SESSION 7: SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS
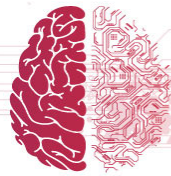
Substance use disorders are the most lethal psychiatric illnesses – more than 90,000 people died last year in the United States from opioid overdoses alone. And what is true for opioids is true for all substance use disorders: only a small percentage of patients are formally diagnosed and even fewer receive evidence-based treatment. Stigma – whether from professionals, the public, or patients themselves – remains a major barrier. It is time to put to rest the insidious notion that addiction is a moral failure. Over the past several decades, a burgeoning body of research has demonstrated a broad range of biological factors that contribute both to the vulnerability and maintenance of substance use disorders. Combined, these data demonstrate that addiction must be managed as a chronic medical illness, just like diabetes and heart disease. Equally important, data on neuroplasticity demonstrate how substance use disorders, like other medical conditions, can remit.

Dig in to today's resources to learn not just about the cutting-edge findings but about how to incorporate them directly into patient care.

Please note: many of our highest yield resources are embedded within this session's Pod activity – be sure to save extra time for it!

On Your Own

Read:

Synaptic Plasticity: The Role of Learning and Unlearning in Addiction and Beyond

From "Azalla" to Anandamide: Distilling the Therapeutic Potential of Cannabinoids

Cannabinoids and Pain: Weeding Out the Undesired Effects With a Novel Approach to Analgesia

Watch:

Talking Pathways to Patients: Addiction

With Your Pod (Or on Your Own)

Progressive Case Conference: Substance Use Disorders

Assessment

At the end of Session 7, you should be able to do the following:

1. **Respond to the case vignette from the course pre-test.**
2. **Draw the core neural circuitry of addiction and how you would discuss it with a patient.**
3. **Define long-term potentiation and describe its relevance to the patho-physiology of addictions.**
4. **Describe what is currently known about the mechanisms of effective treatments of addiction.**
5. **Define allostasis and describe 3 neural systems that experience allostatic shifts with long-term opioid use.**

→ **When you're ready, click here to submit your responses.**

Fun Extras!

Read:

As Hopes Have Flown Before: Toward the Rational Design of Treatments for Alcohol Use Disorder
Opioid Use Disorder: A Desperate Need for Novel Treatments