

Psychedelics in PERIL: An Ethics Analysis of Psychedelic Industry-Healthcare Relationships

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Disclosures

- I receive funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to conduct research related to cannabis industry influences on health and mental health.
- I am an Affiliate Researcher of the UHN Nikean Psychedelic Psychotherapy Research Centre.
- I have **no** financial interests or relationships with commercial entities such as pharmaceutical organizations or medical device companies.



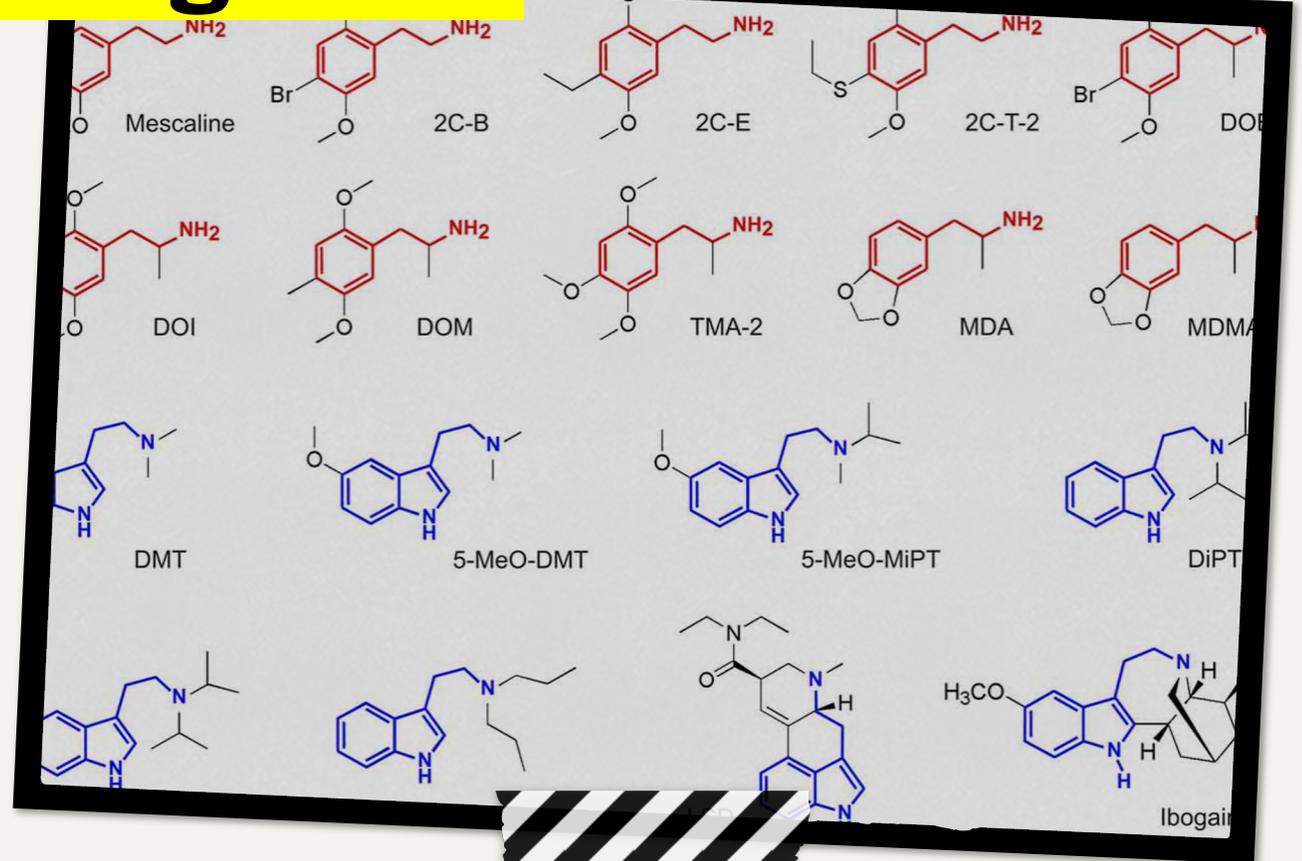
Outline

- Background
- The Emergence of ‘Big Psychedelics’
- Academic and Healthcare Relationships with Industry
- Hypothetical Case Study: PERIL Framework and Ethics Analysis



- Psychedelic plants have been used by Indigenous communities for millennia.
- Psychedelics have a long history with counterculture and underground movements.
- Psychedelics include psilocybin, lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), mescaline, ayahuasca, ketamine, and 3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA, i.e., 'ecstasy').

