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Vermont Primary Care Provider Knowledge and Attitudes Regarding Psychedelics

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Vermont Primary Care Provider Opinions on Psychedelics in 2023
Cole Zweber, Josie Yalovitser, Lauren Tien, Mallory Stultz, Henry Mitchell, Jonah Levine, Elizabeth Cote, and Charles MacLean, MD
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INTRODUCTION
Psychedelic (“mind-manifesting”) compounds have been used by Indigenous communities for millennia.

1940s: Psychedelic research onset
1960s: Increased use in the Counterculture Movement, subsequent criminalization in the War on Drugs
1971: FDA Schedule I status restricts scientific study
2000s: Increased interest in psychedelics in academia, industry, and the law, both for treatment of health conditions and for spiritual exploration
2020s: States and cities enact laws to enable access to psychedelics

METHODS
• We developed a survey with 25 Likert scale items and 2 open-ended questions.
• The survey design was informed by a series of qualitative interviews from a previous study.
• The survey was distributed to all primary care providers practicing in Vermont.
• Survey data were analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics.
• Free text responses were reviewed and thematically organized.

RESULT

KNOWLEDGE & BELIEFS
Providers who correctly identified current regulatory status of psychedelics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Correct Identification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ketamine</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSD</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psilocybin</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ketamine</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCERNS
Percent of respondents who were moderately/very concerned about...

- Youth use: 71%
- Road safety: 61%
- Psychedelics being deleterious to one’s health: 17%

EDUCATION & RESEARCH

- Interested in receiving education regarding psychedelics: 77%
- Agree/strongly agree that research on the risks/benefits of psychedelic substances should be a high priority: 64%

KNOWLEDGE & ATTITUDES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance (Street Name)</th>
<th>Evidence for therapeutic effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ketamine (Special K)</td>
<td>Refractory depression ++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDMA (Ecstasy)</td>
<td>PTSD +++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psilocybin (Magic Mushrooms)</td>
<td>Anxiety +++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSD (Acid)</td>
<td>Addiction/Alcoholism ++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayahuasca</td>
<td>Anxiety +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GOAL: Assess knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs regarding psychedelics amongst Vermont Primary Care Providers

DISCUSSION
• Vermont primary care providers have knowledge gaps regarding the trajectory of psychedelic substances, and most are interested in further education.
• Although providers have specific concerns about safety, there is optimism that these substances have therapeutic potential.
• Research on the benefits and risks of psychedelics was rated as high priority, with public health concerns outweighing addiction risk, tolerability, and administration.
• Given the rapidly changing landscape and sweeping legislative changes, bridging the gap between state policy and clinician familiarity demands increased educational opportunities.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS
• Legislation has been proposed in Vermont
• Research on potential effect in pediatric populations
• Further research on clinical populations
• Next steps:
  o Provider education (Vermont Academic Detailing, UVM Project ECHO)

LIMITATIONS
• Selection bias – Survey participants were more likely to be informed
• Sample size

REFERENCES