

Ayahuasca Canada



Information, Education, Collaboration

AyahuascaCanada

Investigation, Community Response and Recommendations:

The “DMT Importation” Prosecution of Chad Gillies, Alberta



Chad Gillies

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Falsification of Evidence

This document is the AyahuascaCanada community response to the prosecution of Chad Gillies in Calgary, Alberta, Canada for “Importation of Dimethyltryptamine (DMT)” - ***charges that were really about ayahuasca, in which evidence was clearly falsified.***

Chad Gillies Arrest – Operation “Dear Santa”

Mr. Chad Gillies was arrested by a Calgary Police Services (CPS) SWAT team on February 8, 2024.

Chad Gillies, a Calgary businessman and specialty welder was arrested for importing DMT into Canada, a banned substance in Canada. However, it soon became apparent that ***his arrest and prosecution was actually for ayahuasca, which is not a banned substance under the Canadian Criminal Code.***

The arrest was the result of an international law enforcement operation that was so large it was codenamed “Operation Dear Santa” and included U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), United States Homeland Security, Canadian Border Services, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the ***Calgary Police Services (CPS) undercover and SWAT teams.***

Summary – Falsified Evidence

An Alberta Crown Prosecutor decided to prosecute a case of “importation of a controlled substance” and ***represent to the Court that 2 kilograms of a dark tar-like substance was 2 kilograms of Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) a restricted substance in Canada.***

However, from the inception of the case it was revealed that this prosecution was not about DMT and ***the Crown Prosecutor was in actuality prosecuting for ayahuasca, a substance that is not named in the Canadian Criminal Code.*** While ayahuasca may contain trace amounts of DMT, it is a plant decoction as defined by the United Nations International Narcotics Control Board (UNINCB) and is not DMT (a refined chemical) and is not under international control. ***This distinction was made abundantly clear by the United Nations International Narcotics Control Board.***

A “Novel” Case

This is a “novel” case in that there have been a handful of previous DMT arrests in Canada. ***In the last five years there have been 32 arrests for DMT by the RCMP as verified by an RCMP Access to Information (ATI) request. DMT is also not listed as a Drug of Concern in the Canadian Drug Strategy.***

In Calgary, there were no previous arrests for DMT in the year prior to Mr. Gillies’ arrest, the substance was not a perceived public threat or a policing priority, according to the Analytics Manager at the Calgary Police Services.

Recognizing that this is indeed a “novel” case, the Crown Prosecutor has two avenues open to her. ***She could have verified that the dark tar-like substance was indeed 2 kilograms of DMT through locally-available lab tests. Or, she could proceed with the case without verification*** that the “novel” tar-like substance was in fact 2 kilograms of the restricted substance DMT.

Is Ayahuasca or DMT in the Canadian Criminal Code?

According to the Canadian Justice Laws Website searchable **list of banned substances** under the Canadian Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA): Schedule III, Sections 2, 4 to 7.1.10.29.55 and 60, item 7, Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) is indeed a restricted substance:

7. *N,N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) (3-[(2-dimethylamino) ethyl]indole) and any salt thereof*

However, a search for Ayahuasca, Yuasca, Yage or Huasca or other variations of “ayahuasca” in the list of banned substances fails to turn up any mention.

See - <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-38.8/>



Dimethyltryptamine



Ayahuasca

Is Ayahuasca DMT?

Canada is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances in which Dimethyltryptamine was deemed a restricted substance in 1971.* **The UN Conventions on Psychotropic Substances are legally binding on its signatories, requiring them to implement its provisions into their domestic laws.**

*See: United Nations 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances – Page 17, ([link](#))

The 1971 and subsequent 1988 United Nations Conventions **specifically excluded plant-based materials from the ban on DMT.** As clarified by the United Nations International Narcotics Control Board - **DMT is a refined substance and is specifically not ayahuasca.**

From the 2010 International Narcotics Control Board Annual Report* (page 46, paragraphs 284 and 285 (UNINCB [Link](#)):

*In contrast, although some active stimulant or hallucinogenic ingredients contained in certain plants are controlled under the 1971 Convention, **no plants are currently controlled under that Convention or under the 1988 Convention.** Preparations (e.g. decoctions for oral use) made from plants containing those active ingredients are also **not under international control.***

Examples of such plants or plant material include..... ayahuasca, a preparation made from plants indigenous to the Amazon basin of South America, mainly a jungle vine (*Banisteriopsis caapi*) and another tryptamine-rich plant (*Psychotria viridis*) containing a number of psychoactive alkaloids, including DMT;

As can be seen from the **UNINCB statements, made by the people who criminalized DMT – Ayahuasca, a plant-based decoction is not classified as DMT** and has never been under international control. **However, the UNINCB did provide a pathway for countries to criminalize ayahuasca if they chose to do so.**

*https://www.incb.org/documents/Publications/AnnualReports/AR2010/AR_2010_English.pdf

From the United Nations International Narcotics Control Board (UNINCB) 2010 Annual Report:**

287. The Board notes that, in view of the health risks associated with the abuse of such plant material, **some Governments have placed certain types of plant material and preparations under national control.** The Board recommends that Governments that have not yet done so and have experienced problems with regard to persons engaging in the recreational use of or importation in such plant material, to remain vigilant (since the risks associated with such use may increase) and to notify the Board and the WHO of those problems. **The Board recommends that Governments should consider controlling such plant material at the national level where necessary.**

The Government of Canada has not criminalized Ayahuasca at the national level by adding it to the Canadian Criminal Code. If the Government of Canada intended for Ayahuasca to be criminalized, it would have to be put on the list of banned substances as required by the Conventions. The Government of Canada has not listed ayahuasca in the CDSA.* **Putting ayahuasca into the Canadian Criminal Code would require an Act of Parliament.**

Canada is a signatory to the UN Conventions on Psychotropic Substances, **which is legally binding on its signatories,** requiring them to implement its provisions into their domestic laws.

*See: Canadian Justice Laws Website (searchable list of banned substances under the Canadian Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA)

*[https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/Search/Search.aspx?](https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/Search/Search.aspx?txtS3archA11=cannabis&txtT1t3=%22Controlled+Drugs+and+Substances+Act%22&h1ts0n1y=0&ddC0nt3ntTyp3=Acts)

[txtS3archA11=cannabis&txtT1t3=%22Controlled+Drugs+and+Substances+Act%22&h1ts0n1y=0&ddC0nt3ntTyp3=Acts](https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/Search/Search.aspx?txtS3archA11=cannabis&txtT1t3=%22Controlled+Drugs+and+Substances+Act%22&h1ts0n1y=0&ddC0nt3ntTyp3=Acts)

**2010 International Narcotics Control Board Annual Report -

https://www.incb.org/documents/Publications/AnnualReports/AR2010/AR_2010_English.pdf

Health Canada - Ayahuasca is Not Under International Control

This distinction is also clarified in the official Health Canada Policies and Procedures for Religious Exemptions* in which Health Canada states:

Daime tea/Ayahuasca and its plant ingredients remain uncontrolled under the United Nations drug control conventions.

*Access to Information Release Package A-2022-001575, 2023-06-05. Unpublished. Contact AyahuascaCanada for a copy of this file – info@ayahuascacanada.com

No Quantitative Analysis Provided

The Crown failed to provide a quantitative analysis of the alleged DMT, which is standard procedure in cases of importation of a controlled substance, despite a locally qualified lab in Cochrane, Alberta that can undertake detection and quantification of “DMT.”

Indeed, the Crown Prosecutor’s office was notified of just such a test in a complaint filed by AyahuascaCanada over this case when the trial was being conducted. **The email was sent to the PPSC public feedback and complaint system on 10/12/2024 and quoted from a publicly-available study regarding readily-available lab tests for “DMT,”** which includes **“detection and quantification” of DMT.**

see -**Detection and Quantification** of Psychoactive N,N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) in Ayahuasca Brews by Ambient Ionization High-Resolution Mass Spectrometry ([link](#))

Funders of this study included the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), Office of Justice Programs and the US Department of Justice (DOJ)

PPSC Deskbook - Crown Prosecutor Directives

The PPSC Deskbook is a Directive of the Attorney General of Canada

On June 16, 2014, the *Attorney General of Canada* issued a directive* under section 10(2) of the Director of Public Prosecutions Act **directing that all federal prosecutors and persons acting as federal prosecutors respect his directives set out in the Public Prosecution Service of Canada (PPSC) Deskbook.** This applies concurrently with the guidelines issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and those contained in the PPSC Deskbook.

See: <https://www.ppsc-sppc.gc.ca/eng/pub/fpsd-sfpg/index.html>

The following is *quoted directly from the Deskbook* of the *Public Prosecution Service of Canada's Principles Governing Crown Counsel's Conduct***

Statement of Policy

Crown counsel are obliged to exercise independent judgment in making decisions.

Because their decision-making powers are delegated to them by the DPP, whose own powers, duties and functions to act under and on behalf of the Attorney General are delegated under the DPP Act, **Crown counsel are accountable for their decisions, and they must consult where required. Prosecutorial independence is not a license to do as one wishes, but to act as the Attorney General and the DPP should act.**

**see: <https://www.ppsc-sppc.gc.ca/eng/pub/fpsd-sfpg/fps-sfp/tpd/p2/ch03.html>

1. Decision to Prosecute

Overview

Crown counsel must only proceed with prosecutions where two conditions are met:

There is a reasonable prospect of conviction; and
The prosecution is in the public interest.

2. Prevention of Wrongful Convictions

Wrongful convictions result in a miscarriage of justice, and significant harm to the convicted person. When the criminal justice system fails, **the human cost can be substantial,** and public confidence in the justice system is lost. Therefore, Crown counsel must always be scrupulous in **their role as ministers of justice to prevent wrongful convictions and to zealously guard against it.**

Crown counsel must be mindful of the "environmental" or "predisposing circumstances" that have been identified as fostering wrongful convictions. These circumstances include:

- **Tunnel vision** (potentially caused by unconscious bias or close contact between Crown counsel, investigative agencies, or victims)
- Decisions influenced by biases, including racial bias, stereotypes, or prejudices of any kind;
- Public pressure to convict in high-profile cases;
- **Inadequate or misinterpreted evidence;**

- Eyewitness identification error;
- False confessions;
- An unpopular accused;
- **A legal environment or culture which focuses on winning**
- **The presence of what has been labeled as "noble cause corruption," or the belief that the ends justifies the means.**

3. Duty to present a fair, clear, and comprehensible case

“The practice of overcharging is not appropriate, whether it is through the duplication of counts, the laying of additional **or heightened charges that are marginal,** or laying charges where **the evidence barely meets the directed verdict threshold.** Overcharging unduly lengthens and complicates a trial. **Charges must always be tailored to focus on the key evidence and the key issues relevant in the context of the individual case.**”

Crown counsel must carefully consider whether the public interest would be better served by **declining to prosecute marginal charges or deciding not to pursue them once the evidence at trial is complete.”**

4. The Decision to Prosecute

As noted earlier, a prosecution should not be undertaken unless there is a reasonable prospect of conviction and **the prosecution would best serve the public interest. The test applies to each individual accused, and every charge on the information or indictment.**

If charges have been laid, those charges should be withdrawn or a stay of proceedings entered. Crown counsel must continue to consider the decision to prosecute criteria **throughout all stages of the prosecution,** until the exhaustion of all appeals. It is particularly important for Crown counsel to reconsider the criteria **when new and credible information comes to light, including from the accused.**

4.1.2 Irrelevant Factors

The decision to prosecute must not be influenced by any of the following:

Crown counsel's personal views or feelings about the accused, victim(s), or witness(es); or
The possible effect of the decision on the personal or professional circumstances of Crown counsel, the investigative agencies, or its members, including personal or institutional gain.

4.2 Public Interest

The approach set out in this guideline directs Crown counsel to **focus on the most serious cases. A serious case is one that involves violence or raises issues of public safety.** In cases that are not considered serious, **Crown counsel should turn their mind to the availability of alternative measures.**

4.2.1 Factors to Consider

a) Nature and Gravity of the Alleged Offence

Aggravating and mitigating circumstances will influence the public interest assessment. Generally speaking, the more serious an alleged offence is, the more likely it is that public interest considerations will weigh in favour of a prosecution. **Conversely, the less serious an alleged offence is, the more likely public interest will weigh in favour of discontinuing the prosecution, or pursuing an alternative measure.**

There are many factors that influence the nature and gravity of the alleged offence. For example:

The harm, such as serious personal injury, or risk of harm caused by the offence. The public interest generally weighs in favour of proceeding with cases involving serious offences such as terrorism, the **importation or importation of large amounts of controlled substances**, the importation of **harmful opioids such as fentanyl or carfentanyl, or personal injury offences;**

The amount and nature of the controlled substance, including the prevalence of that controlled substance in the community;

Whether the accused is alleged to be part of a criminal organization or a terrorist group.

d) Confidence in the Administration of Justice

Where the charges are serious or a victim is involved, Crown counsel must weigh the evidence of the state misconduct with any impact the discontinuation of the prosecution may have on the administration of justice and the victim. In serious cases, **or where there is a victim involved,** Crown counsel must consult with the Chief Federal Prosecutor (CFP) or their designate before making a final determination.

e) Harm to the Community

Crown Counsel should take steps to gain knowledge and understanding of the communities in which they prosecute. This includes an understanding of communities that may be under-policed or over-policed. **Prosecutors can learn more about their communities by consulting public documents.**

The public interest analysis **must include consideration of the impact of the alleged offence and prosecution on the local community.** Potential harms include **any loss or injury caused by the alleged offence,** and the impact of the alleged offence on **public safety, public health, public welfare,** the environment, natural resources, and other economic, cultural or societal public interests.

5. Consultation

In some cases, it will be appropriate for Crown counsel to obtain the views of the investigative agency or the victim before making the decision to prosecute. Crown counsel are encouraged to consult to gain knowledge about how the prosecution, or the

discontinuation of the prosecution, may impact the victim or the particular community where the alleged offence took place.

7. Providing Advice to Investigative Agencies on the Decision to Prosecute

Public safety and effective prosecutions are promoted when Crown counsel maintain a cooperative relationship with investigative agencies.

Crown counsel should provide timely legal advice to investigating agencies when reasonable and necessary to do so. Upon request, Crown counsel may provide a preliminary confidential legal opinion addressing whether the ***decision to prosecute analysis would be met on the available evidence.*** Such requests may be made prior to charges being laid or referred for approval. ***Generally speaking, it is advisable that such legal advice be given when all the available evidence has been gathered by the investigative agency, after a thorough and complete investigation.*** Crown counsel should ensure they have all the relevant information to arrive at an informed opinion.

It is Crown counsel, not the investigative agency, who are ultimately responsible for making the decision to prosecute, except where the consent of the Attorney General is required. Crown counsel must make this decision ***objectively and independently from the investigative agency.***

**see: <https://www.ppsc-sppc.gc.ca/eng/pub/fpsd-sfpg/fps-sfp/tpd/p2/ch03.html>

Duties and Responsibilities of Crown Counsel

([link](#))

This information is quoted directly from the Public Prosecution Service of Canada website.

2. The Conduct of Criminal Litigation

Crown counsel are vested with substantial discretionary powers delegated by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). **These discretionary powers must be exercised with the public interest in mind.**

As quasi ministers of justice, **Crown counsel's primary interest is not to secure a conviction, rather, it is to pursue justice.** In doing so, Crown counsel represent the public interest. They are not lawyers for the police, the victims, or the accused. The Supreme Court of Canada articulated Crown counsel's role, in the context of a criminal prosecution, in its landmark decision in Boucher:

It cannot be over-emphasized that the purpose of a criminal prosecution is not to obtain a conviction, it is to lay before a jury what the Crown considers to be credible evidence relevant to what is alleged to be a crime. **Counsel have a duty to see that all available legal proof of the facts is presented:** it should be done firmly and pressed to its legitimate strength, but it must also be done fairly. **The role of the prosecutor excludes any notion of winning or losing.**

3. The Duty to be Fair and Maintain Public Confidence

Public confidence in the administration of justice is bolstered by a system where Crown counsel are not only strong and effective advocates, **but also ministers of justice, with a duty to ensure the justice system operates fairly for all.** Crown counsel must recognize that one can intend to act fairly while unintentionally leaving an impression of secrecy, bias, or unfairness. **Crown counsel have a duty not only to act fairly, but also to ensure that their conduct is seen to be fair.**

.....**Crown counsel must recognize that the exercise of prosecutorial discretion has an impact on an accused,** and that impact will be different on each individual accused. For example, decisions can have a more onerous and disproportionate impact on vulnerable and marginalized populations. **Therefore, Crown counsel must ensure that their decisions do not disproportionately impact someone due to their vulnerability. This means that applying the same rules, measures, or standards to every accused may not always be appropriate.** Successfully eliminating the unfair, unequal, or discriminatory impact of prosecutorial decisions requires Crown counsel to actively examine all of their choices, in the context of the material placed before them by investigative agencies and information provided by the accused.

Crown counsel also fulfill the duty to be fair by:

- Making disclosure in accordance with the law;[Footnote 15](#)
- **Bringing all relevant cases and authorities known to counsel to the attention of the court, even if they are contrary to the Crown's position;**

- **Not misleading the court;**
 - **Stating the law accurately;**
 - Not accepting a plea or alternative measures, in circumstances where there is no reasonable prospect of conviction;
 - **Being conscious of the factors that can lead to wrongful convictions**, for example false confessions or mistaken eyewitness identification;
-

3.1. The Duty to Educate Oneself on an Ongoing Basis

The proper exercise of prosecutorial discretion **requires Crown counsel to educate themselves on an ongoing basis**, not only on the law, but also about the ethical duties of their office and **the social realities of the communities in which they prosecute**. This may be done through continuing legal education, self-study, or other training.

5. The Duty to Act with Integrity and Dignity

Crown counsel fulfill this duty by:

- Complying with their bar association's applicable rules of ethics;
- **Complying with the PPSC's Code of Conduct, Missions and Values, and the Deskbook;**
- Exercising careful judgment in presenting the case for the Crown throughout the course of a prosecution.
- Conducting themselves with civility;
- Not rushing to judgment in exercising prosecutorial discretion;
- **Ensuring that all relevant information is available in order to properly exercise prosecutorial discretion.** If relevant information is not available, Crown counsel must make requests to the investigative agency so that they may provide or gather that information;
- **Remaining independent of the investigating agency, the victim and the witness(es);**
- **Adequately preparing for each case;** and
- **Acting with moderation, fairness, and impartiality.**

Ayahuasca Publicly-Available Information

The following information is readily available from public sources and can be publicly verified.

