



Addiction: A Hallmark of the Times?

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My background suffering, makings sense of suffering and transforming it. Exploring the relationship between individuals and community. Moral philosophy especially responsibility

Focus on adolescents and seniors.

Common Understandings

Moral failure

Weakness of Will

- Impulsivity
- Rational Deliberation but...

Compulsion

Disease

Allergy

Brain Disorder

Illness or disease illness language enters the scene in the 1850s and has evolved over time to allergy (early AA) or a disease.

But disease of what sort? COPD, Type II diabetes are diseases very different from cystic fibrosis, for example.

The focus is entirely on individuals. We'll start here but quickly move to broader social/political/economic considerations

Brain Disorder Model from National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA)

Addiction is defined as a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite adverse consequences. It is considered a brain disorder, because it involves functional changes to brain circuits involved in reward, stress, and self-control. Those changes may last a long time after a person has stopped taking drugs.

Source:

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction/drug-misuse-addiction>

Neuroscience and medicine are winning the battle to define addiction.
Analogy of hijacking the brain. Parkinson drugs Requip and Mirapex imitate function of dopamine. Gambling, shopping, sex/internet addiction

Substance Use Disorder (SUD)

Problematic pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress occurring in a 12-month period. The eleven criteria fall into four categories:

- Impaired control
- Social impairment
- Risky Use
- Pharmacological indicators

2-3 mild SUD 4-5 moderate SUD 6+ severe SUD

Impaired Control

1. substance is often taken in larger amounts or over a longer period of time than was intended
2. persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control substance use
3. great deal of time is spent in activities necessary to obtain the substance, use the substance, or recover from its effects
4. craving or strong desire to use the substance

Social Impairment

- 5. recurrent use resulting in failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school, home
- 6. continued substance use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems
- 7. important social, occupational, or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of substance use

Risky Use

- 8. recurrent substance use in situations in which it is physically hazardous
- 9. substance use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by the substance

Pharmacological Indicators

10. tolerance, as defined by either of the following:

- a. a need for markedly increased amounts of the substance to achieve intoxication or desired effect
- b. a markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of substance

11. withdrawal, as manifested by either of the following:

- a. characteristic withdrawal syndrome for the substance
- b. use of the substance or closely related substance is taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms

Why do some adolescents develop addictions?

Risk Factors	Domain	Protective Factors
Early Aggressive Behavior	Individual	Self-Control
Lack of Parental Supervision	Family	Parental Monitoring
Substance Abuse	Peer	Academic Competence
Drug Availability	School	Anti-drug Use Policies
Poverty	Community	Strong Neighborhood Attachment

Source: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/preventing-drug-use-among-children-adolescents/chapter-1-risk-factors-protective-factors/what-are-risk-factors>

Here the emphasis is still on individuals but let's pull the lens back one layer. There are strong causal links between childhood trauma, SUDs, and PTSD.

Childhood trauma/adverse experiences

- 8–12% of American youth have experienced at least one sexual assault;
- 9–19% have experienced physical abuse by a caregiver or physical assault;
- 38–70% have witnessed serious community violence;
- 1 in 10 has witnessed serious violence between caregivers;
- 1 in 5 has lost a family member or friend to homicide;
- 9% have experienced Internet-assisted victimization;
- 20–25% have been exposed to a natural or man-made disaster.

• Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/eutils/elink.fcgi?dbfrom=pubmed&retmode=ref&cmd=prlinks&id=24656575>

Gun violence in schools with active shooter drills. Detention centers and effects of the pandemic. The more adverse experiences a person experiences, the greater the risk of addiction. ACE score of 5+ are up to 10x more likely to experience addiction than people without ACE.

PTSD plus other conditions treated with prescription medications

• ADHD	0-5 years	80,000
	0-17	3,600,000
• Antidepressants	0-5 years	38,500
	0-17	2,100,000
• Antipsychotics	0-5 years	85,000
	0-17	1,200,00
• Antianxiety	0-5 years	389,000
	0-17	1,400,000

Source: IQVia Total Patient Tracker (TPT) Database 2017

A child will receive a diagnosis of PTSD plus often one of these. But PTSD was a diagnosis developed for returning vets. Developmental trauma disorder instead but rejected for inclusion in the DSM-5

Social determinants of health

The conditions in which people are born, live, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health and quality of life benefits and risks.

Source: <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health>

Availability of resources to meet daily needs (e.g., safe housing and local food markets)
Access to educational, economic, and job opportunities
Access to health care services
Quality of education and job training
Availability of community-based resources in support of community living and opportunities for recreational and leisure-time activities
Transportation options
Public safety
Social support
Social norms and attitudes (e.g., discrimination, racism, and distrust of government)
Exposure to crime, violence, and social disorder (e.g., presence of trash and lack of cooperation in a community)
Socioeconomic conditions (e.g., concentrated poverty and the stressful conditions that accompany it)
Residential segregation
Language/Literacy
Access to mass media and emerging technologies (e.g., cell phones, the Internet, and social media)
Culture

What causes addiction? Environment? Drugs? Something else?

