



MAPS

BULLETIN OF THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY ASSOCIATION FOR PSYCHEDELIC STUDIES

Budding Research

SPRING IS A TIME OF NEW BEGINNINGS. Though it's true that I'm constitutionally prone to optimism, even people with a more pessimistic frame of mind may agree that some promising seeds have been planted in the field of psychedelic and marijuana research. • In Washington State, the inspired efforts of Ms. Joanna McKee, medical marijuana patient and advocate, have begun to sprout (p. 68). Ms. McKee coordinated the successful campaign that persuaded the Washington State Legislature to pass a bill that Governor Mike Lowry signed on March 30, 1996 allocating \$130,000 to study the medical use of marijuana. Research funded by MAPS into the attitudes of the people of the State of Washington concerning the medical use of marijuana played a role in this victory. • Another reason for hope involves the proposed scientific study to be conducted by Dr. Donald Abrams, UC San Francisco, to research the medical use of marijuana in people suffering from the AIDS wasting syndrome. With support from MAPS and the Drug Policy Foundation, Dr. Abrams has submitted a grant revised application to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for peer review in the grant cycle beginning May 1, 1996 (p. 67). The NIH grant application represents the persistent continuation of a four year collaboration between MAPS and Dr. Abrams to obtain federal permission to conduct medical marijuana research. • Also promising is a show of government support for the use of a psychedelic to treat alcoholism. The National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse (NIAAA) has awarded a one-year grant to Dr. Evgeny Krupitsky of St. Petersburg, Russia to conduct studies into the use of ketamine in alcoholics at the West Haven Veterans Administration, affiliated with Yale Medical School, (p. 19). On April 23, 1996, Dr. Krupitsky and his family arrived in the US. MAPS funded Dr. Krupitsky's 1995 visit to the US which enabled him to make the contacts necessary to obtain the NIAAA grant. • The French government and European Community have funded research into the use of ayahuasca to treat cocaine addiction. The research is taking place at Takiwasi in Peru (p. 24). • In an inspiring example of optimism in action, two grant applications for psychedelic research have been submitted to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). Deborah Mash, Ph.D. and Dr. Juan Sanchez-Ramos, both of U. of Miami Medical School, requested funds to complete their Phase I ibogaine safety study (p. 18). To strengthen their proposal, they used pilot data funded in large part by a \$25,000 grant from MAPS. • Dr. Charles Grob and Russell Poland, Ph.D., both of Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, requested funds to expand their Phase I MDMA safety studies to which MAPS has contributed \$21,000. The outcome of these two grant applications will be known sometime during the summer. Dr. Grob is now preparing to apply to the FDA to conduct a study to be funded by MAPS into the use of MDMA in the treatment of pain and distress in cancer patients (p. 6). • The European College for the Study of Consciousness conference in Heidelberg generated even more reasons for optimism, as did the speech given there by Dr. Albert Hofmann who had just turned 90 (p. 46). In response to a need for some outside support for ground-breaking studies, MAPS has made a commitment to donate \$15,000 to a pilot study in Switzerland into the therapeutic use of MDMA, \$10,000 to a pilot study in Germany into the therapeutic use of a psychedelic yet to be determined, and up to \$8,500 for d-fenfluramine challenge tests and functional MRI studies of MDMA users in England (p. 7). These studies are expected to start in late 1996 or early 1997. European studies currently underway include research in Switzerland (p. 8) and in Germany (p. 10). • Amidst all these new beginnings in research, my wife and I await this spring the most miraculous beginning of all, another child. As I think of the world she will enter, I feel deep gratitude for the over 1,000 MAPS members who have joined in MAPS' struggle to heal the world that we inhabit and that our children will inherit. I hope we all find that this Spring bears fruit in the fields of love and work. Rick Doblin, MAPS President, May 1996. •