The Disease of Addiction

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Disclosures

- Susan K. Blank, MD
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- President - Georgia Society of Addiction Medicine
- Board of Directors-Georgia Council on Alcohol and Drugs
- Board of Directors- Let’s Be Clear Georgia
- Consultant-Libertas Tobacco Healing Center, Ontario, Canada
- Appointee to Georgia’s State Commission on Narcotics Treatment Programs 2016
- Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association
- Fellow of American Board of Forensic Examiners
- Fellow of American Academy of Anti-Aging Regenerative Medicine
- Fellow of American Society Addiction Medicine
- Diplomate ABPN, ASAM, ABAM, AAAAM
- Certified Medical Review Officer
- Chapter: Tobacco Addiction, 2013 ASAM Criteria
- Chapter: Responsible, safe, and effective prescription of opioids in chronic non-cancer pain. ASIPP Guidelines 2017
- Weekly Radio Show: “Detailing Addiction with Dr. Susan Blank” on America’s Web Radio.
Confusing Terms

- Use
- Overuse
- Abuse
- Dependency
- Addiction
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- Addiction is a Primary
- Chronic disease of brain
- Reward Pathway
- Motivation Pathway
- Memory Network and related circuitry.
Drug Addiction involves 4 circuits

1. Reward – nucleus accumbens (NAc) ventral pallidum
2. Motivation/drive- orbitalfrontal cortex (OFC) subcallosal cortex
3. Memory and learning- amygdala hippocampus
4. Control- prefrontal cortex anterior cingulate gyrus

Circuits Involved In Drug Abuse and Addiction

All of these brain regions must be considered in developing strategies to effectively treat addiction.
Activation of the reward pathway by addictive drugs

- Morphine
- Opium
- Nicotine
- Benzo's Barbs
- Alcohol
- THC
- Chocolate
- LSD
- Ritalin
- Amphetamines
- PCP
- Ketamine
- MDMA
- DXM
- Exercise
- Food
- Gambling
- Sex
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- Dysfunction in these circuits leads to characteristic
- Biological
- Psychological
- Social
- Spiritual manifestations.
This is reflected in an individual pathologically pursuing Reward and/or Relief by substance use and other behaviors.
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- Addiction is characterized by inability to consistently abstain
- Impairment in behavioral control
- Craving
- Diminished recognition of significant problems with one’s behaviors and interpersonal relationships
- A dysfunctional emotional response.
Like other chronic diseases, Addiction often involves cycles of Relapse and Remission.
COMPARISON OF RELAPSE RATES BETWEEN DRUG ADDICTION AND OTHER CHRONIC ILLNESSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Percent of Patients Who Relapse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drug Addiction</td>
<td>40 to 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type I Diabetes</td>
<td>30 to 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertension</td>
<td>50 to 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>50 to 70%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Without treatment or engagement in recovery activities, addiction is progressive and can result in disability or premature death.
“Many chronic diseases require behavioral choices, such as people with heart disease choosing to eat healthier or begin exercising, in addition to medical or surgical interventions,” said Dr. Michael Miller, Past President of ASAM.

“So, we have to stop moralizing, blaming, controlling or smirking at the person with the disease of addiction, and start creating opportunities for individuals and families to get help and providing assistance in choosing proper treatment.”
Addiction is:

• A genetically inherited childhood brain disease
• We can’t cure it
• We Can Manage it
• Treatment Works
• Recovery is Possible