**Participant Information Sheet – Exploring the Link Between Psilocybin Mushroom Variability and Consumer Safety – Stage One - Participant Interviews**



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Liggins Institute: Liggins Institute, FMHS Building 505, 85 Park Rd, Grafton, Auckland, 1023, New Zealand

Landcare Research: Landcare Research, 231 Morrin Rd, St Johns, Auckland 1072, New Zealand

## Project title:

## Exploring the Link Between Psilocybin Mushroom Variability and Consumer Safety – Participant interviews

## Research team:

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## What does the interview involve?

This document contains information regarding interviews conducted as part of the “Exploring the Link Between Psilocybin Mushroom Variability and Consumer Safety” study. This Interview forms the first stage of a two-stage study. If you would like further information about the second stage of this study, please email [mushroomdrugchecking@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:mushroomdrugchecking@auckland.ac.nz), ask a researcher during the interview, or go to the study webpage at <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/fmhs/research/research-study-recruitment/research-study-recruitment--e---h-.html>

Participant interviews aim to gain a deeper understanding of how psilocybin mushrooms are acquired, stored, prepared, and consumed in Aotearoa as well as to understand experienced effects and whether these may differ between species.

To participate in this study, you must:

* Be a current or past user of psilocybin mushrooms
* Be 18 years or older
* Be able and willing to do an in-person, audio recorded interview at the University of Auckland Grafton Campus.

This interview is expected to take approximately 30 minutes and will cover the following questions:

* **Part one – Major physical or psychological harms from use?**
  + How would you typically approach a psilocybin mushroom trip? Could you run me through this?
  + How have your experiences with psilocybin mushrooms affected your daily functioning?
* **Part two – Differences in different mushroom species:**
  + Could you tell me about your experiences with the different species or strains you have consumed?

No personal information will be collected during the interview. Raw data may only be shared outside of the research team if a large number of interviews occur, and the research team must hire a third party to transcribe them. The research team will take every possible step to avoid this, including using automated transcription software to reduce the workload of interview transcription. Aggregated data may be shared with other researchers. Audio recordings of interviews will be kept confidential for the brief period until they are deleted.

The interview, conducted by a fellow psilocybin mushroom user, will be audio recorded (no video) with your consent. Recordings will be stored on a secure research drive at the University of Auckland and accessible only by the research team. The recording will be transcribed then securely deleted. Any potentially identifying information (names, references to specific locations etc.) will be removed from the transcript. Due to the nature of this study not collecting any identifying information, you will not be able to edit your interview transcript. If you do not consent to be audio recorded or to be interviewed, you cannot participate in the interview and will be ineligible for the $30 interview compensation. This will not limit your ability to participate in the second stage of the study. The research team will remove the option to complete an interview before the end of the study once they believe that they have acquired enough data from interviews. When this occurs, participants may not complete an interview and new participants may only participate in the second stage of this study. In the case that interviews are ceased, no more financial compensation for interviews will occur. All other parts of the study will continue unchanged until the end of the study.

Engaging psilocybin mushroom users is crucial to ensure this research serves their community. The research team includes a person with lived experience of psilocybin mushroom uses, who will conduct the interviews, and will regularly consult with an advisory group of people with lived experience of mushroom use.

## Booking an interview:

To minimise the collection of identifying information, and to retain confidentiality, this study will use an online booking form (JotForm) to organise interview appointments. This prevents you from having to provide us with an email address or other type of contact information. This form is linked from all study advertisements. Please use this to book your interview. If you need to cancel or rearrange your interview time, this can be done so with the same form.

In the unlikely event that your interview appointment is cancelled, the research team will place a note at the top of the booking form. **Please check the form before heading to your interview to ensure that it has not been cancelled.**

The interview booking link is: <https://form.jotform.com/250537347067864>

## Benefits and risks:

You will receive a $30 voucher as a thank you for your participation.

This research will benefit the psilocybin mushroom community by identifying how set, setting, storage, preparation, mushroom compounds, and other factors affect the experience. Findings will be used to create educational resources on harm reduction and will help implement psilocybin mushroom drug checking in Aotearoa.

If you have ever experienced any distressing psychedelic experiences, these may be discussed during the interview; this may be uncomfortable.

