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# The Solari Report

January 31, 2019

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## **The Solari Wellness Series: CBD or not CBD An Interview with Dr. Robban Sica**





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**Brigitte Mouchet:** Dr. Robban, welcome to the Solari Wellness Series.

**Dr. Robban A. Sica:** It's so wonderful to be here. Thank you so much for inviting me to speak on this really exciting topic.

**Mouchet:** You're welcome. Let's start by clarifying a few terms. What exactly is 'CBD'? Where does it come from? And what is the difference between hemp, cannabis, and marijuana? Can you help us sort this out?

**Sica:** Of course! CBD is currently a really big buzzword, but people don't understand what they are talking about. CBD literally is 'cannabidiol', which is only one of 80 phytocannabinoids in the cannabis plant. As I've said, there are 80 others. So, it is important to understand that it is only one component of hemp oil or the marijuana plant. It comes from plants that are in that cannabis family. All the plants in the cannabis family produce these phytocannabinoid-like substances of which CBD is just one component.



CBD really is referring to that one little component whereas hemp oil and even marijuana contain a whole lot more components that we need to understand. CBD and other phytocannabinoids are found in the hemp plant as well as in the marijuana plant, both of which are different varieties of *cannabis sativa*.

*Cannabis* is actually what we call the ‘genus’ in biology, which is when a researcher or a biologist names a specific group of plants or animals. They have a ‘genus’, which is a related group. You can think about dogs, they are all in a category or a genus, and there are many different types of dogs, which are the species – just to get an idea of what we are talking about.

So, there are many different varieties of *cannabis*. The *cannabis sativa* has a couple of different varieties. The marijuana plant is actually a flowering herb, and it is indigenous all over the world. Marijuana is cultivated for high levels of THC, which is concentrated in those flowers and the buds of the plant.

Hemp oil, on the other hand, is a close relative, but it doesn’t have that same THC production because it’s not the flowering variety – just to make it simple.

There are many other forms of *cannabis* like *cannabis indica* and *cannabis americana*, which have been cultivated over the years for a variety of different purposes, not just medicinal. It has been cultivated for rope, clothing, sails, paper, and all kinds of different aspects that it can be used for.



Because hemp only has a tiny production of the THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) it doesn't make you 'high'. The percentage is so low that it really doesn't have that same effect as marijuana – whether it's smoked or eaten or however it is consumed. I think that is one concern that people have. When you hear the term 'cannabis' or 'cannabidiol' or 'cannabinoids' there is that, "Oh, are we talking about pot? Are we talking about marijuana? Is there a danger? Is it going to make me high?"

Remember that cannabis is just the name of that species or that genus or that group of plants. From there, as the research has started to look at the different components in these plants, that name 'cannabis' or 'cannabinoid' has been used to identify certain components.

If you think that we have certain phytocannabinoids in these plants, that is 'phyto' meaning 'plant-based' cannabinoid-like substances. As I mentioned before, there are over 80 of them that have been identified and are being studied. The best known of them is THC, which is the component in the marijuana plant, which does make you high. It does have some health benefits, but it also has some real downsides that we are going to talk about shortly. The other one is the cannabidiol.

The reason those two have gotten the most attention and people know those names more, is because they have been studied the longest. THC was the first to be identified, and CBD was the second. There is also CBG and CBNA, and CBC. There is a whole slew of these phytocannabinoids, and many of them are starting to be studied. They are showing very similar positive health benefits to CBD and even THC.

Just because something is a phytocannabinoid doesn't mean that it is THC; it could be some other component. So you need to think about it that way.



As I said, a lot of the other lesser-known phytocannabinoids and CBD are still showing the same type of positive benefits on the immune system – on pain levels, on decreasing inflammation, on increasing mood and decreasing anxiety and improving sleep and all of those things that are becoming known as the benefits of hemp oil. I tend to use this term ‘hemp oil’ over CBD because CBD is really a misnomer. As I’ve said, it is just one component whereas when I refer to ‘hemp oil’, I am referring to all the components extracted from hemp into the oil, which include not only the phytocannabinoids but also things like terpenes and vitamins and minerals and essential fatty acids that all have synergistic, positive health benefits. So focusing on just CBD is sort-of like fractionating out one piece and missing the whole big picture.

**Mouchet:** I see. So when we buy CBD oil, what do we buy? Do we buy hemp oil or CBD hemp oil? It seems like it’s more hemp oil.

