

Current views on Drug Abuse: What Internists should know

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Our understanding of the neurobiology and treatment of addictive disorders has changed dramatically over the past 40 years. This emerging field of medicine, encompasses the fields of genetics, receptor physiology, intracellular messaging, gene transcription and translation, neuroanatomy, regulatory pathways, and combines pharmacotherapy with behavioral treatments. These aspects of addiction medicine are familiar territory for internists. In addition, the medical complications of addictive disorders include those that result from direct toxic effects of abused substances and the infectious complications from intravenous drug use.

This talk will focus on findings from the peer-reviewed literature, including recently published studies in basic science, neuroimaging, observational studies, clinical trials, systematic reviews and meta-analyses. The presenter, a general internist with training in clinical epidemiology and addiction medicine, will cover topics ranging from molecular biology, medical complications, HIV prevention, and screening and treatment of alcohol, nicotine, cocaine, and opioid use disorders. Special emphasis will be placed on treatments that can be offered by internists in the office-based setting including naltrexone for alcohol dependence, and buprenorphine/naloxone for opioid dependence.

This talk will provide a structure for internists to view addictive disorders within the direct purview of their practice and focus on the essential elements of the field that all internists should know.