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THE RECENT EXPLOSION OF KNOWLEDGE on cannabinoid (CB1 and CB2) receptors and their endogenous ligands, impact on virtually all areas of biomedicine, including neuroendocrinology, immunology and reproductive medicine. In recognition of these developments, the NEL editorship has graciously initiated the idea to devote a special section to the Endocannabinoid-CB-Receptor (ECBR) system.

The compilation of papers, which make up this special edition of NEL, reflects the astonishing, almost all-encompassing involvement of the ECBR system in health and disease, from early development throughout adulthood. First, Franjo Grotenhermen reviews the basic and clinical pharmacology of cannabinoids. Developmental aspects, covering the early embryonal period through postnatal development, and including fertility, nutritional and neuroprotective issues, are discussed in the second paper. Ethan Russo discusses the available literature on the medicinal usefulness of cannabis-based medicine for migraine, fibromyalgia and irritable bowel syndrome. Dr. Russo also considers a putative “endocannabinoid deficiency” as the biological basis for these and related disorders. Ruediger Lorenz describes the outcome of a unique clinical study, in which he prescribed delta-9 Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the major psychoactive component of the cannabis plant, to eight children/adolescents suffering from a variety of neurological/neuropsychiatric conditions. Lastly, Gauter, Rukwied and Konrad report on a clinical case, in which for the first time, and successfully, THC (dronabinol) was given to a patient suffering from severe, painful blepharospasm.

It is our hope that the current collection of articles will inspire clinicians and scientists alike, to actively participate in the exciting world of cannabis research and cannabis-based therapeutics.

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