

The monumental stupidity of the failed war on drugs

By Mike Krieger, [Liberty Blitzkrieg blog](#), from Zerohedge, 25 August 2016

Whenever an irrational and inhumane law remains on the books far longer than any thinking person would consider appropriate, there's usually one reason behind it: money.

Unsurprisingly, the continued federal prohibition on marijuana and its absurd classification as a Schedule 1 drug is no exception. Thankfully, a recent study published in the journal *Health Affairs* shows us exactly why pharmaceutical companies are one of the leading voices against medical marijuana. It has nothing to do with healthcare and everything to do with corporate greed.

– From last month's article: [The Real Reason Pharma Companies Hate Medical Marijuana \(It Works\)](#)

This isn't my typical kind of article. Normally, I'd include something like this in my links post, but as I continued reading this piece it became apparent this is one of the most fascinating things I've read all year.

What follows are excerpts from the *Wired* article, [Would You Take LSD to Give You a Boost at Work? WIRED Takes a Trip Inside the World of Microdosing](#). I strongly suggest reading the entire thing.

It's 7am on a sunny Friday in a shared house in the sleepy [San Francisco](#) neighbourhood of Richmond. Flatmates buzz in and out of the kitchen as Lily (not her real name), a publicist for several start-ups, sits down with cup of tea and a credit-card-sized bag of dried magic mushrooms.

The 28-year-old breaks up the caps and stems and places them into a herb grinder. She then scoops the pulverised mixture into empty gel pill capsules, weighing each one on a tiny scale. Once finished, she pops one of the capsules into her mouth and washes it down with PG Tips. She's now ready to start her working day.

"It helps me think more creatively and stay focused," she says. "I manage my stress with ease and am able to keep my perspective healthy in a way that I was unable to before."

Lily is one of many young professionals in San Francisco and beyond experimenting with "microdosing": taking small quantities of psychedelic drugs – typically LSD or psilocybin mushrooms – every few days in the hope of improving their performance at work. In small amounts, say, a tenth of a full dose, users don't experience a consciousness-altering "trip", but instead report improvements in concentration and problem solving, as well as a reduction in anxiety.

Proponents *WIRED* has spoken to – including software engineers, biologists and mathematicians – say that it induces a "flow state", aids lateral thinking and encourages more empathetic interpersonal relations.

Albert Hoffman, who synthesised lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD's full title) in 1938, and who took what is considered the first intentional LSD trip in 1943, microdosed throughout the last couple of his decades of his life (he died in 2008). The father of psychedelics, who lived to be 102, found consuming LSD in small amounts clarified his thinking, according to Dr James Fadiman, a long-time friend.

A Reddit forum dedicated to the practice has grown its subscriber base from 1,600 at the start of 2015 to almost 7,500 in mid-June 2016. Google search volumes for the term "microdosing" have grown at a similar rate. Although WIRED found no completed clinical studies looking specifically at microdoses, Fadiman has been carrying out his own research by collecting anecdotal reports from volunteers who self-administer the drugs.

Fadiman offers guidance to participants on how often to dose and, in return, asks them to keep a journal of observations. He started collecting these reports in 2010, following the advice of friend Albert Hoffman, who described microdosing as the most under-researched area of psychedelics.

The high-pressure startup culture of the Bay Area leads many participants to view their bodies and brains as machines to be optimised using all of the tools available – meditation, yoga, Soylent, intermittent fasting, so-called "smart drugs" (including off-label ADHD and narcolepsy meds), microdosed psychedelics and legal nootropics.

The trend for using "smart drugs" can be traced back to schools, where Ritalin and Adderall prescriptions are rife, explains Anjan Chatterjee, a professor of neurology at the University of Pennsylvania. Children even at preschool age find themselves in competitive environments with dense schedules of study, tutoring, music lessons and sport.

Those who aren't already prescribed ADHD medication can buy it with ease; a series of surveys suggest that around 20 per cent of US college students have abused prescription stimulants. It's something Lily, who has been prescribed ADHD medication since she was six, can relate to. At university she would share her prescription with friends seeking help focusing on assignments – something that she continued when she entered the working world. "It's what fuels not just the tech community but any millennial trying to work really hard and make it," she says.

At the start of her career working in a tech startup, she found Adderall useful. "It helped me launch a company. We went from three cities to over 30 in six months. I felt like a rockstar but I was being an asshole," she says. Lily started to research microdosing psychedelics after experiencing unpleasant side effects from the amphetamine-based drug. "My heart would be racing when I took it, and when I didn't I'd experience withdrawal and feel really dumb – like my brain was slowing down."

Even though magic mushrooms and LSD are illegal in many countries, Lily views them as safer than her legal meds. Not only are the doses small and infrequent, she has found no evidence that psychedelics are physically addictive. “I don’t think we’re going to find out that microdosing fucks up your liver,” she says.

Lily still takes her ADHD medication, but microdosing magic mushrooms has allowed her to substantially reduce her dose. “In a perfect world I don’t want to take Adderall at all,” she says. Lily’s case highlights how inconsistent policymaking around drugs can be. **It’s fine for six-year-olds to be prescribed amphetamines, but it’s illegal for adults to turn on, tune in and drop out.**

Well yeah, one of them makes drug companies a lot of money, and the other doesn’t.

“As a society, we’re medieval in how we classify substances,” says Woo. “Some compounds are prescription-only, some are readily available, and some are illegal. And the classification is pretty arbitrary if we really dig into their potency, addictive potential and harm risks to self and society.”

As a society, we are medieval in all sorts of ways. The global financial system also comes to mind.

In London, 34-year-old Blake (not his real name) works at a mobile startup as a software developer. He has been microdosing on and off since October 2015. He takes tabs of LSD, also bought on the Dark Net, from an online dispensary known as Nucleus Market for around £5 per tab. He divides each tab into ten, taking one dose in the morning, once or twice a week.