**Sica:** This is why you have to read labels. If it says ‘CBD isolate’, then it means that it is just CBD by itself. If it says ‘full-spectrum hemp oil’ – and a lot of sellers will put the term ‘CBD’ on there because it does contain about 5% CBD – and because that is the term that people recognize. People don’t recognize the term ‘hemp oil’ as readily as CBD. They are not lying; it does have CBD in it.

Again, after researching this for a number of years now and also having experience with a lot of different products – both personally as well as with patients – I believe that the full-spectrum hemp oil (the full herb) is what has the best benefits.



**Mouchet:** Thank you. There are also hemp seeds that you can add to salads and things like that. What is the relationship with what we are talking about?

**Sica:** All the products like ‘hemp hearts’ and different products that are made from hemp that are nutritional products have their benefits, but the concentration of phytocannabinoids in those is relatively low. I’m sure there is some, but in terms of maximizing health benefits, there are certain qualities to a hemp oil product that improve the absorption and improve the bioavailability – which we will talk about later – that makes a huge difference in terms of whether somebody is going to feel a benefit or not, and whether they are going to notice improvement in their health or not.

I think hemp hearts are healthy things to consume in your diet, but I just don’t think you are going to see the kind of therapeutic value that you would with a good full-spectrum hemp oil that is bioavailable.

**Mouchet:** So would you say that CBD from hemp is better?

**Sica:** Cannabidiol is cannabidiol; it doesn’t matter what source it is from. There is CBD in marijuana, and there are varieties of marijuana that are higher in CBD and lower in THC. It’s kind of an odd question because the CBD is CBD.

In my opinion, I think that because there are some downsides health-wise to THC, and certain people are more susceptible than others to those, such as raising blood pressure and increasing sympathetic nervous system, psychotic episodes, and things like that, hemp gets away from that because there is virtually no THC. For hemp to be sold legally in the US, it has to be less than 0.3% THC. As I previously stated, it’s not enough that you wouldn’t feel any



kind of psychoactive effect or any type of feeling high from it. Most people don't even feel sedated in any way from taking hemp oil (CBD).

I think that hemp is a better source than marijuana for the majority of people, particularly if they are not under the care of a physician who knows this area of medicine.

CBD, in and of itself, is cannabidiol. In November 2017, the FDA granted a patent to a drug company to market cannabidiol for use in two specific seizure disorders in children that are rare genetic disorders. These seizures are very difficult to control, but CBD is effective. So the FDA allowed this drug company to isolate just the cannabidiol – just the CBD – and market it as a drug.

The reason I mention that is because that is how powerful it is in terms of its effect. I believe that it is not as effective when you take it out of the full plant as it would be with the full plant, but it also raises some questions in terms of if the FDA is going to act and pull products from the market that are pure CBD isolates. That is a definite possibility. They have already published some comments to that effect.

Again, hemp oil is always going to be legal because they can't patent it; it's a natural herb, and it's a naturally-occurring substance. When you isolate out just one chemical component, the FDA views that as a drug. Does that make sense?

**Mouchet:** Yes. So let's talk about the legality aspect of things. What is legal and what is not in the US? Do you have an idea about what is going on outside of the US?



**Sica:** I think that there is still a substantial gray area.

They passed the Farm Bill, and in there was language that decriminalizes or makes legal the cultivation and manufacture of hemp products. Hemp was previously classed with marijuana as a Schedule I drug. A Schedule I drug is pretty severe. There aren't too many things that are in that category. Heroin is one that comes to mind.

It basically says that the Schedule I drugs have no medical use. There are no health benefits, and there are no medical uses, and they are completely dangerous and should never be allowed to be used. Up until December when the bill was passed, federally a physician could not prescribe it. States have gone outside of that and allowed the sale of hemp products and allowed the sale of marijuana products either with a prescription for medical marijuana, and now a number of states have legalized marijuana for purchase.

Technically at the Federal level, it hasn't kept up. Marijuana is still considered a Schedule I. So, there is a lot of gray area, and there are a lot of states that have variably either legalized or restricted hemp and/or marijuana. So, you have to know what is going on in your own state. Even though the Farm Bill changes the Federal mandate, which is good because now the states aren't legalizing something that is still illegal at the Federal level. So, that is definitely going to improve the situation, but it still is not clear exactly how these products are going to be regulated at the state level and if each state is going to do its own little thing and create its own legislation around it, or how that is going to go.



