

No link between psychedelics and mental health problems

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The use of psychedelics, such as LSD and magic mushrooms, does not increase a person's risk of developing mental health problems, according to an analysis of information from more than 135,000 randomly chosen people, including 19,000 people who had used psychedelics. The results are published today in *Journal of Psychopharmacology*.

Lancet Psychiatry will publish a companion letter to this study by Teri Krebs, "Protecting the human rights of people who use psychedelics."

Few or no harms

Clinical psychologist Pål-Ostrove; rjan Johansen (<http://www.EmmaSofia.org>) and neuroscientist Teri Krebs (Norwegian University of Science and Technology) used data from the US National Health Survey (2008-2011) to study the relationship between psychedelic drug use and psychological distress, depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, plans, and attempts. The researchers found no link.

Johansen and Krebs previous population study, which used data from 2001-2004, also failed to find evidence for a link between psychedelic use and mental health problems.

"Over 30 million US adults have tried psychedelics and there just is not much evidence of health problems," says Johansen.

"Drug experts consistently rank LSD and psilocybin mushrooms as much less harmful to the individual user and to society compared to alcohol and other controlled substances," adds Krebs. In contrast to alcohol, psychedelics are not addictive.

Possible benefits

Johansen and Krebs found that, on a number of measures, the use of psychedelic drugs is correlated with fewer [mental health problems](#).

"Many people report deeply meaningful experiences and lasting beneficial effects from using psychedelics," says Krebs. However, "Given the design of our study, we cannot exclude the possibility that use of psychedelics might have a negative effect on mental health for some individuals or groups, perhaps counterbalanced at a population level by a positive effect on mental health in others," adds Johansen.

Psychedelics and human rights

"With these robust findings, it is difficult to see how prohibition of psychedelics can be justified as a public health measure," Johansen argues. Krebs adds that the prohibition of psychedelics is also a human rights issue: "Concerns have been raised that the ban on use of psychedelics is a violation of the [human rights](#) to belief and spiritual practice, full development of the personality, and free-time and play."

More information: "Psychedelics not linked to mental health problems or suicidal behavior: A population study:"

[www.emmasofia.org/wp-content/u ... -behavior.pdf?115a76](http://www.emmasofia.org/wp-content/u...-behavior.pdf?115a76)

Provided by SAGE Publications

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