

research in archetypal art therapy with **psilocybin**

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THIS STUDY is part of a research project conducted by Rick J. Strassman M.D. at the University of New Mexico Clinical Research Center entitled, "Human Psychopharmacology and Neuroendocrinology of Psilocybin." In this study, volunteers will be administered the Ulman Personality Assessment Procedure (UPAP) and a Multi Medium Art Studio Situation (MMASS). In addition, volunteers will be interviewed and asked to describe how their psychological information was processed and perceived visually through the art they created during periods of normal activity, and after they have received a placebo or various doses of psilocybin.

Hypothesis and specific aims

This study seeks to determine whether, and to what extent, that conscious and unconscious psychological material can be recognized in the art of volunteers. It is hypothesized that differences and correlations will be evident between the administration of small, medium, and large doses of psilocybin, and placebo.

Background

In preparation for this project, this investigator met with experienced researchers in the field, Betty Eisner and Oscar Janiger, to explore their work and archives. Eisner's 1964 study of the use of LSD in group psychotherapy utilized art production, with volunteers given specific drawing material while under the influence of LSD. Janiger's 1955 study of LSD and creativity (Janiger, 1989) also used a range of art materials and had particular directives regarding subject matter.

A review of the literature on art and hallucinogens suggests that research methodologies placed limits on at least one aspect of the art process or limited interpretations of the potential aspects of meaning (Grof, 1975; Krippner, 1985; Di Leo and Kellogg, 1977). These initial studies have been valuable and useful, with researchers agreeing that art is a powerful tool to communicate hallucinogenic experiences. No studies reviewed have indicated that psilocybin or an Archetypal approach was used.

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Archetypal Art Therapy (AAT) is a new approach in therapy that requires licensing and accreditation with the National Art Therapy Association. It has been in use in psychiatric, medical, and penal settings since the 1980's. The AAT masters program at UNM is the only one of its kind out of all the accredited university art therapy programs in the United States.

AAT is a modality that engages people to create a piece of art and to reflect upon that process of creation metaphorically. Hillman (1983, p.3) believes that metaphor is the "primary and irreducible language" of the archetype. Through the experience of AAT, people are able to gain insight, problem-solve, and communicate through the language of art, in ways that verbal therapies do not utilize. Art provides a variety of safe and contained media to explore psychological material even if one lacks traditional art training. AAT is far-reaching in its multi-cultural benefits (McCoghey, 1986), because art is a universal language that can be spoken by any population.

Study design

This study will begin with the administration of the Ulman Personality Assessment Procedure (UPAP), devised by Eleanor Ulman in 1965. The UPAP will first be administered several days prior to the volunteer's initial experimental session with psilocybin (or placebo). The UPAP procedure involves prescribed art materials and specific instructions. The UPAP allows the researcher to assess the psychological environment of the volunteer, their decision making process, ability to

follow instructions, and ability to relax defenses and work with unconscious material. This study will contribute new data to an ongoing study of the UPAP, and provide an initial indication of volunteers' attitudes towards the art process.

After the administration of the UPAP, the volunteer will then be introduced to the Multi Medium Art Studio Situation (MMASS), which has been devised by the investigator. The MMASS is an art studio with a broad range of art materials which will be accessible to the volunteers throughout the study. In the preliminary session, volunteers will be introduced to all media and be given the opportunity to ask questions about the technical aspects of the media. Then, using the medium of their choice, they will be asked to represent an image of their choice from among those previously created for the UPAP. After its completion, they will be asked to give a written or verbal account of the session using techniques of metaphor that will be explained to them by the investigator. The AAT process requires that the volunteer "stick to the image" and describe only what is confirmed by it, yet not impose limits on its interpretation. This can help to ensure that only the material in the image created during a session will be reflected upon. Once the volunteer is familiar with the MMASS, the introductory session is concluded.

On several subsequent days, volunteers will be administered various doses of psilocybin or placebo. At the second and fourth hour after administration of the test drug, they will be asked to try to create a work of art using the art studio media. After the fourth hour, if the volunteer has not yet created any art, they will be reminded hourly to try to do so. At least eight hours after the administration of the psilocybin or placebo, the volunteers will be asked to participate in a brief interview.

A hermeneutic methodology will be applied to all imagery and its relationship to entopic phenomena (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1972; Lewis-Williamson and Dowson, 1988, 1989; Kellogg, 1978, Edwards, 1986) that occurs in the art of subjects. Entopic, from the Greek, means "within vision". Horowitz defines entopic

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phenomena as "images experienced as intrapsychic, related to perception, since they arise from stimulation of the optic structures within the eye or in some portion of the optic neural circuits as they travel to higher brain centers" (1978, p.25). One hypothesis of this study is that entopic constructs carry archetypal information of the personal and collective unconscious. The interviews conducted with the subjects will note if entopic imagery is mentioned, and determine, through the subject's reports, if it is meaningful or relevant.

Data will be compiled from these reports into statistical formulations. Quantitative findings will be analyzed comparing small, intermediate, and large doses of psilocybin, and placebo.

In addition to art production and various physiological and psychological measurements, Dr. Strassman's experiment will analyze volunteers' verbal responses in the form of an extended monologue that will be recorded during the psilocybin session. This has fascinating implications for the AAT study because it will record what may arise verbally parallel to the process of creating art. Ultimately, the use of the Archetypal method will give the volunteers in the study a unique way to reflect upon and communicate about their experiences with psilocybin. Hopefully this study will also draw attention to the field of AAT and demonstrate that AAT can be a useful adjunct to current research methodologies. ■

Acknowledgements

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