



MDMA-ASSISTED THERAPY FOR TREATMENT-RESISTANT PTSD

INFORMATION SHEET

- MDMA is the abbreviation for 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine.
- MDMA is not a new medicine and was first synthesized in 1912 by Merck Pharmaceuticals by German chemist Anton Kollisch.
- MDMA was patented in 1914 and then was shelved and mostly forgotten until an American chemist, Alexander Shulgin, began to study it in 1976.
- Shulgin thought MDMA could perhaps be used to help people. He introduced MDMA to his friend psychologist Leo Zeff who then began treating some of his patients with it.
- MDMA was legally used in psychotherapy from 1977 until 1985 by an estimated 4,000 therapists and psychiatrists who reported that their patients were responding well, particularly those suffering from PTSD and the negative effects of trauma.
- “Rave culture” and the recreational use of MDMA began to garner negative attention in the media and as a result, MDMA was made illegal and placed in Schedule 1, the most restrictive classification for a drug which made it virtually impossible to continue researching its potential medicinal uses.
- Professionals that wanted to continue to help their patients with MDMA had to go “underground” and risk their livelihoods and possible jail time to provide this treatment.
- In the early 90s, UCLA researcher Charles Grob was able to get permission from the FDA to study the safety of MDMA in healthy volunteers which showed that with properly screened individuals, MDMA was well-tolerated with no adverse health effects.
- In 2002 a researcher published findings that apes given recreational doses of MDMA showed irreversible damage to the dopamine system in the brain. This helped solidify the public’s perception of MDMA as a dangerous drug of abuse. One year later there was a full retraction revealing that the apes had instead been given very high doses of methamphetamine, a known toxin to the dopamine system.
- The FDA’s Phase 2 studies were completed in 2016 and examined the effectiveness of using three doses of MDMA with a specialized therapy for the treatment of PTSD. One year after receiving treatment, 67% of patients no longer qualified for a PTSD diagnosis.
- The FDA’s Phase 3 studies are underway and should be completed by early 2023. In results published in May 2021, one month after receiving treatment, 67% of patients no longer had PTSD and 88% reported clinically meaningful reduction in symptoms.
- Go to pearlpsychedelicinstitute.org to learn about MDMA-assisted therapy for PTSD that we are doing in Waynesville!!