

THE BECKLEY FOUNDATION

WORKING AT THE FRONTIERS OF NEUROSCIENTIFIC RESEARCH



ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Beckley Foundation was set up by Amanda Feilding in 1998 as a charitable trust that initiates, directs and supports a multi-disciplinary programme of scientific studies into the potential benefits and risks of practices used to alter conscious states, and into how this knowledge may be used to develop new treatments for physical and mental disorders.

The Foundation has been at the forefront of opening the doors to scientific research into how psychoactive substances work, and how they can be used as tools, not only for the improvement of the human condition, but also to learn more about consciousness itself. We are in the process of investigating the many possible clinical applications, including their potential as valuable aids for psychotherapy.

SCIENTIFIC OBJECTIVES

To investigate:

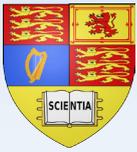
- the neurophysiology underlying the effects of meditation and different psychoactive substances; and the correlation of the brain-imaging findings with subjective experience
 - the potential benefits of psychoactive substances in medicine, psychotherapy and neuroscience
 - the different strains and composition of cannabis, and the relationship between these factors on the one hand, and potential harms and medical applications on the other
 - how best to regulate the widespread use of psychoactive substances in order to minimise harms and optimise benefits.
- in 2009, establishing the *Beckley Foundation/Imperial College Psychedelic Research Programme*. This programme gained the first approvals to study a psychedelic in the UK in modern times, and the first ever to use fMRI and MEG brain-imaging technologies to study how psychedelics affect cerebral circulation and brain functioning. Our research has produced outstanding results, including i) the discovery of a potential new treatment for depression, which is being tested in a clinical trial funded by the UK's Medical Research Council; and ii) new neuroscientific explanations of why MDMA and psilocybin can be valuable aids to psychotherapy
 - in 2013, obtaining the first ethical approvals in modern times for a study using LSD with the latest brain-imaging technology
 - in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University, the first modern study to harness the powerful effects of a psychedelic to aid in the treatment of intractable addiction, in this case the use of psilocybin in the treatment of nicotine addiction. The results so far have been outstanding
 - early research into the beneficial properties of cannabidiol (CBD), and into how cannabis-related harms can be reduced by a balanced ratio between THC and CBD.

GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR DRUG POLICY REFORM

The war on drugs has failed. It is time for a new approach.

The *Global Initiative for Drug Policy Reform* was launched at the House of Lords in London in November 2011. It brought together countries interested in reform and those that have already successfully implemented reform. For the *Initiative*, the Beckley Foundation commissioned two reports: *Roadmaps to Reforming the UN Drug Conventions* and a *Cost-Benefit Analysis of a Regulated and Taxed Cannabis Market in England and Wales*. A major success of the *Initiative* so far has been the invitation of President Otto Pérez Molina of Guatemala to advise him and his government on alternative drug policy approaches. The President is the leading spokesman in the world advocating for global drug policy reform.

SELECTED BECKLEY COLLABORATIONS



DR. ROBIN CARHART-HARRIS
AMANDA FEILDING
PROF. DAVID NUTT

UNDERSTANDING THE PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE

The landmark *Beckley Foundation/Imperial College Psychopharmacological Research Programme* investigates the neurophysiology underlying the changes in awareness induced by psychedelics, using fMRI and MEG brain-imaging technologies.

Results published in 2012/3 from a series of studies using psilocybin show for the first time that the drug *decreases* blood flow and brain activity, particularly in a network of brain centres known as the *default mode network*. This system is responsible for filtering and co-ordinating the flow of information, and plays an essential role in our sense of self. By decreasing the activity of this network, psilocybin brings about a dissolution of ego-boundaries, a reduction in repression and an unconstrained mode of thinking.

One of the centres within the *default mode network* is known to be over-active in depression, and another in cluster headaches. On the back of our finding that psilocybin decreases the activity of these regions, the UK's Medical Research Council has awarded a substantial grant for a study of psilocybin in the treatment of depression.

Other studies with psilocybin and MDMA provide the first neuroscientific evidence for why these drugs can be so beneficial as aids to psychotherapy.



PROF. ROLAND GRIFFITHS
DR. MATTHEW JOHNSON

OVERCOMING ADDICTION

In collaboration with Johns Hopkins University, we are carrying out the first modern study into the efficacy of psilocybin as an aid to psychotherapy in the treatment of addiction. The initial results have been uniquely promising, and we hope that this study will open up important new frontiers in combating some of the most intractable psychological problems of modern times.

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DR. PAUL MORRISON
AMANDA FEILDING

THE DIFFERENTIAL EFFECTS OF THC AND CBD

Collaborating with the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College London, the Beckley Foundation was among the first to carry out a series of investigations into the effects of cannabidiol (CBD) in contrast to THC, and into how important a balance between these two compounds can be for the health of the user.

THC is the primary psychoactive compound in cannabis, and can induce short-term psychosis-like effects, cognitive deficits and anxiety. CBD, on the other hand, protects against these effects, and has many other medicinal benefits.

Since the *illegal* market encourages the production of high-THC cannabis, with little or no CBD, this research strengthens the argument for the creation of a *regulated* market, which would label content and educate users about potential harms.



PROF. VALERIE CURRAN
DR. CELIA MORGAN
AMANDA FEILDING

The Beckley Foundation and University College London are collaborating on a number of studies into the effects of cannabis and MDMA.

CANNABIS AND CREATIVITY

This is a naturalistic study, involving 160 participants smoking their own cannabis. We obtained data on the ratio of the main psychoactive compound, THC, to the anxiolytic compound CBD, as well as state and trait measures of schizotypy and creativity, in order to investigate the reported association between cannabis use and enhanced creativity.

CANNABIS AS MEDICINE

In a pioneering study, the Beckley Foundation is collaborating with UCL and Harborside Health Center, Oakland (which has over 100,000 patients). We are building a database about the efficacy of different strains of cannabis in the treatment of different medical conditions. When this is complete, it will provide the first scientific assessment of the safety, potency and efficacy of the different strains.

