Physicians' knowledge and attitudes towards psychedelics

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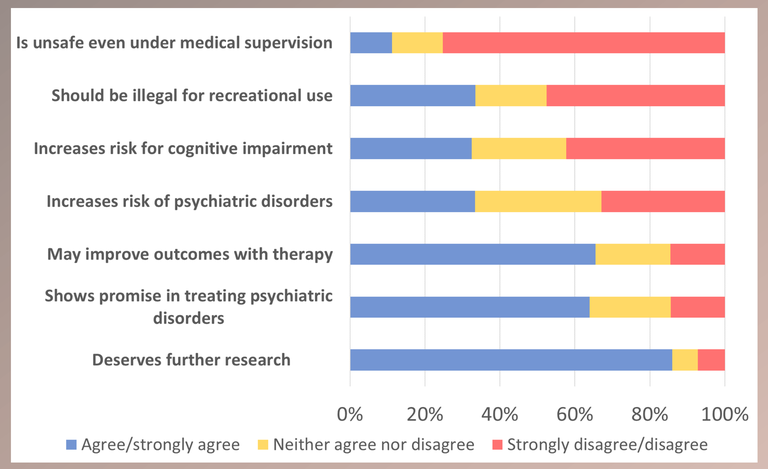

Figure 1. *One study that surveyed American counselors found mixed opinions regarding potential patient risk, yet generally favorable opinions on psychedelics' potential to treat psychiatric disorders, potential to improve therapy outcomes, and merit for further research.*[3]

Background & Purpose

On March 22, 2022, Utah Governor Spencer Cox signed H.B. 167 into law. H.B. 167 would create a task force to "provide evidence-based recommendations on any psychotherapy drug that the task force determines may enhance psychotherapy when treating a mental illness," including psychedelics.

With the passage of this bill, Utah has become the fourth state in the last two years to approve studying the clinical use of psychedelics.[1] In the same month, Johns Hopkins University, Yale University, and New York University announced they were collaborating to create a psychedelics curriculum for psychiatrists.[2]

Currently, there are limited studies investigating knowledge and attitudes among medical professionals. One study found that their participants, who were mostly psychologists, expressed cautiously favorable attitudes toward therapeutic psychedelic experiences.[3] An epidemiological study indicated an increasing need for physicians to understand psychedelic use, given the prevalence of naturalistic use.[4]

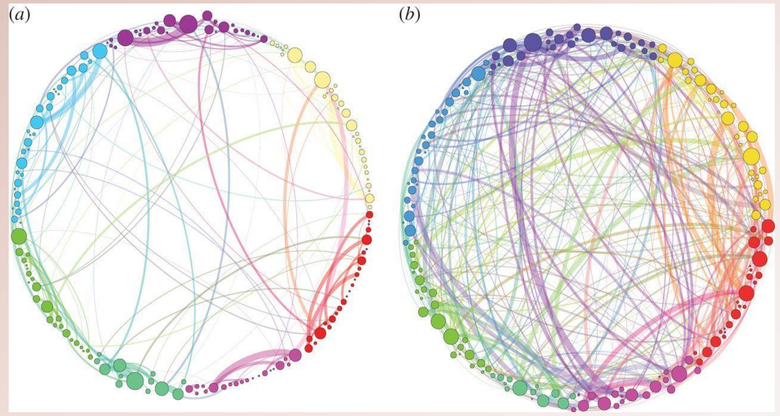

Figure 2. *Normal-state brains are depicted on the left (a), and psilocybin-influenced brains on the right (b). New types of order have emerged, implying that the brain does not become a random system after psilocybin injection, but retains organizational features different from normal organization, supporting the idea that psilocybin disrupts normal organization of the brain with the emergence of strong, long-range functional connections.*[5]

Methods

As top academic institutions and state legislatures lean into psychedelic-assisted therapies, it will be critical to assess the knowledge and attitudes among practicing medical professionals.

In this forthcoming study, we will administer questionnaires to physicians in the state of Utah to understand their baseline of knowledge and attitudes towards the clinical use of psychedelics.

Survey Questions

Our survey will include questions about physicians' backgrounds and their support of psychedelic research and treatment. Physicians will also be asked about the likelihood they would prescribe psychedelic treatment and their willingness to seek extra training to that end.

Sources

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