The onus is on the Crown Prosecutors to understand the evidence and the impact of the alleged offence on the community. This would include researching “novel” substances when law enforcement officers present evidence to a Crown Prosecutor about an alleged offence. **As noted in the Deskbook - Prosecutors can learn more about their communities by consulting public documents.**

Much of the information presented in this section can also be found in the **AyahuascaCanada White Paper on Enforcement Recommendations, a publicly available document** which can be downloaded for free on the AyahuascaCanada website - <https://ayahuascacanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/WHITEPAPER-Recommendations-for-Police-Response-to-Ayahuasca-Enforcement-current.pdf>

A Rich History of Spiritual Healing

In the Quechua language of the north Andes, **ayahuasca is the ‘vine of the soul’ or ‘vine of the dead’ and is consumed as a psychotropic beverage in both indigenous and non-indigenous ceremonies.** Within its original indigenous context, **ayahuasca is traditionally consumed across the upper reaches of the Amazon river system (that is, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) by over 160 indigenous ayahuasca cultures.**

It is considered a spiritual medicine by healers throughout South America and around the world.

Ayahuasca is a liquid produced by cooking the Banisteriopsis caapi vine (vine of the dead) and the Psychotria viridis shrub, (Chacrana) which contains trace amounts of Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) (Schultes & Hofmann, 1992).

Ayahuasca is used as a spiritual medicine in ceremonies officiated by Amazonian Indians, mestizos, and diverse NeoShamanic (New World) shamans who have learned to use it in its places of traditional origin (Labate et al., 2009; Labate & Jungaberle, 2011; Luna, 2011; Labate & Bouso, 2013).

While originating in the Amazon, **ayahuasca is now used worldwide in underground or illegal ceremonies, in “grey-area” ceremonies or in completely legal ceremonies depending on the specific laws of the country.** There are also a number of established world-wide ayahuasca churches mostly originating in Brazil.

3,500 Years of Ayahuasca Use – Scientifically Verified

Pre-Hispanic ritual use of psychoactive plants at Chavín de Huántar, Peru ([link](#)) -

Here, we report results of independent microbotanical and chemical analyses **that demonstrate use of psychoactive plants such as ayahuasca in institutionalized ritual in the first millennium BCE, (1,000 BCE to 1 BCE) demonstrating that even in their early stages, sociopolitically complex societies incorporated psychoactive plants into ritual activity.**

This direct identification of contents of psychoactive paraphernalia from pre-Hispanic Peru sheds light on the content and function of ritual at Chavín de Huántar and other early monumental centers.

National Geographic has verified the use of ayahuasca to at least 1,000 years. ([link](#)).

It is generally accepted that the use of Ayahuasca predates recorded history. **Shipibo Amazonian shamans have stated that ayahuasca was introduced to their ancestors by the Incas, an ancient South American people.**

Shaman-Chiefs Guided Tribes

Historically, the chief of Amazonian Indian tribes was a shaman-chief who had mastered the use of ayahuasca. **The shaman-chief would guide the tribe based on visions and premonitions gleaned from communal ayahuasca ceremonies.*** Ayahuasca would also be used as a teaching plant to help people identify healing plants and for hunters to understand the jungle environment and the habits of animals.

For one of the best resources on indigenous ayahuasca use from the early 1900s, see **The Wizard of the Upper Amazon* by F. Bruce Lamb ([link](#))

Historical Recognition and Acceptance by HealthCare Systems

([link](#))

Traditional Indigenous medicine has faced stigmatization for years, often dismissed as superstitious or ineffective. **However, international declarations like the Alma-Ata Declaration of 1978, the International Labour Organization Convention 169 of 1989, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007 have underlined its significance. They emphasize the holistic nature of health and advocate for integrating traditional medicine into official healthcare systems.**

Countries in Latin America have taken significant steps to integrate traditional medicine into their healthcare systems. Each nation has developed unique policies and institutions, acknowledging the role of traditional practices in their national health systems. Africa has also made an effort to integrate these practices into mainstream healthcare. Ghana, for instance, has been a leader in this integration, incorporating herbal medicine within its official healthcare system and launching academic programs to promote and regulate these initiatives.

Ayahuasca is Legal in Amazonian Countries

Ayahuasca is not criminalized in Brazil, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia which recognize ayahuasca's unique cultural heritage.

After a 20-year investigation, in 2010 Brazil formally approved ayahuasca for religious and ritual use. Prior to 2010, ayahuasca had been illegal.

This was the culmination of a 20-year investigation involving state agencies and numerous formal committees. **The investigation found that the use of ayahuasca was not associated with social disruption and even found that those using ayahuasca were healthier and more productive than average citizens.**

As part of the investigation, **CONFEN (Brazilian Drug Agency) members actually participated in ayahuasca ceremonies and their personal experiences reinforced the findings that ayahuasca was doing far more good than harm in Brazilian society.** ([link](#))

In Ecuador, Ayahuasca is used legally for traditional ceremonies. In Colombia there are no laws against using ayahuasca. **"Yuruparí," an ayahuasca ritual, is recognized as intangible heritage.**

Further north in Central America, Costa Rica does not regulate ayahuasca. Numerous ayahuasca retreats operate there, including Rythmia, one of the most high-end ayahuasca retreats in the world. Numerous celebrities have attended ceremonies there. ([link](#))

Peru Declares Ayahuasca Cultural Patrimony

In Peru, the Directorate of the National Institute of Culture **has declared the knowledge and traditional uses of Ayahuasca practiced by the native Amazon communities as Cultural Patrimony of the Nation (Resolution Number 836/INC)**, based on the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Peru states that the use of Banisteriopsis caapi and Chacruna-Psychotria plants (the traditional ayahuasca brew) structured around the ayahuasca ritual have “an extraordinary cultural history” **with “religious, therapeutic and culturally affirmative” properties and is “one of the fundamental pillars of the identity of Amazonian peoples.”**

The institute, which is charged with documenting and protecting Peruvian cultural heritage, described ayahuasca as **“a wise or teaching plant, which shows to initiates the very foundations of the world and its components.”**

It also stated that, when used in a traditional ritual, it “leads to a variety of effects which are always within culturally defined limits, **and with religious, therapeutic, and culturally affirmative intentions.**” ([link](#))

Christianity and other Mainstream Religions Endorse Ayahuasca

Ayahuasca and other entheogens provide a sacred or mystical experience that strengthens religious faith, according to mainstream religious scholars. **In Canada, Fr. Geoffrey Ready at the University of Toronto, School of Theology, teaches an Orthodox Christian seminary course - Mystical Traditions and the Sacred Journey of Transformation: Narrative, Ritual, and Entheogens.** From the course description:

*As we examine the rich history of Christian mystical experience and parallels within other ancient spiritual traditions, **we will recognize the special role of entheogens, or sacred fungus and plant medicines, alongside other practices, in facilitating or deepening transcendent experience.** We will examine the potential role of entheogens in mystical encounters today, mindful of both ethical considerations and diverse perspectives on their usage.* ([link](#))

In Brazil people can attend traditional Shamanic, Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, African-based, Shamanic and other religious ayahuasca centers. **All co-exist quite peacefully and there are an estimated 1,000 or more ayahuasca centers in Brazil.**

Other Religious Use of Entheogens (links):

Ligare: A Christian Psychedelic Society ([link](#)). Shefa – Jewish Psychedelic Society ([link](#)).

Entheogens and the Ancient Mystery Religions ([link](#)) Enthomedia: Entheogens and human spirituality: ([link](#)).

Brazilian Ayahuasca Experience

Brazil offers a great example for any country grappling with how to regulate ancestral medicines such as ayahuasca. ***After 20 years of studies, commissions and committees, with some regulators actually participating in ceremonies, in 2010 the Brazilian government decriminalized ancestral plant medicines for religious use. ([link](#)).***

Based on the most reliable estimates, there are over 1,000 ayahuasca centers in Brazil, ***including centers affiliated with major religions, ayahuasca churches, indigenous communities, and independent groups.***

What Brazil found was:

- ***Society didn't fall apart***
- ***There is no violence or gang activities associated with ancestral medicines***
- ***Ancestral medicines have never become mainstream***
- ***Pharmaceutical Industry profits have not been affected***
- ***Spiritual healing can easily co-exist with the Pharmaceutical model***
- ***Ayahuasca churches are a net benefit to society***

In Brazil people can attend traditional Shamanic, Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, African-based and other religious-based ayahuasca centers.

Spiritual Healing vs. Pharmaceutical Medicines

Unless your doctor is a shaman, the ayahuasca spiritual approach to mental/emotional spiritual healing is distinctly different than pharmaceutical medicines. ***The Pharmaceutical model assumes any problems are related to physicality while ayahuasca shamanism assumes problems are due to spiritual sickness.***

Pharmaceutical medicines attempt to establish a protocol that will work for a broad population base while ***shamanic healing maintains that individual human spirituality is the pathway to emotional healing.***

And while the pharmaceutical model uses a standard approach, ***shamans work with an individual's spiritual journey. This concept recognizes that true healing is brought about when the participant(s) recognize and accept their own spiritual nature.***

Ayahuasca Will Never be a Pharmaceutical Drug

Ayahuasca cannot be distilled into a "medicine" in the Western pharmaceutical concept. ***The entire objective of an ayahuasca ceremony is to produce a spiritual or sacred experience. Entire religions, such as Axeti Nete, Santo Daime, Barquinha and UDV have been inspired and created through the use of ayahuasca.*** Ayahuasca ceremonies are conducted by shamans or facilitator in a spiritual setting to produce a spiritual outcome.

There are approximately 170 traditional ayahuasca cultures in the Amazon that each have their own well-established and ancient religious cosmologies.

Which means the idea of patenting ayahuasca for clinical use is diametrically opposed to the ceremonial use of this ancient medicine. While western studies have documented ayahuasca's healing powers, any healing done in a ceremony is produced through the spiritual experience. **Ayahuasca will never be a medicine in the context of the pharmaceutical model unless medical doctors become shamans.**

Axeti Nete - a Health Canada Recognized Amazonian Shamanic Religion

The Companionship of the Sacred Vine (CSV), an ayahuasca church in Canada practices one of the original shamanic religions of the Amazon jungle, Axeti Nete, a Shipibo religion whose original practices pre-date written history.

The Canadian federal government, through its Section 56 Religious Exemption Program, formally recognized this Amazonian religion in Canada with the granting of an exemption on July 04, 2023. ([link](#)).

This is the first and only Amazonian Shamanic Religion formally recognized in Canada. All other exemptions for ayahuasca churches that have been granted in Canada are for syncretic ayahuasca churches such as Santo Daime and The União do Vegetal (UDV). These are not "traditional" Amazonian shamanic churches and often incorporate Christianity beliefs and practices into their ceremonies.

The CSV is a true pastoral religion and its core philosophy is to recognize and assist anyone seeking spiritual healing.

Early 1900s - Ayahuasca Churches Established

In the early 1900's the spiritual use of ayahuasca spread from traditional Indigenous Amazonian shamans to structured ayahuasca churches. Santo Daime ([link](#)), the União do Vegetal or UDV ([link](#)) and Barquinha are three of the main ayahuasca churches founded in Brazil and are now located worldwide. For an overview see ([link](#))

All of these ayahuasca churches attempt to improve the human condition. For example, UDV "works for the evolution of the human being in the sense of his or her spiritual development." Santo Daime promotes a lifestyle in conformity with **"Harmony, Love, Truth and Justice as well as key doctrinal values such as strength, humility, kinship, and purity of heart."**

Decades of Ayahuasca Studies Confirm Safety and Efficacy

With the reported therapeutic effects of ayahuasca in traditional spiritual ceremonies, the use of ayahuasca also gained the attention of western ethnobotanists, doctors, pharmacologists, clinicians and researchers.

Over the last four decades **hundreds of studies have been conducted into ritual ayahuasca ceremonies and its effects on PTSD, addictions, suicidal ideation, treatment-resistant depression, childhood traumas and other serious spiritual/emotional issues.** Long-term large-scale studies of regular ayahuasca users indicate the positive effects of ayahuasca spiritual healing for individuals and society. ([Link](#))

Canadian Facilitators – New World Shamans

People who work with ayahuasca in Canada typically undertake at least a 3-year apprenticeship with a shaman in the Amazon jungle or someone who has learned to work with ayahuasca that has undertaken an apprenticeship, a survey of facilitators (unpublished) by AyahuascaCanada has found. Further, most Canadian facilitators continue to work with their “maestros” once they have been initiated into cultural shamanic practices.

A hallmark of the Amazonian ayahuasca cultures is a willingness to share and initiate non-Amazonian cultures into the use of sacred traditional plant medicines such as ayahuasca. While it is difficult to generalize as there are over 170 distinct ayahuasca cultures in the Amazon ([link](#)), cultures such as the Shipibo-Conibo (Peru), Zar (Ecuador), Saliba (Columbia), Quechua, Shuar (Columbia), Cofan (Ecuador, Columbia) Huin Kuin (Brazil) and many others are sharing their traditional culture and medicines with non-Amazonian peoples. **Perhaps more importantly, they are willing to take on Canadians and other westerners as apprentices and initiate them into the ayahuasca and plant medicine spiritual practices.**

The acknowledged experts in working with ayahuasca are these cultures and an apprenticeship to a maestro in the Amazon is a life-long learning experience for the vast majority of Canadian facilitators (internal survey, AyahuascaCanada).

Perhaps the most significant event in terms of this present consideration of the emergence and context of New World (neo-shamanism) in the West is the 1980 publication by Chad Harner of his landmark manual of shamanic methodology, *The Way of the Shaman*.

In it he precisely articulated a synthesis of shamanic methodology he termed core shamanism, a distillation of common themes of shamanic practice having global or near-global distribution, illuminated by his own ethnographic experience in South America among the Conibo and Shuar (Jívaro). This core of shamanic methodology was presented by Harner as the bare essentials of shamanic practice, stripped of traditional, regional, and cultural specifics.

This volume, experiential workshops in core shamanism, and **the creation of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies by Harner, have significantly affected the growth of shamanism in the West**, as well as having repercussions worldwide. (From the Foundation for Shamanic Studies ([link](#)))

Ayahuasca is not a “Recreational” Drug

An ayahuasca ceremony can induce vomiting (la purga) and/or diarrhea. People who wish to undertake a ceremony must also prepare themselves physically and mentally with a special diet before and after ceremonies.

Ceremony preparation also includes a health and mental health questionnaire, designed to screen out applicants for any medical conditions or psychological contraindications. ([link](#))

During a ceremony participants can be confronted with their deepest traumas or have to face their deepest fears – often referred to as “shadow work.”

After the ceremony the knowledge or revelations gained in the ceremony must be incorporated into a person’s life. This “integration” or ceremony follow-up can be another challenging experience and participants may require help from experienced people.

While the ceremony itself is over in hours, the integration process can potentially take several days or even weeks. **It is important for people conducting ceremonies to provide an after-care program. ([Link](#))**

Ayahuasca - the Spiritual Medicine of Last Resort

Most people seeking ayahuasca do so as a last resort when standard pharmaceutical interventions have failed. This is borne out in a large cross-sectional study of over 11,000 ayahuasca users where therapeutic motivation was the primary reason given for attending an ayahuasca ceremony:

*Drinkers of Ayahuasca in naturalistic settings perceived remarkable benefits for their affective symptoms in this survey assessment. **There is no obvious evidence of negative mental health effects being associated with long-term consumption.***

Of participants reporting depression (n = 1571) or anxiety (n = 1125) at the time of consuming Ayahuasca, 78% reported that their depression was either 'very much' improved (46%), or 'completely resolved' (32%); while 70% of those with anxiety reported that their symptoms were 'very much' improved (54%), or 'completely resolved' (16%).

The Global Ayahuasca Project ([link](#))

Long-term Societal Benefits

What people are confronted with in an ayahuasca ceremony is often very deep-seated traumas or behaviors that have come about from traumatic events. **In shamanic terms this would be seen as "inherited" or familial problems which must be addressed for wholistic spiritual healing in order for the person to reclaim their place in their community and family lineage.**

It is well-recognized in Amazonian countries that ayahuasca is beneficial for society. These benefits are also indicated in large-scale studies. The data suggest that the study participants have high levels of general, mental, and positive health, and show excellent levels of adjustment and coping strategies, in addition to healthy lifestyles. ([link](#))

Ayahuasca is not a Threat to Pharmaceutical Industry Profits

Ayahuasca will never become "mainstream" medicine. Even in countries where ayahuasca is legal pharmaceutical industry profits have never been affected by ayahuasca ceremonies.

The projected revenue of South American pharmaceutical markets is estimated to reach US \$33.85 billion in 2025. **South American revenues are anticipated to exhibit an annual growth rate of 4.88%, as estimated by CAGR from 2025 to 2030. ([link](#))**

Brazil decriminalized ayahuasca in 2010 and is the only South American country ranked among the top pharmaceutical markets in the world, with a global share of approximately two percent and pharmaceutical revenues of more than \$20 billion U.S. dollars.

The Brazilian market has one of the fastest growth rates among leading pharmaceutical markets in the world, with an estimated nine percent increase in 2023 and a pharmaceutical industry that has been increasingly growing in recent years. ([Link](#)) There are an estimated 1,000 ayahuasca centers in Brazil.

Analysis and Commentary on the Deskbook

Prevention of Wrongful Convictions

Tunnel vision (potentially caused by unconscious bias or close contact between Crown counsel, investigative agencies, or victims)

Clearly, based on how the Crown presented its case, there was no attempt to understand what evidence they were dealing with and how ayahuasca is used in ayahuasca communities.

There was no attempt to understand the community in which the offence took place nor any attempt to consider the impact of the offence on any of the alleged victims, in this case presumably people wishing to attend an ayahuasca ceremony for their own perceived spiritual or healing benefits.

Inadequate or misinterpreted evidence;

This “DMT” case was clearly about ayahuasca, which is a gross misrepresentation of the evidence presented to the court. As numerous United Nations documents attest and as the Canadian Criminal Code makes clear – **DMT is the banned substance and not ayahuasca.** If Parliament had wanted to outlaw ayahuasca, they could have simply followed the United Nations publicly available instructions to countries on how to do so as articulated in the legally-binding Conventions. **Canada did not do this. Ayahuasca is not in the Canadian Criminal Code and it is also not DMT, according to the United Nations Psychotropic Conventions.**

This is a clear case of fabricated evidence presented to a Canadian court.

There is no other way this charge could have gone forward unless the Crown Prosecutor misrepresented ayahuasca as “DMT.”

