

MDMA, LSD, psilocybin should be legalized for use in therapeutic settings

LSD and psilocybin: illegal since 1968. MDMA: illegal since 1985. For decades, these drugs have remained on the Drug Enforcement Administration's list of Schedule I drugs due to their high potential for abuse and not accepted medical use.



BY OLIVIA WERNER
STAFF WRITER

Since their scheduling, research has provided evidence that these drugs have medical potential when used in a therapeutic setting. The DEA should reconsider the Schedule I placement of these drugs to allow for patients to enhance therapeutic potential.

LSD is administered in a range of doses during therapy, starting as low as 25 micrograms. Each dose serves a different therapeutic purpose.

"LSD is used to make the patient more receptive to therapy," said psychologist Dr.

Melissa Sporn in a phone interview with The Guilfordian. "It is used to get through blocks that may be put up when opening up to therapeutic suggestions."

LSD has aided in the treatment of addictions, anxiety, depression, phobias and compulsive syndromes. It is also effective in reducing the discomfort of terminal cancer patients.

Akin to LSD, psilocybin also maintains the ability to treat depression and aid in the anxieties of terminal cancer patients.

In a recent study by the National Academy of Sciences, scientists found that as more psilocybin shuts off the brain, the feeling of experiencing an altered state heightens.

"Some people say they become one with the universe," said David Nutt, co-author of the study and researcher at Imperial College London in United Kingdom in a CNN News article. "It's that sort of transcendental experience."

Researchers have also found MDMA (widely known as "ecstasy") to be useful in treating PTSD and relieving terminal

cancer patients. The patient may experience increased empathy and acceptance, which can help them open up to therapy.

While psychedelics have side effects such as acute anxiety, depression and paranoia, it is important to note that every drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration has side effects, many exceedingly severe.

The fact that these drugs are commonly abused and potentially addictive allows for the DEA to justify their scheduling. Fortunately, if placed in the hands of psychiatrists, the patient would have no ability to abuse these drugs. Their potential for abuse is immediately eliminated through administration in a controlled setting.

"Certain drugs allow people to access points in feelings and thought that are otherwise bound," said sophomore Ambra Parker. "If under therapeutic surveillance, these drugs wouldn't be used as a free ticket to trip or roll."

If legalized for medical purposes, these drugs would strictly be in the hands of trained professionals who would typically

administer small doses. Therapists aren't encouraging patients to have crazy trips, but rather to open up to therapy.

Considering these facts, the DEA has a weak argument.

Medical marijuana's legalization in many states could be a foot in the door for other Schedule I drugs to be accepted for medical use. However, if the day finally comes that these drugs are legalized for medical use, their distribution wouldn't be as widespread as medical marijuana.

"One cannot write a prescription and send the patient off to pick up a sugar tab of lysergic acid diethylamide," said psychiatrist Dr. Henry Holcomb in an email interview with The Guilfordian. "Rather, the patient and clinician must work closely together in a time-intensive, psychologically intimate manner."

The legalization of psychedelics for therapeutic purposes would aid those suffering from serious ailments. The benefit of successful therapy outweighs the possible detriment of these drugs.

Open letter to Congress: please do your job

Dear Congress,

Thank you for your dedication and excellence. You have certainly made the people of this country proud to have such experienced politicians.



BY ADITYA GARG
STAFF WRITER

Note I said politicians, not public servants. There is a subtle yet important difference between these titles — the former fights for the good of their party and career; the latter for the good of the country and people.

Who am I to question you, however? To distinguish between politicians and public servants? To give my opinion on complex national issues?

An impudent, ignorant student in a room of experienced adults who understand the world?

Yes, I admit I have much to learn, much to see, much to experience. But how can I when my path is constantly obfuscated by national crises, wars and ideological stalemates?

In my 17 years, I have lived almost without respite in a world at war. A world in financial and economic disarray. A world of political and ideological stalemate.

When I look to Congress, I do not see the values of cooperation that I have been taught, the ideals of compromise and respect. Instead, I see a world of mudslingers and career politicians — individuals who would rather shut down the United States government than compromise.

Continued congressional inaction only contributes to the problems that face my generation: the burden of a ballooning deficit, the insolvent Medicare program and an outdated tax code.

"I fear for the millennials," said Kent Chabotar, president and professor of political science. "Our inability to remedy economic inequality or solve the pressing issues of our nation will undoubtedly cause many problems down the road."

"My generation may be the last generation to live a better life than their parents."

I only have one question: why? Why have you picked an enmity with my generation?

I understand there are disagreements over government policy.

"People are very passionate about these issues on both sides of the political fence, which has resulted in a highly polarized political environment," explained N.C. District 59 Representative Jon Hardister in an email interview with The Guilfordian.

That is fine, even good — this passion, these disagreements and these debates fuel better policy. That is, of course, if senators and representatives are willing to listen to each other make decisions based on rationale rather than ideology.

"Inaction has and will cripple consumer confidence and scare the markets," said junior James Missell, an economics and political science double major. "Washington is playing a game for the rich and holding a gun to the heads of the rest of the population."

"It is making a mockery of the United States to the world and destroying our international credit."

Please, put aside your differences and do the work you were elected to do. We will bear the burden of your actions, whether in the form of exorbitant taxes, decreased quality of education or a lower standard of living. The future of my generation and future generations lies in your hands.

But, I understand that we cannot just rely on these earnest pleas and must take action ourselves. To that effect, I urge all readers to take Rep. Hardister's advice:

"If Americans stand up for what they believe, cast their vote and get involved, then there is no limit to what we can accomplish."

"I encourage all Americans to get informed, study the issues and then take action."

To my readers and the public: do not step back and mute your voices; this is the time to be heard.

To Congress: I expect that you have heard this message and hope to see some effect soon.

ANATOMY OF A SHUTDOWN

RESEARCH WAS DISRUPTED.

