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Rua Bioscience Supports Groundbreaking Clinical Study on Psilocybin to Treat Methamphetamine Addiction

Rua Bioscience is proud to announce its support for a world-leading clinical study that harnesses the potential of psilocybin-containing mushrooms to treat methamphetamine addiction. This pioneering research, rooted in an indigenous community and guided by mātauranga Māori, has reached a significant milestone.

Over the past week, the first cohort of marae-based participants engaged in preparatory and experiential sessions with mushroom extract containing a specific dose of psilocybin at Rangiwaho Marae, near Gisborne. This marks an important step in Phase I of the trial.

Dr. Patrick McHugh, lead investigator and addictions specialist at Mātai Medical Research Institute, explained the three-step process undertaken by participants. "The first step involves preparation, followed by an experiential session with the taonga (mushroom). The final and ongoing phase is integration—bringing the experience into everyday life over the coming weeks and months," said Dr. McHugh.

Learnings from this first phase will guide the next steps, focusing on the intervention's safety, acceptability, feasibility, and alignment with tikanga and mātauranga Māori.

Anna-Leigh Hodge, a registered health psychologist from the University of Auckland and researcher in the study, emphasised the importance of reflection during this phase. "Throughout Noho Puku (Phase I), we are collectively evaluating what we have learned and what can be improved. This ensures the wellbeing and mana of participants, facilitators, and the broader community are upheld".

Collaborative Effort Rooted in Tikanga Māori

The study, named **Tū Wairua** (standing with strength and spiritual connectedness), represents a groundbreaking collaboration among Rangiwaho Marae, Rua Bioscience, and other research and health organisations. The initiative blends local Māori knowledge

with cutting-edge scientific research to explore the therapeutic potential of indigenous Psilocybe fungi (taonga).

Tu Wairua is undertaking cultivation trials of taonga varieties with the support from Rua Bioscience and Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research and the Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR) is providing analytical support. The psilocybin used in this trial was supplied by Canadian company Optimi Health.

"This initiative is a profound example of the reclamation of mātauranga Māori," said Jody Toroa, a trustee of Rangiwaho Marae. "Rangiwaho Marae holds the mauri for this kaupapa as we contribute to the development of an oranga (wellbeing) model to support whānau dealing with addiction and historical trauma."

Marae-based kaitieki (guides) have been trained in collaboration with kaupapa Māori and psychedelic therapy trainers to provide culturally informed support for participants throughout the trial.

A Vision for the Future

Rua Bioscience CEO Paul Naske underscored the significance of the initiative. "We are incredibly excited to be on this journey. Through the Tū Wairua collaboration, we aim to explore the potential of taonga varieties to benefit individuals and communities alike. By integrating indigenous knowledge and scientific research, this initiative paves the way for innovative approaches to health and wellness, with mana whenua leading the process."

Phase I of the study received full approval earlier this year from both the Health & Disability Ethics Committees (HDEC) and the Standing Committee on Therapeutic Trials (SCOTT).

The research team is currently fundraising for Phase II of the clinical trial, which will expand upon these early findings.

ENDS

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