Even in regard to the alleged DMT in the samples tested – **the Crown Prosecutor never ordered quantitative testing to ascertain how much “DMT” was actually in the evidence, despite numerous Canadian labs offering testing services and despite being clearly warranted.**

Ayahuasca – Physically and Psychologically Safe

The International Center for Ethnobotanical Education, Research and Service (ICEERS) is a United Nations Sanctioned NGO with special Consultative Status. ICEERS engages with “some of the fundamental issues resulting from the globalization of ayahuasca, iboga, and other ethnobotanicals.” ICEERS is considered a world authority on Traditional Indigenous Medicines.

In their Fact Sheet – Ayahuasca Safety Profile ICEERS states*:

Studies in both animals and healthy humans have shown that ayahuasca is a physically and psychologically safe substance when its composition is known, and when it is administered in controlled doses in appropriate environments with the necessary support.

*https://www.iceers.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ICEERS_factsheet_1_Safety_EN_web.pdf

Ayahuasca Slightly Increases Blood Pressure

From the ICEERS Ayahuasca Decision-Making Guide

In medical terms, ayahuasca has few contraindications. **Only if you have a serious cardiovascular disorder should you not take ayahuasca, as it slightly increases blood pressure.** No alterations of liver function and other biochemical parameters have been observed after the administration of ayahuasca in the laboratory. Only a modulation of the immune system has been detected, but this is temporary and does not seem to have clear effects on health.

See - <https://www.iceers.org/deciding-to-take-ayahuasca/>

Are Mainstream Media Reported Deaths Accurate?

In 2023 ICEERS published the results of a three-year study entitled Ayahuasca Global Consumption and Reported Deaths in the Media. As part of the study they examined media-reported deaths attributed to ayahuasca. A conclusion of the study states:

To date worldwide, no forensic examination or toxicological analysis has determined the combination of *Banisteriopsis caapi* and *Psychotria viridis* or *Diplopterys cabrerana* (the traditional ayahuasca brew) has caused poisoning leading to death.[\(link\)](#)

A legal environment or culture which focuses on winning

Apparently knowing nothing about Ayahuasca cultures, history or context of use, or even a willingness to explore the copious scientific evidence of spiritual healing for PTSD, opioid addictions, alcoholism, treatment resistant depression, suicidal ideation and other serious spiritual and emotional mental health conditions, the Crown Prosecutor decided to proceed to bring the “importation” case to trial.

The opportunity for a Crown Prosecutor as presented by this case was to find out about a substance that she knew nothing about, including context of use and the “dangers” presented to Albertans by ayahuasca, in this case mislabeled as “DMT.”

The presence of what has been labeled as “noble cause corruption,” or the belief that the ends justifies the means.

RCMP - 32 Arrests for DMT in Five Years, Two for Ayahuasca

AyahuascaCanada obtained the five-year RCMP arrest records for all DMT offenses (synthetic and ayahuasca). This was done through an Access to Information (ATI) request, otherwise known as a Freedom of Information request.

The ATI document indicated 32 arrests in Canada in the past five years for all DMT offences, of which it appears that two arrests were made specifically for ayahuasca. ATI File Number – A-2024-08989 Request a copy of the file[\(link\)](#)

The RCMP Have no Arrest Protocols for Ayahuasca

AyahuascaCanada also filed an ATI (Freedom of Information) request to obtain the RCMP written Policies and Procedures, arrest protocols or written instructions to RCMP officers regarding enforcement of ayahuasca regulations in Canada. As it turns out, the RCMP have no

such instructions, perhaps indicating their knowledge that “ayahuasca” is not named in the Canadian Criminal Code. Obtain a copy of the ATI - A-2023-12379 ([link](#))

Calgary – DMT Not a Policing Priority

AC reached out to the Corporate Data and Analytics Division of the Calgary Police Service and asked for any relevant statistics and risk assessments by the CPS for DMT. Specifically we requested **“the number of arrests and seizures of DMT in Calgary in the past year; perceived public threat and policing priorities** regarding DMT and statistics related to arrests, abuse and seizures of DMT in Calgary” over the past year:

Hello,

Thank you for your research request. I have checked with our Drug Unit and we do not have data that would inform your research.

Rebecca Davidson, MA | Corporate Data & Analytics | Manager

C: 403.804.9144 | pol8332@calgarypolice.ca

“When words are both true and kind, they can change the world.”—Buddha



To obtain a copy of the email trail for this research request click this [link](#).

DMT is Not a “Drug of Concern” in Canada

DMT is not listed as a drug of concern in the Canadian Drugs and Substances strategy ([link](#))

The Government of Canada Drug Analysis Service (DAS) has also not listed DMT under their list of Main Controlled Substances in Canada. ([link](#))

However, the Canadian government does have a major concern with opioids such as heroin or pharmaceutical opioids including morphine, oxycodone and fentanyl in Canada ([link](#)).

It is interesting to note that **many people who attend ayahuasca ceremonies to treat addictions will often give up their drug of choice after a single ayahuasca ceremony and numerous addiction studies bear this out ([link](#)).**

What Sounds Better in Court – Two Kilograms or 4.72 Grams?

The Crown alleged that the two kilograms of evidence in question was **two kilograms of DMT**. **However, a quantitative analysis was never conducted, although it was clearly warranted.** given the “importation” charges of a “controlled substance.”

Extrapolating the amount of DMT in 2 kilograms of ayahuasca can be done using verified published studies. Since the DMT in ayahuasca is a small component of the black tar-like substance, we can extrapolate the amount of actual DMT in the evidence by using verifiable published studies.

Detection and Quantification of Psychoactive N,N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) in Ayahuasca Brews by Ambient Ionization High-Resolution Mass Spectrometry

see - <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acsomega.0c03196> -

This study was financially **supported by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice (DOJ).**

If we take the median value (the average value of the DMT) found in the ayahuasca brews tested in the indicated study, **the amount of DMT in 2 kilograms of ayahuasca paste could potentially be 4.72 grams of DMT.**

However, this was never verified through rigorous scientific testing, despite a clear obligation on the part of the Crown to ascertain the evidence in question, as articulated in the PPSC Deskbook and the Guidelines for Crown Counsel.

Canadian Labs Offering Mass Spectrometry Testing

A number of labs in Canada offer Ambient Ionization High-Resolution Mass Spectrometry (AI-HRMS) analysis services which includes detection and quantification of DMT:

- **AIMS Mass Spectrometry Laboratory (University of Toronto, ON):** This facility explicitly lists the JEOL AccuTOF Plus 4G mass spectrometer, which is equipped with a Direct Analysis in Real Time (DART) ion source. They also indicate the availability of Paperspray ionization. They provide services to internal and external clients.
- **National Research Council Canada (NRC) - Measurement Science and Standards (Halifax, NS):** Research has been published utilizing Laser ablation electrospray ionization high-resolution mass spectrometry (LAESI-HRMS) for regulatory screening and food safety.
- **ResolveMass Laboratories Inc. (Cochrane, AB/Montreal, QC):** A specialized contract research organization offering high-resolution mass spectrometry services, including MALDI-TOF.
- **University of British Columbia (UBC) Chemistry Department (Vancouver, BC):** The facility is equipped for advanced mass spectrometric techniques.
- **Carleton University - Mass Spectrometry Centre (Ottawa, ON):** Provides high-resolution, accurate mass measurements, including ESI and other ionization techniques.

DMT – Naturally Produced in the Human Brain

N,N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) found in trace amounts in the ayahuasca brew, is an endogenous psychedelic substance, meaning it is naturally produced in the human brain.

Research shows DMT manufactured by the human body plays a role in the nervous system and influences dream states.

DMT synthesis is thought to occur in the pineal gland. Some theories suggest DMT levels may rise during sleep to induce the dream state. DMT may also be related to other natural changes in awareness, including near-death experiences.

DMT mitigates experimental stroke by stabilizing the blood-brain barrier and reducing neuroinflammation

([link](#))

Our findings prove that DMT mitigates a poststroke effect by stabilizing the BBB and reducing neuroinflammation. Such interactions of DMT with the vascular and immune systems can be leveraged to complement current, insufficient, stroke therapy.

A psychedelic surprise: DMT helps the brain heal after stroke

([link](#))

Scientists have discovered that DMT, a natural compound found in plants and even the human brain, can dramatically reduce brain damage caused by stroke. The psychoactive molecule, long known for its hallucinogenic effects, restored the blood-brain barrier and reduced inflammation in animal and cell studies. These findings suggest that DMT could complement existing stroke treatments, potentially transforming recovery outcomes.

Why DMT matters: unique features and therapeutic potential beyond classical psychedelics

([link](#))

In mental health treatment, an exploratory study with intravenous DMT has shown next-day antidepressant effects in treatment-resistant depression (23). Ayahuasca has been long used in traditional Amazonian ceremonies with the aim of facilitating profound introspection and emotional healing. **Modern preliminary research suggests its therapeutic potential for treating mood, anxiety, substance use, and trauma-related disorders (24–35), as well as suicidality (34) – possibly by modulating emotion and trauma processing (36–41).**

These findings correlate with traditional knowledge of ayahuasca's use in treating problematic spiritual trauma-based afflictions.

The 'Police Science' Magazine in Spain acknowledges that ayahuasca is not illegal in Spain, and "brings benefits to those who consume it"

(Spanish, [link](#))

This 40-page article appeared in the July-August 2020 Police Science Magazine in Spain **and concluded that the benefits of ayahuasca were apparent.** It detailed the effects, the modern expansion in Spain and the legal status of the brew.

While researching this extensive article, a police officer actually participated in three ayahuasca ceremonies. This article (over 40 pages) details the history and current use of Ayahuasca in Spain and its legality. It analyzes the history, effects, expansion and the legal status of the brew in Spain.

These Ontario police officers are using ayahuasca to treat their PTSD

([link](#))

Global News, Ontario - For many years, Chorny suffered from the trauma that came from his work, which frequently included responding to sexual assaults and other violent crimes.

“The worst is when people die in your arms,” Chorny told Global News.

He started doing research online and came across a video of **U.S. army veterans talking about treating their PTSD with ayahuasca, a tea that contains dimethyltryptamine (DMT)** and harmaline, which are both banned in Canada and the U.S. Only a small number of religious groups have been able to get special federal exemptions that allow them to legally import ayahuasca for religious purposes.

Those ceremonies have helped him turn his whole life around and finally get a handle on his PTSD. He likened the experience to peeling back the layers of an onion to reveal the roots of his anger and frustration with life.

Heroic Hearts: A Path to Healing for Veterans and Their Families

[\(link\)](#)

MANY VETERANS TRY EVERYTHING, FROM DOCTORS TO THERAPISTS, AND NOTHING WORKS. Join the mission – learn how psychedelic programs prevent veteran suffering and suicide.

80% of veterans experience significant improvement after participating in just one psychedelic program.

PTSD has killed more soldiers by suicide in the U.S. than were killed in war since 9/11, and even more sobering, **fewer than 10% of veterans who begin traditional PTSD treatment programs complete treatment and experience marked improvement.** Many veterans try everything — from doctors to therapists and nothing works. Veterans and their families feel helpless, alone, and out of options.

“When people have these big psychedelic experiences during a week long retreat, no matter what, they will have lasting changes. **They’re going to have new perspectives when it comes to how they perceive themselves and the world. Many Veterans can permanently overcome hypervigilance, depression, and anxiety** – Jesse Gould, Founder, HHP.

Could psychedelics offer a key to solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

[\(link\)](#)

The *Jewish Chronicle* – July 10, 2025

From ayahuasca retreats to MDMA-assisted therapy, psychedelic researchers are exploring the peace-building potential of mind-altering drugs

A juggernaut in the movement to decriminalize psychedelic drugs for their healing potential, Doblin, 70, has always been in pursuit of a spiritual reckoning. At 13, he expected his bar mitzvah to offer a glimpse into the infinite; the spiritual emptiness he experienced instead led him to a different rite of passage. **“For me, psychedelics were a key part of my spiritual and emotional maturation,” he says.**

Last month’s line-up for Psychedelic Science Conference, a week-long expo of panels, workshops and presentations on the latest in psychedelic research, certainly confirms the intersectionality between Judaism and psychedelics. **Hosted by MAPS, this year’s event**

emphasized the role psychedelics can play in social change and collective healing, especially in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Ayahuasca and Human Spirituality

([link](#))

ENTHEOS is a community of enthusiasts, scholars and scientists who share a common interest in the role of entheogens as it pertains to human spirituality. Recognizing the important role of the 'psychedelic' experience, both past and present, to the development of spiritual expression, the Journal Entheos will provide a much-needed forum for specialists while encouraging a wide popular readership.

It is our intention to provide a balanced and respectful perspective on this widely misunderstood and politically volatile subject. Broad discussion of the role of entheogens in human history can only widen the scope of humanity's collective pursuit of understanding.

The ritual use of ayahuasca can be integrated socially without risk to public health

([Link](#))

Marta Molina | November 2020

ICEERS published the [technical report](#) "ayahuasca in Spain: an assessment of the people participating in ayahuasca sessions using indicators of public health"

After having published numerous articles in scientific journals for more than a decade, ICEERS conducted a campaign (#InformeAYA2020) with the aim of transferring their research of the academic and scientific communities.

ICEERS was also interested in engaging the media and public health administrators to open a constructive dialogue about the uses of ayahuasca, increasingly prevalent in the West, and whose growing popularity is reflected specifically in the Spanish State.

The report shows that ayahuasca could be integrated into modern societies without causing a negative impact on public health. On the contrary, the participants improved their health and well-being.

Ayahuasca: The power of a plant from the Amazon and the respect it demands

([link](#))

By Dr. Gabor Mate – Please note, Dr. Gabor Mate is a **world-renowned addictions specialist** and was using ayahuasca to treat Vancouver street addicts.

A CBC "Nature of Things" documentary chronicles his work in Canada ([link](#)). After obtaining excellent results in curing street addicts with ayahuasca, Health Canada subsequently threatened to revoke his medical licence.

Thursday, 24 Dec 2015 18:42 UTC – **This article originally appeared in the Globe and Mail.**

As a Western-trained doctor, I have long been aware of modern medicine's limitations in handling chronic conditions of mind and body. For all our achievements, there are ailments whose ravages we physicians can at best alleviate. In our narrow pursuit of cure, we fail to comprehend the essence of healing.

Thus the popularity of ayahuasca, the Amazonian plant medicine that many Westerners seek out for the healing of physical illness or mental anguish or for a sense of meaning amid the growing alienation in our culture.

StatsCan DMT Reported Deaths in Canada - (There Aren't Any)

The fatal dose of DMT has been estimated at 8,800 mg for a person weighing 80 kg. The average dose of DMT in tested ayahuasca brews has been measured at 60 mg. ([link](#))

A search of the StatsCan database by AyahuascaCanada ([link](#)) failed to turn up any DMT-attributed deaths in Canada.

Ayahuasca – Physically No More Dangerous than a Cup of Coffee

The International Center for Ethnobotanical Education, Research, and Service (ICEERS) is a United Nations sanctioned NGO with UN Special Consultative Status. ICEERS is a world-recognized authority on the use of entheogens including ayahuasca.

From ICEERS Safety Fact Sheet:

Studies in both animals and healthy humans have shown that ayahuasca is a physically and psychologically safe substance when its composition is known, and when it is administered in controlled doses in appropriate environments with the necessary support. ([link](#))

Ayahuasca (and Coffee) slightly raise blood pressure -

In medical terms, ayahuasca has few contraindications. Only if you have a serious cardiovascular disorder should you not take ayahuasca, as it slightly increases blood pressure. No alterations of liver function and other biochemical parameters have been observed after the administration of ayahuasca in the laboratory. Only a modulation of the immune system has been detected, but this is temporary and does not seem to have clear effects on health. ([link](#))

Coffee (caffeine) also raises blood pressure ([link](#)):

Caffeine may cause a brief rise in your blood pressure, even if you don't have high blood pressure. This short-term spike in blood pressure happens mainly in people who don't drink caffeine often, rather than in those who do. Still, the blood pressure response to caffeine differs from person to person.

The ICEERS Fact Sheet also brings up that **the psychological contraindication for taking ayahuasca is psychosis. Psychosis is generally recognized as schizophrenia, hearing voices, an inability to hold a coherent conversation - a break from reality.** This is why typical mental health screening processes and questionnaires are put in place by ayahuasca facilitators.

Is the ICEERS Fact Sheet credible? ICEERS is a United Nations Sanctioned NGO with special consultative status. They are world-recognized experts in ayahuasca.

No Black Market in Ayahuasca – Health Canada

There is no recreational or black market for ayahuasca according to Health Canada's official Policies and Procedures for religious exemptions for ayahuasca, obtained by AyahuascaCanada through the Access to Information (Freedom of Information) Act - Health Canada File Number - A-2022-001575 /MC2. The document states:

- ***There is no evidence of risk to public safety associated with Daime tea/Ayahuasca, in terms of illicit production and importation, even in countries where it has been used for centuries.***
- ***There is no evidence of widespread use and diversion in Canada***
- Daime tea/Ayahuasca specifically does not appear to be the object of common abuse.
- Physical dependence and tolerance to Daime tea/Ayahuasca do not appear to develop.
- ***Consumption of Daime tea/Ayahuasca induces vomiting, which limits the amount that can be ingested at one time and thus its abuse potential.***

To request a copy of this ATI file ([link](#)).

The Worst Drug Crisis in Canadian History

Alberta and the Opioid Crisis in Canada

(From the Government of Canada, House of Commons Research Publications*):

Executive Summary

Opioid-related harms have reached CRISIS PROPORTIONS in many countries, including Canada. Almost 23,000 Canadians died due to apparent opioid toxicity between January 2016 and March 2021.

Many other people faced life-threatening medical emergencies or other harms. These harms have been linked to many causes, including opioid-prescribing practices and the ***presence of very potent opioids such as fentanyl and fentanyl analogues in the drug supply***. The COVID-19 pandemic has further worsened outcomes.

The opioid crisis has touched Canadians from all walks of life, although it has not done so equally: people with certain identities, including men and Indigenous people, have been disproportionately harmed.

In response to the crisis, the federal government has made investments and launched a variety of initiatives. ***Parliament has also addressed the issue by enacting legislation and proposing a range of other measures.***

https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en_CA/ResearchPublications/202123E

The opioid crisis in Canada is a significant public health emergency, primarily driven by the rise in the use of powerful illegal opioids like fentanyl. ***The Canadian government is implementing a comprehensive strategy that includes prevention, treatment, and harm reduction efforts to address the crisis and its underlying causes.***

Overview of the Opioid Crisis in Canada

The opioid crisis in Canada is a significant public health emergency, primarily driven by the rise of powerful illegal opioids like fentanyl. This crisis has resulted in a dramatic increase in overdose deaths, ***with more than 18 Canadians dying daily from opioid toxicity.***

Key Factors Contributing to the Crisis

Prescription Practices

- Overprescribing of legal opioids has contributed to addiction.
- Misleading studies in the past suggested opioids were less addictive, leading to liberal prescribing.