“It makes me work in such a focused way,” he says. “It gets your brain out of its regular grooves and helps you snap out of unproductive trains of thought.” It’s part of a range of techniques he uses to optimise his mental prowess, including playing instruments, exercising and brain games. “I try to get as good as I can at everything I do. It’s a natural attribute of many software engineers, especially when it comes to optimising mental activities,” he says.

When he was preparing a proposal for his masters thesis he set aside time to take the larger dose and try and visualise ideas. “My mind became a supercomputer. It allowed me to visualise ideas, shuffle them, put them into multiple combinations,” he explains. Alex says that he’s noticed a marked improvement in the feedback from his supervisor, who is none the wiser. “Maybe I could have got to the same result on my own, but it comes faster with the drug.” The benefits aren’t restricted to work, but spill out into the rest of his life. “It makes me more happy and social,” he says.

Blake agrees: “I listen to people more, I have an appreciation for simple things, and an inability to eat unhealthy food. Looking at fried stuff can be repulsive.”

Of course, like with everything else in life, moderation is probably an intelligent strategy.

Fadiman’s research revealed other side effects: “Several people reported uncomfortable sweating on dose day, but they continued dosing. And two subjects reported increased anxiety. One person reported more migraines.”

Furthermore, we don't really understand the long-term impact of taking these drugs every few days. David Nichols carried out an experiment in 2011 in which he gave rats doses of 0.08 to 0.16mg/kg of LSD every other day for three months. Over time the animals became aggressive and hyperactive, showing behaviours that resemble psychosis in humans, brought about by changes in the circuitry to the brain.

“Using these drugs once a month is one thing. Using them every day, I'm not sure they are innocuous,” Nichols says. “They may bring about subtle behavioural and hormonal changes that we don't yet fully understand.”

Fadiman dismisses this study, arguing that no-one ever takes psychedelics daily for three months and that if individuals don't feel as though their microdose is beneficial, they should stop. However, drug charities are more cautious. Although there's currently no evidence that LSD and magic mushrooms do any long-term damage to the body or directly cause long-term psychological damage, in large doses they can lead to unpleasant hallucinations, flashbacks and exacerbate pre-existing mental health problems.

Now here's where things get really interesting...

The study that has captured the attention of today's microdosers is one that took place in the summer of 1966, at a research facility in Menlo Park, led by a then 27-year-old Jim Fadiman.

The question he set out to answer was whether psychedelic drugs could help solve hard science problems. Volunteers for the study had to be dealing with a problem – something that could be measured, built, proven or manufactured – that they'd been stuck on for at least three months. Twenty-seven men, including engineers, architects, mathematicians, a psychologist and a furniture designer, signed up.

Each participant was given 200 milligrams of mescaline – the equivalent of 100 micrograms of LSD – and left to listen to classical music with their eyes closed for a couple of hours while the drug kicked in. Then, they were let loose on their problems.

The results were startling. There were breakthroughs or partial solutions to 40 out of the 44 problems the volunteers were collectively grappling with.

“It's hard to estimate how long this problem might have taken without the psychedelic agent,” reported one scientist who took part in the trial. “But it was the type of problem that might have never been solved. It would have taken a great deal of effort and racking of brains to arrive at what seemed to come more easily during the session.”

Tangible innovations to emerge shortly after the psychedelic experience include a mathematical theorem for NOR gate circuits; a new design for a vibratory microtome; a space probe experiment to measure solar properties; a technical improvement to the magnetic recorder; a new conceptual model of a photon; and a linear electron accelerator beam-steering device.

Research came to a standstill as the US government classified psychedelic drugs as Schedule 1 substances, the most tightly controlled. Nixon's subsequent war on drugs whipped up moral outrage among the socially conservative. **This stigmatised psychedelics, causing funding for research to dry up, leading to a 40-year interruption to scientific advancement in the field.**

“This is the worst censorship of science in the history of the world... since the dark ages. It's worse than the Catholic Church banning the telescope in 1616,” says David Nutt, who is widely known in the UK for being sacked from his role as the government's chief drug advisor in 2009, after claiming ecstasy was safer than horse riding.

The U.S. government. Protecting the American people from creativity and scientific progress. Why am I not surprised.

The article ends by getting to the crux of the issue.

The logistics of researching microdoses are more challenging. With full-dose experiments, human participants are kept in a controlled environment with access to medical professionals and a sitter who stays with them at all times. A study on microdosing would involve, in theory, administering a Schedule 1 drug to volunteers before sending them home – a tough challenge for risk-averse institutional review boards.

Compounding the issue is the fact that LSD was discovered so long ago that it's off-patent. If it were to be commercialised today, it would be a less profitable, generic drug. “A pharma company needs to figure out how to make an obscene profit – that's what gets their attention. The problem is that these drugs are not addicting and you don't need to take them very often,” Fadiman says.

If this article isn't enough to convince you of the **monumental stupidity of the failed “war on drugs,”** I suggest you read the following:

[Federal Judge of 17 Years Repents – Compares Damage Done by “War on Drugs” to Destruction of World War II](#)

[The Real Reason Pharma Companies Hate Medical Marijuana \(It Works\)](#)

[How NSA Surveillance Was Birthed from the Drug War – The DEA Tracked Billions of Phone Calls Pre 9/11](#)

Meanwhile, over at the FDA...

[NYU Professor Uncovers How the FDA Systematically Covers Up Fraud and Misconduct in Drug Trials](#)

[Fraud Alert: FDA Allowed Drugs with Fraudulent Testing to Remain on the Market](#)

[The FDA is Caught Spying on its Employees and Creating an “Enemies List”](#)

[And you wonder why society is so completely messed up?](#)