



MAPS

BULLETIN OF THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY ASSOCIATION FOR PSYCHEDELIC STUDIES

clinical trials and tribulations

THE SCENT of promise is in the air. Dr. Grob's Phase I MDMA research (p.2) is moving forward at a steady pace, laying the groundwork for future studies using MDMA in the treatment of end-stage cancer patients. Dr. Gasser's crucial follow-up study of Swiss patients treated with MDMA and LSD (p.3) demonstrates that psychedelic drugs can indeed be used to catalyze profoundly healing experiences. The MDMA neurotoxicity debate, outlined in articles by Dr. Ricaurte and Dr. McCann (p.8) and Lamont Granquist (p.10), indicates to me that the potential neurotoxic risk to subjects who volunteer for human studies using therapeutic amounts of pure MDMA is substantially outweighed by the potential benefits of the research. Dr. Strassman's Phase I DMT and psilocybin research (p.14) is also moving forward, and a study of the use of psilocybin in the treatment of AIDS and cancer patients is being planned. Howard Lotsof's comprehensive review of ibogaine research (p.16) presents a compelling case for further studies into the use of ibogaine to treat substance abusers. With MAPS' support, Dr. Evgeny Krupitsky, the Russian scientist who conducted research into the use of ketamine to treat alcoholics, is currently traveling throughout the United States, discussing the possibility of having his pioneering work replicated. ■ Several important conferences have also built support for the continuation of psychedelic research. The 2nd International Congress for the Study of Modified States of Consciousness was held in October, 1994 in Lerida, Spain (p.28). A January, 1995 meeting at Esalen Institute brought together all United States scientists with FDA approval to conduct human studies with psychedelic drugs. Also in attendance were National Institutes of Health scientists, drug policy experts, drug abuse treatment providers, and authorities in the field of psychedelic research. The consensus of the meeting was that psychedelic research should be protected and carefully expanded. An audiotape of the public session of that meeting is available (p.52). ■ This issue of the newsletter also contains a report on the 1994 Telluride Mushroom conference (p.33) and the Lollapalooza tour (p.39). A fascinating new book by Myron Stoloroff is discussed by Ann and Sasha Shulgin (p.41). This newsletter also contains the MAPS Forum (p.43), announcements (p.51), and membership information (p.52). ■ Throughout history, psychedelics have been used for spiritual purposes. Czech President Václav Havel gave a stirring speech at Stanford University in September 1994, focusing on the need for people all over the world to have transcendent spiritual experiences (p.44). In my view, President Havel's talk underscores the importance of the establishment of legal contexts for the spiritual uses of psychedelics, one of MAPS' long-term goals. ■ Despite progress with psychedelic research, Dr. Abrams' MAPS-assisted struggle to obtain legal permission to conduct medical research into the use of smoked marijuana to treat the AIDS Wasting Syndrome is still underway. The efforts of those MAPS members who wrote letters and contacted their elected officials have been quite fruitful and have resulted in letters of support from several senators and representatives (p.45). A governmental decision about Dr. Abrams' research is expected soon. ■ For the first time, MAPS has received a bequest (back cover). It was my privilege to meet Eric Bass shortly before he died, and to learn that we shared common goals. MAPS has also received a \$25,000 donation from an anonymous philanthropist who gave an additional \$25,000 to Drs. Mash and Sanchez-Ramos at the U. of Miami, Florida to support their human studies with ibogaine. To ensure that these one-time gifts can be directed toward research, your membership donations are needed to support MAPS' educational and advocacy work. I hope that this special edition of the MAPS Bulletin inspires you to continue supporting MAPS and to mention MAPS to potential new members. With your participation, we can continue to work together to make a major contribution to the field of psychedelic research. *Rick Doblin, MAPS President. March, 1995.*