

Research Evidence Sheet

SEO recommendation topic: **Topic 1 - Depression**

Trial of Psilocybin versus Escitalopram for Depression

Carhart-Harris R, Giribaldi B, Watts R, et al. N Engl J Med. 2021;384:1402-1411.

Developing controlled evidence

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Study design	Phase 2 double-blind randomized comparison of psilocybin vs escitalopram over six weeks, with psychological support in both groups.
Population	59 adults with long-standing moderate-to-severe major depressive disorder.
Why it matters to this SEO topic	A useful comparator trial because it tested psilocybin against an established SSRI rather than only against placebo.

What the study found

- The prespecified primary depression outcome did not show a statistically significant difference between psilocybin and escitalopram at week 6.
- Several secondary outcomes favored psilocybin, but those analyses were not corrected for multiple comparisons.

Important limitations / boundaries

- Small selected sample, six-week duration, and functional-unblinding concerns.
- The negative primary endpoint is critical and should not be obscured by favorable secondary outcomes.

How this can be used responsibly in Satya content

- Useful as evidence of nuance: not every controlled trial shows superiority on its primary endpoint.
- Avoid “psilocybin works better than antidepressants” language; this study does not establish that.

Important: Clinical-trial results are evidence about the study population and protocol. They do not establish that Oregon psilocybin services at Satya will reproduce the same outcomes, and they should not be presented as a guarantee of benefit.

Official source / access

[Open the official study page](#)

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