

# Drugs

With Professor David Nutt

<b>Social Media Handles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Associated Websites</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Professor David Nutt</b>	<b>2</b>
Early Life and Career	2
Controversies	3
Post-Controversy	4
Quotes	5
<b>Drugs Without the Hot Air</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Current Events</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Selection of Interviews</b>	<b>7</b>

## Social Media Handles



[David Nutt \(@ProfDavidNutt\)](#)



[@drugscienceinfo](#)



[David Nutt](#)



[Professor David Nutt](#)

## Associated Websites

- [Home - Professor David Nutt DM, FRCP, FRCPsych, FSB, FMedSci](#)

- [David Nutt - Wikipedia](#)
- [The Truth About Drugs | drugscience.org.uk](#)
  - As written on the *Drug Science* website: “Drug Science works to provide an evidence base free from political or commercial influence, creating the foundation for sensible and effective drug laws, and equipping the public, media and policy makers with the knowledge and resources to enact positive change.

Founded in 2010 by Professor David Nutt following his removal from his post as Chair of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, Drug Science is the only completely independent, science-led drugs charity, uniquely bringing together leading drugs experts from a wide range of specialisms to carry out ground-breaking research into drug harms and effects.

The Scientific Committee play a vital role in society, providing the public in the UK and internationally with high quality, scientifically based information on drugs and evidence-based comment and analysis of new research. Led by founder Professor David Nutt, the committee is made up of the UKs most accomplished, respected and authoritative individuals in science, academia and policy, united with a passionate belief that the pursuit of knowledge should remain free of all political and commercial interest. Together, they work tirelessly to emphasise the role of science in the public discourse, providing information on the actual harms and benefits of various drugs, and challenging the myths that surround drug classification and legislation in the UK.

Drug Science’s mission is founded on their efforts, and their many hours of work delivering, reviewing and investigating scientific evidence relating to psychoactive drugs, with one single minded message – to tell the truth about drugs.”

## Professor David Nutt

### Early Life and Career

Sourced from [wholecelium](#): David Nutt was born in England in 1951. After attending Bristol Grammar School, he progressed to Cambridge University to study medicine. He

then took his clinical training at Guys Hospital, London. He completed a groundbreaking study on inverse antagonists while working as a clinical scientist between 1978-1982.

Side Note: According to [ScienceDirect](#), “An inverse agonist is a ligand that binds to the same receptor-binding site as an agonist and not only antagonizes the effects of an agonist but, moreover, exerts the opposite effect by suppressing spontaneous receptor signaling (when present).” (E.g. Nearly all H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> antihistaminics (antagonists) have been shown to be inverse agonists.)

From there he lectured on psychiatry at Oxford University. He then headed to the US in 1986, to be the Fogarty visiting scientist at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

On his return to the UK in 1988, he became the director of psychopharmacology at the University of Bristol. In 2008, he was appointed as the chairman of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) for the British Government. He also held the positions of advisor to the Ministry of Defence, the Home Office and the Department of Health.

## Controversies

His 2007 publication in *The Lancet* called [Development of a Rational Scale to Assess the Harm of Drugs of Potential Misuse](#) posited that alcohol was the 5th most dangerous drug after heroin, cocaine, barbiturates and street methadone. Comparatively LSD

(classified as a Class A drug) was ranked 14th, nine places lower than alcohol (which is legal.)

Nutt's 2009 publication led to the dismissal of his government position. The paper was titled [Equasy— An overlooked addiction with implications for the current debate on drug harms](#). In the paper, Nutt explored that horse riding was, like drug use, a pastime that was popular with young people. Both could potentially have harmful effects. What he found however, while treating horse riding as a pseudo-drug, was that this legal and common hobby was statistically far more dangerous than recreational drug use. Horse riding chalked up one serious incident every 350 exposures. While in contrast, the consumption of ecstasy resulted in one serious incident every 10,000 exposures. Nutt stated that the intention of the study was *“to get people to understand that drug harm can be equal to harms in other parts of life”*.

