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DOES ADDICTION RESEARCH NEED A PARADIGM SHIFT?
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In the last century, a plentitude of addiction research data have been published. Nevertheless, the definition of the disease is still discussed, and new classifications will be presented soon (ICD 11, DSM V). Epidemiology and national care systems are generally reluctant to changes. They support a 'substance causing dependence' approach and focus on intake patterns. Basic research, long-term course investigations and treatment trials show the heterogeneity of these patients and also the heterogeneity of different cravings (craving caused by withdrawal syndromes, by anxiety states, by mood disorders, or by compulsion). Onset of addiction, family burden of addiction and different typologies influence the course and treatment results. In brain research, we learned many new interactions of different levels of brain functions. A four-level model will be presented and the results of epidemiological studies, basic research up to treatment will show different possibilities how to influence these four different levels. I believe that we need a change from the focus on substance, e.g. alcohol, related psychological and biological disturbances to an individual-oriented approach. We have to look much more to the heterogeneity of brain functions and especially if we like to translate the results of animal trials we need definitions of subgroups of addiction reflecting the animal model. I hope that the new classification systems give possibilities to define these subgroups. We use the LAT-system (www.LAT-online.at) defining the most important items of these heterogeneities and available in many languages.

REFERENCE