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Vancouver discovery will make 'Magic Mushroom' mental health care cheaper

Breakthrough process designed by Vancouver scientists uses bacteria as factories to make Psilocybin for psychedelic assisted therapies to treat depression, addictions and PTSD.

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Feb 23, 2022 • February 23, 2022 • 3 minute read • [Join the conversation](#)

Vancouver, BC, Feb. 23, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — A team of Vancouver scientists has discovered a new process to cost-effectively make psilocybin, the active ingredient in magic mushrooms, paving the way for greater and more affordable treatments for a range of addictions and mental health conditions.

Recent research has found psilocybin is effective in the treatment of alcohol and opiate addiction, PTSD, depression, and anxiety. Research into other potential applications is ongoing. According to scientists at [John Hopkins University](#) the current cost of \$7,000 – \$10,000 per gram of psilocybin, makes it a prohibitively expensive ingredient in medical regimens and academic research.

A team out of Vancouver's [Core One Labs](#) led by Dr. Robert Hancock, a globally renowned University of British Columbia (UBC) microbiologist and Canada Research Chair Holder in Health and Genomics, has created a new process they expect will bring that cost under \$100 a gram by the end of 2022.

“It’s a game changer that allows for rapid, stable and cost-effective psilocybin production to bring the price down of the psychedelic compound that is showing enormous promise in treating addiction, depression and PTSD,” said Dr. Hancock, an Order of Canada recipient.

Psilocybin, Dr Hancock said, has been trialled, tested, legalised and decriminalised in many parts of the world and its “exceptional properties” could transform the mental-health care field.

The new process the team developed uses specially constructed, optimised DNA sequences making bacteria into biological factories for psilocybin production via a fermentation process, allowing the substance to be created in a lab under controlled conditions.

The breakthrough discovery comes in the wake of Health Canada approving the Special Access Program (SAP) use of psilocybin in psychedelic assisted therapy for mental illness, which afflicts 1 in 5 people in Canada every year.

A study from the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology, & Neuroscience (IoPPN) at King’s College London, found that psilocybin can be safely administered with no detrimental effects in healthy people

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In the Pacific Northwest, Oregon has legalised psilocybin treatment for mental health issues while a pair of Washington State lawmakers earlier this month introduced legislation that would legalize “supported psilocybin experiences” by adults 21 and older.

“Nationally and internationally recognized medical institutions have shown that Psilocybin can help treat a variety of behavioral health conditions,” stated the Washington bill, “including but not limited to addiction, depression, anxiety disorders, and end-of-life psychological distress.”

“Psychotherapists around the world are reporting psilocybin treatment, is showing some of the best results compared to any therapy in addressing addiction, anxiety, depression and PTSD, said Joel Shacker, Chief Executive Officer of [Core One Labs Inc.](#), which has filed for a patent on its new discovery.

“The science and engineering by our scientists is playing a significant role in furthering mental health research with cost-effective psychedelic compounds,” he said.

The company’s scientists are now working with Dr. Hancock and global partners for the advancement of psychedelic-derived treatments for mental health disorders including neurodegenerative diseases, like Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s.

[McMillan LLP](#) research recently reported that psychedelics have come a long way since the 1970s, at which time they faced a negative backlash as a result of the “war on drugs” in the United States, and corresponding restrictions in countries such as Canada.

“With a growing body of research, shifting demographics and a general openness to evaluate non-conventional ways to deal with existing challenges, the public has become more receptive to psychedelics for medical and therapeutic purposes,” said the business law firm.

The Canadian Psychedelic Association has also revealed survey findings from Nanos Research which demonstrated that 82% of Canadians approve the use of psilocybin-assisted therapy, and 78% would support a government that legalized the same.

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