

Review of: "The Integrated Metatheoretical Model of Addiction: Towards an Architectonic of a Metatheory of Addiction"

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This article is a commendable attempt to get to grips with and solve the 'conceptual chaos' that, the author is correct to point out, bedevils the field of addiction science. Although not its primary objective, a strength of the article is that it sets out the nature and range of this conceptual chaos. However, while the author's claim that "the five elements of the AQAL model provide(d) a parsimonious framework for major observations of addiction", the same cannot be said of the integrated metatheoretical model of addiction itself. A model that includes "forty ontological zones" can hardly be described as parsimonious. Dr. Du Plessis has given us here a great deal to chew over.

An alternative to a metatheory as a response to conceptual chaos would rely on a pragmatic philosophy of science. Whatever the inconsistencies and contradictions between various accounts of addiction, the key question is whether or not they work. 'Work' here can mean different things – a radical improvement in the success rates of treatment for addictive disorders, a significant reduction in rates of addiction in society, or improved understanding and less stigmatising view of addiction among the general public. It also includes the ability to predict and make sense of a range of empirical data on how addiction manifests itself. Whatever the methodological, epistemological or ontological distinctions between various theories, they can be evaluated on whether or not they work in any specific and declared sense. Whether or not the metatheoretical model outlined in this article can be said to work is yet to be decided. After struggling to follow all the complex features of the metatheoretical model, one is left with the question, where does this get us, how do we progress from here? Du Plessis no doubt has an answer to these questions and one hopes to see it in future work. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the Integrated Metatheoretical Model of Addiction is presented as an attempt, albeit provisional, to answer the challenge by Robert West and colleagues for greater unity and clarity in the addiction field. My current verdict on this brave attempt must be that, while it may have provided the grounds for some kind of unity, it cannot be said at present to offer greater clarity.

There are more minor observations. It is gratifying to see one's words quoted verbatim on p.16 but there is no reason why the original citation should not be given: Heather, N. (1998). "A conceptual framework for explaining drug addiction." *Journal of Psychopharmacology* 12(1): 3-7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026988119801200101>. The NIDA monograph on the required components of a theory of addiction described on p.17 seems to confuse an explanation of drug use and an explanation of drug addiction, as does the adoption of these components in the integrative metatheory. An irritation is that a number of references to works in the text are missing from the reference list at the end.

Despite these imperfections, this is an article with outstanding breadth and serious purpose. It deserves the attention of

those seriously interested in making scientific sense of addiction.