



New advances in addiction medicine

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The high prevalence rate of the drug and alcohol-related problems highlights the public health importance of this disorder. The abuses of legal and illegal drugs remain one of the major medical problems in the world today. The total number of drug users in the world is now estimated at about 200 million people, equivalent to about five percent of the global population age 15–64 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. World Drug Report, 2006). Cannabis remains by far the most widely used drug, followed by amphetamine-type stimulants, opiate and cocaine users. Alcohol abuse and alcoholism affects nearly 10% of the general population both in the United States (McGinnis and Foege, 1993) and in Europe (Hupkens et al., 1993).

Drug and alcohol abuse have many medical consequences. Health effects may range between cardiomyopathies, immune impairment, endocrine disorders, metabolic and nutritional disorders, liver and gastrointestinal diseases, cancer disease, neuropsychiatric complications to name a few, so all kinds of physicians could be involved in

the management of these patients. Medical approaches continue to develop with new discoveries in pharmacology, molecular genetics, and immunology.

Indeed, in the last three decades, our increased knowledge about the molecular, biological and behavioral aspects of addiction has enabled us to improve the management and survival of these patients. For example, the discovery of the neurobiological basis of addiction and of different neural pathways involved in drug and alcohol abuse led to identify new pharmacological approaches to treatment that can be paired with psychosocial treatments. Furthermore, there are new advances in pharmacogenetics that can bring forward to era of personalized medicine to the addictions field. New vistas in vaccine research also promise to improve both the prevention and treatment of addictive disorders. All this scientific progress was, and shall continue to be, possible due to the rapid expansion of research in the field.

Frontiers in Addictive Disorders will be at the cutting-edge of publishing papers that will shape our understanding and the

treatment of addictive diseases now and in the future. The scope of the journal is very broad and ranges from the laboratory bench to society.

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