

This ‘psychedelic’ treatment can cure opioid addiction. It also might kill you

With proper treatment, withdrawing from opioids won’t kill you, but it can make you want to die.

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The desperation of some users to get clean leads them to seek hope underground. A while ago, I began to hear about a rogue treatment called ibogaine. It’s illegal in the US but draws users south to Mexico, where a network of unregulated clinics has emerged to offer it. Extracted from the root of a plant native to West Africa, the drug produces psychedelic effects akin to a waking dream and is said by its advocates to spirit away withdrawal symptoms with a single dose, leaving users sober and uninterested in smack. But there’s a catch—apparently, the treatment could kill you.

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There was evidence that very high doses of ibogaine could damage the cerebellum in rats and cause seizures in primates. Ibogaine also appeared to affect the heart, causing bradycardia and increasing the risk of a life-threatening arrhythmia.

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I asked [neurologist Deborah] Mash about these risks. “Ibogaine can be given safely—there’s no doubt about it,” she told me. “But there is some cardiotoxicity, and it has to be given under full medical supervision.”

Read full, original post: [A Detox Drug Promises Miracles—If It Doesn’t Kill You First](#)