In 2009, Nutt lectured and released a widely-available pamphlet, *The 9 Parameters of Harm*, which posits that alcohol and tobacco are more dangerous than cannabis, LSD, and ecstasy. He was dismissed from his position at the ACMD shortly thereafter.

## Post-Controversy

By 2010 Nutt had received enough funding to found *The Independent Scientific Committee on Drugs* (later renamed *DrugScience*).

Among other projects, Nutt is currently working in collaboration with Amanda Fielding and the Beckley Foundation. The research focuses on the effect of psychedelics on cerebral blood flow.

The research goals were furthered to include research on LSD in relation to creativity and problem solving. Nutt and his colleagues have already performed an MRI brain imaging study of volunteers administered psilocybin— which revealed that the compound played a role in the Default Mode Network (DMN). The DMN is the part of the brain that is associated with depression, OCD and Alzheimers, leading to great excitement that psychedelics can assist with these conditions.

## Quotes

- "Alcohol is the most damaging drug in pretty much every Western country."  
([Source](#))
- On using psychedelics for terminally-ill individuals: "People are very, very frightened of dying. They see it as the end. On psychedelics, this sense of self begins to break down...People in the psychedelic trip often experience being at one with the world or even with the universe. It's as if they have died, as if they've gone out to another place. They exist beyond their body. That experience can give them a sense of perpetuity, of permanence, of being part of the cycle of life, which of course we all are." ([Source](#))
- "Cannabis is illegal for political not medical reasons." ([Source](#))

# Drugs Without the Hot Air

[Goodreads](#) synopsis:

From health to family to society, this informative exploration takes an evidence-based view of all the factors involved in drug use. Applying the same objective criteria to legal and illegal substances, an argument is made that legality is not a clear measure for harm. Tackling a variety of questions, such as *Which is more harmful—Ecstasy or alcohol? Can addiction be cured? and Does the "War on Drugs" have serious unintended effects that can hurt children?*, this analysis equips readers with the ability to make educated decisions regarding drugs both personally and in their communities. Broadening the scope of the discussion, a framework is explored for formulating national drug policies that will minimize a myriad of harms—social, medical, criminal, financial, and environmental.

Additional outtakes of a book review, found [here](#):

The narrative begins in October 2009 when David Nutt, a member of the Advisory Committee on Safety of Medicines, gave a lecture followed by a radio interview. The topic? What he believed to be a wrong-headed change in drug policy. Cannabis had been recently upgraded from Class C to Class B in the U.K., signifying greater harm with greater penalty for possession.

After going public he was asked by the Home Secretary (a position similar in the U.S. to the combination of the Secretary of State and U.S. Attorney General) to resign from the ACMD. Dr. Nutt refused and was fired.

The greatest difficulty politically with attempts to reduce harm from drug use is that it may be seen as encouraging drug use (as for example with needle exchange). As a result policy makers in the U.K. are less interested in reducing harm as being seen as tough on crime. U.K. drug policy is principally geared towards reducing the total number of users rather than the total amount of harm.

Humans use drugs both medicinally and recreationally; and even though international treaties have created a strict legal division between the two, humans are natural pleasure seekers—and we simply don't know how to stop drug abuse. Experimentation with drugs is largely determined by social norms and cultural trends—not by stricter laws. The tactic of criminalization deters casual but not heavy users, while it is just this category that suffers (and causes) the most harm.

## Current Events

- [Nitrous oxide: Patel orders Laughing gas review to decide on potential new law](#) (From September 3, 2021)

Nutt added: "This is completely pointless, an utter distraction. This is pretence of doing something about drug problems, but focusing on a drug that has very, very little harm - way less harm than alcohol - and they should be investing their money on people who are dying of drugs like fentanyl and heroin."

## Selection of Interviews

- [I'm Professor David Nutt, sacked for telling the truth about drugs and founder of DrugScience, AMA!: IAmA](#)

- [Psychedelics and Hallucinogens in Psychiatry - Conversations with Prof David Nutt](#)
- [Alcohol Alternatives, Vaping Nonsense, and Comparative Drug Harms: Interview with Professor David Nutt](#)