Review of: "Addiction as a Loss of Inner Freedom"

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As a reader, I am immediately taken aback by the author's use of stigmatizing language (e.g., labeling a person as "addict" throughout the entire paper). The authors state that this paper is a "result of observations made through many years of work with…", and yet continue to stigmatize a portion of our population with broad, sweeping, and inappropriate generalizations (e.g., "…shackled with selfishness…"). The authors lose even more credibility with the early assertion that gambling disorder is "nonsubstantial" when "gambling can be identified as an important contributor to suicide" (p. 8 in Marionneau, V., & Nikkinen, 2022).

The authors seemingly make no effort to deeply understand the behavioral manifestations of addictiveness, nor question their own cognitive bias in these judgmental expressions. In their discussion of "Loss of Inner Freedom", they treat the subjects as insects under a macroscope, rather than their fellow human beings. They miss a real opportunity to convince the reader of their thesis ("loss of inner freedom", which I agree is a part of the phenomenon) by erecting barriers when using disrespectful language. This makes the paper extremely difficult to read for those who also work with this population but have the necessary respect and positive regard for the subjects of this discourse.

Though the philosophical exploration is interesting, the authors lose validity and credibility with how they treat the subjects experiencing the phenomenon of addictiveness. Had the authors made their philosophical arguments without unjustifiably marginalizing a group, their work may have been persuasive. The authors use overly complex expressions that are unnecessarily verbose and do not add meaning or clarity to the espoused aim of the paper. This is the second barrier for the reader.

Anyone engaging in writing about any mental health topic needs to familiarize themselves with the Recovery-Oriented Language Guide, or a similar resource, to avoid expressing (and reinforcing) stigma and bias. Words and word choices matter.