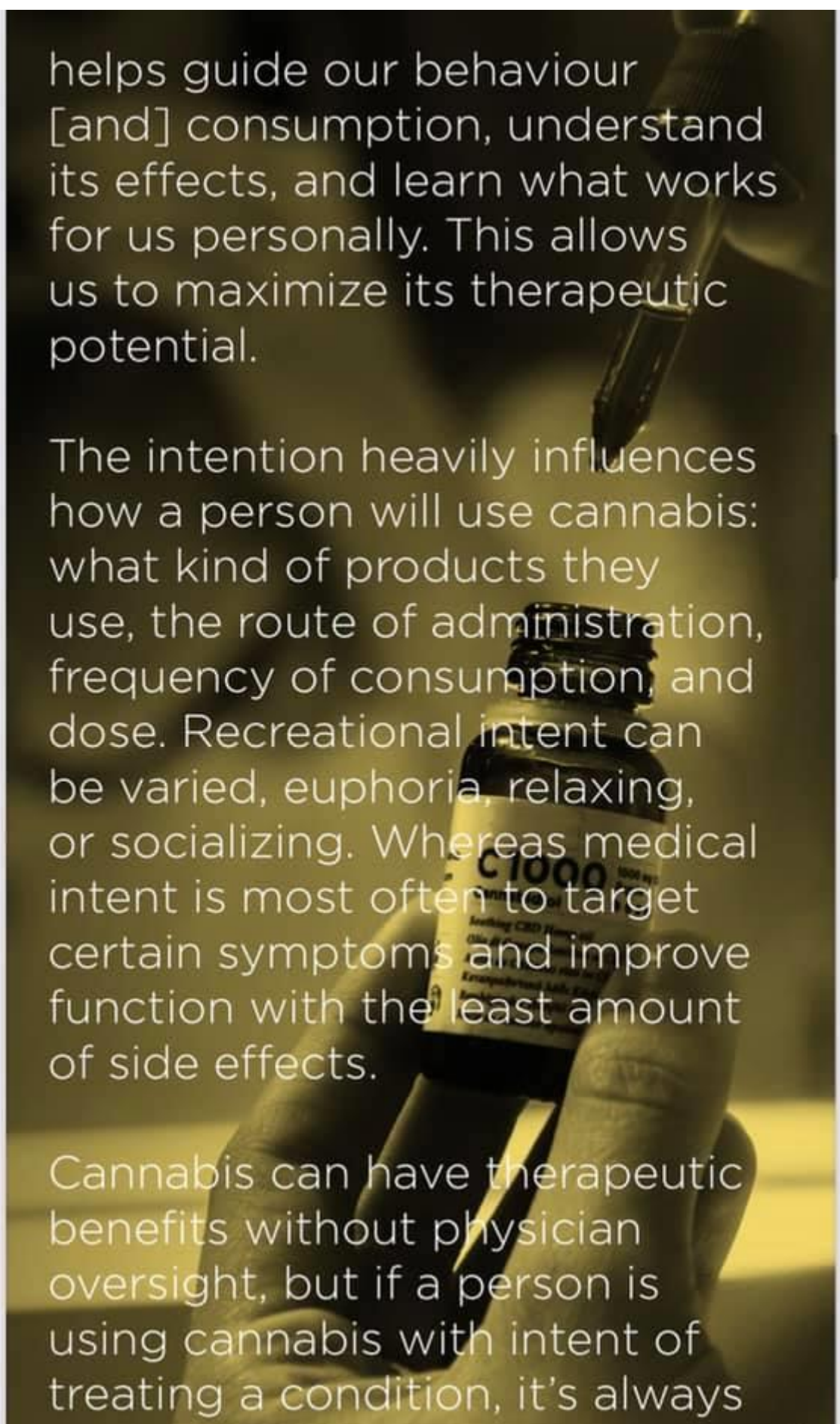


# Adult-Use Versus Medical Cannabis: Intention is Important

Cannabis is inherently a therapeutic substance. The only difference between medicinal and recreational use is the intention with which it's consumed. The cannabis is the same.

I took the medical cannabis journey in 2014, in order to help educate and guide individuals by using cannabis as a catalyst for physical, emotional, and spiritual healing. For me, all cannabis is medicine with profound potential, whether it's been purchased, grown at home, or prescribed by a doctor.

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' with cannabis, its natural properties benefit all consumers in uniquely individual ways. When we are conscious of this and approach it with intention, our mindset