Again, I think that there are places outside of the US where it is perfectly legal to import hemp. There have been changes in Canada within the last year that allowed the sale of hemp. Oddly enough, Canada is one of the major producers of hemp, and yet it wasn't legal to import hemp products.

It's getting cleared up, but it's on a country by country basis. Obviously, there are countries like the Netherlands that have been very liberal for years on both hemp and marijuana. Then there are other countries that are still very, very restricted.

Again, you have to look into the legislation of where you live as to where the laws are wherever you reside. It's an evolving terrain for the next few years.

**Mouchet:** If we look at marijuana for a second, do you think that the legalization of marijuana is really a good thing, knowing that the plant is so much stronger than it was 30 years ago? Not that I know anything about it because I never tried it, but that is what I've heard.

**Sica:** Certainly over the last 30 years, there have been efforts to cultivate and breed the plants, selecting out the stronger THC content, and also selecting out stronger CBD content. There are strains that are from 30:1 concentration to 1:1 concentration of THC to CBD.

I'm not going to make a comment on whether it's a 'good thing' to legalize it or not. I think that overall marijuana has been very 'villainized' in a way that is way out of proportion to the downside of the side effects.



Again, as I mentioned previously, there are people who are very susceptible to getting a psychotic, hallucinogenic effect from THC, and there are other people who can smoke marijuana and it doesn't affect them that way ever – no matter how much they smoke or no matter how strong it is. I think it's more of a genetic susceptibility.

There is actually some genetic testing that is now available where someone could test to see if they are more prone to having adverse effects from THC. If somebody is interested in getting either a medical marijuana card – here in Connecticut, we only have medical marijuana that is legal – you can check to make sure that they are okay with it before they try the THC component.

As I said, there are downsides. People just have to be very cautious. If you are in a state where it is legal, and you can buy it, make sure that you are safe before you try it. It does have some downsides.

When you compare the side effects of marijuana, even with the stronger THC, to the devastating effects of opiates – these strong opiates that people are dying from in record numbers – marijuana is such a safer drug than these opiates like the fentanyl opiates and some that are even stronger.

The FDA actually just came out and approved another long-acting even stronger form of opiate, and here we are in the middle of an opiate crisis. I don't understand why it's okay to do that, but they are going to say that CBD and hemp oil are dangerous. It's kind of like: "Where do your interests lie, the FDA". I'm not quite sure where they are going with that. Certainly marijuana, even though it is still considered a Schedule I drug, the overall number of people having side effects that are life-threatening are so minimal compared to the prescription narcotic opiate drugs.



I think it is a consideration people need to be aware of that there could be side effects with marijuana and with THC, but still overall, the safety and the number of people who can be helped by medical marijuana; I have seen patients who I have prescribed it for here in Connecticut, it has been life-changing for patients with MS and cancer and PTSD and severe pain. Not everybody likes the way that it feels, so some people actually prefer the hemp oil with just CBD, and they don't want to continue with the medical marijuana, but for some patients, it's really been very useful.

It's a double-edged sword. I think that we have to be considerate of it, but I don't think that we need to be afraid of it.

**Mouchet:** Back to CBD, what is the main reason everybody is talking about CBD right now – from investment advisors to medical doctors and wellness experts?

**Sica:** The fact that CBD is so tremendously effective – and when I say 'CBD' I am talking about phytocannabinoids. These phytocannabinoids are so effective. I know that we are going to talk about the endocannabinoid system in a minute. Suffice to say that these components have only been discovered in the late 1980's and the early 1990's. The research has mostly been done outside of the US because hemp was still considered a Schedule I drug, and is very difficult to research here.

Now there are over 25,000 studies on the benefits of THC, CBD, and other phytocannabinoids. As we start to understand why that is – and I'm going to talk about that in a minute – the massive health benefits to these components and the numbers of people who are benefitting by taking hemp oil products is a sudden opportunity where we have relatively recently gotten the information about it.



Medical doctors have never been trained in this area. When I was in medical school, we didn't even know that the endocannabinoid system existed. All of a sudden, it is opening up and people are realizing that this is a significant alternative for pain, for emotional disorders, and for all kinds of different conditions. So, it's a huge investment opportunity and a huge business opportunity. There are dozens of companies that are jumping in the market.

If you look at *Forbes* and *The Wall Street Journal*, they are all projecting that this could be a multi-billion dollar market within the next few years.

**Mouchet:** Let's talk about the cannabinoid system and the main benefits of CBD hemp oil on the body and for well-being.

