



Psychedelics

Psychedelics (serotonergic hallucinogens) are powerful psychoactive substances that change perception and mood and affect a number of cognitive processes. They are generally considered physiologically safe and do not lead to dependence or addiction. Their origin predates written history, and they were employed by early cultures in many sociocultural and ritual contexts going back to 4,000 BC. These cultures absorbed how to use psychedelic substances for medical purposes. In the 1800s, scientists and psychiatrists started recognizing psychedelic-assisted drugs as an alternative medicine¹. Into the 1950s, a small group of psychiatrists, lead under the supervision of Humphry Osmond started using psychedelic-assisted drugs as an alternative medicine for addictions and various mental disorders with promising results. Approximately 2,000 patients were showing positive outcomes from Osmond's treatments². Osmond's form of therapy was so successful that it was endorsed by the co-founder of Alcoholic Anonymous and the director of Saskatchewan's Bureau of Alcoholism then². However, by end of the 1960s different countries started debating the recreational use of psychedelics and began prohibiting the use of psychedelics as it was becoming a recreational drug and negative results were coming from it in social use. This shut the door to figuring out the full potential of psychedelic-assisted drugs as alternative medicine.

After all, despite all these barriers some contourites in the past 5 to 10 years have given the opportunity to scientists and researchers to conduct studies to prove the real potential of psychedelic-assisted drugs³. These studies are showing extraordinary results in people with depression, anxiety, and addiction problems. Since patients are responding in positive ways to psychedelic-assisted treatments, more studies are being done with a more variety of psychedelics assisted drugs to treat severe diseases like stroke, Parkinson's, and Alzheimer's. By doing psychedelic micro-dose-assisted treatments and having the patients take the drugs

in controlled areas, scientists have taken the “bad trip” experience out and are helping patients with their problems. With different scientific groups conducting more successful studies, governments should consider putting more focus and attention towards psychedelic-assisted therapies to treat all these overwhelming diseases. If social concerns of the 1960s were not in effect today and society was more open to the results of psychedelic-assisted treatments; the pressure from the people can change governments ruling on psychedelic-assisted drugs to speed up approval of psychedelic-assisted treatments. In contrast, psychedelic-assisted drugs could be the future treatment to specific targeted diseases and open the door to treating a diverse list of other diseases.

[1] Sponsored Content, “The History of Psychedelics (Part 1 of 2),” Visual Capitalist, April 30, 2021, <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/the-history-of-psychedelics-part-1-of-2/>.

[2] Moheb Costandi, “A Brief History of Psychedelic Psychiatry | Mo Costandi,” The Guardian (Guardian News and Media, September 2, 2014), <https://www.theguardian.com/science/neurophilosophy/2014/sep/02/psychedelic-psychiatry>.

[3] Williams , Luke. “Human Psychedelic Research: A Historical And Sociological Analysis.” MAPS, April 1999. https://maps.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5468.

