

Innovations to Address the Opioid Crisis



Randy Brown

Associate Professor with Tenure, Department of Family Medicine, School of Medicine and Public Health

CURRENT RESEARCH

Testing psychedelic compounds for treating opioid addiction

It is hard to avoid the daily tragic news related to the current national opioid epidemic. In the United States, drug overdose now exceeds motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of accidental death, and opioid overdose has driven this trend. While effective medication-assisted treatment is available for opioid addiction, current resources are inadequate and it is frequently a challenge for patients to find prescribers or afford these medications (buprenorphine and methadone). Additionally, concerns have arisen about the diversion and abuse of these drugs. There is an urgent need to develop innovative approaches to the treatment of opioid addiction (or opioid use disorder, OUD).

Contrary to the popular belief that the goal of using a psychedelic drug such as LSD or psilocybin is simply recreational in order (or recreationally-driven) to experience kaleidoscopic images and distorted sensations, the therapeutic goal sought in modern clinical studies of psilocybin is to establish and maintain a therapeutic and highly meaningful mystical experience over the course of several hours. Drawing from his just-concluded study of the pharmacokinetics and safety of increasing doses of psilocybin in healthy volunteers with collaborators Drs. Paul Hutson and Christopher Nicholas at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Dr. Brown aims to conduct a clinical trial testing the safety and usefulness of 2-3 doses of psilocybin as an addition to the behavioral treatment of opioid use disorder. Recent addiction studies with psilocybin have achieved positive results in alcohol use disorders and tobacco use disorders, demonstrating abstinence rates far exceeding available approved therapies. Further, as...

AFFILIATION



University of Wisconsin-Madison

EDUCATION

- PhD Population Health Sciences 2009, University of Wisconsin
- MD 1996, University of Washington
- Dual BS Neurobiology and Psychology 1991, Northwestern University

RESEARCH AREAS

Psychology, Life Science, Neurological / Cognitive

FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will propel the research of Prof. Randy Brown as he tests the efficacy of psilocybin in opioid addiction. As a natural chemical, psilocybin is not patentable and studies are thus unsupported by pharmaceutical companies. Benefunder donations will help fund over \$350K/year needed for this proof of concept clinical study of psilocybin, with a goal of future FDA approval of psilocybin. Help test psilocybin for treating opioid abuse disorder: fund Prof. Brown.

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