**Sica:** It turns out that the researcher who has done most of this work, discovering THC and then CBD and a lot of the research on the components and what the health benefits are, is a doctor by the name of Raphael Mechoulam. He is in Israel. He discovered that our body has receptors. We have locks for these types of cannabinoid compounds to go into.

I always think of receptors as being the lock and the neurotransmitter or the chemical messenger – in this case the phytocannabinoid – the key that goes in there, and it turns on some system in the body. So, if you think about it, we are sitting here with these receptors for cannabinoid substances and cannabinoid chemicals. Why?

You look back in evolution, and literally all vertebrates – going back about six million years in evolution – have these endocannabinoid receptors and make compounds in the body that look similar to the phytocannabinoids.



In the humans, the two predominant endocannabinoids that are made by our own body are 2AG and anandamide. 2AG works predominantly on the immune system and the inflammatory system of the body. The anandamide works predominantly on the central nervous system. But literally, almost every tissue in the human body, as well as virtually all animals, have these receptors for these compounds.

There are many things that get affected by cannabinoids whether our own body makes them, or whether we consume them by consuming hemp or marijuana. A lot of systems in the body are affected, and predominantly in a very positive way.

The endocannabinoid system, as it turns out, is the super-regulatory system of the regulatory systems in the body. So, if you look at neurotransmitters such as serotonin, norepinephrine, dopamine, epinephrine, etc., they regulate mood, and they regulate the way that certain messages are transmitted in the brain. If they are out of balance, you can either be anxious, or you can be more depressed. However, what regulates the neurotransmitters is actually the endocannabinoid system – predominantly in the human body in the anandamide.

So, by increasing the amount of cannabinoids in the system, it is going to normalize the balance between the excitatory and the calming neurotransmitters that restore health to the nervous system. So, imagine all the positive benefits there in terms of sleep, mood, feeling relaxed and calm, and feeling that sense of well-being and that sense of wholeness. Those are all dependent on the endocannabinoid system balancing those neurotransmitters out.



The same thing is true in the endocrine system balancing everything from blood sugar and blood pressure and the other hormones in the body such as thyroid and adrenals. In the immune system, the cannabinoids upregulate the positive part of the immune system that helps to fight bacteria and viruses and even cancer. It downregulates the inflammatory markers that cause inflammation and autoimmune disease and arthritis and that type of thing.

Imagine that suddenly you have access to this system that overrides everything else and balances it out in a very homeostatic way. It brings everything back into level again. Because of our diets and because of the toxins that we are exposed to, our bodies – in a lot of ways – have been thrown way out of balance. We take supplements or medication that brings things back into balance, but here we have a system that preempts all of that and restores health in an adaptogenic way. It is actually restoring our body back to balance.

**Mouchet:** That sounds really, really good. Do you think that everybody can benefit from this?

**Sica:** I actually do believe that because of the stress in our modern environment and our diets being toxic and too refined and not having a lot of nutrition in them, there are a number of reasons these endocannabinoids either get broken down too quickly, or we don't have enough of the substrate to make them, so a lot of people today are walking around with an endocannabinoid deficiency syndrome. Some of them have very severe symptoms such as fibromyalgia or intractable depression, but the majority of us call it 'stress', but we aren't making the endocannabinoids that would be optimal for our body.



In my opinion, I think that taking phytocannabinoids in the form of hemp oil is a preventive for virtually everyone. Even if you don't have particular symptoms, or you take it for a few days, and you don't notice a big difference, that doesn't necessarily mean it's not balancing things out in the body and it's not helping you.

Yes, everyone can benefit, and I think that there are specific categories of people that it benefits most dramatically such as people with pain or insomnia or anxiety or inflammation and arthritis. Those are the people who I see generally get the most benefit and the most noticeable benefit the quickest.

I have also seen people get off blood pressure medication and get off being able to correct their blood sugar to a point where they are able to get off blood sugar medication. Obviously, that has to be combined with diet and other things, but it's a powerful tool adjunctively for so many different health challenges.

**Mouchet:** What about the opioid epidemic? Do you think that it could provide a solution for that, or is it not related?

**Sica:** I think that it already is providing a solution for it. When you talk to people who are in chronic pain, and they are able to reduce their medication in half because they are either taking hemp oil or they have a medical marijuana card, it is pretty dramatic how much it can reduce in so many patients the requirement for opioids.



