

## 'Breakthrough' treatment for PTSD? FDA approves ecstasy drug trial

One of the main targets in the war on drugs could well become a drug to treat the scars of war. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has designated 3,4-methylenedioxy -methamphetamine (MDMA), better known as the illegal drug ecstasy, a "breakthrough therapy" for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a status that may lead to faster approval.

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In people with PTSD, a small sensory trigger such as a sound or a smell can bring a traumatic memory rushing back. "The disabling element of PTSD is the fact that when the memory starts, the emotions completely override you and overwhelm the brain," Nutt says. Studies suggest that MDMA can dampen the emotional response to the memory, allowing people to relive their trauma and work through it, he says. The MDMA-treatment consists of several sessions of psychotherapy, some conducted while the patient is under the influence of the drug.

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The biggest hurdle now is raising the money for the two phase III trials, which together will include between 200 and 300 participants. So far MAPS has raised only \$12.75 million, about half of its goal.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [All clear for the decisive trial of ecstasy in PTSD patients](#)**