

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

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This is an ambitious article, attempting to sketch the architectonic of a metatheory of addiction. The article is well-written and interesting to read. What is particularly excellent is the multifaceted discussion of the phenomenology of addiction, particularly the exploration of the intra-psychic and inter-subjective processes of the addicted person. I have the following comments:

1. There is not just definitional confusion surrounding addiction, but additionally scope creep in which the term and concept of addiction is over-extended to incorporate an increasing range of maladaptive behavioural phenomena that may have little in common in terms of etiology and pathophysiology. Given this ambiguity, the article should outline at the beginning a general definition of addiction that establishes the boundary conditions of the phenomenon or what addiction is not. One option is to describe addiction in terms of its component processes such as appear in the NIDA monograph or Griffith's component model of addiction.
2. The author discusses the poor efficacy of addiction treatment in terms of relapse rates. However, note that total abstinence is just one model of recovery. This should be clarified. Other metrics of recovery success, such as absence of functional impairment, could be described.
3. The pleasure pathway of the brain being "hijacked" by substances is an impoverished metaphor for the myriad of neuroadaptive changes that take place within and outside the mesolimbic dopaminergic pathway with repeated administration of psychoactive substances and I think best avoided.
4. When discussing the etiology of addiction, the author seems to have neglected discussion of the role of genetic propensity, which is well-established in the literature. For example, the Disinhibition construct from behavioural genetics literature is heritable and represents a latent liability for substance use initiation and problematic use.
5. Having described the forty ontological zones of the architectonic for an integrative meta-theory of addiction, I feel the author could have elaborated more on which zones have already been given an adequate treatment by existing theories and perhaps which zones require further exploration and articulation? This would then lead to some concrete recommendations for programmatic research to fill in the gaps of our ontological knowledge of addiction.