CBD in and of itself, sits in the pain receptor and decreases – to simplify – is a down regulator that decreases the sensitivity of the pain receptors, or what they call the neuroreceptors. So, CBD and the other phytocannabinoids, which I'm sure a lot of them have been studied for pain, downregulate that need, our sensation of pain, raise your pain tolerance and decrease the sensitivity to pain. That is huge because opiates actually do the opposite, which is one of the reasons you need more and more drugs to get the same pain relief. There are a number of reasons for that, but that is one of the reasons.

CBD actually helps by blocking that pain receptor, but it also blocks the breakdown of our own endocannabinoid such as anandamide, which has an important impact on pain as well.

It does a number of things in the body to reduce pain. So, yes, I think that it is a much better solution than narcotics. With what we are dealing with in terms of the number of deaths from opioids, we have to do something. I think that this is a huge way that we can approach that.

**Mouchet:** Do you see that as a solution for other types of addictions?

**Sica:** Again, I think that it is an important adjunct. Most people get addicted for what reason? They get addicted because they are anxious, or get addicted because they are depressed or are under a lot of stress, so they can't sleep, and they get addicted.



If you could provide them with something that naturally restores health, then that person can deal with addiction more easily because they are not fighting the symptom that they feel like they need that benzodiazepine or whatever drug it is they are taking to treat that.

I do not think that this is a cure; let me make that clear. However, I do think that it is a very useful adjunct in decreasing symptomatology that drives addiction.

**Mouchet:** I see. Let's talk about how we can consume CBD or hemp oil. Can you talk about that a bit?

**Sica:** There are a whole bunch of different mechanisms or forms of hemp oil from just straight oil. You can vape it, so you inhale it, and it goes through the lungs. People have consumables such as gummies or other products that you can eat. It comes in capsules. There are a number of topical products. I think they all have pros and cons.

The problem with hemp oil – or virtually any type of oil – is that the bioavailability is very limited. The bioavailability of hemp oil is about 6%. So, when people buy hemp oil, they might be buying something that is 10mg per dose or 5mg per dose, and they are only getting 6% of that. So, if you are taking a 10mg dose, you are really only getting 0.6mg into the body if you take it orally or under the tongue – sublingually. It is really important to look at how we increase the bioavailability to get more into the body so that you have more of an impact.



One of the things that people have found – and this is true for both medical marijuana as well as hemp oil – is that if you inhale it (in the case of smoking pot where you are burning the actual leaf, which has some downsides to it because you are getting all the combustion products into your lungs as well) it isn't so healthy, but if you vape the oil (which is basically aerosolizing it) and inhale it, there is a lot of absorptive surface in the lung, and you get a pretty good absorption. So, I would say that for people with pain, that is often one of the better solutions of getting the cannabinoids into the system.

I prefer to take the hemp oils that I have researched that are water-soluble and bioavailable and hydrophilic, which are all very similar terms. When you increase the bioavailability up to 90-100%, all of a sudden, you are getting the whole amount or pretty close to the whole amount of a 10mg or 15mg dose. You see huge differences in terms of how it impacts people's health over just any old hemp oil product.

I'm not a huge fan of vaping. It does give better bioavailability, but I think that the jury is still out on how healthy it is for the lungs if you do that on a regular basis.

**Mouchet:** So, what do we need to know about the products that are available so that we can make safe choices and get optimal results? What do we need to know about the manufacturing process? What do we need to look for?



**Sica:** As far as safety, the most critical thing to look at when you view a label is to make sure that it is organically sourced. Hemp is what we call ‘bioconcentrator’ and it has actually been used in countries where there is a lot of toxicity in the soil. It grows very quickly, and it sucks all the toxins out of the soil. So, you don’t want to be consuming nonorganic hemp because it is going to concentrate anything in that soil that’s toxic, and it will be compressed out into the oil as well.

Nonorganic CBD or hemp products are not safe. They absolutely need to be organically sourced. You can use that hemp for paper or some other use, but you wouldn’t want to use nonorganic hemp for human consumption or animal consumption. So, that is number one. Make sure it is organic, and make sure the company that is manufacturing it is using the manufacturing processes; they are extracting the oil in a way that is safe and not using chemical solvents.

The companies that I researched and the ones that I recommend, you can actually go to their website and see their analyses of their products. You can see that there are no molds in there, and there are no heavy metals, and there are no pesticides or solvents. You can see that they are doing the right thing as far as sourcing and manufacturing to get to the oil.

