



The Michigan Poison and Drug Information Center issues notification about effects and risks of using psychedelic substances

Monday, Sept. 20, 2021

Michigan state Sen. Jeff Irwin (D-Washtenaw County) introduced a bill this month to decriminalize two psychedelic drugs. Last year a city ordinance in Ann Arbor decriminalized psychedelic drug use. Similar proposals are being considered to decriminalize psychedelics in other communities throughout the state.

The Michigan Poison and Drug Information Center at the Wayne State University School of Medicine wants to ensure that the public is informed of the risks associated with the use psychedelics.

Several of the substances have toxic effects and may cause significant illness resulting in hospitalization or death in people with underlying heart and neurological illnesses. The wide variation in the metabolic rate of consumption of these compounds places some people at high risk for drug and food interactions. Studies suggest that patients with mental health disorders who use psychedelics are more likely to suffer from self-destructive and suicidal thoughts or so-called “bad trips.” This manifests as fear, confrontational hallucinations, severe anxiety, confusion and paranoia. Although rare, death can occur with combined use of these substances and other agents, such as alcohol and certain prescription medications.

Symptoms associated with use of psilocybe cubensis, known as “magic mushrooms,” and other related species of mushrooms may include dilated pupils, confusion, dizziness, drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, fast heart rate and high blood pressure. Psychotropic effects may include hallucinations, euphoria, perceptual distortions and anxiety. Prolonged hallucinations and flashbacks have occurred months after use. Seizures, cardiopulmonary arrest and death have also occurred as a result of use.

Ayahuasca is a plant-based psychedelic containing the active ingredient dimethyltryptamine, or DMT. Ayahuasca also contains compounds known as monoamine oxidase inhibitors, or MAOIs, which prevent the breakdown of certain chemicals (including serotonin), foods and medications in the gut. Due to the presence of DMT and MAOIs in ayahuasca, individuals using anti-depressants such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors like fluoxetine (Prozac), citalopram (Celexa) and others, or those who use methylenedioxymethamphetamine, or MDMA, are at higher risk for adverse effects like seizures and cardiovascular toxicity. Use of ayahuasca with other medications used to treat attention deficit disorders, pain, weight loss, high blood pressure and other health conditions can result in severe adverse effects. Many foods and alcoholic beverages, such as beer and red wine, should not be consumed with ayahuasca.

Ibogaine is the most concerning drug of all of these substances. Ibogaine is a known heart toxin, and in high doses may cause nervous system cell death. People with pre-existing cardiac conditions are at higher risk of illness and sudden cardiac arrest with use of ibogaine. There are numerous cases of people developing abnormal heart rhythms requiring defibrillation and leading to sudden death.

The Michigan Poison and Drug Information Center at the Wayne State University School of Medicine is committed to providing the public with poison prevention information and education. Adults who choose to use recreational substances should be aware of the risks. Accidental consumption by a child of any substance intended for adult use can result in severe and life-threatening symptoms. Keep medication, alcohol and all recreational substances out of sight and reach of children.

To learn more, call the **Michigan Poison & Drug Information Center** at:

1-800-222-1222

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