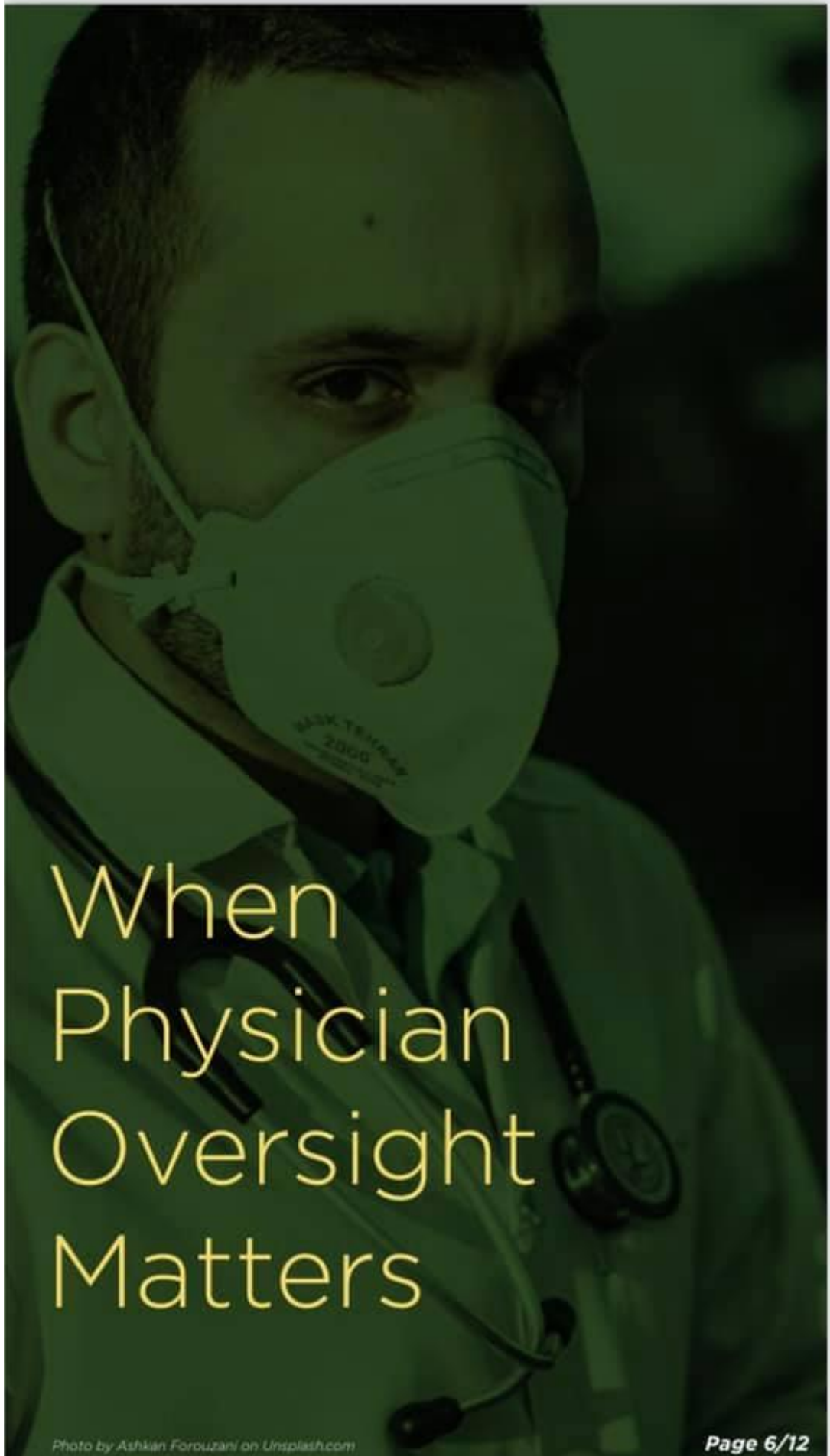
helps guide our behaviour [and] consumption, understand its effects, and learn what works for us personally. This allows us to maximize its therapeutic potential.

The intention heavily influences how a person will use cannabis: what kind of products they use, the route of administration, frequency of consumption, and dose. Recreational intent can be varied, euphoria, relaxing, or socializing. Whereas medical intent is most often to target certain symptoms and improve function with the least amount of side effects.

Cannabis can have therapeutic benefits without physician oversight, but if a person is using cannabis with intent of treating a condition, it's always

best to speak with a healthcare professional (especially when pre-existing medical conditions are involved, or when someone is using other prescription or illicit drugs).

While maintaining that all cannabis is therapeutic, separate adult-use and medical streams are important everywhere around the world. While I believe everyone deserves to benefit from cannabis, the needs for those utilizing it as an adjunct therapy should be prioritized. There should be no barriers to accessibility of quality products, economic or otherwise.