Illegal Drug Market

- ***Fentanyl and other potent opioids are increasingly found in the illegal drug supply.***
- ***These drugs are often mixed with non-opioid substances, heightening overdose risks.***

Federal Actions

The Government of Canada has implemented a comprehensive strategy to combat the crisis, **focusing on prevention, treatment, and harm reduction.**

Key initiatives include:

- Increased availability of Naloxone, a life-saving drug that reverses opioid overdoses.
- Funding for community-based treatment programs and harm reduction services.
- Regulatory changes to facilitate access to supervised consumption sites.

Funding and Support

Significant investments have been made, including:

- **\$150 million for the Emergency Treatment Fund to address urgent needs.**
- **Over \$750 million for innovative community-based pilot projects since 2017.**

Overview of Drug Deaths in Canada

The rate of drug-related deaths in Canada has been a growing concern, particularly in recent years. The following table summarizes the most recent statistics on drug deaths per 100,000 population.

Drug Death Rates in Canada*

Year	Rate per 100,000 Population
2019	8.0
2020	10.7
2021	12.0
2022	14.0
2023	15.0
2024	16.0
2025	17.0

Key Points

- The rate of drug deaths has increased significantly over the years, **with a notable rise from 8.0 deaths per 100,000 in 2019 to an estimated 17.0 in 2025.**
- **Opioids, particularly fentanyl, have been a major contributor to these deaths.**
- The increase in drug-related fatalities reflects broader trends in substance use and the **challenges of addressing addiction and overdose crises.**

These statistics highlight the urgent need for effective public health strategies to combat the rising rates of drug-related deaths in Canada.

*paho.org

Canada is in the Most “Serious and Deadly” Public Health Crisis in History says Health Minister

From the Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy October 30, 2023*

Minister’s Message:

Canada is in the midst of one of the most serious and deadly public health crises in our country’s history—the toxic and illegal drug and overdose crisis. No community has been left untouched. **Since 2016, more than 38,500 people have died of apparent opioid toxicity in Canada.**

This crisis is tragic, and I want to recognize and remember the lives of people in Canada we have lost. **Every person who overdoses is somebody who has a family and people that care about them and that we must do everything we can to support and protect them.**

People who use substances, their families, and the communities around them, need us to use every tool at our disposal to provide compassionate care **and maintain community safety.** There is so much to be done **and no one government, community or family can end this crisis alone.**

That is why we are launching a renewed Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy (CDSS) that has been designed to support a comprehensive and compassionate approach centered on promoting both public health and public safety. **This whole-of-government initiative includes timely access to a full range of strategies to help people access the prevention, harm reduction, treatment, or recovery services and supports they need, when and where they need them.**

* <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/documents/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-drugs-substances-strategy-approach-related-harms-overdose-crisis/cdss-report-eng.pdf>

Government of Canada Strategy for Dealing with the Crisis

[\(link\)](#)

To support the administration and enforcement of our substance control laws, we are focusing our efforts on authorizing activities with controlled substances and precursor chemicals for legitimate purposes, such as clinical trials or medical uses, **while also giving health inspectors, law enforcement and border control authorities the tools that they need to enforce the laws that keep people living in Canada safe and address the harms of the illegal drug trade.** To achieve this objective, we will:

Provide law enforcement and public health officials with new tools to respond to the overdose crisis

Law enforcement interact daily with people who use substances and have a crucial role to play in supporting a public health approach to substance use related harms. We are supporting law enforcement in this role by:

+ offering training to raise awareness of drug stigma; and

+ piloting an overdose monitoring platform to provide near real-time suspected overdose surveillance data

to support an immediate community-level response to a sudden increase or spike in overdose events and

collect information on organized crime's drug importation patterns to support decision-making.

Enforcement Strategy Targets Organized Crime

We are working with law and border enforcement partners across the country ***to address the role of organized crime in the production, diversion and importation of toxic illegal drugs.***

Our activities include:

+ preventing cross-border movement of illegal drugs and precursor chemicals through on-going enforcement efforts.

+ supporting major drug enforcement operations both domestically and internationally and the dismantling of illegal drug labs.

+ collecting, assessing and sharing criminal intelligence on the illegal drug supply among law enforcement partners.

+ working closely with the United States and other countries to identify and disrupt shipments of illegal drugs destined for Canada.

+ providing forensic accounting services to support law enforcement agencies in conducting complex and sophisticated organized drug crime investigations; and

+ identifying drugs seized by law enforcement agencies to support police investigation and enforcement of our drug laws.

Support the diversion of people away from the criminal justice system and towards the health and social services

+ Bill C-5, which repealed mandatory minimum penalties for all drug offences in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act; it also requires police and prosecutors to consider diverting people who commit simple drug possession offences toward health and social services

+ guidance to prosecutors to encourage them to consider alternatives for simple drug possession offences, except when there are serious public safety concerns

Guiding Principles for Dealing with the Crisis

The CDSS is led by four guiding principles. It is:

+ Compassionate by treating substance use as a health issue and people who use substances with compassion and respect, and recognizing stigma as a barrier to accessing health and other services.

+ Equitable by recognizing the distinct impacts that substance use policies and interventions can have on Indigenous Peoples, African, Caribbean, Black and other racialized and marginalized populations.

+ Collaborative by engaging all levels of government, Indigenous Peoples, communities, stakeholders, people with lived and living experience, law and border enforcement and international partners.

+ Comprehensive **by recognizing that substance use is different for everyone and requires a range of policies, services and supports** to promote overall well being and that many substance use related harms arise from the toxic illegal drug supply and illegal drug market more broadly.

* <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/documents/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-drugs-substances-strategy-approach-related-harms-overdose-crisis/cdss-report-eng.pdf>

Major Drug Arrests in Alberta

CBSA officers seize over 1,000 kg of narcotics at Coutts port of entry in Alberta

From: Canada Border Services Agency

February 13, 2026 , Calgary, Alberta

In November and December 2025, CBSA border services officers at the Coutts port of entry in southern Alberta seized a combined 1,010 kg of cocaine, methamphetamine, suspected heroin and dode (opium poppies) from three commercial trucks.

On November 26, officers examined a commercial truck carrying a load of electrolyte beverages destined for Calgary, Alberta. With the assistance of the CBSA's Detector Dog Service, **officers found 461 kg of cocaine and 43 kg of suspected heroin.**

On December 2, officers examined a commercial truck hauling an empty truck trailer. During the search of the truck, **officers found 300 kg of cocaine. Officers also found 400 grams of suspected dode (opium poppies)** in the cab of the truck. The driver was arrested for smuggling.

On December 18, officers, with assistance from CBSA's Detector Dog Service, examined a commercial truck carrying a declared load of vacuum parts destined for Calgary, Alberta. During the search, officers found methamphetamine hidden inside. After completing the examination, **a total of 206 kg of methamphetamine was seized.** The driver was arrested for smuggling.

In all three incidents, the drivers and the seized narcotics were transferred to the custody of the RCMP Federal Policing Northwest Region.

QUOTES

“This string of significant seizures exemplifies the dedication of CBSA officers who tirelessly defend our borders and protect our communities from dangerous drugs and organized crime groups. **As a government, the safety and security of all Canadians is our most important responsibility.**”

- The Honourable Gary Anandasangaree, Minister of Public Safety

“CBSA officers remain vigilant and dedicated to keeping harmful drugs off our streets. **Alongside our RCMP law enforcement partners, we are keeping Canadians safe by securing our borders and disrupting crime.**”

- Janalee Bell-Boychuk, Regional Director General, Prairie Region, Canada Border Services Agency

“Through strong collaboration with our partners, we continue to enhance our ability to detect, intercept, and prevent harmful drugs from crossing our borders. This shared commitment reflects our collective resolve to protect Canadians and disrupt those who attempt to traffic dangerous substances.”

- Assistant Commissioner Lisa Moreland, Regional Commander, RCMP Federal Policing Northwest Region

QUICK FACTS

In 2025, CBSA officers in Alberta were responsible for making 1,292 seizures of illegal narcotics, including 1,054 kg of cocaine and 279 kg of methamphetamine.

Canada is investing \$1.3 billion to bolster security at the border and strengthen the immigration system, all while keeping Canadians safe. Information available on the Border Plan is available here: The Government of Canada's Border Plan: significant investments to strengthen border security and our immigration system - Canada.ca

For the latest contraband statistics, visit [Canada Border Services Agency seizures](#).

see: <https://www.canada.ca/en/border-services-agency/news/2026/02/cbsa-officers-seize-over-1000-kg-of-narcotics-at-coutts-port-of-entry-in-alberta.html>

Project Cerberus

Project Cerberus (Concluded Sept 2025): Led by ALERT (Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams), ***this two-year investigation dismantled a cross-border network tied to Mexican cartels.*** It resulted in the seizure of 157 kg of cocaine (96–98% pure), 15 firearms, and seven vehicles with sophisticated hydraulic hidden compartments.

Edmonton Record Bust (May 2025): ALERT seized 27 kg of cocaine and 5 kg of MDMA in West Edmonton, marking the largest-ever cocaine seizure for the agency within the city of Edmonton.

Historical Context

While the 2025 Coutts seizures represent a record-breaking volume for the border, ***Project Cobra (2022) remains one of the largest integrated investigations in provincial history. It resulted in the seizure of an estimated \$55 million worth of drugs, including 928 kg of methamphetamine and 6 kg of cocaine, along with \$7 million in assets***

\$600K of drugs seized in Fort McMurray-based trafficking investigation, 8 charged

Police have charged eight people following a two-year investigation into drug trafficking activity in Fort McMurray, Edmonton and lower mainland B.C.

Two Fort McMurray homes were searched as well as two in Surrey and one in Coquitlam.

Approximately \$600,000 worth of drugs were seized including 5,486 grams of cocaine, 1,036 grams of methamphetamine, \$51,000 in cash, two hand guns, three carbine rifles, one shotgun, five prohibited extended round magazines, and various amounts of ammunition.

A total of 23 drug trafficking related charges have been laid. All eight suspects – five from Fort McMurray, two from Edmonton and one from Grande Prairie – were arrested on Feb. 18 and have since been released from custody.

They have various court dates in March, said a news release from Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams.

See: <https://www.ctvnews.ca/edmonton/article/600k-of-drugs-seized-in-fort-mcmurray-based-trafficking-investigation-8-charged/>

The opioid crisis in Alberta remains a critical public health emergency, characterized by record-high mortality rates and a shifting landscape of high-potency synthetic opioids. While recent 2025 data suggests a potential drop in deaths and emergency events in some areas, the province continues to see significant harms, particularly in major urban centers.

Opioid Deaths in Alberta - Deadliest Years on Record

Mortality: 2023 was the deadliest year on record for Alberta, with 2,051 drug-related deaths, a 17% increase over the previous year.

Carfentanil Surge: In early 2025, 68% of opioid deaths in Alberta involved carfentanil, a massive jump from just 10% in 2024.

Geographic Hotspots: Edmonton and Calgary consistently report the highest numbers of fatalities and emergency responses. In Edmonton alone, carfentanil was involved in 78% of opioid deaths during the first five months of 2025.

Impact on First Nations: First Nations people are disproportionately affected; in 2022, their rate of opioid poisoning deaths was 8.4 times higher than non-Indigenous Albertans.

[Health Infobase Canada](#)

Government Response: The "Alberta Recovery Model"

The Alberta provincial government has shifted its strategy toward a recovery-oriented system of care, prioritizing long-term treatment and recovery over some harm reduction measures.

Virtual Opioid Dependency Program (VODP): Offers same-day access to addiction medicine specialists and medications like Suboxone or methadone by calling 1-844-383-7688.

Digital Overdose Response System (DORS): A mobile app designed to alert emergency services if a user becomes unresponsive while using substances alone.

Recovery Communities: Alberta is establishing 11 large-scale recovery communities, including five in partnership with Indigenous communities, to provide holistic, no-cost treatment for up to one year.

See – [Alberta Recovery Model](#)

UN experts call for end to global ‘war on drugs’ ([link](#))

23 June 2023

GENEVA (23 June 2023) – **The international community must replace punishment with support and promote policies that respect, protect and fulfill the rights of all, UN experts said today.**

Ahead of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit importation 2023, they called for transformative change in the international approach to drugs, focusing on health and other human rights and issued the following statement:

“The ‘war on drugs’ may be understood to a significant extent as a war on people. Its impact has been greatest on those who live in poverty, and it frequently overlaps with discrimination directed at marginalised groups, minorities and Indigenous Peoples. **In our reporting and experience, we have [found](#) that such discriminatory impact is a common element across drug policies with regard to the widest range of human rights,** including the right to personal liberty; freedom from torture, ill-treatment and forced labour; fair trial rights; the right to health, including access to essential medicines, palliative care, comprehensive drug prevention and education, drug treatment, and harm reduction; the right to adequate housing; freedom from discrimination and the right to equal treatment before the law; right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; **cultural rights and freedoms of expression, religion, assembly and association.**

Secretary-General's message on the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit importation ([link](#))

Statements | António Guterres, Secretary-General

The global illicit drug trade continues to exact a devastating toll: claiming lives, ravaging public health services, and fueling violence and organized crime.

Drug importation is tearing through communities with substances that are more potent, more dangerous, and more deadly than ever. Meanwhile, criminal networks prey on the most vulnerable – particularly women and youth – as they rake in hundreds of billions annually through the illicit drug trade.

Is DMT Contributing to Canada’s Drug Crisis?

At no place in the Government’s statements on one of the worst public health crises in history is DMT or ayahuasca mentioned as a drug of concern or that these substances are in any way contributing to the on-going devastation caused by the illegal and dangerous drugs ravaging Canadian communities in Alberta at this time.

And yet, set against the backdrop of **the most serious drug crisis in the history of Canada**, a Crown Prosecutor committed hundreds of hours of law enforcement and court time into a prosecution that has, by all accounts, no impact on the health and safety of Canadians and, indeed **the argument is easily made that ayahuasca, in this case presented as “DMT” to a court of law, is actually part of the solution, given its known efficacy in treating addictions of all types including opioids.**

The SWAT Traumatization of Chad Gillies

Chad Gillies originally started taking ayahuasca as a last resort in his life when conventional pharmaceutical interventions did not bring the relief he sought for his depressive symptoms – ***often referred to in the medical community as “treatment-resistant depression.”***

Having heard about ayahuasca and being determined to alleviate his symptoms and return to a normal productive life, ***Mr. Gillies moved to Costa Rica when he heard that ayahuasca ceremonies were being legally offered there.*** After moving back to Calgary, Mr. Gillies remained active in the Ayahuasca community in Canada.

Mr. Gillies is by all accounts a hard-working, highly-reputable person and a peaceful family man whose life consists of looking after his family, working incredibly hard at his specialty-welding business and pursuing his passion for music.

The SWAT arrest of Mr. Gillies with heavily-armed police officers pointing rifles into his face and allegedly telling him to ***“get on your fucking knees,” and, then after handcuffing him one of the officers threatened to punch him “in the fucking face” if he raised his gaze.*** As can be rightly assumed, ***this was an incredibly traumatizing event.***

At no time during their months-long investigation would the CPS undercover officers have seen him handling firearms (there aren’t any in the house), associating with known criminals or criminal organizations, consuming alcohol or exhibiting any criminal behaviors whatsoever.

When asked what the undercover officers would have seen him do during their months-long undercover investigation, ***Mr. Gillies remarked that it must have been incredibly boring for them*** as they would have observed him leaving for work in the morning, undertaking his welding jobs and then returning home and typically going to bed around 10 p.m.

Mr. Gillies was publicly arrested at his home in a working-class neighborhood when people were leaving for work in the morning. As a result of this, Mr. Gillies had to move his family out of the neighborhood and rent a house in a neighborhood where he was not well known.

Ethical and Political Questions

The SWAT Arrest of a Peaceful Family Man

On February 8, 2024 Chad Gillies, a Calgary businessman and musician was arrested for importing DMT (Ayahuasca) into Canada. **His arrest raises a number of ethical and political questions around the use of Ancestral Medicines in Canada in general and the circumstances surrounding this high-profile arrest in particular.**

This six-month investigation and arrest was so large it was given a codename – “Operation Dear Santa,” presumably because of Mr. Gillies’ flowing beard. **This must have been highly amusing for the police agencies involved.** For an excellent article on the situation see this story on [Flickermag.org](https://www.flickermag.org).

On the day of the arrest, Chad was expecting a delivery from DHL. Instead he got a visit from an undercover police officer posing as a DHL delivery man and then shortly afterwards a nine-man [Calgary SWAT team](#) conducted the arrest. **Chad had no prior arrests, does not have a history of violence, does not have firearms in his house and is not a registered firearm owner.**

The investigation and arrest was actually initiated in the United States and included five enforcement agencies including U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), United States Homeland Security, Canadian Border Services the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the **Calgary Police Services undercover and SWAT teams.**

Decision to Prosecute

In light of the severe opioid crisis and wholesale drug smuggling being perpetrated in Alberta and throughout Canada, **what was the motivation for a six-month investigation and a 2-year trial to prosecute an alleged “importer of DMT” in which the trial somehow turned into a case of “importation of ayahuasca?”**

In the past five years the RCMP have conducted 32 arrests for DMT, with two apparently for ayahuasca. Many members of police forces and the RCMP have no idea what DMT is or what it does. However, **there are police officers that were using ayahuasca in an effort to heal their PTSD according to news reports.**

In Calgary, according to the CPS Analytics Manager, **DMT is not recognized as a public threat and is not a policing priority. The CPS hadn’t made an arrest for “DMT” in the year preceding Mr. Gillies’ SWAT takedown.**

Prevention of Wrongful Convictions

Tunnel Vision – despite the plethora of information concerning the benign nature of ayahuasca and despite why wasn’t a stay of proceedings entered?

A legal environment or culture which focuses on winning – The only way that these charges could have been brought forward was by representing that the evidence in question, which was clearly ayahuasca, was represented to the court as “DMT,” which is patently false as elucidated by the UNINCB.

Noble Cause Corruption – **Noble Cause Corruption, or “the ends justify the means,” is readily evident throughout this trial.**

Duty to Present a Fair, Clear, and Comprehensible Case

The Practice of Overcharging is Not Appropriate – charges of “importation” typically indicate a highly-organized criminal venture predicated on the exploitation of members of the public. **There was no evidence that Mr. Gillies’ motivation was financial or even criminal in nature. Indeed, in Mr. Gillies’ sentencing agreement the Crown Prosecutor admitted this.**

The Decision to Prosecute

The Public Interest – what public interest was being served in this case? **A person who had healed himself from treatment-resistant depression was assisting a Canadian facilitator to bring spiritual healing to other people.** There is absolutely zero indication of public harm or violence being perpetrated by Mr. Gillies.

