

JOINT EVENT

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Forensic Psychology & Criminology

3rd International Congress on
Addictive Behavior and Dual Diagnosis

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What does the international psychedelic science renaissance mean for dual diagnosis?

Over the last decade there has been an international psychedelic science renaissance. Investigators at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, UCLA, New York University and Imperial College London have embarked on studies that could be paradigm changing for psychiatry. These developments overturn a 30-year embargo on psychedelic research that followed political reactions to the 1960s counter-culture movement in the USA and elsewhere. 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) is showing promise for the treatment of refractory post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). For people who are unable to discuss their trauma, a key component of most psychotherapy, MDMA reduces trauma-associated anxiety while allowing reprocessing of the trauma and subsequent healing. This is significant, as while most medical treatments for PTSD provide symptomatic relief, they do not cure the disease. Meanwhile, an open-label trial of 15 people examining psilocybin-assisted psychotherapy for the treatment of tobacco addiction found 66% of participants remained abstinent at 12 month follow-up. Consequently, the team at Johns Hopkins University is initiating an RCT of psilocybin-assisted psychotherapy for smoking cessation involving 40 participants. Meanwhile, a proof-of-concept study has found that treatment of alcohol dependence with psilocybin-assisted psychotherapy yielded similarly impressive effects. This team at NYU is now undertaking an RCT of 180 people that includes fMRI scans. A study by Sessa is investigating the efficacy of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy with people experiencing substance use disorders that have co-morbid trauma. Such treatments have the potential to significantly increase the efficacy of treatments for people with dual diagnosis.

Biography

Stephen Bright has worked as a Psychologist in the Mental Health and AOD field for the past 15 years. He is currently a Senior Lecturer of Addiction at Edith Cowan University. His PhD is related to the public perceptions and media portrayal of AOD use and the implications of this for drug-related harm, including the rapid emergence of new psychoactive substances. He is a leading Australian voice on the role of drug policy on emerging drug trends such as synthetic cannabis and dark web marketplaces, in addition to psychedelic science. He is an Adjunct Research Fellow in Curtin's National Drug Research Institute.

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