

Psychedelic drug therapy could provide a ‘radical new answer’ to depression, PTSD, anxiety

For years now a band of dedicated scientists has been quietly building a case to redeem the reputation of MDMA and a raft of other psychedelic drugs – LSD, psilocybin, mescaline and ketamine – hoping to deliver them into the hands of mainstream psychiatry. They claim that when it comes to some of our most debilitating mental illnesses – depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), addiction, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) – the therapeutic cupboard is close to bare. Psychedelic drugs might provide a radical new answer.

The efforts of the psychedelics champions are paying off. In August 2017, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) gave the green light to a phase 3 clinical trial of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy for treating PTSD. It also designated MDMA a ‘breakthrough therapy’, clearing the path for a speedy approval process.

If successful, it will be the first psychedelic to be approved since a clampdown on mind-bending drugs swept the world in the early 1970s.

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MDMA is not a so-called ‘classical’ psychedelic; unlike LSD or psilocybin it doesn’t cause hallucinations. It is often referred to in the medical literature as an ‘empathogen’, due to its ability to induce feelings of empathy and compassion – including self-compassion.

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[Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies’] goal is to have MDMA reclassified as a pharmaceutical drug by 2021, with psilocybin close on its heels. If the legal landscape in the US changes, other countries may follow.

Read full, original post: How psychedelic therapies are making a comeback