Decision to Continue Prosecution – the Crown Prosecutor failed in her duty to understand the implications of the importation charges prior to trial. **However, even after admitting in their sentencing report that Mr. Gillies had no financial motive in importing ayahuasca, the Crown Prosecutor never once considered that this “importation” case did not warrant prosecution from the outset.**

Deskbook - Irrelevant Factors

Effect of the Decision on the Crown Prosecutor – **it can only be assumed that Ms. Awoniyi was “saving face” in her dogged pursuit of importation charges, perhaps for personal notoriety or to bolster the institutional reputation of the PPSC** as these charges originated with US Homeland Security and US Border Services.

A Serious Case Involves Violence or Raises Issues of Public Safety – **Since there is no violence associated with ayahuasca use in Canada or even in Latin American countries where it has been used for millennia and since the substance is eminently safe** (as even a cursory web search would have confirmed), **Crown counsel should turn their mind to the availability of alternative measures.**

Gravity of the Offence – from the PPSC Deskbook - **Conversely, the less serious an alleged offence is, the more likely public interest will weigh in favour of discontinuing the prosecution, or pursuing an alternative measure.**

Serious Offences – the Deskbook gives examples of serious offences predicated upon the amount and nature of the controlled substance, the prevalence of that controlled substance in the community and **whether the accused is alleged to be part of a criminal organization or a terrorist group. None of which applied to Mr. Gillies, as an extensive undercover police investigation confirmed.**

Consultation

Knowledge and Understanding of the Community – **the Ayahuasca community in Canada is a small but robust group of individuals dedicated to spiritual healing.** These individuals include persons seeking spiritual healing, ceremony helpers (guardians), property owners providing ceremonial space in naturalistic settings, curanderos, ayahuasceros, shamans and facilitators. **As far**

as we are aware, at no time did Ms Awoniyi reach out to members of the ayahuasca community in Alberta or Canada.

At the very least, as noted in the Deskbook - **Prosecutors can learn more about their communities by consulting public documents.** All of the information in this document is publicly available.

Consideration of the Impact on the Local Community – including public safety, public health and public welfare. Four decades of world-wide scientific research confirms the safety and efficacy of ayahuasca. In ayahuasca cultures in the Amazon, children will be given age-appropriate doses of ayahuasca and pregnant women will take the medicine up to the eighth month of pregnancy.

Crown Counsel Oluwadamilola Awoniyi is Responsible – as clearly articulated in the Deskbook - **It is Crown counsel, not the investigative agency, who are ultimately responsible for making the decision to prosecute,** except where the consent of the Attorney General is required. Crown counsel must make this decision objectively and independently from the investigative agency.

Crown Prosecutors “Represent the Public Interest”

([link](#))

Crown counsel's primary interest is not to secure a conviction, rather, it is to pursue justice. In doing so, Crown counsel represent the public interest. They are not lawyers for the police, the victims, or the accused.

How exactly was the “public interest” served in the violent arrest and two-year prosecution of a peaceful family man and a productive hard-working member of his community?

It cannot be over-emphasized that the purpose of a criminal prosecution is not to obtain a conviction, it is to lay before a jury what the Crown considers to be credible evidence relevant to what is alleged to be a crime. Counsel have a duty to see that all available legal proof of the facts is presented.

What “legal proof” of the Crown’s contention that Mr. Gillies imported “2 kilograms of DMT” was ever presented to the court? **There is a qualified lab in Cochrane Alberta that can undertake a quantification analysis of the evidence in question.**

Despite this huge outlay of public expense for undercover police, a six-month investigation that was so large it had to be given a name, police officers posing as DHL delivery men and a SWAT team arrest, **the Crown Prosecutor, who’s duty it is to ascertain “all available legal proof of the facts,” never bothered to order quantification of the “evidence” despite having access to five Canadian labs that provide this service, with one located in Cochrane, AB.**

Public confidence in the administration of justice is bolstered by a system where Crown counsel are not only strong and effective advocates, but also ministers of justice, with a duty to ensure the justice system operates fairly for all.

What was Ms. Awoniyi’s role in this trial, exactly? **A minister of justice seeking fairness for all, or an apologist for the brutality and callousness shown by the CPS in undertaking this “high risk” arrest?** Or was she perhaps trying to gain institutional favor from international law enforcement agencies? Whatever the motivation, we can see no justification for “DMT importation” charges

against Mr. Gillies, especially **when it became apparent that the Crown was using the Criminal Code restriction of DMT to, in actuality, prosecute for ayahuasca. Where was the fairness to Mr. Gillies who had to answer to these charges?**

Crown counsel also fulfill the duty to be fair by:

- Making disclosure in accordance with the law;[Footnote 15](#)
- **Bringing all relevant cases and authorities known to counsel to the attention of the court, even if they are contrary to the Crown's position;**
- **Not misleading the court;**
- **Stating the law accurately;**

Here again we can see absolutely no attempt to “bring all relevant cases” known to counsel, even if contrary to the Crown’s position. However, from a neutral observer’s viewpoint, **the Crown Prosecutor not only misled the court by characterizing 2 kg of a dark tar-like substance as “2 kg of DMT” but also did not state the law accurately as ayahuasca is not in the Canadian Criminal Code.**

3.1. The duty to educate oneself on an ongoing basis

The proper exercise of prosecutorial discretion **requires Crown counsel to educate themselves on an ongoing basis,** not only on the law, but also about the ethical duties of their office and **the social realities of the communities in which they prosecute.** This may be done through continuing legal education, self-study, or other training.

The social realities of the ayahuasca community in Canada include the compassionate desire to help our fellow human beings who are suffering from intractable spiritual/emotional sickness. Once you have been shown the spiritual healing path, **many people choose to help others as a way to give back to the community.**

5. The Duty to Act with Integrity and Dignity

Crown counsel fulfill this duty by:

.....Ensuring that all relevant information is available in order to properly exercise prosecutorial discretion. If relevant information is not available, Crown counsel must make requests to the investigative agency so that they may provide or gather that information;

- **Remaining independent of the investigating agency, the victim and the witness(es);**
- **Adequately preparing for each case;** and
Acting with moderation, fairness, and impartiality.

Where was the relevant information in this case? A locally-available Alberta lab could have put to doubt any questions about what was contained in the evidence.

Where was the preparation in this case in which a simple, local lab test could have shown to the Crown and the investigative agencies that there was not in fact 2 kg of DMT in the evidence and perhaps only a few grams? Where did Ms. Awoniyi display her moderation, fairness and perhaps most importantly her impartiality?

AyahuascaCanada Community Analysis and Conclusions

This Prosecution is a Travesty of Justice

This “DMT” prosecution, which was really about ayahuasca, is a **travesty of justice** by the PPSC. **The Crown Prosecutor admitted in the sentencing agreement that there was no financial motive for Mr. Gillies to import “DMT” (ayahuasca). She understood this.** So how did this prosecution continue **as if Mr. Gillies was a drug trafficker** or a terrorist or was committing violent acts or endangering the health and safety of Canadian citizens, **which are the hallmarks of the serious cases that the Deskbook says must be the priority of Crown Prosecutors.**

“Get on Your Knees”—Alberta Cops Raid Home Over Ayahuasca Delivery

From Flickermag.org -

He (Gillies) told Filter that he soon encountered a four-man SWAT team from the Calgary Police Service with their weapons drawn, pointed straight at him.

They screamed, “Get on your fucking knees,” Gillies alleged. “They grabbed me and dragged me to the ground through the doorway.” They threatened to shoot him, he continued, if he did not comply with their orders. Then, after officers handcuffed him, Gillies said, one threatened to punch him “in the fucking face” if he raised his gaze.

Calgary police face serious questions over the raid. **The force did not respond to Filter’s repeated requests for comment over email and telephone.** But in a March 14 letter to Ayahuasca Canada, an advocacy group which is supporting Gillies, Chief Constable Mark Neufeld turned down a request for a meeting in response to the arrest.

Do “Importers” Have Community Support?

One would be hard-pressed to imagine that a drug importer that is devastating Alberta communities with tainted drugs would be shown community support should he or she be brought to trial.

However, in the case of Mr. Gillies, his ayahuasca community rallied behind him and even raised funds for his defence.

Does this sound like a typical “importer?” **Would the community rally to support a narcotic, opioid or fentanyl importer?** This show of support was readily evident at Mr. Gillies’ trial and yet the Crown Prosecutor, in direct contravention of the directives contained in the Deskbook, chose to neither consult the Alberta or Canadian ayahuasca communities, or even consider that Ayahuasca is not named in the Canadian Criminal Code. **No one at the PPSC bothered to even do some basic research.**

Was the Decision to Prosecute in the Public Interest?

There are two overriding criteria for making a decision to proceed with prosecution of a case in Canada, according to the PPSC Deskbook. The first being – is there enough evidence to obtain a conviction and the second – **is the prosecution in the public interest.**

Based on the scant evidence presented in the trial, it can easily be argued that neither of these pre-prosecution evaluations were met, unless the “ayahuasca” evidence was falsified as DMT to

the courts and the incredibly rich history of ayahuasca as a spiritual healing medicine was completely ignored.

The Government of Canada says that Canada is in the most serious public health crisis in its history due to the illegal activities of cartels and other organized criminal drug importation. ***There are literally tons of illegal narcotics being smuggled into Alberta, as ascertained by Canadian Border Services. And yet, set against the backdrop of this public health crisis, a Canadian Crown Prosecutor committed two years of police and prosecutorial time to this case?***

The drug crisis in Alberta is so bad that the province is establishing 11 “large-scale recovery communities.” Ayahuasca or DMT, take your pick, has absolutely nothing to do with drug addiction other than potentially treating addicts through spiritual healing.

The motivation to proceed with this case, given the deaths and devastation being caused by the drug crisis, could hardly be construed by even the most jaundiced neutral observer as being remotely in the public interest.

If this is a Crime, Who are the Victims?

Who were the victims of this “importation” crime? What exactly was the violence perpetrated against Albertans? Where was the exploitation of the “victims” by organized criminals which is the hallmark of an importation offence? Were the Chinese or Mexican cartels behind these activities? We didn't hear any evidence about this in the trial.

Mr. Gillies was subjected to months of undercover observation by the CPS. During that time there was no reports of organized criminal activities, firearm use (Mr. Gillies is not even a registered firearm owner), and according to the Mr. Gillies, ***it must have been an incredibly boring time for the undercover officers.*** All they would have seen was “me going to work and coming home again.”

And all of this set against what the Government of Canada is calling the worst public health crisis in the history of Canada and the Province of Alberta establishing 11 large-scale recovery communities. ***There are organized criminal activities associated with this Canadian crisis, however, Mr. Gillies is not among them. The real threat to the health and safety of Albertans is methamphetamine use, fentanyl, heroin, cocaine and other truly dangerous drugs that are being trafficked on a daily basis in Alberta.***

PPSC Deskbook Directives Ignored

And this is how a Canadian Crown Prosecutor, chose to evaluate and prosecute this “novel” crime? ***Her own remarks in the sentencing agreement show that she understood that there was no black market for the ayahuasca and that there was absolutely no financial incentive for Mr. Gillies importing ayahuasca other than to aid people in their quest for spiritual healing.***

Which also begs the question of why this information only appears in the sentencing agreement? Obviously the Crown Prosecutor knew that there was no commercial value to the “drug” being imported. ***Why did this information only become available to the court at the end of the trial?***

The Deskbook and Guidelines clearly indicate that a case should only proceed when there is a threat of violence or where the health and safety of Canadians is being threatened or a criminal or terrorist organization is involved.

How much research was done into not only assessing the evidence, but understanding the Ayahuasca community in Canada, the Ayahuasca community in Alberta or the impacts on the lives of the “victims” of this supposed criminal enterprise.

How many victims of drug importers financially support the “importer’s” legal defence costs?

Ayahuasca is not a threat to Canadians

Even a cursory web search would have brought up the ICEERS Ayahuasca Safety Profile which shows that ***the physical effects of ayahuasca are no more dangerous than a cup of coffee and only slightly raise blood pressure. And all of this set against a backdrop of at least 18 Canadians dying every day from actual illegal drug activities.*** The Government of Canada does not include ayahuasca or DMT on its list of Dangerous Substances or Drugs of Concern.

The ICEERS Fact Sheet also brings up that the psychological contraindication for taking ayahuasca is psychosis – such as schizophrenia, hearing voices, an inability to hold a coherent conversation, a break from reality. ***Is that who the Crown was “protecting” here – schizophrenics or people suffering from a break with reality who may want to participate in an ayahuasca ceremony?***

Is the ICEERS Fact Sheet credible? ICEERS is a United Nations Sanctioned NGO with special consultative status to the United Nations, whose conventions criminalized DMT in 1971 and 1988.

What did the Alberta Chief Prosecutor Have to Say?

A complaint filed by AC about this case through the PPSC Feedback and Complaint Process was summarily dismissed on October 28, 2024 by ***Alberta Chief Federal Prosecutor Elizabeth O’Grady who did not deem a potential fabrication of evidence to be worthy of her time:***

Per PPSC’S Complaint Policy, complaints may be rejected where there is an ongoing criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding relating to the same situation. In this capacity, I note that you are not a party of any ongoing litigation in relation the Alberta case that you have raised in your complaint.

Accordingly, your complaint is not receivable by the PPSC and no further action(s) will be undertaken regarding the complaint itself. The subject of the concerns that you have raised, will be shared with any prosecutor assigned to the Alberta proceeding so that they may be considered in the application of our Deskbook. ***This concludes our communication on this matter.***

Despite having “ministerial powers” to intervene in this case Ms. O’Grady dismissed out of hand any allegations of falsified evidence in this case by quoting “policy” and she “kicked the can” down the road to the prosecutor handling the case.

Despite quoting PPSC “policy” Ms. O’Grady had the foresight to label her reply “WITHOUT PREJUDICE.” Which begs the question - if PPSC policy is so clear in this instance, what was the need to label her reply so that it could not be used in potential future legal actions?

And why, given the “community-oriented” posture of the PPSC through the Deskbook and Duties and Responsibilities of Crown Counsel and the PPSC inviting feedback on its website, did Ms. O’Grady then add that **“this concludes our communication on this matter”** – which again points to the hope that this matter will simply go away and **that community input into the PPSC Feedback and Complaints system is not only unwelcome but can be summarily dismissed by the Alberta Chief Federal Prosecutor if it presents some inconvenient information.**

Conversely, perhaps she is concerned about her complicity in this matter? As indicated by heading her reply “WITHOUT PREJUDICE”

A cursory Examination of the Evidence

One would assume that when the “evidence” in question was shown to the Crown Prosecutors and characterized as “DMT,” that Ms. Awoniyi, **as a quasi Minister of Justice would have taken the time to educate herself as to what exactly “DMT” is, given the handful of charges by the RCMP in the past five years.**

Even a cursory web search for DMT would bring up the fact that “DMT” is a white-yellowish powder and not a black tar-like substance. As the Deskbook and the PPSC Duties and Responsibilities of Crown Counsel point out, **it is incumbent upon Crown Counsel to ascertain the evidence in question and not that of the investigative agencies involved.**



Dimethyltyptamine



Ayahuasca

Further, the Crown Prosecutor is supposed to advise the investigative agencies if their “evidence” does not meet a legal threshold, which presumably would include a quantitative analysis when a serious charge of “importation” is contemplated.

Is This Document a Complaint or Reporting a Crime?

Falsification of evidence is a serious criminal matter to the point that a maximum 14-year jail sentence could be levied. **The Crown Prosecutor was representing in a court of law that 2 kg of a dark tar-like substance was in fact 2 kg of DMT, a white-yellowish powder.** This is patently false.

As well, since this trial was clearly about ayahuasca, not only was the Crown Prosecutor misrepresenting the evidence, **she was prosecuting for a substance that, according to the**

UNINCB, would have to be added to the Canadian Criminal Code if the Canadian Government wanted to outlaw ayahuasca, a plant material.

One of the cornerstones of the Canadian Justice System is citizens reporting crimes that they believe will be taken seriously and will be acted upon by authorities. This can be done informally through the many local “Crimestopper Tips” programs, the 911-caller system and through more formal processes including a citizen “laying an information” in front of a Justice of the Peace.

Citizen participation is the cornerstone of the Canadian criminal justice system.

In all cases where credible information is reported to an enforcement agency or to an agent of the Crown, the expectation by the citizen(s) reporting the crime is that the information will be acted upon.

A Clear Miscarriage of Justice

Is the PPSC Deskbook, the Attorney General’s Directives and the PPSC’s Duties and Responsibilities of Crown Counsel in place to pay lip service to procedures that can be arbitrarily ignored by Crown Prosecutors for their own purposes?

Crown Prosecutors have “ministerial” powers, and, it would be assumed the Alberta Chief Federal Crown Prosecutor, Elizabeth O’Grady is there to supervise these powers. **This prosecution was not done in a vacuum** and presumably Ms. O’Grady and Ms. Awoniyi had access to a plethora of Crown Prosecutors, Team Leaders, Senior Prosecutors, Legal Assistants, Paralegals, Administrative Assistants, iCase Administrators, Database Administrators, Regional Office Administrators and Articling Students.

Why was this obvious miscarriage of justice allowed to run its course? Why did Ms. Awoniyi continue to push for this prosecution despite admitting in the sentencing document that there was no criminal intent in Mr. Gillies’ actions? Don’t the Canadian courts have more pressing matters to attend to with one of the most serious drug crises in Canadian history playing out before their eyes?

Why were the Crown Prosecutor guidelines, as so clearly and intricately outlined by the Attorney-General in his Deskbook and the clear instructions in the PPSC “Duties and Responsibilities of Crown Counsel” not only blatantly ignored by Ms. Awoniyi but also by her direct supervisor?

In this case, the Crown Prosecutor was acting not only as a Justice Minister, but as Parliament itself by prosecuting for ayahuasca, which she seemed to personally add to the Canadian Criminal Code. However, it takes Parliament to modify an Act of Parliament. And all of this conducted with **the complicity and knowledge of the Chief Federal Prosecutor in Alberta, Ms. Elizabeth O’Grady and, indeed, the federal Crown Prosecutor Services in Ottawa** through their public feedback and complaint system. **Qualified people knew about this and did nothing. There was institutional knowledge of this case within the PPSC.**

There is no DMT or Ayahuasca Crisis in Canada

DMT is not named in the Canadian Drug Strategy as a drug of concern. Canada is in the midst of one of the most serious and deadly public safety crises in our country’s history - the toxic and illegal drug and overdose crisis, according to statements by the Canadian Health Minister.

