**Participant Information Sheet – Exploring the Link Between Psilocybin Mushroom Variability and Consumer Safety – Stage Two – Experience Surveys and Drug Checking**



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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

## Research team:

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## What does the study involve?

This study consists of three parts: (1) a nationwide online survey, (2) the testing of mushroom samples through a legal drug checking service, and (3) a survey(s) on specific psilocybin mushroom experiences of either mushrooms that were tested through drug checking or ones that weren’t. You are not required to acquire or use psilocybin mushrooms for this study, and **none will be provided**.

This project aims to understand how people acquire, store, and prepare psilocybin mushrooms for consumption. Laboratory analysis will investigate whether variation in mushrooms affects user experience.

To participate in this study, you must:

* Be a current or past user of psilocybin mushrooms (past users should have consumed psilocybin mushrooms at least once in Aotearoa New Zealand)
* Be 18 years or older

To be eligible for the drug checking part of the study you must meet the above criteria **and**:

* Plan to use psilocybin mushrooms within six months
* Be able and willing to provide a mushroom sample at the University of Auckland Grafton Campus as part of a drug checking service.

### Part One: Initial Survey:

You will be asked to do a 20–30-minute online survey covering how you collect, store, and use psilocybin mushrooms. You will also be asked about the effects psilocybin mushrooms have on you. On completion of this survey, you will be directed to a unique webpage which will enable you to participate in the following parts of this study if you wish.

If you wish to participate in parts two and three of this study, you must complete the Pre-Experience Survey located on your unique webpage after the Initial Survey. This survey should take approximately 15 minutes.

### Part Two: Drug Checking:

If eligible, you will generate an anonymous ID, complete a range of online personality tests, and book an appointment with a researcher at the University of Auckland Clinical Research Centre in Grafton. The appointment will give you the opportunity to provide a mushroom sample(s) for drug checking. The research team will test your mushroom to determine its psilocin/psilocybin dosage and, whether it is likely to be a toxic look-alike species or not. This appointment is expected to take approximately 15 minutes. You will be asked some questions about the sample and be provided with information on how to reduce harm from your psilocybin mushroom use.

Your sample(s) will be tested for drug content (psilocybin/psilocin), and the mushroom species will be identified. Results will be available on a web portal within one to two weeks. You can book multiple appointments and bring further samples in for analysis if you wish. Accessing your results and the associated surveys is all done through a unique webpage link. This is generated as soon as you begin the initial survey and is unique to you. Saving this link allows you to access this information without providing any contact details.

If the sample provided at the drug checking appointment is a dried or fresh mushroom, the researcher may be able to identify what species it is when provided. If the researcher believes that the mushroom sample is a potentially toxic mushroom, they may notify you of this. If this occurs, the researcher will still complete testing to be sure and will provide results as per the standard process. The researcher will not give out species identifications for mushrooms that appear to be non-toxic, psilocybin containing, or are uncertain, until laboratory analysis has been completed.

To participate in part two of the study, complete the pre-experience survey from your unique webpage. A link to an online form will then become available on this webpage that can be used to book your drug checking appointment. Appointment confirmations, changes, and cancellations will be posted on the unique webpage. Appointments can be cancelled or rearranged through the JotForm.

### Part Three: Post Experience Survey:

You will be invited to complete a survey(s) on a specific psilocybin mushroom experience(s).This experience must have occurred since you enrolled in the study (completed the initial survey in part one) to ensure that data is only gathered on experiences that are well remembered by participants. You may not complete a survey on experiences of consuming microdoses or any dose that is too small to cause noticeable changes in your perception of the world around you. This post experience survey will take approximately 40 minutes.

**IF** you consume psilocybin mushrooms tested in part two, you will be invited to complete a survey on the experience with those mushrooms. You will only be invited to complete this survey if your tested mushroom sample is not found to contain mushroom material from a known toxic species, and if the sample:

* Is a mushroom species known to contain psilocybin, or
* Is a mushroom species not known to contain psilocybin but psilocybin or psilocin are identified.

The survey results will be compared with the laboratory analysis to identify the effect of chemical compounds in the mushroom, and other factors, on the experience.

If you did not participate in drug checking (part two) or you had an experience with psilocybin mushrooms that were not tested, you may still complete a survey on this experience. These survey results will not be able to be compared to laboratory analysis however, they will be used to determine the effects of Aotearoas psilocybin mushrooms more broadly.

To participate in part three, complete the pre-experience survey and then either of the surveys, “Post Experience Survey For Non Tested Samples” or “Post Experience Survey For Tested Samples”. All surveys can be found at the bottom of your unique webpage.

### Anonymity, data management and engagement:

This study ensures your confidentiality. Data is linked by a unique ID code, and all gathered data will remain confidential. No identifying information will be collected from you.

Only the research team will access raw data. Aggregated data may be shared with other researchers. Health information will be collected in the surveys to identify factors that may affect your response to psilocybin mushrooms.

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 use, who will conduct the interviews, and will regularly consult with an advisory group of people with lived experience of psilocybin mushroom use.

## Benefits and risks:

You will receive financial compensation for your time. If participating in drug checking, you will receive information regarding the drug content and any potential toxicity of your mushroom samples. You will also be provided with general harm reduction information relating to psychedelic mushroom use.

You may complete multiple surveys on mushroom use experiences, but you will not receive additional compensation. This is to avoid incentivising increased consumption.

This research will benefit the psilocybin mushroom community by identifying how 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.

You are not expected to use psilocybin mushrooms more frequently than usual. Thus, the risk to you in this study is low. As drug checking is a legal service, you are legally protected whilst attending your appointment. Thus, there is no additional legal risk by being involved in this study.

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 psilocybin mushroom users.
* 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.

## Who pays for the study?

You will not bear any costs for participating. You will be compensated with a chance at one of four $100 vouchers for participation in the initial survey. You will **not** be financially compensated for providing a mushroom sample for analysis. You will be compensated with a $20 voucher for participation in the final survey. Subsequent appointments or surveys are not compensated to avoid incentivising more psilocybin mushroom use than usual.

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 use the anonymous contact form on the research portal or email [mushroomdrugchecking@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:mushroomdrugchecking@auckland.ac.nz) with your unique ID. Mushroom samples provided for testing cannot be returned. 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 unique identifiers and will contain minimal information.

The research platform (REDCap), which hosts surveys and test results, and the appointment booking platform (JotForm) are both anonymous. Only the research team can access data from these platforms. Neither platform will record any identifying or contact information, IP addresses, or device 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 original team will retain data ownership.

Findings will be published in academic journals and presented at academic conferences. To ensure you can access study results, a summary will be provided through the research portal. The research portal will remain online for six months after the project is complete to enable you to access your Drug Checking results and to access the research summary.

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 non-recruited participants.

If you have completed the initial survey, you can use the anonymous contact form in the research portal for questions or concerns. This form is on the main online portal landing page for surveys and test results and is titled “Contact the research team”. If you have a question for the research team, please enter it in the text box in this survey. If you have additional questions, add them after previous ones as the messages are not stored. When you save and exit this survey, the research team will receive a notification of your message directly. The research team will respond to this by writing a personalised message on your landing page, directly below the provided harm reduction information and status of ongoing sample tests.

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.