Where it is grown is obviously important. There are differences in terms of the content of different phytocannabinoids based on the amount of rainfall and the amount of sunlight and things like that, but as long as it is organic, you are still going to be on the safe side with it.



Hemp oil, at most, only has 0.3% THC. I think that is fine unless you are in a profession where you frequently get drug tested, in which case you might want to find a brand that takes even that tiny bit of THC out so that you are a little safer in terms of not showing up positive on a drug test. Increasingly in different professions, people are being drug tested for that.

Then we get to the absorption bioavailability, which I started talking about before. There are a number of different ways to increase the bioavailability. There is a process called liposomal, making it into liposomes, which is like hiding the good stuff on the inside. It's like turning a molecule inside-out so that it's not hydrophobic; it becomes hydrophilic. That is one way to do it, and that increases it up to about 30% from 6% absorption.

You can micellize it, which probably gets it up to about 80%. You can do a combination of the two of them, and I see good results from products that do that.

The newest extremely bioavailable product that I have been using recently is called 10X Pure because they combine it with an oxygenated oil, which in and of itself, has health benefits. That is why I like that one; not only am I getting all the benefits of the CBD and the other phytocannabinoids and the terpenes, etc., but are also getting the benefit of the essential fatty acids that are being made bioavailable so that they get into the body and they have antiviral, antibacterial, and antifungal effects, which is pretty profound in terms of inflammation and in terms of infections as well as in terms of cancer development.



There are some real benefits to just using that product because it also has that element in it that has some really great health benefits in addition. Then it makes the CBD hemp oil almost 100% absorbed. It actually gets into the cell membrane pretty thoroughly as well as across the blood-brain barrier fairly effectively.

Again, we have all these components in our body. How much of a result you are going to get on a certain condition is whether you are going to get it to the place where it's needed. If it's not bioavailable, and it's not getting to the tissue or organ where it is really needed, then you are probably not going to see the benefit that you would like to see.

**Mouchet:** That is very, very useful. Thank you.

Would you choose a product with a bit of THC? You talked about people who need to be tested, but otherwise is there any benefit in having a little THC with the product? Or it doesn't really matter.

**Sica:** I think that there is a lot of controversy around that. There are people in the camp of, "You have to have THC," and then there are people in the camp that, "THC is not necessary."

If you look at the mountain of research on all these phytocannabinoids, most of the time, researchers don't study the whole plant. They don't study the whole herb because there isn't a lot of money to be made in that, and they don't get a lot of funding for it. So, they are studying each one of these components by themselves instead of looking at the whole plant. I don't know if there is really research that can answer that question.



There are people who are very strongly opinionated on both sides. I don't believe that with 0.3% THC, there is enough there to have a really positive therapeutic benefit. On the other hand, I don't think that there is a downside to it at that level either – even if people were susceptible to adverse side effects with higher levels of THC, such as you would find in marijuana. I don't think that there is any danger with that 0.3% other than, obviously, you could test positive on a drug test, which could be problematic for a lot of people.

There are different drug tests, too. If I can go aside for a minute to the older drug tests for cannabinoid. If you are taking hemp oil, you are going to test positive for cannabinoid. You want to be testing positive for cannabinoid because you are paying for the oil and taking the oil, so you want to have that benefit in your body.

The newer drug tests test for THC, specifically. That is what I am talking about. If you get a product that doesn't have any THC in it, then you would not test positive on those.

**Mouchet:** Is it possible for you to share some of the results that you have seen with some of your patients, and maybe talk about any contraindications that you have seen?

**Sica:** I've seen some pretty remarkable things, especially since I started using really good-quality bioavailable products. It's been about four or five years since I started recommending different products. Some of the ones that are really well-known on the market, my patients have tried. Some of them benefit, and some of them don't.



There was one company I was recommending that was one of the first ones on the market four years ago, and it was very expensive. I somewhat got away from it because I was disappointed. I had a patient with seizures, and it didn't really diminish the seizures. It helped, but it didn't really get rid of them.

I got frustrated with it until about a year and a half ago. Then I discovered a product that was micellizing liposome at about 90-95% absorption. What I started seeing was that I could give a dose in the office, and 50% of the people would notice a difference within five to 20 minutes with anxiety and their stress level and their pain level, etc. That very quickly got my attention. It was like, "Whoa! What's happening here?"

I've never seen that with any medication or any supplements or any treatment that I've recommended, and I've almost never seen anything work that quickly. So, I got fascinated with it, and I got focused on the people who were getting these dramatic results.

