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5/15/23

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs it's great to be able to provide support for LD 1914: "**An Act to Enact the Maine Psilocybin Health Access Act**"

Patients and their doctors should have options when it comes to treating trauma and mental health disorders. Many people suffer for years and decades with re-occurring anxiety, depression, PTSD, and other symptoms. While traditional pharmacology has tools at its disposal to treat the symptoms patients present with, there is a large section of the public whose disorders are unaffected by these treatments or are helped, but the side effects are too much and thus discontinue treatment.

With the introduction of the war on drugs in the late 20th century, promising advancements in mental health treatments using substances like psilocybin were paused. These substances were mistakenly compared to other illicit and addictive drugs. Many are realizing now, this set advances in treating mental health back decades.

However, a resurgence of individuals interested in thinking outside the box has come with research indicating the substantial benefits substances such as psilocybin have for treating intractable disorders. The FDA, a traditionally pharma-centered organization has even taken notice and categorized psilocybin as a "breakthrough" therapy, opening the floodgates of research. And the research did not disappoint.

1. A study published in JAMA Psychiatry found that psilocybin-assisted therapy reduced symptoms of treatment-resistant depression and anxiety in cancer patients, many of whom had experienced trauma. The study included participants who received two sessions of psilocybin-assisted therapy. Participants reported significant reductions in depression and anxiety symptoms, as well as increased quality of life, following the therapy sessions (Ross et al., 2016).
2. Another study published in the Journal of Psychopharmacology found that psilocybin-assisted therapy significantly reduced symptoms of PTSD in military veterans. The study included 26 participants who received either a high dose of psilocybin or a low dose of the drug as part of a therapy session. Participants who received the high dose reported significant improvements in PTSD symptoms, including reduced anxiety and depression, increased mindfulness, and improved well-being (Garcia-Romeu et al., 2021).

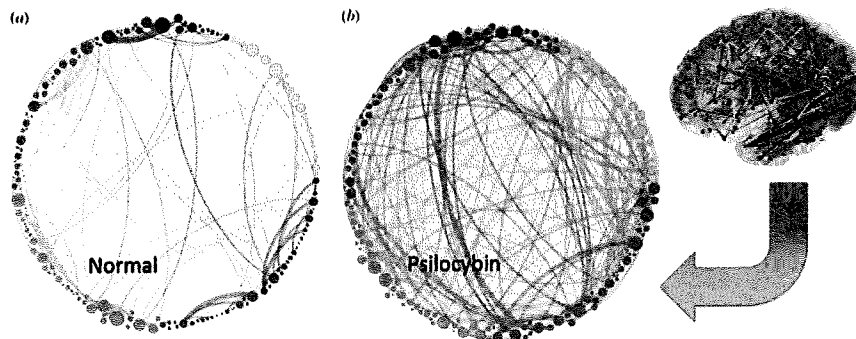
3. A study published in the Journal of Psychopharmacology found that psilocybin-assisted therapy can be effective in reducing symptoms of social anxiety in adults. The study included participants who received a high dose of psilocybin in a supportive setting. Participants reported significant reductions in social anxiety symptoms, as well as increased positive mood and overall well-being (Gasser et al., 2014).
4. In a study published in the Journal of Psychopharmacology, psilocybin-assisted therapy was found to be effective in reducing symptoms of major depression. The study included participants who received two sessions of psilocybin-assisted therapy. Participants reported significant reductions in depression symptoms at both the one-week and three-month follow-up assessments (Carhart-Harris et al., 2016).

Critics of legalizing psilocybin argue that it could lead to increased recreational use and potential harm to users. However, studies like these suggest that psilocybin-assisted therapy can offer significant benefits to individuals with mental health conditions who have not found relief through traditional treatments. With proper regulation and oversight, legalizing psilocybin can help ensure that more people have access to this potentially life-changing treatment.

But the most powerful defense of the benefits of psilocybin for mental health comes from personal stories of individuals who have experienced positive transformations in their lives thanks to psilocybin-assisted therapy. Anne-Marie Prins, a Canadian trauma survivor. Prins was diagnosed with PTSD after experiencing sexual abuse as a child and multiple traumatic experiences as an adult. She struggled with debilitating symptoms for years and was unable to find relief through traditional treatments like therapy and medication. However, after participating in a clinical trial of psilocybin-assisted therapy, Prins reported significant improvements in her symptoms. She described her psilocybin experience as a "life-changing" journey that allowed her to process and heal from her trauma in a way that traditional treatments had not. She credits psilocybin with helping her reclaim her life and is now an advocate for legalizing the drug to help others who are struggling with trauma and PTSD (Stone, 2021).

Greater functional connectivity

Homological scaffolds of brain functional networks, G. Petri, et al (2014)



"there is an increased integration between cortical regions in the psilocybin state... One possible by-product of this greater communication across the whole brain is the phenomenon of synaesthesia which is often reported in conjunction with the psychedelic state..."

Another powerful story is Matthew Kahl, a U.S. Marine veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Kahl struggled with PTSD for years, and traditional treatments like therapy and medication did not provide much relief. However, after participating in a clinical trial of psilocybin-assisted therapy at the University of South Florida, Kahl reported significant improvements in his symptoms. Kahl described his psilocybin experience as "the most intense spiritual journey" of his life and said it allowed him to process and heal from the trauma he had experienced during his military service. He credits psilocybin with saving his life and is now an advocate for legalizing it to help other veterans and individuals struggling with mental health conditions (McKenna, 2019).

I don't think anyone would argue we have an unprecedented crisis of mental health in Maine and around the Country. Allowing for psilocybin in a regulated and controlled environment could have significant benefits for mental health, particularly for individuals struggling with trauma and PTSD. While there are concerns about potential abuse and harm, with proper regulation and oversight, psilocybin-assisted therapy could offer a new, promising treatment option for those who have not found relief through traditional methods.

Sincerely,



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State Representative

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