

Psychedelics: Comparing therapeutic uses and potential harms

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Abstract

Psychedelics might be the oldest psychoactive agents known to humanity and have been used for religious purposes in native religions however their strong psychologic effect was discovered accidentally in 1943 after the synthesis of Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) in 1937. The discovery of the psychologic effects of these drugs became a mainstream area of since the synthesis of LSD however several political and social factors lead to their ban in 1966 after which research on Psychedelics was limited. These drugs became a major topic of scientific and ethical debates in 1990's and the recent times have seen a 'Psychedelic renaissance' where the therapeutic value of psychedelic is being considered again. This article reports the historic perspective of psychedelics, pharmacologic action by 5-HT_{2A} receptor agonism, effects and finally reports proposed therapeutic uses including uses in depression, PTSD, anxiety related disorders, drugs and alcohol addiction, neurodegenerative diseases and auto-immune diseases and compares them to potential harms including production of tolerance, hallucinogen persisting perception disorder An and psychosis. An analysis of history, pharmacology and comparison of benefits and harms lead to the conclusion that the therapeutic benefits significantly outweigh the potential harms.

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