

## **Abstract**

**Background:** Psychedelics are substances that affect the nervous system and have the ability to influence thinking, perception and feelings of the user. In the Czech Republic, psilocybe mushrooms are the second most used psychedelic. 5.7% of the population over the age of 15 used them at least once in their lifetime, and over 70,000 people in the last 12 months. Research shows that this hallucinogen has potential uses in medicine and psychotherapy, especially in the treatment of depression, anxiety or PTSD. In the past, psychedelics were associated with the phenomenon of psychedelic art, in which artists were inspired in their works by psychedelic experiences they achieved under the influence of hallucinogenic substances, which entails significant risks. Patterns of magic mushroom use among artistic college students have not yet been adequately described.

**Objectives:** The aim of the work is to find out the patterns of use of psychedelic mushrooms among university students with an artistic focus, to find out what effect the use has on their artistic creation and what is the motivation for using it. In this work, I will focus on the prevalence and amount of hallucinogenic mushrooms used by students and try to evaluate whether there is a connection between the pattern of using psilocybin mushrooms and the quality of artistic creation. Last but not least, I will provide students with research information about the potential risks associated with the use of this psychedelic.

**Methods:** A questionnaire survey was used for the preliminary research, and its target population was current university students with an artistic orientation. Questionnaires were distributed using the snowball sampling method and active search for suitable participants by the author of the research. After evaluating the questionnaire survey, students who met the selection criteria were invited to the qualitative part of the study, which took place in the form of semi-structured interviews. The data I obtained

from the interviews with the students were subsequently evaluated using an interpretive phenomenological analysis.

**Results:** Students of art schools who have at least one experience with the use of psilocybe mushrooms rate this experience as positive. The psychedelic experience usually takes place in a group of 3 or more people and is often motivated by fun. Mostly psilocybin mushrooms are taken orally, after the onset of effect positive emotions dominate, such as happiness, euphoria or solidarity. But anxiety and fear also appear. The whole experience is accompanied by changes in the perception of time, which usually appears as slowed down. Visual hallucinations, tachycardia and mydriasis occur. Negative experiences are rather rare when taking psilocybin mushrooms orally, but it is still important to take them into account. In some cases, psychedelic mushrooms have been used in combination with alcohol, which carries significant risks. The research shows that some works of art were created in a state of intoxication, which supports the hypothesis that some artists try to support their creativity by using this psychoactive substance.

**Conclusion:** The research provided a more detailed look at patterns of psilocybin mushroom use among university students with an artistic focus. This is a phenomenon that is important to take into account in the creation of prevention programs at secondary schools and universities.

**Keywords:** psilocybin, magic mushrooms, creativity, art, hallucinogens, qualitative research, university students