Awakn Life Sciences Initiates the First Ketamine Treatment Study for Gambling Addiction Led by Professor Celia Morgan

written by Raj Shah | August 24, 2021

August 24, 2021 (Source) – **Recruitment Has Commenced for the First-Of-Its-Kind, U.K. – based Study, Led by Renowned Ketamine Researcher**

Awakn Life Sciences Corp. (NEO: AWKN) (OTCQB: AWKNF) (FSE: 954) (Awakn), a biotechnology company developing and delivering psychedelic medicine to better treat Addiction, announced today that it has received ethical committee approval and has initiated recruitment for the first-ever study investigating ketamine in gambling addiction.

The study will be led by Celia Morgan, Ph.D., Professor of Psychopharmacology at the University of Exeter, U.K., Awakn's Head of Ketamine-Assisted Psychotherapy for Addiction and an internationally respected expert in the therapeutic use of ketamine.

Gambling disorder is a serious issue globally with rates of addiction increasing. In the U.S. alone it is estimated that there are 10 million gambling addicts[1], which is more than 2.5% of the population.

There are no licensed pharmacological treatments of gambling disorder available and the need to find a new treatment has never been more important.

The study will investigate a new treatment approach for gambling addiction, tackling both the urge to gamble and the "superstitious thinking" that accompanies gambling. The study will explore whether ketamine administration can modify the reward memories associated with gambling.

This study forms part of Awakn's strategy to develop and deliver proprietary psychedelic therapeutics (medicine and therapy) to better treat both substance addiction, which affects 15% to 20%[2] of global adult population, and behavioral addiction which affects up to another 27%[3] of the American adult population.

In addition to this study, Awakn has an extensive preclinical and clinical IP portfolio focused on substance and behavioural Addiction treatment, including: 10 patent filings covering multiple chemical series and clinical targets, a completed Phase II ab trial for Ketamine-Assisted Psychotherapy to treat Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD), a planned Phase IIb trial for MDMA as a treatment for AUD with ethics approval forecast for Q4 2021, a two stage pre-clinical drug discovery program developing the next generation psychedelic medicines to treat Addiction, with the first stage due to be completed and reported in early Q4 2021.

Professor Morgan commented, "This study is an exciting first step toward a new treatment for gambling disorder, and one which will give new insights into the neurobiology of this damaging and often overlooked addiction, we are delighted that Awakn is able to take the lead in developing solutions to address this growing unmet treatment need."

Awakn's ambition for this study is to provide a new treatment hope for people whose lives have been destroyed by gambling. This is part of the pipeline of next-generation therapeutics to treat addiction that the Company is developing.

About Awakn Life Sciences Corp.

Awakn Life Sciences is a biotechnology company with clinical operations, 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. Source: North American Foundation for Gambling Addiction Help.
2. 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.
3. Source: NIH – Prevalence of the Addictions: A Problem of the Majority or the Minority? Steve Sussman1, Nadra Lisha, and Mark Griffiths.