Awakn Life Sciences Initiates Research Program to Further Develop Ketamine-Assisted Therapies for Treating Addiction

written by Raj Shah | July 14, 2021

July 14, 2021 (Source) – **Program to Focus on Developing and Delivering New Treatments for Substance and Behavorial Addictions**

Awakn Life Sciences Corp. (**NEO: AWKN**) (Awakn), a biotechnology company with clinical operations developing and delivering psychedelic medicines to better treat addiction, announced that it will undertake a program of clinical research designed to demonstrate the effectiveness for ketamine-assisted psychotherapy against multiple addictions.

Awakn estimates that between 15% and 20% of the global adult population[1], or between 840 million and 1.1 billion people, suffer from addiction such as alcohol, gambling or tobacco use. Treatment rates are typically low and relapse rates are typically high. For example, with Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD), which affects 5% of the global adult population, only 16% of those suffering with AUD seek treatment and there is a 70% relapse rate within the first 12 months for those who do seek treatment[2].

Despite only treating a minority of those suffering from addiction and with high relapse rates, the global addiction

treatment industry is currently valued at US$17.5 billion per year, forecasted to increase to US$31.5 billion per year by 2027[3].

To address this major and growing unmet medical need, one of the biggest in medicine, and the significant associated commercial opportunities, Awakn is developing a pipeline of next-generation therapeutics to treat addiction, with a near term focus on ketamine, a medium term focus on MDMA, and a long term focus on Awakn's own developed drugs (New Chemical Entities or NCEs).

Awakn's ketamine research program will focus initially on treating AUD and gambling addiction. The program will consist of, amongst other activity, a late-stage clinical trial focused on AUD, a mechanistic study focused on gambling addiction and intellectual property development activities. The program was designed and will be led by Professor Celia Morgan, Professor of Psychopharmacology at the University of Exeter, U.K., an internationally respected expert in the therapeutic use of ketamine and Awakn's Head of Ketamine-Assisted Psychotherapy for Addiction.

The results from this research will be used to push forward the use of ketamine-assisted psychotherapy as a mainstream medical treatment, available widely in the U.K., E.U. and beyond.

Professor Morgan commented, "The need for novel and effective treatment approaches for addiction is well understood and urgent. Patients and their families are poorly served by existing treatments that are known to have very high associated relapse rates. Ketamine-assisted psychotherapy has the potential to deliver a significant improvement on existing therapeutic strategies, and at Awakn we aim to prove this via a rigorous set of planned studies and trials. These are designed to help bring ketamine-assisted psychotherapy into mainstream clinical use,

and I am delighted to be playing a leading role at Awakn in driving this research program forward."

This program will position Awakn globally at the forefront of addiction treatment with ketamine-assisted psychotherapy.

About Awakn Life Sciences Corp.

Awakn Life Sciences is a biotechnology company with clinical operations, researching, developing, and delivering psychedelic medicine to better treat addiction. Awakn's team consists of world leading chemists, scientists, psychiatrists, and psychologists who are developing and advancing the next generation of psychedelic drugs, therapies, and enabling technologies to treat addiction. Awakn will also deliver evidence-backed psychedelic therapies for addiction in clinics in the U.K. and Europe and through licencing partnerships globally.

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[1]. Awakn's estimate is based on WHO's report (Percentage of people aged 15 years and older with harmful alcohol use or dependence globally in 2016), North American Foundation for Gambling Addiction Help statistics, and World Cancer Report:

Cancer Research for Cancer Prevention.

[2.] Source: “Treatment rates for alcohol use disorders: a systematic review and meta-analysis” by Tesfa Mekonen.

[3]. Source: Reports and Data (reportsanddata.com) – Drug Addiction Treatment Market.