So on one hand we have an opioid crisis as articulated by the Government of Canada and on the other hand, **a Crown Prosecutor who arbitrarily chooses to spend significant public enforcement resources on prosecuting for a substance which actually treats opioid addictions**, as attested to by over four decades of research into ayahuasca's efficacy in treating opioid addictions, PTSD, alcoholism, heroin addiction, treatment-resistant depression, traumas, suicidal ideation and other serious spiritual traumas. **And this is deemed worthy of this huge outlay of public enforcement resources?**

What was the Result of "Operation Dear Santa?"

And what was the end result of this two and a half year legal odyssey? This huge marshaling of the combined efforts of six law enforcement agencies, including US enforcement agencies, the RCMP, Canadian Border Services and the Crown Prosecutors office which included a Calgary Police Service months-long undercover operation and a SWAT team sent to arrest at gunpoint a person with no history of violence, firearms in their home or organized criminal associations as ascertained by a months-long undercover operation?

The CPS SWAT team, who train for "high risk" arrests must have been embarrassed to be deployed in this matter. However, it did not prevent them from verbally abusing Mr. Gillies, pointing loaded firearms into his face and telling him to "get on his fucking knees" or that they would punch him "in the fucking face" if he raised his gaze.

What was the result of the full weight of Canada's considerable enforcement and prosecutorial powers? After two years and the virtual bankrupting of the defendant? **The result of all of this combined effort was a suspended sentence. Seriously? This is an example of Canada's "community" justice system as outlined in the PPSC Deskbook and the Crown Counsel Guidelines?**

Falsifying evidence is a serious crime in Canada - the courts don't like to be lied to, as ascertained by a potential 14-year jail term. And with good reason, the administration of justice is perverted. And it doesn't matter who is doing the falsifying, the Crown or the Accused. Canada's laws are unequivocal. **So who is going to pursue this travesty of justice in a court of law?**

Long-Term Psychological Consequences of Being Held at Gunpoint

From NeuroLaunch – ([link](#)):

For some individuals, **the psychological impact of being held at gunpoint can extend far beyond the immediate aftermath, leading to long-term consequences that can significantly affect their quality of life.** These enduring effects can manifest in various ways, often intertwining and compounding each other.

One of the most severe long-term consequences is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This complex condition can develop in the weeks or months following a traumatic event and is characterized by persistent re-experiencing of the trauma (through flashbacks or nightmares), avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma, negative alterations in cognition and mood, and marked changes in arousal and reactivity. **PTSD can be debilitating, affecting a person's ability to work, maintain relationships, and engage in everyday activities.**

Depression and mood disorders are also common long-term effects of such a traumatic experience. The overwhelming nature of the event can lead to feelings of hopelessness and despair, loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities, and a persistent low mood. **These mood disturbances can significantly impact a person's overall well-being and quality of life.**

Indeed, after curing his treatment-resistant depression in Costa Rica with ayahuasca and returning to Canada to become an upstanding and very productive member of his community, **Mr. Gillies re-entered therapy over these traumatic events.**

What are the Legal Justifications for Police Offers to Point Firearms at Individuals?

Canadian police officers may point firearms at individuals as part of their lawful duties, particularly in situations where they believe there is an imminent threat to themselves or others. Justifications can include self-defense, defense of others, or when executing their responsibilities in a high-risk situation.

What "high-risk" situation was the Calgary SWAT team engaged in? What "imminent threat" were they under? Months of undercover observation did not see Mr. Gillies with firearms, associating with violent criminals or engaging in violent activities. Mr. Gillies had no record of violence and no firearms in his house. In Mr. Gillies' own words – **all they had to do was phone me up and I would have come down to the police station and turned myself in.**

This high-profile public arrest of a peaceful specialty welder and family man resulted in Mr. Gillies having to move his family from their Calgary home, face public scorn and ridicule, a loss of income through loss of customers and for Mr. Gillies to re-enter therapy for emotional trauma.

Crown Prosecutor – "No Financial Incentive" for Importing DMT

The Crown Prosecutor, in her sentencing agreement openly admitted that Mr. Gillies had no financial incentive for "importing" ayahuasca into Canada.

So what was the incentive for the "importing" charge? The basis for "importing" a banned substance and subsequent charges **would be the assumption that the criminal was engaged in an on-going criminal enterprise for profit.**

This would certainly be the case in importing cocaine, meth, fentanyl, heroin or other drugs that pose an immediate threat to the health and safety of Canadians. However, in this case of "importing DMT," by the Crown's own admission there was no financial incentive whatsoever.

Which begs the question – what criminal activity was the Crown hoping to set an example for as a deterrent to others who may be contemplating "importing DMT?"

There is no organized crime, gang violence or trafficking associated with ayahuasca use in Canada, which is also admitted to by Health Canada in official documents.

We can only speculate on Ms. Awoniyi's motivation in pursuing this case but could her willingness to subvert her office have been because of the investigative agencies involved? Is the "900-pound gorilla" in the room the US enforcement agencies who initiated this case? **US Border Services**

confiscated the package and US Homeland Security drove the package to the border to hand it off to the Calgary Police Services with the assistance of the RCMP and Canadian Border Services.

Was this the motivation – was Mr. Gillies the “sacrificial lamb” so that that the Canadian enforcement agencies could curry favor with their US counterparts? **Or, indeed, was it a case of US enforcement agencies telling the Canadian enforcement agencies and the PPSC to “jump” and they replied with “how high” on the way up?**

And so the Crown Prosecutor simply went along with the “good old boys” network to play her part in this farcical trial **in which the outcome of the trial appeared to be known by Defence Counsel before the case even went to court. Indeed, defence counsel told Mr. Gillies at the outset of the trial that the end result would be a suspended sentence.** Or perhaps Ms. Awoniyi subverted her duties in light of the combined six-month law enforcement effort to arrest a peaceful law-abiding citizen and for which she could find no financial incentive as outlined in the sentencing agreement? **Can huge law enforcement effort and investment subvert a “minister of justice” to play along with a travesty?**

In order to participate in this case, did the Crown Prosecutor have to give up all pretense of “impartial fairness” or her role as a “justice minister” who is supposedly independent from the investigative agencies, and, according to the public posturing of the PPSC website, **the characteristics of what it means to be a Crown Prosecutor in Canada? Was this the incentive?**

PPSC Deskbook - When the criminal justice system fails, the human cost can be substantial

What was the motive for Chad Gillies’ “importation” crime? **Mr. Gillies healed himself of his treatment-resistant depression with the spiritual healing provided by an ancient and very safe substance – ayahuasca, completely turning his life around. And then, motivated by a desire to help others do the same agreed to receive a package from abroad?**

Mr. Gillies’ “crime” was not motivated by financial incentive, the hallmark of importation or trafficking offences, but for a desire to help others heal from problematic spiritual afflictions. And all this acknowledged by the Crown Prosecutor in the sentencing agreement.

And he paid dearly for this desire to help his fellow human beings, including near-bankruptcy, which may still happen, his own traumatization at the hands of a Calgary SWAT team and the untold stresses he suffered both professionally and personally, which resulted in Mr. Gillies re-entering therapy.

This entire case beggars belief.

Summary of Crucial Points

- Clearly falsified evidence was presented in a Court of Law in Canada – “Two kg of DMT” was never verified in the evidence
- Ayahuasca is not in the Criminal Code
- Ayahuasca was presented to the court as “DMT”
- Although it was clearly warranted, quantitative testing for DMT was never conducted to ascertain exactly what was in the evidence
- Published studies show that there was possibly 4.72 grams of DMT in the evidence, which was never verified
- A local lab in Cochrane, Alberta offers Mass Spectrometry testing services which can both identify and quantify the actual amount of “DMT” in the evidence
- Ayahuasca is used for spiritual healing and incorporated into numerous countries’ healthcare systems
- The PPSC Deskbook threshold for prosecution in the public interest was not met
- The Canadian Drug Strategy is targeting serious drug crimes in Canada, ayahuasca (DMT) is not among them
- There were no victims or violence in this “importation” case
- There is an “opioid crisis” in Canada and Alberta, as articulated the Government of Canada through the Health Minister
- Ayahuasca is used to treat opioid addictions, among other addictions and traumas
- DMT (ayahuasca) does not pose a threat to the health and safety of Canadians
- DMT is not a common drug of abuse and it is not identified as a Drug of Concern in Canada
- Tons of dangerous drugs are being wholesale smuggled into Canada, including in Alberta
- 20 people in Canada are dying every day due to the drug crisis in Canada, including in Alberta
- No Canadians are dying at ayahuasca ceremonies or even through synthetic DMT use
- This years-long arrest and prosecution took resources away from the enforcement of actual violent crimes
- This two-year prosecution utilized already strained court time that could have been dealing with serious criminal activity

Recommendations

The Crown Prosecutor, Ms. Awoniyi was responsible for deciding to proceed with these charges and should be held accountable for her clearly negligent actions in the prosecution of this case. However, this case was not conducted in a vacuum. The Alberta Chief Federal Prosecutor was complicit and indeed, the PPSC had institutional knowledge of these proceedings.

Mr. Gillies should be exonerated and compensated. In this case the Crown Prosecutor:

- Misrepresented the criminal code to prosecute for a substance that is not in the CDSA – ayahuasca.
- Presented falsified evidence to a court of law in Canada – ayahuasca is not DMT
- The only way this trial could have arrived at its foregone conclusion was if the “DMT” in question was never quantified
- Misrepresented a possible few grams of DMT as 2 kilograms of DMT in a court of law
- A laboratory in Cochrane, Alberta can provide detection and quantification of DMT through mass spectrometry
- Failed to undertake her sworn duties in a responsible manner as directed by the Attorney-General of Canada
- Completely ignored the Directives in the PPSC Deskbook and Crown Counsel Guidelines as specified by Canadian law
- Taken in total, the actions of the Crown Prosecutor and the PPSC in this matter amounts to willful negligence

Mr. Gillies’ suspended sentence should be dismissed and monetary awards for time and legal fees should be awarded

This arrest and prosecution is a complete miscarriage of justice. Chad Gillies was railroaded by the PPSC. There was absolutely no justification for the two-year prosecution for importation charges against Mr. Gillies.



Mr. Chad Gillies

Contact Us – We Would Love to Hear From You

This document was compiled by volunteers from AyahuascaCanada. **All information was obtained from publicly available and verifiable sources using publicly-available search engines. These are the same search engines and documents that are readily available to the Crown Prosecutor’s office,** if they had chosen to conduct even minimal research into this “novel” substance or chose to reach out to the Ayahuasca community in Canada.

For further information, comments or clarifications, please contact the AyahuascaCanada Public Affairs Committee:

PublicAffairs@AyahuascaCanada.com

APPENDIX A - Ayahuasca Studies and Further Resources

A Small Sample of Over Four Decades of Scientific Research

Please note - This is a very small sample of the large volume of ayahuasca studies that have been published in English in various government, medical and pharmacological journals. ***Non-English studies dating back over four decades can also be found in institutions such as the University of Madrid in Spain, Natal in Brazil and in other South American medical and pharmacological journals.***

Much of the initial interest from western researchers, pharmacologists, ethnobotanists and clinicians started with reports of healing generated by Ayahuasca churches.

1. Takiwasi - Center for the Rehabilitation of Drug Addicts and Research on Traditional Medicines for Forty Years

See – (TW [link](#))

One of the original evidence-based South American ayahuasca mental health centers is Takiwasi located in Tarapoto, Peru which has over 40 years of practical and clinical experience. Their focus is on Drug Addiction Rehabilitation and Traditional Medicine using ayahuasca.

Takiwasi is considered the oldest institution to combine the use of psychotherapy and medicinal plants for the treatment of mental health. With over three decades of experience in this field, our model, in perfect balance between medicine, psychology and spirituality, has been the subject of study in more than 60 international research projects, articulating an interdisciplinary academic community made up of scientific institutions of world excellence.

Results

Over 40 years of clinical experience indicate that the interaction between traditional Amazonian medicine, psychotherapy and spirituality, proposed by the therapeutic model of the Takiwasi Center, turns out to be very successful in the treatment of addictions and other mental health disorders. We believe that the articulation of these different therapeutic approaches greatly benefits the outcome of the treatment and thus is showing a path to follow in the global search for mental well-being and good living.

It is the initial vocation of the Takiwasi Center to associate clinical practice with research as it appears in its full name: Center for the Rehabilitation of Drug Addicts and Research on Traditional Medicines. Since the beginning of its operation, the Takiwasi Center has permanently evaluated its activities, its patient population and the results of its therapeutic interventions (Giove 1996, 2002; Mabit, 2007; Mabit & González, 2013) in order to constantly improve its model. A study published by Dr. Rosa Giove in 2002 shows that in a group of 100 former patients contacted two years after leaving the Center, the recovery rate is 54%, reaching 67% considering only those patients who completed the treatment receiving therapeutic discharge.

2. The Therapeutic Potentials of Ayahuasca: Possible Effects against Various Diseases of Civilization

(National Library of Medicine [link](#))

As a sacrament, ayahuasca is still a central element of many healing ceremonies in the Amazon Basin and its ritual consumption has become common among the mestizo populations of South America. Ayahuasca use amongst the indigenous people of the Amazon is a form of traditional medicine and cultural psychiatry.

During the last three decades, the substance has become increasingly known among both scientists and laymen, and currently its use is spreading all over in the Western world. In the present paper we describe the chief characteristics of ayahuasca, discuss important questions raised about its use, and provide an overview of the scientific research supporting its potential therapeutic benefits.

A growing number of studies indicate that the psychotherapeutic potential of ayahuasca is based mostly on the strong serotonergic effects, whereas the sigma-1 receptor (Sig-1R) agonist effect of its active ingredient dimethyltryptamine raises the possibility that the ethnomedical observations on the diversity of treated conditions can be scientifically verified. Moreover, in the right therapeutic or ritual setting with proper preparation and mindset of the user, followed by subsequent integration of the experience, ayahuasca has proven effective in the treatment of substance dependence.

This article has two important take-home messages: (1) the therapeutic effects of ayahuasca are best understood from a bio-psycho-socio-spiritual model, and (2) on the biological level ayahuasca may act against chronic low-grade inflammation and oxidative stress via the Sig-1R which can explain its widespread therapeutic indications.

3. Research on Traditional Indigenous Medicine within an intercultural medicine model

(Nierka A.C. [link](#))

The Nierika Institute of Intercultural Medicine promotes scientific research on the therapeutic potential of the ceremonial use of sacred plants in therapeutic contexts and their interdisciplinary and intercultural integration in public health. The institute brings together researchers in psychology, medical anthropology, ethno-psychiatry and pharmacology, to collaborate in developing a multidisciplinary and intercultural scientific approach to the study of sacred plants.

Recent studies conducted in other countries indicate that participation in indigenous peyote and ayahuasca ceremonies can have clinically positive effects on different mental conditions in patients receiving treatment with these plants. The integration of ayahuasca rituals in different psychotherapeutic treatment models has proven to be effective for patients with substance dependence problems, depression, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress and complicated grief, among other conditions.

Currently, the Nierika cultural institute collaborates in the ATOP project (Ayahuasca Treatment Outcomes Project), an international research project that evaluates the effectiveness of Ayahuasca in the treatment of addictions, depression and anxiety; AC is also collaborating on an international study evaluating the effects of ceremonial use of Ayahuasca in the treatment of eating disorders with Laurentian University, and the University of British Columbia, as well as UNAM

4. Ayahuasca and Public Health: Health Status, Psychosocial Well-Being, Lifestyle, and Coping Strategies in a Large Sample of Ritual Ayahuasca Users

PubMed ([link](#))

This study involved a sample of long-term ritualistic ayahuasca users in Spain. To our knowledge, this is the first study to assess regular ayahuasca users from a communitarian public health perspective. The data suggest that the study participants had high levels of general, mental, and positive health, and showed excellent levels in terms of adjustment and coping strategies, in addition to having healthy lifestyle habits. Study results do not suggest the possible effects of ayahuasca, but they show how the ritualistic use of a drug considered a hallucinogen is not associated with negative consequences in terms of adjustment or physical and psychological health.

5. New Insights into the Chemical Composition of Ayahuasca

National Library of Medicine (NIH [link](#))

Recently, ayahuasca has captured the attention of the scientific community as part of the “renaissance of psychedelic studies”. Several reports highlight its potential therapeutic applications in clinical and nonclinical settings for the treatment of depression, grief, eating disorders and substance use disorders (SUDs). In addition, preclinical studies have shown that DMT, β -carbolines, and ayahuasca preparations present antidepressant-like effects in animal models and that administration of the beverage can block ethanol (alcohol) preference in an animal model of dependence.²⁶

Ayahuasca, commonly translated from the Quechua language as “vine of the spirits” or “vine of the dead”, is a psychedelic beverage originally from the Amazon rainforest used in different shamanic settings for a variety of medicinal, spiritual, and cultural purposes.¹ It is prepared by boiling in water an admixture of the vine *Banisteriopsis caapi*, which is a source of β -carboline alkaloids, and other plants containing N,N-dimethyltryptamine (DMT), usually *Psychotria viridis* (Figure Figure11) or *Diplopterys cabrerana*, (where the preparation name is usually referred to as yagé).²

Almost four decades ago, ayahuasca traveled from its traditional uses in the Amazon basin to religious, therapeutic, and spiritual centers with a worldwide distribution.^{3,4} Brazilian churches that use ayahuasca as part of their religious practices, such as the Santo Daime and União do Vegetal, as well as shamanic practices involving the ingestion of the beverage in group rituals, have expanded globally within the psychospiritual transnational networks.^{4–7}

6. Ayahuasca and public health II: health status in a large sample of Ayahuasca ceremony participants in the Netherlands

Leisen University Scholarly Publications (LU [link](#)) - The findings of this study indicate that long-term participants in ayahuasca ceremonies have better general well-being, fewer chronic and lifestyle diseases, and are more physically active compared to the normative Dutch data, as well as having a more balanced diet. (according to national dietary guidelines; Health Council of the Netherlands 2015).

Other studies that investigated the health of ayahuasca ceremony participants similarly reported differences in lifestyle, well being, nutrition, and physical activity (Kaasik and Kreegipuu 2020; Ona et al. 2019). It had been suggested that hallucinogens may promote healthful behaviors and

may reduce the risk of developing “lifestyle diseases” such as diabetes, high cholesterol and blood pressure, which contribute to personal suffering, premature mortality, and public health costs (Teixeira et al. 2021).

