



W.W. Fleischhacker and D.J. Brooks (eds.)

Addiction
Mechanisms, Phenomenology and Treatment

Springer-Verlag Wien GmbH

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© 2003 Springer-Verlag Wien

Originally published by Springer-Verlag Wien New York in 2003

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2003

Typesetting: Best-Set Typesetter Ltd., Hong Kong

Printed on acid-free and chlorine-free bleached paper

SPIN: 10925195

CIP data applied for

With 9 (partly coloured) Figures

ISBN 978-3-211-01316-8 ISBN 978-3-7091-0541-2 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-7091-0541-2

Preface

Addiction was the topic of the 6th Neuropsychiatry Symposium of the European Institute of Health Care. Substance related disorders rank among the leading causes for disability worldwide and represent a major concern in the field of public health. Ever since mankind has experienced the effects of psychotropic agents, first reports date back more than 5000 years, abuse and addiction have been a part of this story. Although the phenomenology and course of substance use disorders have long been known, especially since extensive research in the last century, neurobiological mechanisms behind these syndromes have only begun to unravel in the last few decades. The methodological progress in neuroimaging and molecular biology have significantly contributed to this process. The increasing knowledge about the way our brains' networks, with the dopaminergic inputs to the nucleus accumbens as one of the areas of key interest with regard to reward and reinforcement mechanisms, has led to a fascinating new look onto an old field. At this moment this field faces two major challenges: firstly to translate findings from preclinical, animal work to humans and secondly to develop treatment strategies based on this.

For the present volume, we have brought together experts, which cover a lot of this ground: consequently, the authors shed new light on the field from various different angles and discuss different drugs of abuse, ranging from the more traditional ones (like opiates and alcohol) to more recent additions, such as designer drugs. The treatment of addiction is also explored from different perspectives including pharmacological and psychotherapeutic approaches. On the threshold of a new area of addiction research, this volume is expected to wet the readers appetite to learn more about this exciting field of interdisciplinary research.

Innsbruck and London, July 2003

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