Review of: "A Unified Theory of Addiction"

Oscar Prospéro-García[1]

1 Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

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Although this unified theory of addiction is appealing, it does not go beyond a mere description of facts. It is not providing an explanation useful as a framework to develop pharmacological and/or behavioral therapies. The author has no data to support his claim that this theory is useful for developing treatments for patients, hence does not have clear evidence that is working. The displacement behavior to cope with stress is something all the clinicians have observed for decades. Since the origin of the modern psychiatry this displacement has been observed and described as mechanisms of defense, conversive hysteria, and others; but besides a description, they have not provided of any useful approach to benefit patients. Particularly because the author does not face the main problem, the stress itself and the adverse situations provoking such stress and epigenetic changes in the brain underlying maladaptive behaviors. The way the author presents his theory undermines the gigantic problem addiction is. Some other explicative approaches that have been put forth by others as the antireward and hyperkatifeia model (Koob, 2021) and the antifragility of the brain defense system (Prospero-Garcia et al., 2021) are much more promising to understand the neurobiological mechanisms underlying anxiety and addiction, therefore potentially more useful to develop effective therapeutic approaches. Even the popular but every day less convincing dopamine reward theory seems to provide more utility that the simple description the unified theory is providing. Hence, I believe this theory is providing nothing new nor has proven to be useful to benefit the patient.