Background



The Emergence of 'Big Psychedelics'

- Psychedelic research for mental health and substance use disorders goes back at least to the 1950s, but largely prohibited since the 1970s.
- Research in psychedelics is enjoying a renaissance in psychiatry.
- Market value predicted to be worth ~\$10.75B USD by 2027.
- Appears to be following Big Pharma model (e.g., patents and prescribed medications) vs. Big Cannabis (broad retail availability).

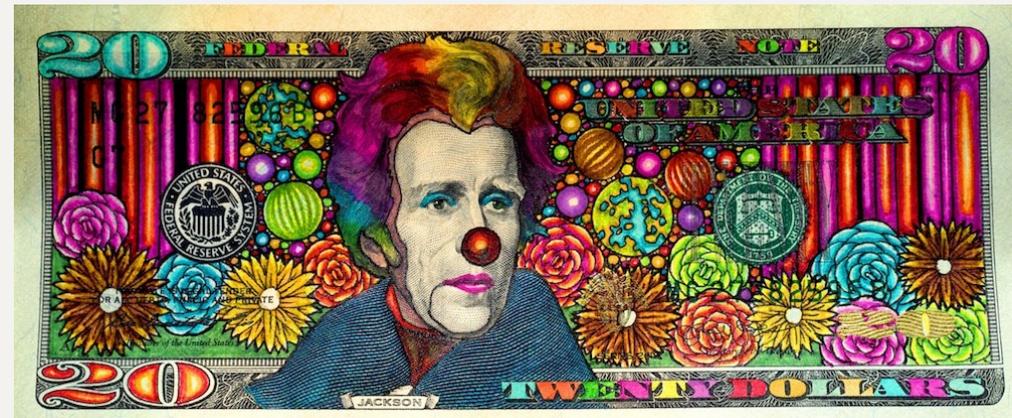


Image by Josh Usmani, from *Altered Value* (2018).



Academic and Healthcare Relationships with Industry

- Industries such as Big Tobacco, Big Food, and Big Pharma frequently seek out partnerships with academic researchers, healthcare professionals, and institutions.
- A deep literature explores corporate influence on scientific research, its ethical implications, and impact on population health.
- Relationships with for-profit industries can provide much-needed financial support, but also creates risks (e.g., conflicts of interest).



Hypothetical Case

Study

A for-profit psychedelic company wants to provide financial support to a psychedelic research and clinical centre at a large academic hospital for scientist salaries and research operating costs. The group's leadership wants to know whether it is ethically permissible to accept money from this industry source, and whether it is possible to minimize the harms that this potential relationship may generate.



<https://psymposia-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/psychedelic-trade-secrets.jpg>



PERIL

Framework

Purpose: whether the primary mission of the recipient organization (e.g., academic hospital) conflicts with the primary purpose of the sponsor (e.g., for-profit company).

Extent: the degree to which the recipient (e.g., researcher) relies on funds, for example as salary support.

Relevant Harm: the degree of harm generated by consumption of the product.

Identifier: observable cues that signal the existence of an industry-funding relationship (e.g., branding).

Link: the directness of the link between the sponsor and decision-making.



PERIL

Framework:

Risks

- **Ethical Risk:** when a person or organization accepts money in order to achieve good from a source that does harm.
- **Contributory Risk:** the act of accepting money either directly or indirectly contributes to the sales of the product.
- **Reputational Risk:** A person or an organization that accepts industry funding does so at the risk of reputational impacts from negative perceptions of stakeholders.
- **Governance Risk:** Governance (or independence) is at risk when industry has a greater say in the direction of an organization than its owners.
- **Neutrality Risk:** when industry relationships contribute to reductions in the level of objectivity or neutrality regarding a company and its products.
- **Relationship Risk:** the various ways in which a decision to accept industry funding can negatively affect relationships both inside and outside an organization.



Extremely High Risk	High Risk	Moderate Risk	Low Risk	Very Low Risk
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		PERIL Indicators				
		Purpose	Extent	Relevant Harm	Identifier	Link
RISKS	Ethical					
	Contributory					
	Reputational					
	Governance					
	Neutrality					
	Relationship					
	Democratic					

