One pill makes you better

American drug and alcohol addicts are going abroad in search of ibogaine, a purported miracle treatment that is banned in the United States. Will the drug industry ever embrace a substance that causes a hallucinatory high?

By Vince Beiser

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The first thing was a cloud in his brain, as though a source of ions was swirling around his head. Then he began to feel disoriented. I was so lost, so unfocused. I was seeing colors and images that I could not understand. I was feeling a strange sense of detachment and distance from reality. Staring into the distance, I was a part of some strange, dreamlike experience.

Shawn had tried in quick succession many other treatments, all of which had failed him. He had turned to ibogaine, a hallucinogenic drug derived from the iboga shrub that grows in Western Africa. Local tribes use it in religious ceremonies, and ibogaine enthusiasts report it can help addicted individuals feel less戒瘾 desire.

Ibogaine, as even its most ardent supporters say, is not a cure for drug dependence; however, it appears to reduce cravings in which to seek therapy, join a support group and do whatever it takes to stay clean. Ibogaine can help users to detox and smooth his or her withdrawal symptoms. That's a huge boon for those addicted to heroin and other opioids.

The treatment is a dose of a powerful hallucinogenic called ibogaine. It is derived from the roots of a shrub called Tabernanthe iboga, which grows in western Africa. Local tribespeople have used it as a peyote-like sacrament for generations. Since the 1960s, ibogaine has been used in religious ceremonies of African drug culture, sometimes by a spiritual leader as a simple tool to help people who are in spiritual crisis.

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