A friend of mine who is a doctor-a pain management specialist-lived with chronic 8 out of 10 level pain for 22 years. He didn't want to nor could he take narcotics, so he just lived with the pain. He tried medical marijuana, and he tried a number of different CBD products on the market, and never really noticed much of anything. When we tried this product with him, his pain was literally gone within ten minutes. It was amazing.

I think that is because of the bioavailability, it went in sublingually. It got in very quickly, and it was very effective because it was getting to those receptor sites.



I've seen some really dramatic things like that, and then I've seen patients where they have said, "It didn't really do much for me."

I encourage people to take it for at least three months if they are taking a good product. If you are not getting results with a product that you are trying, then try something that is much more bioavailable or try a different form of it. Do it for at least three months because what I've seen in some people, for instance this one patient, is that they had taken it for two months for their knee pain, and they didn't notice anything different. After two months, he went to his primary-care physician, and they did blood work. He was on blood pressure medication, and he was on stats and medication for blood sugar. His cholesterol was so low that they stopped the cholesterol medication. His blood pressure was so low that they stopped his blood pressure medications. After that, he finally started getting benefit from his pain and his arthritis in his knee.

It was almost like the innate wisdom of the body was saying, "No, it's more important that we balance out your blood sugar and your blood pressure and get you off these medications than it is to relieve the pain."

I thought that was a really interesting example that you have to stick with it.

First of all, make sure that it is a form that your body is getting a benefit from. Secondly, stick with it long enough at a high enough dose that you are going to see other results. It affects so many areas of the body, and we don't know if the body is going to say, "This is the most important thing to heal right now." We can't predict that; we can't control that.

It may not be that the CBD hemp oil isn't working; it's just working on something that is not so obvious to you.



**Mouchet:** That is a really good example. Thank you.

You obviously have been trying them, right? Is there anything that you can share about that?

**Sica:** I'm a pretty healthy person. I've taken a lot of good supplementation, and I do a lot of detox. I don't consider myself a very good candidate because I'm not going to notice something really dramatic.

The original one that I took four years ago, I didn't notice any difference with. I took it for about two or three months, and then I stopped it.

I started last year on the liposomal micellized one, and it did affect my thyroid. I have hypothyroidism, and it did improve my hypothyroidism, which I thought was rather interesting, and I needed to cut my dose down. Other than that, maybe I felt a little better mood-wise.

When I switched to the 10X Pure Hemp Oil, which crosses the blood-brain barrier, it was very dramatic for me. It was really a big improvement in terms of mood and mental focus and concentration. I had a real sense of well-being that was very dramatic within a couple of days.

I am getting old enough now that I have a few aches and pains and stiffness here and there, and I think it has definitely diminished all of that, but nothing as dramatic as that feeling of my brain coming alive after about two days. That was remarkable.



**Mouchet:** So, should we talk about some brands that you would recommend and why?

**Sica:** My favorite brand, based on the fact that the research on 10X Pure is remarkable, and that is really increasing the delivery system of the CBC and the other phytocannabinoids. I would have to say that is the product that I think is the most beneficial at this point. That comes from a company called CTFO, which is short for ‘Changing the Future Outcome’, which I also love the name of that company.

Brigitte, you can post the link so that people can check that company out. They have about 70 different products – different strengths of the CBD hemp oil, and they also have vape products and gummies and capsules. They also have a number of different skincare anti-aging products that contain CBD and have benefits that way. You can give people that link and they can go check out those products.

I also think that they are very reasonably priced based on the quality and research that has gone into them. They are really reasonably priced products compared to some of the others that I have seen out there.

I also like Zilis’ brand, and I think 7 Hemp is the one that I started with a couple of years ago. That is available, too. Both are pretty bioavailable and are therefore, give good effects rather quickly.

**Mouchet:** What do you think about the difference between products like creams and shampoos and pain relief creams that include CBD oil versus using the pure CBD?



**Sica:** Obviously, creams and topicals don't have a huge concentration, but I think that you are actually getting it closer. If you are doing it for improving the texture of your skin and improving the health of your skin and decreasing aging spots or sun-damaged spots and things like that, to get it topically is better. I don't think that you need to take your CBD or hemp oil and rub it on your skin. It's rather oily, and the 10X Pure probably absorbs far better than standard CBD oil, but I have not tried that directly on my skin.

I've been using a number of CTFOs and anti-aging skin creams, and I noticed a big difference in the texture of my skin and wrinkles and things like that. I think that it has been very effective, especially the longer I use it.

