

Addictions, Dependencies and Substance Use Disorders: A new Paradigm



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Full Disclosure



- **Ad-Board:**
 - Pfizer for Champix until group disbanded in 2019
 - Indivior for Sublocade – new drug for SUD-opiates
- **Conference speaker:**
 - Pfizer
 - Indivior
 - JOICA-Janssen
 - Takeda-Shire

Pet Peeve of the day



- Evidence-based medicine is important BUT it shouldn't impede the development and even the implementation of novel ideas and paradigms especially in instances where these are helpful and do no harm.

Objectives



- 1. To understand how a new paradigm regarding SUD's /Dependency/Addiction might facilitate adequate treatment and increase success as well as increase compassionate understanding and decrease patient guilt while increasing patient responsibility.
- 2. To understand both the positive and negative repercussions of the suspected origin of SUD's for the great majority of these patients.
- 3. To understand that often what we refer to as co-morbidity is actually different clinical expressions of the same underlying state of being.
- 4. To understand the rationale for existential/spiritual value-based approaches as an integral part of recovery and a way towards happiness.

Let's talk about Chips!



- Almost everyone likes chips
- But not everyone likes chips for the same reason!
- Some like:
 - Salty
 - Sweet
 - Spicy
 - Or some combination of all three
- So almost all like chips BUT NOT FOR THE SAME REASONS!
- **For this reason, reducing SUD's to simply the substance/behaviour used is much too basic to be sufficiently useful.**

ASAM's 2019 definition for Addiction



- Addiction is a treatable, chronic medical disease involving complex interactions among brain circuits, genetics, the environment and an individual's life experiences. People with addiction, use substances or engage in behaviours that become compulsive and often continue despite harmful consequences.
- Prevention efforts and treatment approaches for addiction are generally as successful as those for other chronic diseases.



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So what about substances?

Are they anything like Chips?



- **Alcohol:**
 - Dopamine agonist so stimulating and pleasurable
 - Glutamate-GABA agonist so anxiolytic
 - Endorphin agonist so anti-pain and pro-sense of connection
- **Tobacco:**
 - Dopamine agonist so stimulating and pleasurable
 - MAO-I effect so antidepressant and anxiolytic activity
 - Pro-gating thus anti-wariness and anti-paranoia activity
 - Endorphin agonist so anti-pain and Pro-sense of connection

So not so simple or maybe simpler with another way of looking at things!



- So diagnostic categories like:

- Alcoholism

- Smoker

are in fact **NOT VERY HELPFUL** in choosing appropriate therapeutic measures whether they are medication or therapy-based simply because different people drink and smoke and use different drugs/behaviours for different reasons.

New Emerging Paradigm for many (80%) of SUD's



- Kenneth Blum's **Reward Deficiency Syndrome**
- Research on post-synaptic Dopamine receptors has demonstrated clearly that the greater majority of people with SUD's are born with post-synaptic Dopamine receptors that are hypo-sensitive and consequently require more stimulation in order for the chemical messenger to have an effect.
- It's like being 'Hard of Hearing' for Pleasure!

Hypo-Dopaminergic Syndrome (HDS): New nomenclature whose time has come?



- So if 'Hard of Hearing', how do we adapt?
- We increase the volume!
- So with HDS, this means:
 - party more,
 - harder
 - and more often
- or else suffer the consequences of living with a form of congenital hypothymia-dythymia or mal-de-vivre.
- Most people don't understand because pleasure comes easily to them. So they judge these HDS people as excessive and unreasonable.
- And the HDS people think that those who don't party as hard as being boring and adverse to fun.
- Two solitudes!

Advantages and Disadvantages of HDS



- **Advantages: Bigger containers need more to be filled**
 - If the person is fortunate enough to come across a positive, constructive activity that they thoroughly enjoy and have parents willing to allow them to indulge themselves excessively, then they will invest more time in the activity becoming more proficient more quickly and succeeding more easily as well.
 - This probably explains why so many over-performers (Music, sports, art, other) often develop S.U.D's at some time during their lifetime. Once they become too successful for too long, things get boring and S.U.D's are lurking for them on the sidelines.
 - The bigger glass has greatness thrust upon it (or great emptiness if not)!

Disadvantages



- If not dealt with positively early on then hypothyroidism, ADHD, depression and anxiety can develop.
- If / when they try dopaminergic stimulants like alcohol or smoking or any activity that gives them a lot of pleasure, they immediately feel as if something inside of them has been corrected and they sense an immediate connection to the substance (or behaviour) and a relationship develops between them.
- This relationship, if it is the only way that person has found to self-correct, eventually becomes a privileged behaviour and thus what we can call dependency or addiction.
- These are terms that we are used to but are they really the most appropriate?

