

Psychedelic Drug Microdosing Practices: A Qualitative Netnographic Exploration

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Introduction: Recently, the practice of “microdosing” with psychedelic drugs has gained popularity. “Microdosing” is defined as taking a small amount of a psychedelic drug on a schedule to obtain psychological and physiological benefits. It is a relatively new and understudied concept, therefore no set guidelines exist on how to microdose. Consequently, people who microdose (PWM) utilise internet resources sources of microdosing guidance. The present study conducts a novel investigation of online microdosing guidance, enabling us to assess its safety and efficiency from a pharmaceutical perspective.

Method: We developed and used a unique netnographic approach to identify and characterise online microdosing guidance, particularly regarding doses, preparation methods, administration, storage, and harm reduction strategies. Medical databases, video websites, online forums, drug specific websites and forums, search engines, and social media websites were searched and relevant information was collated.

Results: 174 unique online resources were found. LSD and psilocybin mushrooms were the most common substances used by PWM. Preparation methods of LSD mostly involved volumetric dosing and cutting tabs, whereas psilocybin was mostly prepared by grinding mushroom material. Microdoses were often consumed orally every third day. Harm reduction strategies were mentioned by some, however there was considerable variation in such advice.

Discussions and Conclusions: The nascent nature of microdosing is apparent when examining the variety of guidance information discussed online. As research into microdosing continues and as online microdosing communities continue growing, it is imperative that high quality, safe information is readily available to PWM to follow the safest possible microdosing practices.

Implications for Practice or Policy: Further research into microdosing practices to evaluate their safety and efficacy is encouraged, as this may reduce potential harm to PWM and have implications for harm reduction policies surrounding psychedelic legislation.

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