What are the most important factors in developing an addiction?

- Bruce Alexander's Happy Rat Park experiments (1979)
- Johann Hari's *Chasing the Scream* (2015)

Both Alexander and Hari claim that the drugs don't really have so much to do with it as we think. It is more a matter of dislocation and fragmentation such that people lack fundamental life affirming connections. Too much of a one-sided diet? Failure of the War on Drugs.

Seniors Using and Abusing Alcohol and Other Drugs

- 2.8 million people 50+ had a Substance Use Disorder (SUD) in 2006
- 5.7 million people 50+ estimated to have a SUD in 2020

Yes, there are now many more seniors than there were in 2006 because of the size of the Baby Boom generation so the raw numbers will be higher. It is also true that longevity has been increasing.

Number of older Baby Boomers 70+ is projected to climb to 32.8 million this year (up from 21.7 million in 2010). In 2040, the number climbs to 38.6 million.

Source: https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/jchs-housing_americas_older_adults_2014-ch2_0.pdf

High risk drinking for elders

3 or more drinks during one occasion or more than 7 drinks per week.

A drink is 12 oz beer, 4-5 oz wine, or 1.5 oz hard liquor:

16% men

10.9% women

Use the same language for seniors drinking as we do for college drinking

Binge drinking for elders

5 or more drinks per occasion:

19.6% men

6.3% women

Possible risk factors

Depression anxiety stress avoidance
Divorced widowed separated single
Bereavement
Loss of occupation/livelihood/forced retirement
Change of living arrangements
social isolation
sleep disturbances

Source: Kuerbis and Sacco et al. Substance Abuse among Older Adults (2014). *Clin Geriatr Med*. 2014 Aug 30(3): 629-654

10-15% of people do not start to drink until they are older/seniors. Why?

Aging bodies are more sensitive to alcohol and respond differently from younger bodies:

Slower rate of metabolism of alcohol so it sits in organs longer;

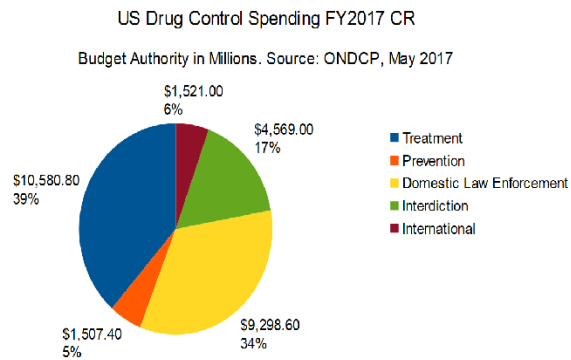
Less muscle to absorb alcohol (lose 1% muscle each year);

Less water in body (between ages of 20 and 80, there's a 15% decrease in water) so there is a higher percentage of alcohol in blood than a young person consuming same amount;

Dehydration slows metabolism and alcohol contributes to dehydration and affects kidneys creating a vicious cycle.

ck to social determinants of health

How does the US spend its money?



Office of National Drug Control Policy

Interdiction means interrupting the illegal flow of drugs, figuring out the routes, shutting them down etc.

Possibilities for recovery

- Individuals can recover/be sober/abstain/use in less risky ways.
- Systemic problems require systemic solutions. How do we transform many of the missing elements in the social determinants of health?
- How do we create and draw upon community capital?

Safe injection sites? Wet houses in Minneapolis Anishinabe Wakiagun is a culturally specific permanent supportive housing program for chronic inebriates. Residents must have 20 or more admissions to detox centers in the last three years, two or more attempts at chemical dependency treatment, and have been homeless the majority of the last two years. Other indicators of eligibility include physical deterioration and evidence that the individual is incapable of self-management due to alcohol use.

Iceland high rate of dangerous binge drinking with adolescents



Are some drugs more addictive or dangerous than others?

- the harm it causes
- the street value of the drug
- the extent to which the drug activates the brain's dopamine system
- how pleasurable people report the drug to be
- the degree to which the drug causes withdrawal symptoms
- how easily a person trying the drug will become hooked

5 most addictive substances

1. Heroin
2. Cocaine
3. Nicotine
4. Barbiturates
5. Alcohol

Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/02/health/most-addictive-substances-partner/index.html>

Barbiturates are far less common now than in 1960s and 70s, which shows how a drug's addictiveness or danger is in large part a matter of context and environment. Used to be prescribed for extreme anxiety, epilepsy, insomnia, seizures.