More Disadvantages



- When we are young we develop positive rewarding relationships with our parents, our friends and our pets.
- People with a large Dopamine requirement develop stronger bonds because they invest more time in those relationships.
- However, if and when those relationships end, the loss is all that much greater and hurtful.
- The larger glass when it tips over makes more of a mess/grief/trauma

More Disadvantages (cont'd)



- Thus what might be considered a 'normal' loss can actually be a major traumatic event for these people. Very hurtful relationship losses at a young age are more at risk to leading to PTSD, an Attachment Disorder and Dysthymia from a reluctance to invest in relationships for fear of being hurt.
- Studies show that 50% of people with SUD's suffer from Dysthymia/Chronic low-grade depression.

More disadvantages (cont'd)



- These very-injured people seek out relationships where they are less likely to be abandoned so:
 - They compensate with relationship dependencies with other dependent people!
 - SUD's because of the illusion of control and because beer bottles don't have little feet and cannot run away from them!
Illusion of control.
- This relationship insecurity leads to immaturity, bad problem-solving skills and neglect of the development of a Real Self

So what does Hypo-Dopaminergic Syndrome correlate with on a genetic level?



- Alcohol use disorder
 - Tobacco use disorder
 - Gambling
 - ADHD
 - Conduct disorder
-
- The more the problem is severe, the greater the chances that we are dealing with a HDS!

The Tissue Box



- Traditionally, we have referred to the drinker who smokes and gambles and womanizes and is antisocial as:
 - Alcoholic with:
 - ✦ Co-morbid smoking , gambling, emotional/sexual dependency and antisocial traits
- So 5- 6 diagnoses!
- Our new paradigm suggests he has only 1 true diagnosis (HDS) that is expressed in 6 different facets that can rotate over time becoming more or less evident depending on life circumstances.

This explains much



- It explains switching between substances/behaviours
- It explains how come they stop one behaviour but increase another two or three-fold
- It explains the hypothymia that remains even after therapy and that isn't fixable with Rx.
- It explains why a spiritual value-based approach towards learning how to be Happy actually works at keeping them away from an insatiable Dopamine-pleasure driven solution that always leaves them empty and wanting for more.

So how do we know what we are dealing with?



- So simple – JUST ASK!
 - Do you use alcohol?
 - ✦ Do you appreciate the pleasure effect? Does it put you in a party mood?
 - ✦ Do you appreciate the anti-anxiety, anti-shyness anti-stress effects?
 - ✦ Do you appreciate the anti-loneliness effects?
 - All or two or one?
- Depending on which effect/effects are appreciated, we should choose the corresponding pharmacological and therapeutic approaches.

If This, then That!



- If drinking/smoking/using for Dopamine effect then;
 - Detox
 - Be patient (wait 4-8 weeks) but also treat significant co-morbid problems
 - Explanation of HDS
 - Investment in positive and constructive DA activities while also investing in a way of life that is Spiritual Value and Happiness weighted
 - Self-Help Groups do help

Existentialism/ the Self and a way to Happiness



- The major emotional trauma for these people usually occurred from separation, real or imagined.
- They felt as if they would die
- They prioritized Surviving over being Happy
- They invested in substances and behaviours and dependency relationships that made them feel better and that they felt they could control
- They thus neglected creating a true integrated Self

The Self



- Values of Self lead to Self-Esteem/ Self-worth
- ‘The Estimate of the value of the Values that constitute the Self’
- This is where Self-help groups fit in.
- They provide a framework where people can work on theirSelves together

Advantages of a Value-based Self



- **Values of Being:**
 - Their value increases over time
 - Trying to Be guarantees Becoming
 - They are not limited in quantity
 - They can't be taken or lost without your consent
 - They can't be seen, or measured or owned
 - They define our being and can even transcend death as our values can inspire the living to invest in the same values, inspired by our example.
- **Ex.:** Calm, Courage, Generosity, Honesty, Loyalty, Faithfulness, Generosity, Goodness, Love, Perseverance, Peaceability, Respect, Humbleness, Humanity.

Only a true Self can be truly Happy



- An integrated Self is our core
- It is untouchable and can't be killed
- So for the Hypothymic and traumatized HDS/SUD patient, it allows him/her to create positive constructive yet independent relationships without fear of dying if there is separation.
- They Are together They grow together.
- It allows him/her to compensate being hard-of-hearing for pleasure with being Happy.
- It provides an alternative way to feeling well that is guaranteed to function and thus fosters Serenity and Happiness.