

# Comparative Psychedelic Law and Legal Reform: An Analysis of Ketamine Policy in the United States and Singapore

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## BACKGROUND

Ketamine is a drug used medically as an anesthetic but can also be misused recreationally. Because of this, countries regulate it differently. In the United States, ketamine is classified as a Schedule III controlled substance, allowing regulated medical use while restricting unauthorized possession. In contrast, Singapore classifies ketamine as a strictly controlled drug under its Misuse of Drugs Act, reflecting a zero-tolerance drug policy. These differences show how government priorities—medical innovation versus deterrence—shape drug regulation. This research compares ketamine laws in the United States and Singapore to understand how legal systems respond to new scientific evidence. Government laws, policy documents, and scholarly research were analyzed to examine changes in ketamine regulation. Since the early 2000s, studies have shown ketamine can rapidly reduce symptoms of treatment-resistant depression (TRD), influencing policy discussions about medical access. This study suggests that as evidence of ketamine’s medical benefits grows, governments may gradually shift toward more evidence-based policies that balance safety concerns with new treatment opportunities.

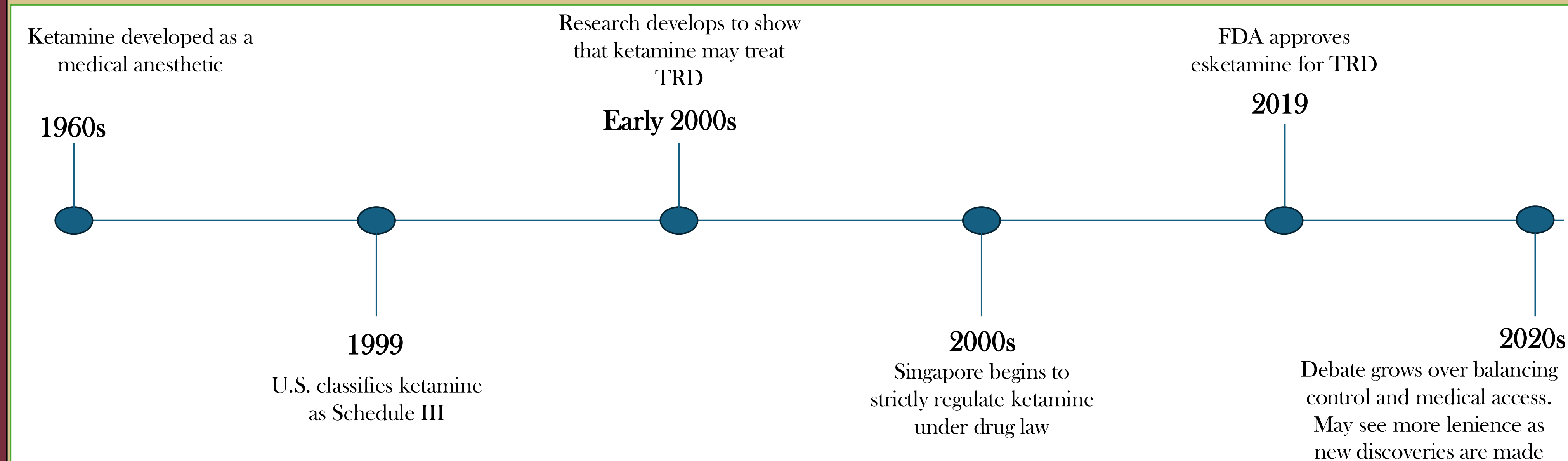
## RESEARCH QUESTION

How do differing state priorities—medical innovation in the United States and deterrence in Singapore—shape ketamine regulation, and what do these differences suggest about potential evidence-based drug policy reforms?

## METHODS

- This study used qualitative comparative policy analysis to examine ketamine laws in the U.S. and Singapore.
- Sources included government laws, policy documents, and peer-reviewed research on ketamine and treatment-resistant depression.
- Documents were reviewed and compared to identify differences in policy goals, particularly medical innovation versus deterrence.
- The analysis focused on drug scheduling, medical access, and criminal penalties.
- A limitation is that the study relied on public documents rather than interviews or statistical data.

## KETAMINE POLICY TIMELINE: U.S. vs. SINGAPORE



## NEXT STEPS

- Study ketamine policies in more countries to better understand how different governments regulate psychedelic substances.
- Look at medical research and public health data to see how ketamine treatments affect patient outcomes and policy decisions.
- Include perspectives from doctors, legal experts, and policymakers to understand how scientific evidence influences drug laws.
  - Use these findings to help guide future discussions about drug policy and possible legal reforms that balance safety concerns with ketamine’s medical benefits.

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## Ketamine Policy: United States vs. Singapore

