

K E T A M I N E U P D A T E

underlying psychological mechanisms of
ketamine psychedelic therapy (KPT) in
the treatment of **alcohol** dependencyEvgeny **Krupitsky**, MD, Ph.D.

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THE MAIN PURPOSE OF OUR next study of the underlying mechanisms of ketamine psychedelic therapy (KPT) is to discern the subtle changes in our patients' systems of values, life purposes and meaning of life as caused by their KPT sessions. The results of our previous studies have been described in previous MAPS Newsletters.¹

To assess quantitatively such a subtle matter we decided to use three questionnaires which were translated into Russian several years ago: the Questionnaire of Significant Life Values and Purposes (QSLVP) based on the M. Rokeach Test of Human Values; the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) developed in the United States by Shostrom to measure patients' self-actualization; and the Locus of Control Questionnaire (LCQ) based on the Internal- External Scale developed by J.B. Rotter to estimate the attitude of the patient towards life events (whether the patient feels responsible for his life events or whether he feels that just external circumstances determine his life). We decided to treat 30 patients with KPT and investigate them with these tests. We also decided to investigate at least 7-10 out of the 30 patients with verbal and nonverbal (color) repertory grids (Kelly matrices) to assess changes in the attitudes of our alcoholic patients towards themselves from the stand-point of values and life purpose. We administered this battery of psychological tests twice: before KPT and several days after the psychedelic session.

Progress report

We began this work at the end of April and have already treated and investigated 22 patients. We expect to have this study completed in October 1995. According to our preliminary impression, the QSLVP and LCQ tests are working out well, and preliminary results are promising. These tests demonstrate positive changes in the patients' life values and internalization of the locus of control, meaning that patients are getting more independent and assuming responsibility about themselves and their futures. At the same time, POI is not working very well: we haven't noted significant changes, perhaps because our patients do not know anything about Shostrom's theory of self-actualization. Therefore we've decided to explain Shostrom's paradigm to our patients before testing with POI to make POI statements more understandable to them. We hope it will work better after that. We also hope this study will enable us to come to a better understanding of how KPT works for the treatment of alcohol dependency and why KPT is effective.

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1. MAPS Newsletters. 1992, V.3, No. 4, pp.24-28 and 1995, V.5, No. 4, pp.6-8.