Some of the products actually work pretty quickly. So, I think that there is a definite benefit to using CBD topically and combining those things.

I think that with shampoo; how long is it going to stay on your scalp to really be absorbed? However, they have combined it with a product called AnaGain in shampoos and hair treatments. It takes about two to three months, but in two to three months people notice a huge improvement in hair growth if they are balding or losing hair. I've seen many pictures of that where people do get the benefit with the AnaGain products.

There is a pain cream from CTFO – and I know that there are other companies that make them. The Ultimate Deep Healing pain cream is the one that I've seen the best results with, although they do work when CBD is put on topically as long as it is an area where you can get it to the area of pain. Sometimes I will sit at the computer too long and get a spasm in my lower back, and I can put that pain cream on there, and it will go away within five minutes.



I also have a patient who is on significant doses of narcotics for neuropathy in his feet, and he can put that cream on and get the pain level from a six or a seven down to about a two using hemp oil cream.

The thing about hemp oil and CBD is that for things like neuropathy, it treats neuropathic pain whereas opiates just dull it a bit. They don't get rid of it because they can't really address neuropathic pain. Also, things like fibromyalgia are being helped tremendously by both oral and topical because you are actually correcting the issue instead of just trying to cover it up with a palliative pain relief.

So, I think that there is a place for all the topical-type products as well.

**Mouchet:** Wonderful! Are there other plants or substances that have similar effects to CBD we should know about, and that you are familiar with?

**Sica:** There is a whole new area of research going on, and they call it 'cannabinomimetics'. In other words, it is plants or herbs that have components that mimic the effects of the phytocannabinoids on those endocannabinoid receptors. It may not be as dramatic, but they certainly can be beneficial. I'm sure that the people listening to this health series are familiar with things like Echinacea and hops and curcumin. Of course, curcumin (turmeric) has been studied widely in terms of the benefit on the immune system, on decreasing inflammation and also anti-cancer benefits and lots of other benefits in it. So, it makes sense that those types of plants are also having an impact on that homeostatic endocannabinoid system as well.



Many of them, like curcumin for instance, have a very low bioavailability. So, only taking a teaspoon of turmeric, you aren't going to get much absorption – maybe one percent. So, it either has to be combined with something else or concentrated or a complex that gets a better absorption. Combining it with oil, for instance, increases the absorption oddly enough of curcumin. So, when it is cooked in a curry, you get better absorption than you do if you just take the powder in a capsule.

There are a number of substances – and I think there are more and more being discovered – that have similar benefits and also that are synergistic as I mentioned before. When you look at a whole plant, it's not just the major component. For instance, white willow bark is an herb that is a good pain reliever, and the acetylsalicylic acid, which is aspirin, was originally extracted from white willow bark.

We all know that aspirin and the other drugs that are similar to aspirin and their effects on pain relief as well as their side effects, but white willow bark is the whole herb. Maybe herbalists have studied the whole herb, but you not only have acetylsalicylic acid, but you have all these other terpenes and other phyto-compounds that act synergistically in a whole herb versus an extract.

It's really important to look at that, too. In our pharmaceutical-based world, we tend to say, “What is the active ingredient? Let's just get to the active ingredient,” when maybe that is not the approach that we should be taking. Maybe we need to look at what all the synergistic things are that work together to get a better effect with lower side effects over the long run.



**Mouchet:** Definitely. I think that we have discussed nearly everything that I wanted to talk about today. Is there anything else or any final thoughts that you would like to share with our listeners?

**Sica:** I just hope I have been able to convey how profound I feel that the knowledge and understanding of the phytocannabinoids, but also our endogenous cannabinoid system and how that impacts our health. When you understand that and you learn how to be able to support that system in restoring homeostasis, I want people to understand how profound that effect is on your health. That is really the ‘take-home’ I would like to get across to people.

**Mouchet:** Thank you. Dr. Sica, thank you so much for your time today and for making us more knowledgeable about CBD and its wellness-enhancing capabilities.

Again, if people want to find you, they can sign up on ‘Healoha’ and easily book a Second Opinion session with you over the phone and ask you any question that they might have.

This is Brigitte Mouchet with Solari Wellness Series. Thank you for listening, and take good care of yourself because it’s more fun to be well.



## **MODIFICATION**

Transcripts are not always verbatim. Modifications are sometimes made to improve clarity, usefulness and readability, while staying true to the original intent.

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