

The Neural Mechanisms of Psychedelic Drug Action - Talk 3

Speaker: Dr. Enzo Tagliazucchi - University of Buenos Aires

Title: How to study the effects of serotonergic psychedelics without alienating your experimental subjects and obtaining useless data in the process

Venue: Institute of Theoretical Biology, Philippstr. 12, Haus 4, Hörsaal 4, Berlin 10115, Germany
<https://goo.gl/maps/uBEkAEksdoxK89ua6>

Date: Thursday, 15.06.2023

Time: 17:00

Zoom Link (hybrid event): <https://hu-berlin.zoom.us/j/63931747441>

Abstract: The renewed scientific interest in psychedelic drugs combines traditional questions with modern experimental paradigms and analytic methods, which aim to overcome severe limitations that characterize early research conducted during the 20th century. An important feature of contemporary methodology is the attempt to isolate one aspect of the psychedelic experience, dissociating it from potential confounding factors, a usual practice within the framework of cognitive neuroscience. In this talk, I argue that this framework is suboptimal for the study of psychedelic drugs, as they induce profound alterations in consciousness and cognitive function (mainly attention) which compromise the interpretation of results whose main outcome is a measure of task performance. Moreover, I propose that lengthy tasks without correlates in what humans naturally do during psychedelic trips can lead to anxiety and negatively affect the data and the experience of the participants. I conclude that natural tasks and settings have not been sufficiently explored in recent research, and I will show examples that combine rigorous paradigms with tasks that are natural for the participants.

Yours sincerely from the organizing team,

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