Two recent studies report an association between classic hallucinogens and lower odds of being overweight or obese, and lower odds of having diabetes, cardiometabolic diseases, and/or cancer (Simonsson et al. 2021; Simonsson, Sexton, and Hendricks 2021). In addition, observational studies reported improvements of indicators of mental health and overall well-being among ayahuasca ceremony participants (Gonzalez et al. 2021; Kaasik and Kreegipuu 2020; Maia, Daldegan-Bueno, and Tófoli 2020).

7. Ayahuasca’s entwined efficacy: An ethnographic study of ritual healing from addiction

PubMed – NIH Library of Medicine (NIH [link](#))

Background: A range of studies has demonstrated the efficacy of the psychoactive Amazonian brew ayahuasca in addressing substance addiction. These have revealed that physiological and psychological mechanisms are deeply enmeshed. This article focuses on how interactive ritual contexts support the healing effort. The study of psychedelic-assisted treatments for addiction has much to gain from ethnographic analyses of healing experiences within the particular ecologies of use and care, where these interventions are rendered efficacious.

8. Associations between ayahuasca consumption in naturalistic settings and current alcohol and drug use: Results of a large international cross-sectional survey

National Library of Medicine – (NIH [link](#))

In the context of both expanding naturalistic use and academic research interest in the therapeutic use of ayahuasca, our dataset of 8,629 ayahuasca drinkers from more than 40 countries provides a unique opportunity to investigate associations between ayahuasca consumption in naturalistic settings and the use of alcohol and other drugs.

We identified a strong positive association between the consumption of ayahuasca and the likelihood of never or rarely drinking alcohol, never or rarely engaging in risky drinking (>4 standard drinks on one occasion) and having not consumed a range of drugs in the past month.

Our findings suggesting anti-substance use effects are consistent with those reported in several smaller studies. Analysis of outcomes for 36 patients at the Takiwasi (therapeutic community) drug treatment centre in Peru, which uses ayahuasca along with other traditional plants, identified significant decreases in addiction severity outcomes for drug and alcohol use, as well as reduced emotional distress and enhanced wellbeing [60].

Similarly, an observational study of First Nations young people in Canada provided with ayahuasca-assisted treatment for problematic substance use reported psychological and wellbeing benefits as well as reductions in tobacco, alcohol and cocaine use at 6 months [30].

A global survey of drug users, including 527 ayahuasca drinkers, found this group to have lower problematic alcohol consumption than other psychedelic users, but not non-psychedelic users; however, heterogeneity of groups was noted [61].

A number of studies have also reported lower rates of alcohol and other drug use among members of ayahuasca churches in Brazil, when compared to a comparison group or the Brazilian population, with these effects visible even among samples with a higher lifetime incidence of illicit drug use or dependence.

9. Ayahuasca-assisted therapy for addiction: results from a preliminary observational study in Canada

PubMed National Library of Medicine (NIH [link](#))

This paper reports results from a preliminary observational study of ayahuasca-assisted treatment for problematic substance use and stress delivered in a rural First Nations community in British Columbia, Canada.

Ayahuasca-assisted therapy appears to be associated with statistically significant improvements in several factors related to problematic substance use among a rural aboriginal population. These findings suggest participants may have experienced positive psychological and behavioral changes in response to this therapeutic approach, and that more rigorous research of ayahuasca-assisted therapy for problematic substance use is warranted.

10. Psychotherapeutic and neurobiological processes associated with ayahuasca: A proposed model and implications for therapeutic use

Frontiers in Neuroscience (FN [link](#))

Observational and qualitative studies investigating ayahuasca's therapeutic effects have identified improvements in some psychological skills or traits such as decentring (Franquesa et al., 2018; Domínguez-Clavé et al., 2019); certain mindfulness capabilities (acceptance, non-judgmental and non-reactive processing, and improved observation) (Thomas et al., 2013; Soler et al., 2016; Uthaug et al., 2018); cognitive flexibility (Stemme et al., 2008; Murphy-Beiner and Soar, 2020); and emotional regulation (Domínguez-Clavé et al., 2019).

Broader psychological and well being benefits have also been identified among those drinking ayahuasca. These include increased confidence, optimism, independence, and positive mood (Barbosa et al., 2009), higher levels of self-transcendence and lower harm avoidance (Bouso et al., 2012), increased satisfaction with life (Uthaug et al., 2018) as well as increased openness to therapeutic interventions and improvements in both anxiety and depression (Perkins et al., 2021a).

Beneficial effects have also been reported in relation to interpersonal relationships, sense of self, creativity, somatic perception, sense of connection, substance use, and other health behaviors (Thomas et al., 2013; Lafrance et al., 2017; Bathje et al., 2021; Perkins et al., 2021a).

Additional benefit may also be associated with the reported modulation of some personality traits after ayahuasca consumption including increased agreeableness, openness to experience, and extraversion, and reduced neuroticism and negative emotionality (Mendes Rocha et al., 2021).

11. Changes in mental health, well being and personality following ayahuasca consumption: Results of a naturalistic longitudinal study

Frontiers in Pharmacology (FP [link](#))

Fifty-three attendees (32 women, 21 men) completed pre and post ayahuasca assessments with 55.6% of the sample reporting a complete mystical experience based on the MEQ-30. One-month post-ayahuasca, significant reductions were identified in depression, anxiety, stress, alcohol and cannabis use, body dissociation, accepting external influence, self-alienation, impulsivity, and negative affect/emotionality.

Significant increases were identified in positive mood, self-efficacy, authentic living, extraversion, agreeableness, open-mindedness, spirituality, and satisfaction with relationships. While facets of the mystical experience held little predictive validity on outcome measures, baseline traits, particularly high negative emotionality and body dissociation, and low sense of self-efficacy, robustly predicted improvements in mental health, well being and personality following ayahuasca consumption: Results of a naturalistic longitudinal study.

12. Potential Use of Ayahuasca in Grief Therapy

ResearchGate (RG [link](#))

This is the first study to explore the therapeutic potential of ayahuasca in grieving processes. The findings from this study indicate that people who used ayahuasca reported lower level of grief than people who attended a peer-support group. This result stems from the fact that although both groups were comparable in the level of grief at the moment of death, the level of grief presented in the Present Feelings scale (TRIG) was lower in the ayahuasca group. Also, a significantly greater proportion of ayahuasca participants reported direct benefits on some of the psychological and interpersonal dimensions that are central to grief processes.

13. Ayahuasca Global Consumption and Reported Deaths in the Media

ICEERS ([link](#)).

For years, a number of concerns have been raised in the field of ayahuasca research that, so far, no one has tried to systematically resolve. The first consideration:

How many people in the world have taken ayahuasca in their lifetime? How many people take ayahuasca each year? How many servings of ayahuasca are taken each year? And another important question:

What do we know about the deaths the media has attributed to ayahuasca?

It seems that answering the first question by estimating the prevalence of ayahuasca consumption globally is valuable to understand ayahuasca's expansion and its social, economic, and environmental implications. Comparing these numbers alongside an analysis of the deaths the media attributed to ayahuasca would amplify the value of this information collectively. It can also help shed light on the alleged danger of ayahuasca which can be a tool to guide public policies.

Deaths Attributed to Ayahuasca

As part of this three-year study ICEERS examined media-reported deaths attributed to ayahuasca. One of the conclusions of the study was that:

To date worldwide, no forensic examination or toxicological analysis has determined the combination of Banisteriopsis caapi and Psychotria viridis or Diplopterys cabrerana (the traditional ayahuasca brew) has caused poisoning leading to death.

14. Therapeutic Effects of Ceremonial Ayahuasca Use for Methamphetamine Use Disorders and Other Mental Health Challenges: Case Studies in an Indigenous Community in Sonora, Mexico

PubMed ([link](#))

The cases presented above suggest that the application of traditionally used entheogens within a culturally adapted community-based therapeutic programme for Indigenous mental health can be an effective therapeutic resource for supporting recovery from depression, grief, anxiety, PTSD and systemic trauma, and substance use disorders. The selected cases show specifically how ceremonial use of ayahuasca within a culturally adapted, community-based treatment program may be safe, tolerable, and demonstrates therapeutic potential.

Perhaps, most significant is the way in which this intervention has potential to support recovery from diverse mental health challenges among family and community members in addition to, and often as part of, individual recovery. Incorporating family members and community practices into treatment is of utmost importance for improving quality of life and well-being among historically oppressed Indigenous communities.

15. Influence of Context and Setting on the Mental Health and Well being Outcomes of Ayahuasca Drinkers: Results of a Large International Survey

Frontiers In Pharmacology (FP [link](#))

Our study has a number of important strengths, including a large sample size, international cross-cultural sampling frame, and inclusion of ayahuasca drinkers from a range of different contexts of consumption. Therapeutic motivation was the most consistently associated of the motivation variables, including with a greater number of self-insights, stronger subjective spiritual experience and higher PWG. Moreover, unlike previous studies, we are also able to identify and consider separately the sizable wellbeing and mental health benefits associated with the social and community aspects of ayahuasca drinking, on which ceremony practices, additional support, and drinkers motivations also have an influence.

16. Ayahuasca use and reported effects on depression and anxiety symptoms: An international cross-sectional study of 11,912 consumers

Journal of Effective Disorders Reports – Science Direct (SC [link](#))

Of participants reporting depression (n = 1571) or anxiety (n = 1125) at the time of consuming Ayahuasca, 78% reported that their depression was either ‘very much’ improved (46%), or ‘completely resolved’ (32%); while 70% of those with anxiety reported that their symptoms were ‘very much’ improved (54%), or ‘completely resolved’ (16%).

A range of factors were associated with greater reported affective symptoms improvement, including subjective mystical experience, number of Ayahuasca sessions, and number of personal

psychological insights experienced. 2.7% and 4.5% of drinkers with depression or anxiety, respectively, reported worsening of symptoms.

17. Psychedelic Medicine: A Rapid Review of Therapeutic Applications and Implications for Future Research (Canada)

Homewood Research Institute, Guelph, ON. (HRI [link](#))

Amidst growing medico-therapeutic interest in psychedelics, the socio-political factors of the 1960s and 70s driven by racist policy and political persecution led to these drugs being declared illegal, including in Canada, despite a lack of evidence for toxicity or addictive potential. Their designation as Schedule I substances under the UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and consequently within the Canadian Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, meant that they were considered as having a high potential for non-medical use¹, no currently accepted therapeutic application, and a lack of accepted safety for use under medical supervision.

The combination of the socio-political climate, shrinking funding opportunities, and methodological issues have severely limited new research and development since the 1970s. The past 15 years has seen a rapid resurgence of work in both basic and clinical psychedelic science, with the majority of the work focused on substance use, mental health, and related conditions. A wide range of topics are being covered within the domains of: neuroscience and psychopharmacology; treatment effectiveness with associated mechanisms of action and safety considerations; palliative, end-of-life, and spiritual care; treatment guidelines; training and certification of therapists and other practitioners; health policy and prevention; as well as anthropology, sociology, and global health.

18. The Impact of Ayahuasca on Suicidality: Results From a Randomized Controlled Trial

Frontiers in Pharmacology (FP [link](#))

Interestingly, within the ayahuasca group, the relationship between changes in suicidality and changes in nonsuicide-related depressive symptoms approached significance, with a large effect size (i.e., $r = .53$). These findings suggest that the impact of ayahuasca on suicidality may, in part, be due to its impact on nonsuicide-related depressive symptoms or mechanisms overlapping both non-suicide-related depressive symptoms and suicidality. Research suggests that suicide functions as a means of escaping intense emotional distress (Baumeister, 1990; Shneidman, 1998). Extant research indicates that psychedelics in general, and ayahuasca in particular, leads to decreases in emotional distress (for a review, see dos Santos et al., 2018). Similarly, a recent study found that the administration of ayahuasca led to decreases in emotion dysregulation, within a community sample and among individuals with BPD traits (Domínguez-Clavé et al., 2019). Similarly, among males in a community sample, lifetime use of psychedelics was associated with lower levels of emotion dysregulation (Thiessen et al., 2018). One particular means through which ayahuasca may decrease emotion dysregulation is via increased mindfulness-related capacities (e.g., acceptance and decentering), which have been shown to increase after administration of ayahuasca (Thomas et al., 2013; Soler et al., 2016; Sampedro et al., 2017; Domínguez-Clavé et al., 2019; Soler et al., 2018; Uthaug et al., 2018).

19. Ayahuasca Treatment Outcome Project (ATOP): One Year Results from Takiwasi Center and Implications for Psychedelic Science

(PubMed [link](#))

Results: The group change from baseline to the one-year follow up was significant and in the anticipated direction for alcohol and drug use severity, depression and anxiety, and some dimensions of quality of life. There was considerable individual variation in outcomes and treatment duration. The majority of participants rated all aspects of the program as important, including the spiritual and therapeutic significance of the ayahuasca experience which was rated as very significant.

Conclusion: Based on the positive one-year outcomes, and within the limitations of an uncontrolled observational study design, the findings suggest promise for the effectiveness of the use of ayahuasca in a multifactorial treatment context for individuals with significant treatment histories, high levels of comorbidity and treatment motivation. Results highlight considerable variation in individual experience that merit in-depth qualitative analysis. Implications for ayahuasca-assisted and other psychedelic-assisted treatment alternatives are discussed.

20. Neuropharmacology of N,N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT)

(National Library of Medicine [link](#))

This paper reviews the current literature of both the recreational use of DMT and its potential roles as an endogenous neurotransmitter. DMT appears to have limited neurotoxicity and other adverse effects except for intense cardiovascular effects when administered intravenously in large doses. Because of its role in nervous system signaling, DMT may be a useful experimental tool in exploring how brain works, and may also be a useful clinical tool for treatment of anxiety and psychosis.

21. Rapid antidepressant effects of the psychedelic ayahuasca in treatment-resistant depression: a randomized placebo-controlled trial ([link](#))

We observed significant antidepressant effects of ayahuasca when compared with placebo at all time points. MADRS scores were significantly lower in the ayahuasca group compared with placebo at D1 and D2 ($p = 0.04$), and at D7 ($p < 0.0001$). Between-group effect sizes increased from D1 to D7 (D1: Cohen's $d = 0.84$; D2: Cohen's $d = 0.84$; D7: Cohen's $d = 1.49$). Response rates were high for both groups at D1 and D2, and significantly higher in the ayahuasca group at D7 (64% v. 27%; $p = 0.04$). Remission rate showed a trend toward significance at D7 (36% v. 7%, $p = 0.054$).

Conclusions. To our knowledge, this is the first controlled trial to test a psychedelic substance in treatment-resistant depression. Overall, this study brings new evidence supporting the safety and therapeutic value of ayahuasca, dosed within an appropriate setting, to help treat depression. This study is registered at <http://clinicaltrials.gov> (NCT02914769)

22. Safety and tolerability of inhaled N,N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT): A phase I clinical trial ([link](#))

Highlights

- First clinical trial evaluating inhaled DMT's effects in a controlled setting.
- No serious adverse event were observed, indicating potential safety.
- Profound, yet manageable, subjective psychological effects reported by participants.
- Inhaled DMT offers a rapid, non-invasive, and cost-efficient tool for psychiatry.

We investigated subjective experiences (intensity, valence, and phenomenology), physiological effects (blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate, blood oxygen saturation, body temperature), biochemical markers (liver, kidney, and metabolic functions), and adverse events during the acute and post-acute effects of DMT.

DMT dose-dependently increased intensity, valence and perceptual ratings. There was a mild, transient, and self-limited increase in blood pressure and heart rate. There were no changes in safety blood biomarkers and no serious adverse events. DMT dose-dependently enhanced subjective experiences and positive valence. Inhaled DMT might be an efficient, non-invasive, safe route of administration, which might simplify the clinical use of this substance.

23. Changes in inflammatory biomarkers are related to the antidepressant effects of Ayahuasca ([link](#))

Ayahuasca is a traditional Amazon brew and its potential antidepressant properties have recently been explored in scientific settings. We conducted a double-blind placebo-controlled trial of ayahuasca with treatment-resistant depression patients (n = 28) and healthy controls (n = 45).

We observed a significant reduction of C-reactive protein levels across time in both patients and controls treated with ayahuasca, but not with placebo. Patients treated with ayahuasca showed a significant correlation ($\rho = +0.57$) between larger reductions of C-reactive protein and lower depressive symptoms at 48 hours after substance ingestion (Montgomery-Åsberg Depression Rating Scale).

Conclusions: These findings enhance the understanding of the biological mechanisms behind the observed antidepressant effects of ayahuasca and encourage further clinical trials in adults with depression.

24. The Psychedelic State Induced by Ayahuasca Modulates the Activity and Connectivity of the Default Mode Network

The experiences induced by psychedelics share a wide variety of subjective features, related to the complex changes in perception and cognition induced by this class of drugs. A remarkable increase in introspection is at the core of these altered states of consciousness. Self-oriented mental activity has been consistently linked to the Default Mode Network (DMN), a set of brain regions more active during rest than during the execution of a goal-directed task. Here we used fMRI technique to inspect the DMN during the psychedelic state induced by Ayahuasca in ten experienced subjects.

Based on these ROI, the signal of the DMN changed significantly when comparing rest with task periods, both before and after Ayahuasca intake (S2 Fig.). Statistical comparison between maps obtained for the two moments (before vs. after) revealed a significant signal decrease for most parts of the DMN as a result of Ayahuasca intake (Fig. 1)

25. Modulation of Serum Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor by a Single Dose of Ayahuasca: Observation From a Randomized Controlled Trial ([link](#))

Forty-eight hours after treatment (D2), we observed higher BDNF levels in both groups (patients and controls) who were treated with ayahuasca, compared to those treated with placebo. In addition, at D2 patients treated with ayahuasca, and not with placebo, presented a negative significant correlation between BDNF levels and MADRS scores.

Additionally, patients that were treated with ayahuasca, and not with placebo, presented a negative significant correlation between BDNF levels and MADRS scores at D2: higher serum BDNF levels were correlated with lower depression symptomatology after the session with ayahuasca.

26. The Impact of Ayahuasca on Suicidality: Results From a Randomized Controlled Trial ([link](#))

Interestingly, within the ayahuasca group, the relationship between changes in suicidality and changes in non-suicide-related depressive symptoms approached significance, with a large effect size (i.e., $r = .53$). These findings suggest that the impact of ayahuasca on suicidality may, in part, be due to its impact on non-suicide-related depressive symptoms or mechanisms overlapping both non-suicide-related depressive symptoms and suicidality.

