

# Is Addiction A Psychological Or Physical Disorder?

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Addiction, in regard to the field of psychology, refers to a chronic brain condition which is composed of drug seeking and usage despite the adverse effects. They argue it's a brain disease because drugs can interfere with the brain as it changes the normal functioning of the brain. The state in which a body can adapt to the presence of a drug till the drug has no similar effect is known as tolerance.

On the other hand, commoners argue it is a condition in which an individual ingests a substance, e.g., a drug or gets involved in an activity, e.g. sex, which is exciting, but the prolonged use or act interferes with one's routine. Users may not even be aware that their behaviour has changed and is out of control, causing harm to others and themselves.

A lot of addictive behaviour is neither related to physical tolerance nor exposure to cues. Individuals compulsively engage in drug use or even gamble due to being emotionally stressed whether or not they have a physical addiction. The primary focus of obsession is not what matters but rather an urge to take action in certain types of stress due to stress hormones (Corticotropin-Releasing Factor, Adrenocorticotrophic Hormone) (Kiesbye, 2010).

Thus, the treatment of these types of addiction requires one to understand fully how psychologically it works. It is essential for one to recognize that addiction is not about searching for pleasure or anything to do with one's moral behaviour/character. Experts continue to debate and argue if addiction is a disease or a genuinely mental illness, and lack of any resolution may preclude appropriate treatment (Kiesbye, 2010)

The question of whether addiction is a psychological or physical disorder always arises when one talks of dependency. The idea of one being able to separate between mental and physical dependence goes way back to the 17th-century French philosopher known as Rene Descartes. By the philosophy of the mind, Descartes's appropriate solution to the [mind/ body](#) problem is the argument that there is always the mind (soul) and the body (brain), and the two shall never meet or causally affect each other (Prinsen, 2012).

The solution is identified as the Cartesian Dualism though some people consider it unsatisfactory in explanation, and some argue this concept has crippled the understanding of the nature of the consciousness. Thus, differentiating between mental and physical becomes hard using the Cartesian dualism concept. To solve this issue of psychological and physical disorder once and for all, the philosopher of the mind, John R. Searle, argues that consciousness can be identified as a feature of the single and physical organization of the brain. Thus, when one identifies the physical occurrence of water molecules as wetness, it shows that the mental and the physical are the same thing. With this

concept, one can define addiction as a defect in the ability of the brain to perceive pleasure, which influences the consciousness, thus forming an unhealthy attachment (Starcevic & Aboujaoude, 2017).

The part of the brain which is significantly affected by addiction, e.g. drug addiction, is the centre of the limbic brain. It is the part of the brain involved in handling anticipation and survival planning. Nevertheless, a slight defect in the limbic brain affects the addict's perception of the substance survival salience, which is the part that is unconscious (the first part of addiction) (Wiers, 2010).

Afterwards, the drug experience is sent to the frontal cortex, where an emotional connection is experienced towards the drug based on the information received concerning the drug salience. It is identified as the second part of addiction, where the drug takes a particular meaning by the addict and finally comes to love when they use the drug (Wiers, 2010).

A lot of factors are considered when one considers addiction. A range of genetic and environmental factors vary across a population when developing the habit. Approximately half of an individual's opportunity for developing an addiction is identified from genetics, while the other half is derived from the surrounding environment. Under the right circumstances, any person can become an addict. It only means that an individual with a little genetic loading, when exposed to high doses of a drug which is addictive for an extended period, can result in addiction.

The question of whether addiction is a disease or a choice has always arisen. Over the previous decade, a concept has been seen to evolve from scientists with regard to addiction being a brain disease as it develops over a period due to voluntary behaviour. Relevant mechanisms imply that the long-lasting changes in the brain are the ones responsible for distortions of both cognitive and emotional functioning (Hajela, 2017).

It is as though the brain's natural control circuit has been hijacked. Thus, a lot of the biomedical community considers addiction as a brain disease. Like other illnesses, the condition of dependency is both organic and chronic. It targets the brain as its primary organ, causing effects such as craving and constant usage, among other results, but it can be treated one day at a time. Different people have different opinions with regard to addiction. Not all people agree that addiction is a disease. It is because some people argue that addiction is due to an individual's choice to use the drug available. Though the early stage of usage may be due to selection, once the brain has been affected, a person loses control of his/her behaviour. A choice is not able to determine whether an element is a disease; rather, a condition is what happens to an individual's body due to decisions incurred (Khantzian, 2013).

