



Drug Science
Medical Psychedelics
Working Group

2020/2021



Drug Science

Founded in 2010 by Professor David Nutt following his removal from his post as Chair of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, Drug Science is the only completely independent, science-led drugs charity, uniquely bringing together leading drugs experts from a wide range of specialisms to carry out groundbreaking research into drug harms and effects.

Drug Science works to provide an evidence base free from political or commercial influence, creating the foundation for sensible and effective drug laws, and equipping the public, media and policy makers with the knowledge and resources to enact positive change.

Its vision is to see a world where drug control is rational and evidence-based; where drug use is better informed and people who use drugs are understood; where drugs are used to heal not harm.

Overview

Drug Science believes that the future of psychedelic medicine is extremely promising, and there is potential for widespread application of psychedelic drugs within public health models. The UK is a world leader in the development of clinical psychedelic research, which is now expanding globally.

However, current UK regulations have created serious and considerable barriers to legitimate research associated with Schedule 1 regulations. While current legislation does not preclude scientific research with these drugs, it does make them significantly more difficult, time-consuming and costly to study.

With a greater understanding amongst policy makers, academics, the media and the general public, there are realistic prospects of regulatory approval, leading to the evidenced possibility that medical psychedelics can be used safely, feasibly and with the potential for lasting therapeutic benefits.

Building off the success of the Medical Cannabis Working Group, the Medical Psychedelics Working Group (MPWG) is a consortium of Drug Science experts, leading academics, researchers and policy specialists, supported by industry partners.

The group's aim is to create a rational and enlightened approach to psychedelic research and clinical treatment. The group will explore innovation within the psychedelic space with a specific focus on how psychedelics can be integrated into primary and secondary healthcare. Evidence-based science, sharing data, and strong partnerships are keys to success for the psychedelic community.

Meeting Dates 2020/21

14 July
2020
(launch)

9 September
2020

4 November
2020

13 January
2021

10 March
2021

12 May
2021

Aim

To break down the barriers of 50 years of medical censorship by creating a rational and enlightened approach to psychedelic research and clinical treatment, ensuring the UK is a world leader in psychedelic medicine.

Objectives

- Develop research materials on psychedelic drugs
- Work alongside regulators and other organisations, providing evidence to enable the removal of psychedelic drugs from Schedule 1 restrictions
- Work with regulatory bodies to ensure that relevant legislation is enacted to facilitate medical use of psychedelic drugs
- Promote destigmatisation to provide improved understanding of psychedelic drugs
- Provide evidence-based educational resources on psychedelic medicine for doctors, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals

Outputs

- Evidence leading to rescheduling of all psychedelic drugs for research and medical purposes
- Peer reviewed position papers:
 - Addressing the misconceptions about psychedelic drugs
 - Overcoming barriers to safe patient access
 - Investigating the most effective ways of conducting trials
 - A deconstruction of the true history of psychedelics
- Multi Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) for psychedelics
- Media engagement/Media fact pact
- Educational materials/slide sets
- Training & support for health care professionals
- Drug Science Podcasts
- Others to be determined

Proposed Outputs (specific funding required)

- Systematic review of the current scientific literature for Psilocybin (and other psychedelic substances) for a range of indications
- Health economics analysis of medical psychedelics, including an assessment of the “hidden” benefits such as the reduced costs of other more costly and less effective psychoactive medicines to the NHS
- Others to be determined

The Working Group

Scientific Committee		
Prof Jo Neill (Chair)	Professor of Psychopharmacology	Drug Science/University of Manchester
Prof David Nutt	Professor of Neuropsychopharmacology	Drug Science/Imperial College London
Prof Fiona Measham	Chair in Criminology	Drug Science/University of Liverpool
Prof Adam Winstock	Honorary Consultant Addiction Psychiatrist	Drug Science/Global Drug Survey
Prof Val Curran	Professor of Psychopharmacology	Drug Science/University College London
Dr Tim Williams	Consultant Addiction Psychiatrist	Drug Science/University of Bristol
Dr Roz Gittens	Director of Pharmacy	Drug Science/Humankind
Dr James Rucker	Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist	Kings College London
Dr Robin Cahart-Harris	Head of Centre for Psychedelic Research	Imperial College London
Liam Modlin	Psychological Therapist	King's College London
Dr Dennis McKenna	Director of Ethnopharmacology	Heffter Research Institute
Dr David Nichols	Co-Founder	Heffter Research Institute
Prof David Taylor	Professor of Psychopharmacology	Kings College London
Dr Simon Ruffell	Psychiatric Doctor	Kings College London

Policy Specialists		
Jeff Smith MP	Manchester, Withington	Labour Party
Crispin Blunt MP	Reigate	Conservative Party
Rudi Fortson QC	Visiting Professor of Law	Queen Mary, University of London
Steve Rolles	Senior Policy Analyst	Transform Drug Policy Foundation
Craig Whittall	Communications & Engagement Officer	University of Manchester
Dave King	Senior Researcher	CDPRG
Amber Moore	Senior Researcher	CDPRG

Patient Advocates		
Keith Abraham	CEO	Heroic Hearts Project UK
Guy Murray	Veteran	

Drug Science Team		
David Badcock	CEO	Drug Science
Dr Anne Schlag	Head of Research	Drug Science
Dr Chloe Sakal	Clinical Director	Drug Science
James Bunn	Communications Manager	Drug Science
Rayyan Zafar	Honorary Research Assistant	Drug Science

If you are interested in joining the Medical Psychedelics Working Group as a corporate partner, please contact David Badcock (Drug Science CEO) David.badcock@drugscience.org.uk to discuss the terms and conditions of doing so.



For more information about Drug Science,
please visit www.drugscience.org.uk

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