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Global coalition launches initiative to secure the rescheduling of psilocybin

12th January 2022

By Roland Sebestyén

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A new initiative has been established to help push global decision-makers to reschedule psilocybin to grant access to those that could benefit from the potential therapeutic properties of the compound.

The International Therapeutic Psilocybin Rescheduling Initiative (ITPRI) (<http://reschedulepsilocybin.org/#/menu>) launched today. The ITPRI is a global coalition working to promote and secure a rescheduling of psilocybin under the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances.

Psilocybin, which is often called “magic mushrooms” as it is found in a number of fungi species, has been long deemed a safe and highly effective chemical compound in treating many forms of mental illness and substance use disorder.

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In most countries, however, legal control of psilocybin results from its Schedule I status under the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances.

The new initiative was established to change this, sooner rather than later. Advocates claim that the change is needed urgently as researchers looking into the potential benefits of substances classed Schedule I currently face numerous hurdles (approvals, funding, etc).

Professor David Nutt, head of Imperial College London’s Centre for Psychedelic Research and Founder of ITPRI partner Drug Science, said: “Psilocybin’s Schedule I status has severely limited – and continues to limit – neuroscience research and the development of treatments for patients.”

Psilocybin is one of several psychedelic compounds that have shown promise for the treatment of a range of mental health conditions, including treatment-resistant depression, major depressive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, end-life-psychological distress and substance use disorder.

The evidentiary basis for including psilocybin in Schedule I remains unclear but appears to have been based largely on political considerations and a mistaken presumption that these drugs offered no medical benefit and posed a high risk of non-medical use and dependence.

Basing its objectives on research from a number of leading universities and institutes, and with the ultimate goal of accelerating research and fostering the availability of psilocybin-assisted therapies for those suffering from mental illness and substance use disorders, ITPRI will pursue a change to psilocybin’s current Schedule I status.

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Christopher Koddermann, ITPRI Co-founder and Chair of the Board of Directors, said: "Given today's scientific understanding of CBD's high potential therapeutic value and low risk of dependence, a change of its status as a Schedule I drug is long overdue."

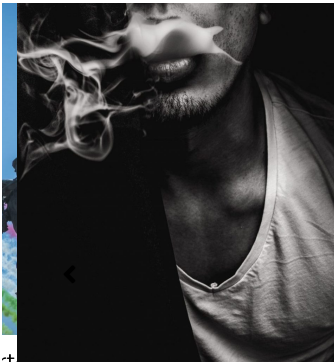
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Willeen Scholten, ITPRI Advisory Board member and former Secretary to the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence, added: "Rescheduling procedures under the 1971 Convention offer a potentially game-changing opportunity to advance further research and accelerate the approval of treatments for patients."

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