Other people argue that addiction is not a disease, as people with addiction can get better even without undergoing treatment. Some people can curb severe addiction after experiencing the crisis. Others can achieve sobriety through self-help groups.

According to NIDA, addiction is a disease because the brain can change, which is evident in a brain scan, and these changes result also. They characterize this as compulsive drug seeking and use.

There are ways in which, in this case, the disease model falls. They include changes incurred in the brain; people can change their behaviour though their minds have evolved in response, and finally, there exists no evidence of addict's compulsive (Wakefield, 2016)

A lot of reasons have been identified as to why addiction is not a disease. Some of the main reasons include

- A virus is involved in physiological malfunction, and the proof that there exist brain changes shows no brain damage. These changes can explain how the brain functions, not only when using a substance. This is because brain changes occur in everyday life, and the mind can be altered by the choice of thinking since the changes are not permanent.
- Evidence which is used to elaborate an addict's behaviour, which is caused by brain change, also develops the behaviour change without medical intervention. Thus, the brain can change back to normal after voluntarily changing its behaviour.
- Drug usage is not compulsive as they can differentiate between the activities happening around them. Research shows how the offers given to an addict lead to choice-making, thus leading to substance abuse.

The origin of every concept encountered in the world always exists. Thus, one is required to look at precisely what causes the concept of addiction. Firstly, the word addiction is derived from a Latin word meaning "enslaved by", or it can mean "bound." A person/individual who has encountered habit knows what it's like to be addicted. Addiction can exert a strong influence on the brain, which is manifested in three distinct ways, i.e., craving for the substance of dependency, losing control over its excessive use, and finally, continuing involvement despite the consequences incurred (Starcevic & Aboujaoude, 2017).

A lot of people for many years believed that only drugs and alcohol are responsible for causing addiction. However, recent research has proven otherwise, as pleasurable activities such as gambling, sex, and even shopping are accountable for co-opting the brain. Many people don't comprehend the reason why one can be addicted to substances such as drugs. It is commonly mistaken that individuals who are addicted mostly to drugs are immoral and lack moral principles. They think stopping the addiction is as easy as choosing to stop using the substance and doing an activity (Kiesbye, 2010).

In reality, addiction acts as a complex disease and quitting takes more than words or real intention. Strong substances such as drugs affect the brain in different ways, and this makes it difficult to stop addiction, even for those individuals prepared to do so. With experimental intervention, one can know how addiction affects the brain, and with this, one can know how to treat successfully and help the addicts. Various things happen to an individual mind when one is addicted to active substances such as drugs. It is because these drugs contain chemicals which enter into the brain communication system and interfere with the reasonable progress of the nerves a cell which receives process and sends information (Prinsen, 2012).

There exist two ways in which the disruption is incurred, namely, through imitating the primitive brain's chemical messengers and by overstimulating the mind. Strong substances contain a similar structure to the mind's messenger, commonly known as neurotransmitters, which are produced by the brain naturally. The universal similarity allows the material to affect the way messages are being sent to the brain.

Other substances, such as cocaine, cause the nerve cells to release an excessive amount of neurotransmitters, thus preventing regular recycling of the brain chemicals, which is required to shut the signal between the neurons. The final result is a brain awash in neurotransmitters, which are present in the brain region that controls motivation and emotion, among other things.

## Overstimulation Of The System Produces Euphoric Effects In Response To This Substance.

As an individual continues to use active substances such as drugs, the brain finally adopts the extreme surge in dopamine, thus producing less amount of dopamine or reduced quantity of dopamine receptors. The final results become a less dopamine impact on the circuit, and this leads to an addict-ability to not only the substance but other events of life. The decrease caused the addicted person to keep using the content/ doing the activity at hand in an attempt to bring back the functioning of dopamine (Absi, 2007).

Continued usage of a substance changes other chemical circuits and systems in the brain. Glutamate is a neurotransmitter which can influence the course and affect the ability to learn. When the concentration of glutamate is countered, the brain tries to restore cognitive function. Brain images of individuals addicted to most drugs show different changes in the brain section that are core in judgment, decision-making, and behaviour control (Heyman, 2010).

In conclusion, addiction is a psychological disorder which can be prevented, as evidenced by the results from research bodies worldwide. These prevention programs involve the whole community as a whole, i.e., the family, schools, and media, among others. Though many events and factors have affected and facilitated the addiction, once an individual chooses to stop the habit, it becomes easy since their mind is set. Education and programs are critical ways of helping the youth and the public at large to understand the risks involved with addiction and how to prevent them.

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