

Editorial

Addictive Behaviours

The chronic, excessive consumption of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and food is an ever increasing health problem with dire social, psychological, and medical consequences. While clinical research on these addictive patterns has a long history, only recently has the quality of that research improved. The literature abounds with theories about etiology and anecdotal descriptions regarding treatment efficacy without objective data to support these viewpoints and conclusions.

Several years ago clinical researchers became disenchanted with this “state-of-the-art” and embarked on a more systematic analysis of addictive behaviours. This movement led to the development of more objective assessment and evaluation procedures, to a more careful evaluation of the social, psychological, physiological, economic, and political aspects of substance abuse, and to a more rigorous scrutiny of traditionally held beliefs about the nature of addictions (e.g., the “loss of control” concept in the field of alcoholism). While greater controversy has emerged as a result of these new findings, such controversy has been productive.

Concomitantly, an increase in interest in studying *all* consummatory behaviours that are detrimental to health has developed. Health advocates are developing a political constituency fostering more research and treatment programmes on smoking and obesity. Previously, addiction research focused almost exclusively on alcohol and drug abuse.

An even more recent and quite intriguing trend involves the analysis of addictive behaviours together rather than as separate entities. Smoking, drinking, drug abuse, and overeating appear to be interrelated on several levels. For example, alcohol consumption frequently triggers overeating or excessive smoking. Combined research and treatment focussing on several addictions would not only allow for a more thorough study of these interactions but also enable a much needed sharing of knowledge among researchers and clinicians studying one addiction in isolation.

This issue of *Behavioural Psychotherapy* presents a cross section of studies illustrating research on new approaches and concepts regarding the addictive behaviours.

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Alcoholism

CLINICAL AND EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH

An Official Publication of the National Council on Alcoholism and the American Medical Society on Alcoholism

Editor: Frank A. Seixas

Publication: Quarterly

Subscription: Volume 3, 1979. £23.35/\$40.00. \$38.00 (USA)

Alcoholism is a complicated disease touching on a multiplicity of disciplines—biochemistry, psychology and pathology of various systems, especially the gastrointestinal and nervous systems. There are also important psychiatric, social and cultural implications. Most physicians are confronted with some aspect of alcoholism in their day-to-day work. Thus, there is a definite need for an authoritative and regular source of vital information on specific laboratory and clinical problems, and on the resources now available to the physician for the treatment of the disease. This, then is the rationale for introducing *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*—a practical and multidisciplinary quarterly publication, providing a fresh, contemporary approach to what can be done, and what is being done about this complex medical problem.

Published by Grune and Stratton. Distributed in the UK by Academic Press or Grune and Stratton at the New York address given below.

Acute Drug Abuse Emergencies

A Treatment Manual

edited by Peter G. Bourne

1976, 328pp, £10.05 o 12 119560 0

This volume represents a collection of the preferred methods for treating all of the major drug abuse emergencies that a physician or other health professional is likely to encounter.

Methadone Treatment in Narcotic Addiction

Program Management, Findings and Prospects for the Future

R. G. Newman and M. S. Cates

1977, 285pp, £12.60 o 12 517050 5

Subject Headings

Program rationale, planning and implementation. Analysis of program experience, 1970-1974.

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