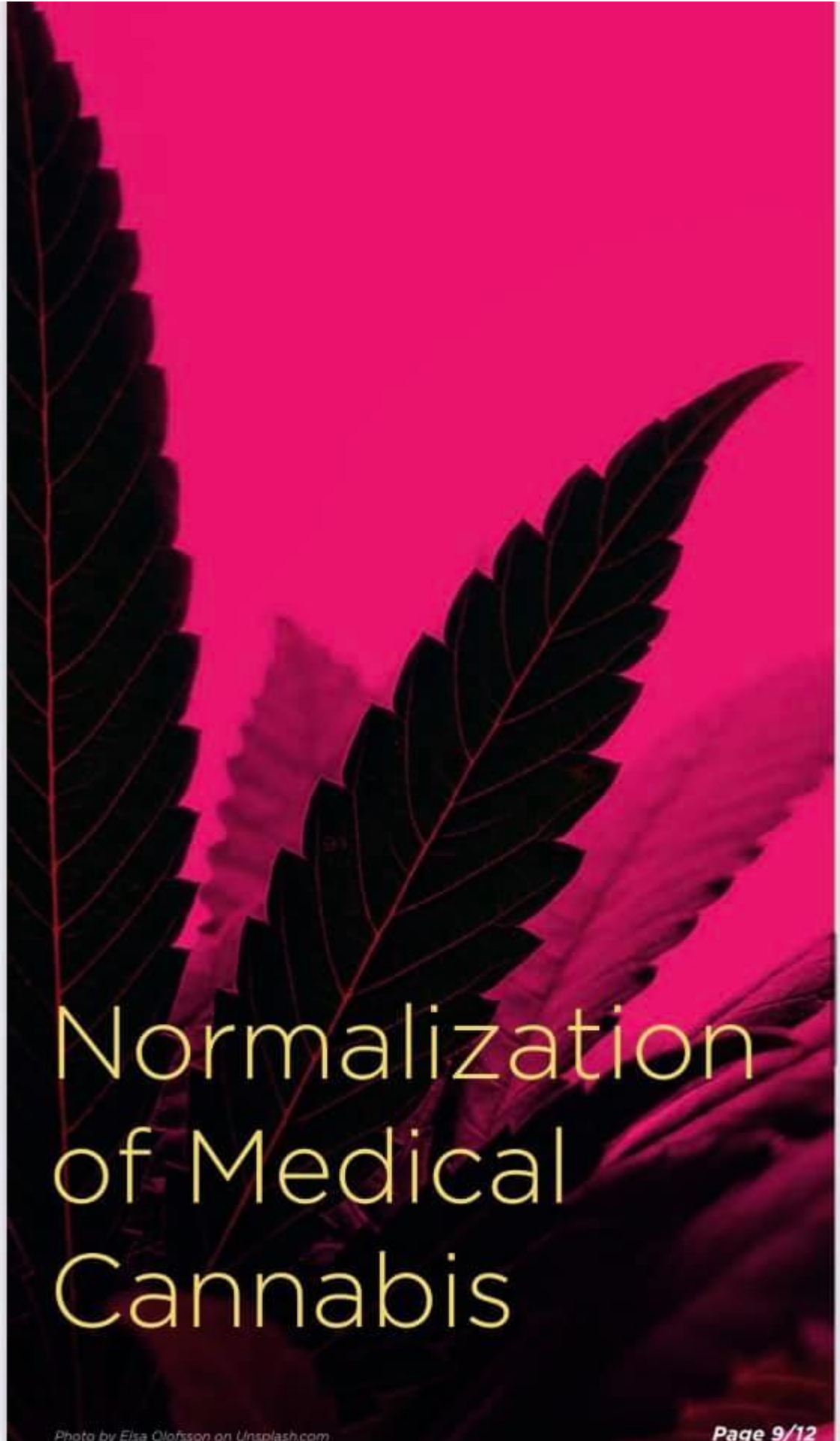


# When Physician Oversight Matters

For many patients, the distinction between medical and adult-use is more than a philosophical one. Beyond intention, the goals and needs are generally different for those using adult-use and medical cannabis. Patients deserve the best access to products, education, and mitigation of safety risks. Yes, the plant is the same-but the support systems are not.

Those who depend on cannabis to improve their quality of life have additional requirements that don't fit within the overly strict adult-use regulations, adding that product quality, education, price point, and personal grow limits should have extra considerations when it comes to medical cannabis patients.

For people wishing to use cannabis medically, having a separate category allows them to access the care and guidance of a physician. By consulting a physician, a patient can get case-specific advice on medical history, potential drug interactions, and instructions for optimal outcomes.



# Normalization of Medical Cannabis

Physician oversight is important when treating a medical condition, which seems obvious but warrants repeating. Not everyone who uses cannabis needs a doctor, but when physician support is required, it needs to be accessible. Blurring the lines between medical and adult-uses for cannabis inhibits the normalization and legitimacy of cannabis as medicine.

The stigma and lack of normalization surrounding medical cannabis affects how people can access it. If a patient has a physician who isn't supportive of pursuing medical cannabis, they'll often turn to adult-use retail instead. This route doesn't guarantee improvement of symptoms and could come with unwanted side effects.

In order for cannabis to be legitimized as medicine, it needs to be treated as such. This means treating medical cannabis like other prescriptions, including with the language we use. Many people simply do not understand how cannabis can and is used medically. Not everyone who uses cannabis uses it to get high. Also, you don't need to be high to experience benefit.

There are good evidences for cannabis use despite what some people may believe. There are extensive reviews on cannabis and cannabinoids, thousands of peer reviewed cannabis studies.

The best evidence so far in medical cannabis is for treating chronic pain and spasticity, and adds that there are many other

conditions for which cannabis might have a positive signal but more research in those areas is needed.

We should be focusing on up-to-date, evidence-based medical information on cannabis. We need increased access to education for both the public, policy makers, and health care professionals.

With education comes physician support, and with physician support comes normalization.