

Preface

The book *Addiction Medicine: Science and Practice* is my attempt to bridge the gap between the explosion of neuroscientific and behavioral knowledge in the past three decades and treatment delivery in clinical practice. As such, it should fulfill the role of a comprehensive textbook that integrates addiction medicine from its scientific underpinnings to the treatment of patients in clinical settings.

In many ways, addiction is a spectrum of disorders that expands as our knowledge grows about the exposure and acquisition of habit-forming behaviors. This expansion shall eventually bring diseases not considered previously as addictions within its sphere. Due to our increasing use of *in silico* systems, technology-related behaviors might also become prominent areas of addiction research and treatment in the years to come. Our knowledge about the phenomenology and classification of addictive disorders is rising, and novel concepts related to the staging of disease are being developed.

We have learned that the neurobiological correlates of addictions related to substances, behaviors, or both appear to be similar. This discovery opens up new vistas for addiction treatments across a spectrum of disorders. Harnessing the power of understanding addiction at the level of the cell and molecular events across species with our ability to demonstrate the impact of these changes on the behavior of the organism shall usher in an era of personalized medicine. Innovative treatments and disease concepts are being advanced. New efficacious medicines for the treatment of addiction are being discovered. Indeed, our own immune system might someday be used to fight an addiction to various substances.

Culture, race, and ethnicity also have a major influence on how addictive behaviors can manifest or are expressed, and how they are viewed by society. Family traditions, religious beliefs and practices, and social setting characteristics are all very relevant and important in understanding addiction. Consequently, this book gives appropriate attention to these very relevant factors.

Taking all these essential factors into consideration, I conceptualized the bold design and challenge of a book that not only incorporated and highlighted cutting-edge science but also provided up-to-date and evidence-based treatments for addiction. This book provides a fresh approach that builds upon what the best experts know today—that for most, addiction is a

treatable disorder and the outcome need not always be poor. Modern addiction treatment is firmly in the arena of medicine, and is moving rapidly into general clinical practice, with evidence-based procedures replacing the much less well or formally evaluated and more expensive residential programs. For many individuals with an addictive disorder, an office-based approach enables optimum management of the disease whilst allowing engagement in work, play, social relationships, and the general business of daily life to continue.

I am most grateful to the distinguished group of leading experts who have come together to produce this book. These experts, united in their mission to deliver a scholarly and comprehensive book, came from the basic and clinical sciences and treatment delivery fields. I am glad for all that they have taught me through their contributions, for the knowledge they shall distill to all who read this book, and for their dedication to alleviating the suffering of those afflicted by the disease of addiction.

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Addiction Medicine

Science and Practice

Johnson, B.A. (Ed.)

2011, XXX, 1633 p. In 2 volumes, not available
separately., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-1-4419-0337-2