The decision to engage in drug use is entirely your own and is not required as part of participation in this study. Any drug use which you engage in will not be in the proximity off or under the supervision of the research team. If you decide to use psilocybin mushrooms or any other drugs, these support services and resources are available to you to reduce any drug associated risk:

* <https://thelevel.org.nz/> has information on how to reduce harm from your current drug use, reduce how much you use, or stop using drugs.
* <https://www.psilverlinings.nz/> contains information and resources specifically for people who use psilocybin mushrooms.
* New Zealand Poisons Centre - 0800 POISON (0800 764 766). Provides advice to people who believe they may have ingested a poison, such as a toxic mushroom.
* Additional resources relating to mental health are listed at the end of this document.

## Who pays for the study?

You will not bear any costs for participating. You will be compensated with a $30 voucher for participation in the interview.

The project is funded by a University of Auckland Doctoral Scholarship, and an Ember Korowai Takitini Research Grant from the Ember Wellbeing Trust.

## Your rights:

#### Withdrawal from participation and withdrawal of data and samples:

You may withdraw from the project at any time without penalty. To withdraw your data, you can email [mushroomdrugchecking@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:mushroomdrugchecking@auckland.ac.nz). If you no longer wish to participate but do not wish to withdraw your data from the study, you do not need to take any action.

#### Confidentiality and anonymity:

All reported data will be aggregated. If mentioned, specific responses will not include any identifying information.

## What will happen after the study?

Data will be stored on an encrypted, locally hosted, University of Auckland research drive for the duration of the project and may be retained for further research. Only the research team will have access to the data. The research team will retain data ownership. Audio recordings of interviews will be deleted as soon as possible and not stored long term. De-identified interview transcripts will be stored long term on the University of Auckland research drive.

Findings will be published in academic journals and presented at academic conferences.

Mushroom samples will be stored at the University of Auckland School of Pharmacy. Mushroom samples may be retained for further analysis at the School of Pharmacy or Manaaki Whenua-Landcare Research. Indigenous fungi samples will not be given to researchers outside Aotearoa.

## Contact Details, and additional Māori support:

For questions or concerns, contact [mushroomdrugchecking@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:mushroomdrugchecking@auckland.ac.nz). Anonymous, free messaging services are unavailable, so this is the only communication method for participants in the interview stage of this project.

If you need Māori cultural support, talk to your whānau first. You can also contact the Māori Research Committee or Advisor at 09 486 8920 ext 3204 for questions or complaints about the study.

For ethical concerns, contact the Chair of the Auckland Health Research Ethics Committee at ahrec@auckland.ac.nz, 373 7599 x 83711, or Auckland Health Research Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.

Experiencing mental distress? Where to get help:

Free call or text 1737 any time to speak to a trained counsellor, for any reason.

[Lifeline](https://www.lifeline.org.nz/): 0800 543 354 or text HELP to 4357

Suicide Crisis Helpline: 0508 828 865 / 0508 TAUTOKO (24/7). This is a service for people who may be thinking about suicide, or those who are concerned about family or friends.

[Depression Helpline](http://depression.org.nz/): 0800 111 757 (24/7) or text 4202

[Samaritans](http://www.samaritans.org.nz/): 0800 726 666 (24/7)

[Youthline](http://www.youthline.co.nz/): 0800 376 633 (24/7) or free text 234 or email talk@youthline.co.nz

[What's Up](https://whatsup.co.nz/): free counselling for 5 to 19 years old, online chat 11am-10.30pm 7days/week or free phone 0800 WHATSUP / 0800 9428 787 11am-11pm

[Asian Family Services](https://www.asianfamilyservices.nz/services#AsianHelpline): 0800 862 342 Monday to Friday 9am to 8pm or text 832 Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm. Languages spoken: Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai, Japanese, Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi and English.

[Rural Support Trust Helpline](http://www.rural-support.org.nz/): 0800 787 254

Healthline: 0800 611 116

[Rainbow Youth](https://www.ry.org.nz/): (09) 376 4155

[OUTLine](https://outline.org.nz/): 0800 688 5463 (6pm-9pm)

Concerned about your drug use? Where to get help:

Alcohol Drug Helpline: Free call 0800 787 797 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

A variety of support services are listed on The Level website: <https://thelevel.org.nz/support-and-advice>

Ethics Approval:

Approved by the Auckland Health Research Ethics Committee on 25/2/2025 for three years. Reference number AH27703.