

Addiction as a brain disease

The brain undergoes structural and functional changes:

- Disruption in salience networks / cue sensitivity (OFC, rACC, dACC)
- Disruption in the reward system (VTA, NAcc)
- Executive control network, reduction in the level of dopamine D2 receptor (vlPFC, dlPFC, premotor SMA) → disruption of goal-seeking & disruption of self-control

Addiction should be cured through medicines

Is a disease reducible to biological facts?



Cure & Care

Cure: it is directed towards the biological body.

Many times curing the biological body also implies curing the lived body (fever), but that's not always the case (permanent disability or life lasting diseases)

Care: it is directed towards the lived body. It is fundamental for all those cases in which curing the biological body cannot directly tackle the lived body

Lived body

- **Body as a subject:** my hand is not next to me in the same way in which my laptop is near to me.
- **Body intentionality:** characteristic of the body of being directed towards possible tasks (grab a cup).
- **Acting:** «I can» is a more fundamental dimension than «I think».

Lived space deformation

- **Repulsive spaces:** spaces that elicit avoidances
- **Low Responsivity:** the capacity to respond adequately to the stimuli and requirements of the environment
- **Repetition Compulsion:** being trapped in dysfunctional patterns of behaviour which occur again and again even though the subject tries to avoid them

Disembodiment

- **Body as a subject:** the body has a lower degree of subjectivity (it might be felt as not belonging to the subject)
- **Body intentionality:** it is narrowed down, less directedness towards actions and interactions
- **Acting:** body fails to attune the subject to the environment

Conclusion

- Addiction cannot be treated as brain-disease only. The lived body role has to be acknowledged
- The lived body fosters a new understanding of addiction that is both for the addicted subject itself and for caregiver. We need an approach to addiction that is not only cure-oriented but also care-oriented
- Importance of bodily relationship with the world, striving for a new healthy relationship with the world that is fulfilling without drugs
- Disease in general cannot be accounted for only in term of physical structures

References :

Carel, 2007, *Philosophia*, 35(2), 95–110; De Haan & Fuchs, 2010, *Psychopathology*, 43(5), 327–333; Kemp, (2020), *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 19(2), 305–319; Merleau-Ponty, (2012). *Phenomenology of perception*