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Australian first research trial to explore use of psychedelics for alcohol use disorder

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Studying new ways to help people with alcohol use disorders



Researchers at the University of Sydney are embarking on an Australian first research trial into the use of psychedelics in combination with psychotherapy for the treatment of alcohol use disorder.

The trial builds on a growing body of innovative research on psychedelic medications for substance use disorders supported by the National Health and Medical Research Council, Medical Research Future Fund and pharmaceutical industry partners.

The University plans to conduct a randomised placebo-controlled Phase IIB trial of a novel synthetic formulation of the naturally occurring psychedelic, psilocybin, developed by Sydney-based company Woke Pharmaceuticals. The trial is designed to recruit participants with alcohol use disorder who are unresponsive to current therapies.

Psilocybin, the drug to be used in the trial, is a naturally occurring psychedelic prodrug produced by more than 200 fungi.

When used in combination with psychotherapy, a previous proof-of-concept study indicated that psilocybin may be effective for the treatment of people with alcohol dependence.

Subject to ethics approval, the University of Sydney trial will be run in partnership with the Sydney Local Health District (Royal Prince Alfred Hospital) where this treatment will be delivered. It will aim to examine the safety, tolerability, and proof-of-concept efficacy of the drug for the treatment of alcohol use disorder in Australia.