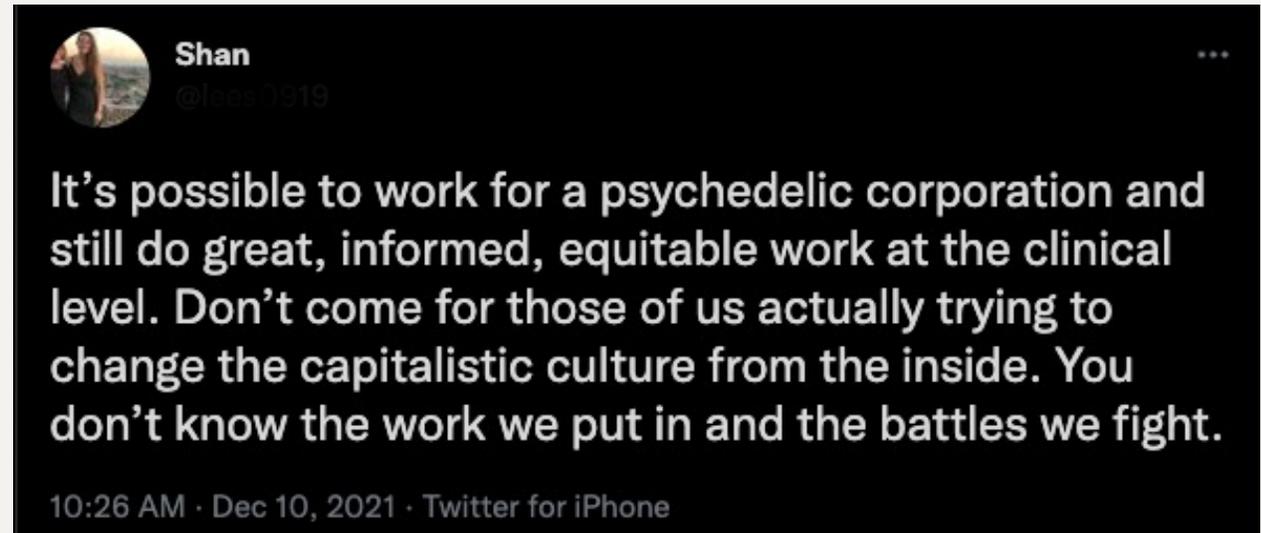


Risks	Context	PERIL Indicators	Probable Outcome
Ethical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Centre accepts money from a for-profit psychedelic company with the goal to conduct research, provide patient care, and education. 	Medium clash of Purpose, Extent, and Identifier of for-profit companies whose primary interest is profit where the primary interest of the Centre is patient care.	Moderate risk
Contributory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The funder benefits financially from a visible relationship with a psychedelic centre at a high profile academic hospital. 	Strong clash of Identifiers and Purpose in being linked to a for-profit company.	Moderate risk
Reputational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level of public and professional concern that the Centre's funding comes from a for-profit company. 	High levels of Identifier, Link, and Extent may affect stakeholders' (e.g., patients, families, clinicians, learners) ability to place trust in the Centres' ability to place patient welfare as of primary importance.	High risk
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a disproportionately high percentage of the funding comes from an industry donor, it may have a disproportionate influence on the Centre's activities. 	Extremely high levels of Extent and high levels of Identifier and Link may compromise the Centre's leadership to act autonomously; The Centre's obligation to act in the interest of the public's health at may be unduly influenced by the interests of industry.	High risk
Neutrality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May affect the ability of the Centre's researchers, educators, and clinicians to provide services that are not shaped by industry interests. Could also affect the ability of learners, patients, and families to place trust in the Centre's ability to provide care that prioritizes their interests. Centre staff may be in a conflict when advocating for public policy that is independent from industry funding. 	Extremely high levels of Extent and Link , and high risk of Identifier and Purpose , may considerably affect the Centre's ability to remain neutral in all of its activities.	High to Extremely High Risk
Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry funding, no matter the extent, is likely to affect professional relationships with colleagues. Other relationships that may be at stake include clinical relationships with patients and families as well as learners. 	Strong clashes of Extent, Identifier and Link , may lead to strained or potentially cessation of professional relationships with colleagues inside and outside of the host organization.	High risk
Democratic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The continued establishment/legitimizing of for-profit psychedelic clinics may contribute to the erosion of publicly-funded healthcare in Canada, and continued under-funding of mental health care. An industry funder may strongly oppose members of the Centre advocating for policy changes (e.g., national pharmacare) that may go against the industry funders interest in for-profit medications. 	Strong clashes of Extent, Identifier and Link , and high risk of Purpose . These clashes may affect the public's trust in the Centre to not be motivated by profit; pressure from the industry funder to not participate in educational or policy efforts to advocate for publicly-funded mental health care and pharmacotherapy.	High Risk



Summary

- PERIL is an approach for methodical deliberation on financial relationships with industry sources.
- Analysis may differ if considering e.g., named research chair or named centre or type of industry source.
- Level of analysis is at the individual/organizational level – does not address underlying structural realities of capitalist influence on health.



Josiah Hesse

Sun 12 Dec 2021 07:00 GMT

‘This isn’t the 60s again’: psychedelics business takes off amid culture clash

Experts fear if psychedelics fall exclusively into the hands of big pharma the industry will follow the same path as legal marijuana, making the rich richer



Thank You

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