

# Psilocybin: A Promising New Treatment for Depression

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VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA, August 24, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Psychedelic therapy and, in particular, psilocybin therapy, is taking the world by storm. Psilocybin is being studied as a potential treatment for any number of physical and mental health concerns, but treating depression is its most promising therapeutic use yet.

Read on to learn about the therapeutic trajectory of psychedelics as a treatment for mental health conditions, as well as the unparalleled potential of magic mushrooms to treat depression.

## [Psychedelics and Mental Health](#)

The therapeutic applications of psychedelics have been studied since before most of us were born. But don't be surprised if you've only heard about the therapeutic potential of psychedelics recently. Due in great part to political interests, the study of psychedelics was shut down for decades and wasn't renewed until the 21st century.

Despite these setbacks, what we have learned in these past couple of decades alone is enough to make us want to put the study of all other treatments on hold and just focus on psychedelics. Let's take a look at some mental and physical conditions for which treatment with psychedelics is currently being studied:

- Different types of depression
- Anxiety disorders
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Anorexia nervosa
- Schizophrenia
- Adult attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
- Substance dependence
- Acute suicidal ideation and behaviour
- Cancer
- Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)
- Sanfilippo syndrome

## Parkinson's disease

However, even now, after everything we know about psychedelics regarding their promising therapeutic uses, scientists struggle to obtain authorization to study these drugs, and much of the stigma surrounding psychedelics continues.

### Can Shrooms Treat Depression?

According to the WHO, approximately 280 million people in the world suffer from depression. This number constitutes 3.8% of the general population, 5% of all adults, and 5.7% of adults over the age of 60. Depression can be a very serious condition, affecting people's work, school, and family life. In some conditions, depression can even lead to suicide, which is the fourth cause of death in 15- to 29-year-olds. Thankfully, one of the conditions for which psychedelics – in particular shrooms– show great therapeutic promise is depression.

Johns Hopkins already claims that psilocybin is effective in treating treatment-resistant depression, and one of their upcoming studies will focus on the effectiveness of psilocybin in treating alcohol use in people with major depression.

Furthermore, [Compass Pathways](#) is currently carrying out the largest clinical trial in the history of psilocybin therapy, developing a drug whose primary aim is to treat treatment-resistant depression. If this drug proves effective, this treatment would be life-changing for literally millions of people. We know how prevalent depression is, but did you know that for two-thirds of people with depression the first medication they try is not effective? Did you know that up to one-third of people with depression are not helped by multiple treatment attempts? Let's do the math: this means that treatment-resistant depression affects approximately 93 million people worldwide. These 93 million people, struggling with both their depression and the frustration of failed treatments, could get their lives back through psilocybin therapy.

Furthermore, psilocybin is not only being studied as a treatment for treatment-resistant depression but also as an alternative treatment for anyone suffering from depression. [Scientists from Imperial College London's Centre for Psychedelic Research](#) carried out a study with 59 participants who were either given psilocybin or a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI), which is a common antidepressant. The scientists discovered that psilocybin was as effective as the conventional antidepressant as measured by different depression scales. However, scientists discovered that in many ways – that had not been the primary focus of the study – psilocybin performed even better. Not only did the participants who took psilocybin to see equal reductions in depressive symptoms, but they also saw improvements in work and social functioning, mental well-being, and the ability to feel happiness. These participants also reported fewer negative side effects than the participants of the conventional antidepressant group, such as drowsiness, sexual dysfunction, and dry mouth.

### How Do Magic Mushrooms Help Depression?

SSRIs, such as the well-known Prozac, are effective in reducing users' negative feelings; however,

they often reduce users' positive feelings as well. On the other hand, psilocybin doesn't mute our feelings. In fact, it seems to have a re-ordering effect on the brain. Participants from the psilocybin therapy group in the Centre for Psychedelic Research study reported feeling "recalibrated, reset like they haven't for years", and "enjoying life".

#### Will People Have to Trip to Get Relief?

Many would look forward to therapy involving psychedelic trips, but, understandably, many would not. Nevertheless, psychedelic-hesitant people should not dismiss psilocybin treatment outright. Doug Drysdale, CEO of Cybin, another company that is currently developing a psilocybin drug to treat depression, in this case, major depressive disorder, explains that Cybin is modifying the structure of psilocybin in order to optimize duration, efficacy, and speed of onset of effects, while also reducing unwanted side effects and the length of psychedelic experiences. Cybin's drug, called CYB001, is elaborated through a process called deuteration, which creates a new chemical entity. The hydrogen atom in a psilocybin compound is replaced with deuterium, a heavier version of hydrogen, thereby creating a stronger carbon bond. Drysdale explains:

"We then leverage molecules like this that have shown positive early efficacy, optimizing their pharmacokinetics, bioavailability and delivery. The result is an NCE (New Chemical Entity) that is stronger, more effective and more commercially viable."

#### Have Magic Mushrooms Caught Your Attention?

Magic mushrooms are truly fascinating organisms, and the therapeutic potential of psilocybin goes way beyond treating depression. If you want to learn more, read our previous blog post "Psilocybin Mushrooms and Their Promising Therapeutic Applications."

John A.  
GMM CO  
[email us here](#)

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