Research suggests that suicide functions as a means of escaping intense emotional distress (Baumeister, 1990; Shneidman, 1998). Extant research indicates that psychedelics in general, and ayahuasca in particular, leads to decreases in emotional distress (for a review, see dos Santos et al., 2018). Similarly, a recent study found that the administration of ayahuasca led to decreases in emotion dysregulation, within a community sample and among individuals with BPD traits (Domínguez-Clavé et al., 2019).

27. Shannon entropy of brain functional complex networks under the influence of the psychedelic Ayahuasca ([link](#))

More specifically, we believe that the observed increase in entropy may be related to the temporary removal of some of the restrictions that are necessary for sustaining ordinary (adult trained) consciousness. With these restrictions temporarily gone, the entropy increases and the mind may become effectively more “free”, attaining a more flexible state in which self-referential narratives and thoughts about the past or the future are no longer mentally identified with the reality that they represent.

Our results are broadly consistent with the entropic brain hypothesis, hence we discuss the latter in the context of our findings. The hypothesis maintains that the mental state induced by psychedelics, which the original authors term “primary-state,” presents relatively elevated entropy in some features of brain organization, compared to the ordinary waking state (termed “secondary”)¹¹. Although it may be somewhat counter-intuitive that the psychedelic state is considered primary

while ordinary consciousness is secondary, their hypothesis is inherently plausible considering that a wider spectrum of experiences is possible with psychedelics than in ordinary consciousness.

28. Seeing With the Eyes Shut: Neural Basis of Enhanced Imagery Following Ayahuasca Ingestion ([link](#))

The broad range of neuroanatomical sites significantly affected by Ayahuasca during intentional imagery underlies the remarkable psychological changes produced by the tea. The findings from the connectivity analysis indicate that Ayahuasca intake strongly alters fronto-occipital relationships, producing marked changes in the temporal ordering of events across several brain regions.

Ayahuasca-induced seeings have been traditionally used within religious contexts to give access to a deeply meaningful internal world. Altogether, our results indicate that these seeings stem from the activation, during voluntary imagery, of an extensive network of occipital, temporal, and frontal cortical areas respectively involved with vision, memory, and intention. By boosting the intensity of recalled images to the same level of natural image, Ayahuasca lends a status of reality to inner experiences. It is therefore understandable why Ayahuasca was culturally selected over many centuries by rain forest shamans to facilitate mystical revelations of visual nature.

29. The Antidepressant Effects of Vaporized N,N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT): An Open-Label Pilot Trial in Treatment-Resistant Depression ([link](#))

Significant reductions in MADRS and PHQ-9 scores were noted from Day 1 to Month 1 (M1). The mean MADRS score variation from baseline to Day 7 (D7) was -22 points and -17 points at M1. PHQ-9 scores also showed significant decreases, mirroring the MADRS results. By D7, 83.33% of patients responded to treatment, with 66.67% achieving remission. At M1, 66.67% maintained response, and 50% maintained remission.

Discussion: The rapid onset and sustained antidepressant effects of vaporized DMT align with the paradigm of rapid-acting antidepressants to be used in the scope of interventional psychiatry. The noninvasive route and short-acting nature of DMT offer practical advantages, potentially enhancing accessibility to psychedelic treatments.

Clinical Trial Registration: [Clinicaltrials.gov NCT06094907](https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/study/NCT06094907)

30. Associations Between Ayahuasca Use in Naturalistic Settings and Mental Health and Wellbeing Outcomes: Analysis of a Large Global Dataset ([link](#))

With growing research and community interest in the potential therapeutic use of ayahuasca, our global dataset of 7,576 drinkers provides unique insights into possible mental health effects associated with naturalistic use. We identified significant positive associations between the number of ayahuasca uses and current mental health status (measured via the K10 and SF-12) and reported psychological wellbeing improvement (PWG), for individuals both with and without a lifetime mental health diagnosis. These associations were evident in bivariate analysis and remained highly significant in multivariate models, with little evidence of these diminishing over time.

Additionally, we found various ayahuasca experience variables to be associated with current mental health and PWG. Consistent with studies of other psychedelics where subjective mystical experiences have predicted therapeutic outcomes (Russ et al. 2019), we found highly significant

associations (in bivariate, multivariate and GSEM models) between our two spiritual experience variables and both current mental health and PWG.

31. Intercultural Health: Bridging Traditional and Western Medicine ([link](#))

Intercultural health is emerging as a transformative approach to healthcare, integrating Western medical practices with traditional Indigenous healing methods. This comprehensive system is becoming increasingly vital in countries with Indigenous populations. The latest [report from ICEERS](#) offers a deep dive into this concept, covering its historical, political, theoretical, and practical aspects.

The Intercultural Health Report analyzes successful examples, such as in India and China, where traditional medicine has been effectively incorporated into healthcare systems. Additionally, it presents practical cases and strategies implemented in Latin America, Africa, and Oceania, aimed at overcoming the common challenges of including Indigenous and traditional medical practices in global healthcare systems. The purpose of this guide is to analyze intercultural health proposals in countries with Indigenous and traditional populations, identifying obstacles and suggesting strategies to improve the health of these communities.

32. The Effects Of The Ayahuasca Ceremony On Participants As Measured By qEEG And The Cognitive Emotional Checklist ([link](#))

The renewed interest in psychedelics has opened many new pathways of research. Of these, Ayahuasca is one of the most intriguing plants from an investigative perspective because the cultural institutions still exist surrounding the experience. Previous investigations in clinical settings have demonstrated the effectiveness of psychedelics in having a profound therapeutic effects. Now, with this study and others to follow, more field investigations will likely shed light on the therapeutic effect of Ayahuasca in the traditional ceremonial setting.

To conclude, this study confirmed our hypotheses of reductions in anxiety and depression and possible QEEG changes relating to lack of sleep. The QEEG changes relating to decreased anxiety and depression were confirmed in the CEC questionnaire. These results have been observed in other studies' questionnaires and this study confirmed these findings through QEEGs as well.

In addition to the decreased level of anxiety, we found other fascinating results. One of the truly important findings and one the most surprising was that Ayahuasca appears to have many other positive cognitive effects in a seemingly wide variety of areas. Most interesting to the research team was how after three days of participating in Ayahuasca ceremonies significantly decreased one of the subjects ADD symptoms and this was confirmed in both the QEEG and the CEC self-inventory. This research team has never heard of Ayahuasca being able to help with attention-deficit issues either in the scientific literature or from anecdotal reports.

33. N,N-dimethyltryptamine (DMT) mitigates experimental stroke by stabilizing the blood-brain barrier and reducing neuroinflammation ([link](#))

N,N-dimethyltryptamine (DMT) is a psychoactive molecule present in the human brain. DMT is under clinical evaluation as a neuroprotective agent in poststroke recovery. Yet, its mechanism of action remains poorly understood. In a rat transient middle cerebral artery occlusion stroke model, we previously showed that DMT reduces infarct volume. Here, we demonstrate that this effect is

accompanied by reduction of cerebral edema, attenuated astrocyte dysfunction, and a shift in serum protein composition toward an anti-inflammatory, neuroprotective state. DMT restored tight junction integrity and blood-brain barrier (BBB) function in vitro and in vivo. DMT suppressed the release of proinflammatory cytokines and chemokines in brain endothelial cells and peripheral immune cells and reduced microglial activation via the sigma-1 receptor. Our findings prove that DMT mitigates a poststroke effect by stabilizing the BBB and reducing neuroinflammation. Such interactions of DMT with the vascular and immune systems can be leveraged to complement current, insufficient, stroke therapy.

34. Resilience and Brain Changes in Long-Term Ayahuasca Users: Insights From Psychometric and fMRI Pattern Recognition ([link](#))

Ayahuasca is an Amazonian psychedelic brew that contains dimethyltryptamine (DMT) and beta carbolines. Prolonged use has shown changes in cognitive-behavioral tasks, and in humans, there is evidence of changes in cortical thickness and an increase in neuroplasticity factors that could lead to modifications in functional neural circuits.

Ayahuasca users (mean = 43.89; SD = 5.64) showed significantly higher resilience scores compared to controls (mean = 39.05; SD = 5.34). The MKL classifier distinguished users from controls with 75% accuracy ($p = 0.005$). The GPR model significantly predicted individual resilience scores ($r = 0.69$).

Data conclusion: Long-term Ayahuasca use may be associated with altered emotional brain reactivity and increased psychological resilience. These findings support a neural patterns consistent with long-term adaptations of Ayahuasca detectable via fMRI and machine learning-based pattern analysis.

35. DMT mitigates experimental stroke by stabilizing the blood-brain barrier and reducing neuroinflammation ([link](#))

N,N-dimethyltryptamine (DMT) is a psychoactive molecule present in the human brain. DMT is under clinical evaluation as a neuroprotective agent in poststroke recovery. Yet, its mechanism of action remains poorly understood. In a rat transient middle cerebral artery occlusion stroke model, we previously showed that DMT reduces infarct volume.

Here, we demonstrate that this effect is accompanied by reduction of cerebral edema, attenuated astrocyte dysfunction, and a shift in serum protein composition toward an anti-inflammatory, neuroprotective state. DMT restored tight junction integrity and blood-brain barrier (BBB) function in vitro and in vivo. DMT suppressed the release of proinflammatory cytokines and chemokines in brain endothelial cells and peripheral immune cells and reduced microglial activation via the sigma-1 receptor.

Our findings prove that DMT mitigates a poststroke effect by stabilizing the BBB and reducing neuroinflammation. Such interactions of DMT with the vascular and immune systems can be leveraged to complement current, insufficient, stroke therapy.

36. A psychedelic surprise: DMT helps the brain heal after stroke ([link](#))

Scientists have discovered that DMT, a natural compound found in plants and even the human brain, can dramatically reduce brain damage caused by stroke. The psychoactive molecule, long

known for its hallucinogenic effects, restored the blood-brain barrier and reduced inflammation in animal and cell studies. These findings suggest that DMT could complement existing stroke treatments, potentially transforming recovery outcomes.

DMT, a natural compound in the brain, has shown powerful protective effects against stroke damage. Scientists believe it could become a groundbreaking addition to modern stroke therapy.

37. Why DMT matters: unique features and therapeutic potential beyond classical psychedelics ([link](#))

A nuanced understanding of DMT's pharmacology and its redefinition among psychedelics is necessary to recognize its full potential. In mental health treatment, an exploratory study with intravenous DMT has shown next-day antidepressant effects in treatment-resistant depression (23). Ayahuasca has been long used in traditional Amazonian ceremonies with the aim of facilitating profound introspection and emotional healing.

Modern preliminary research suggests its therapeutic potential for treating mood, anxiety, substance use, and trauma-related disorders (24–35), as well as suicidality (34) – possibly by modulating emotion and trauma processing (36–41).

38. Pre-Hispanic ritual use of psychoactive plants at Chavín de Huántar, Peru ([link](#))

Ritual activity is commonly argued to have played an important role in the development of complex sociopolitical formations worldwide. Here, we report results of independent microbotanical and chemical analyses that demonstrate use of psychoactive plants in institutionalized ritual in the first millennium BCE, demonstrating that even in their early stages, sociopolitically complex societies incorporated psychoactive plants into ritual activity.

This direct identification of contents of psychoactive paraphernalia from pre-Hispanic Peru sheds light on the content and function of ritual at Chavín de Huántar and other early monumental centers.

39. The “Police Science” Magazine in Spain acknowledges that ayahuasca is not illegal in Spain, and “brings benefits to those who consume it” (Spanish, [link](#))

This 40-page article appeared in the July-August 2020 Police Science Magazine in Spain **and concluded that the benefits of ayahuasca were apparent.** It detailed the effects, the modern expansion in Spain and the legal status of the brew.

While researching this extensive article, a police officer actually participated in three ayahuasca ceremonies. This article (over 40 pages) details the history and current use of Ayahuasca in Spain and its legality. It analyzes the history, effects, expansion and the legal status of the brew in Spain.

40. These Ontario police officers are using ayahuasca to treat their PTSD ([link](#))

Global News, Ontario - For many years, Chorny suffered from the trauma that came from his work, which frequently included responding to sexual assaults and other violent crimes.

“The worst is when people die in your arms,” Chorny told Global News.

He started doing research online and came across a video of U.S. army veterans talking about treating their PTSD with ayahuasca, a tea that contains dimethyltryptamine (DMT) and harmaline, which are both banned in Canada and the U.S. Only a small number of religious groups have been able to get special federal exemptions that allow them to legally import ayahuasca for religious purposes.

Those ceremonies have helped him turn his whole life around and finally get a handle on his PTSD. He likened the experience to peeling back the layers of an onion to reveal the roots of his anger and frustration with life.

41. Heroic Hearts: A Path to Healing for Veterans and Their Families ([link](#))

MANY VETERANS TRY EVERYTHING, FROM DOCTORS TO THERAPISTS, AND NOTHING WORKS. Join the mission – learn how psychedelic programs prevent veteran suffering and suicide.

80% of veterans experience significant improvement after participating in just one psychedelic program.

PTSD has killed more soldiers by suicide in the U.S. than were killed in war since 9/11, and even more sobering, fewer than 10% of veterans who begin traditional PTSD treatment programs complete treatment and experience marked improvement. Many veterans try everything — from doctors to therapists and nothing works. Veterans and their families feel helpless, alone, and out of options.

“When people have these big psychedelic experiences during a week long retreat, no matter what, they will have lasting changes. They’re going to have new perspectives when it comes to how they perceive themselves and the world. Many Veterans can permanently overcome hypervigilance, depression, and anxiety – Jesse Gould, Founder, HHP.

42. From ayahuasca to psilocybin, execs turn to psychedelic retreats to cope with stress - *The Globe and Mail* ([link](#))

[The Globe and Mail](#) September 24, 2025

Around the world and in Canada, options range from ayahuasca retreats with shamans in Peru or the jungles of Costa Rica, to psilocybin vacations in Jamaica and the Netherlands. There are discreet domestic offerings of all types, including retreats and urban clinics that administer ketamine, a dissociative anesthetic that’s become a party drug popular with Silicon Valley titans and celebrities (it was implicated in the overdose death of Friends actor Matthew Perry). A ketamine-derived nasal spray was approved by Health Canada in 2020 to treat depression.

At home, there’s been a push toward decriminalization of all kinds of psychedelics, including an effort last year to turn Prince Edward Island into an ayahuasca retreat hub that might draw both celebrities and wellness influencers.

“It helps you see the bigger picture: Money’s just an illusion, but the true currency is the relationships we have with each other,” says Jamie Larkin, a Charlottetown real estate broker and former financial adviser who spearheaded the effort. Larkin told me he has done ayahuasca about 150 times.

As the global economy flashes warning signs all around us, and when the scourge of emptiness persists even once the mountain of conventional success has been scaled, a generation of C-suite seekers now has an increasing array of options to temporarily zap their brains out of reality in the hopes of beating depression and improving focus, discovering a path forward and healing their childhood wounds. And some insist they're becoming not just better people, but better leaders.

43. Assessing the Psychedelic “After-Glow” in Ayahuasca Users: Post-Acute Neurometabolic and Functional Connectivity Changes Are Associated with Enhanced Mindfulness Capacities ([link](#))

Ayahuasca is a plant tea containing the psychedelic 5-HT_{2A} agonist N,N-dimethyltryptamine and harmala monoamine-oxidase inhibitors. Acute administration leads to neurophysiological modifications in brain regions of the default mode network, purportedly through a glutamatergic mechanism. Post-acutely, ayahuasca potentiates mindfulness capacities in volunteers and induces rapid and sustained antidepressant effects in treatment-resistant patients.

However, the mechanisms underlying these fast and maintained effects are poorly understood. Here, we investigated in an open-label uncontrolled study in 16 healthy volunteers ayahuasca-induced post-acute neurometabolic and connectivity modifications and their association with mindfulness measures.

44. Peru Declares Ayahuasca Cultural Patrimony

In Peru, the Directorate of the National Institute of Culture has declared the knowledge and traditional uses of Ayahuasca practiced by the native Amazon communities as Cultural Patrimony of the Nation (Resolution Number 836/INC), based on the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Peru states that the use of Banisteriopsis caapi and Chacrana-Psychotria plants (the traditional ayahuasca brew) structured around the ayahuasca ritual have “an extraordinary cultural history” with “religious, therapeutic and culturally affirmative” properties and is “one of the fundamental pillars of the identity of Amazonian peoples.”

The institute, which is charged with documenting and protecting Peruvian cultural heritage, described ayahuasca as “a wise or teaching plant, which shows to initiates the very foundations of the world and its components.”

It also stated that, when used in a traditional ritual, it “leads to a variety of effects which are always within culturally defined limits, and with religious, therapeutic, and culturally affirmative intentions.” ([link](#))

45. Christianity and other Mainstream Religions Endorse Ayahuasca

Ayahuasca and other entheogens provide a sacred or mystical experience that strengthens religious faith, according to mainstream religious scholars. In Canada, Fr. Geoffrey Ready at the University of Toronto, School of Theology, teaches an Orthodox Christian seminary course - Mystical Traditions and the Sacred Journey of Transformation: Narrative, Ritual, and Entheogens. From the course description:

As we examine the rich history of Christian mystical experience and parallels within other ancient spiritual traditions, we will recognize the special role of entheogens, or sacred

fungus and plant medicines, alongside other practices, in facilitating or deepening transcendent experience. We will examine the potential role of entheogens in mystical encounters today, mindful of both ethical considerations and diverse perspectives on their usage. ([link](#))

In Brazil people can attend traditional Shamanic, Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, African-based, Shamanic and other religious ayahuasca centers. All co-exist quite peacefully and there are an estimated 1,000 or more ayahuasca centers in Brazil.

Other Religious Use of Entheogens (links):

Ligare: A Christian Psychedelic Society ([link](#)). Shefa – Jewish Psychedelic Society ([link](#)). Entheogens and the Ancient Mystery Religions ([link](#)) Enthomedia: Entheogens and human spirituality: ([link](#)).

46. Resources - Links

ICEERS.org – [Ayahuasca Global Consumption and Reported Deaths](#), June 2023.

YouTube – David Suzuki The Nature of Things - [The Jungle Prescription](#), CBC Documentary 2011

Global News - [These Ontario police officers are using ayahuasca to treat their PTSD](#), 2019

ICEERS.org - Ayahuasca Safety Profile Fact Sheet (ICEERS [link](#))

Companionship of the Sacred Vine medical questionnaire (CSV [link](#))

CSV - Ayahuasca Decision-Making Guide (CSV [link](#))

The Spanish National Police magazine recognizes that ayahuasca is not illegal in Spain and "brings benefits to those who consume it." (PF [link](#))

Parliament of Canada – The Opioid Crisis in Canada (PC [link](#))

Substance-related acute toxicity deaths in Canada from 2016 to 2017: A review of coroner and medical examiner files (CAN [link](#))
