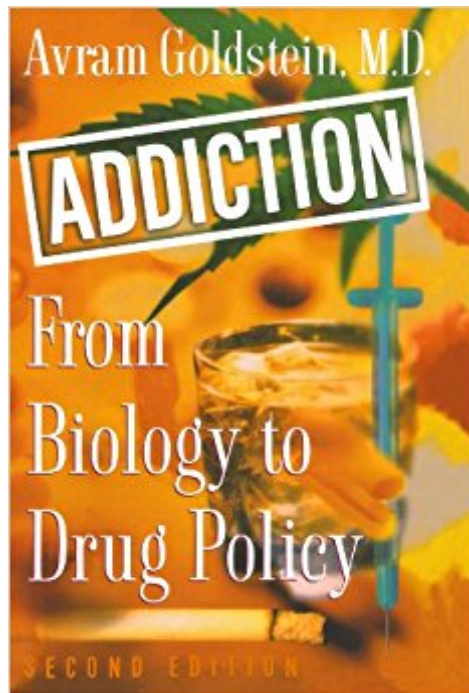




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Addiction: From Biology To Drug Policy



Synopsis

Drug addiction is a brain disease--that's the modern view and it is fully expressed in this up-to-date book. Among the many volumes on drugs written for lay readers, this one is unique in the breadth of its coverage and the depth of its science. The first part gives a clear scientific account of the nature of addiction, stressing neurobiology and addictive behavior and describing the "highs" that drugs can produce. The second section covers the seven families of addictive drugs, with emphasis on their actions in the brain and on psychological aspects: nicotine, alcohol, heroin and other opiates, cocaine and amphetamines, marijuana, caffeine, and hallucinogens like LSD. The third section deals with laws and drug control policies. Throughout, the author gives many interesting personal accounts of addiction research, to which he has highlighted new research on the genetics and neurobiology of susceptibility to addiction.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A refreshingly straightforward and scientifically rigorous consideration of a wide range of information."--Eric J. Nestler, M.D., Cell
"Goldstein directs this readable small volume toward 'intelligent non-experts.'.... [He] goes to great lengths to show how each class of drugs produces its own form of addiction and why humans will go to such great effort to take them."--Floyd Bloom, M.D., Issues in Science and Technology
"It is written in a lively manner, is admirably logical and systematic, and is peppered with interesting quotations and clinical vignettes.... Deserves to be widely read."--Steven E. Hyman, M.D.
"This book is for everyone. Clinicians, experimental psychologists, and the ubiquitous intelligent layperson will all enjoy and learn from this

book."--Contemporary Psychology"An essential tool to understand the biology of addiction as well as the history, politics, and sociology of the issue. Dr. Goldstein brings to the policy debate a powerful scientific perspective based on decades of research backed by common sense."--General Barry R. McCaffrey, USA (Ret.), former Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy

Avram Goldstein, M.D. is Emeritus Professor of Pharmacology, Stanford University. He is the author of Principles of Drug Action, is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and is the recipient of many awards including the Franklin Medal, the Nathan B. Eddy Award, and the Sollman Award.

It's a good resourc

Indepth

It was the first edition. I thought it was the second edition and it doesn't say that it isn't anywhere.

I took a BU course on Drugs and Behavior, and this was one of two books the professor recommended we get. I barely used this book. I read two, maybe 3 chapters, tops. And I don't even think I read the whole chapter, either. The only chapter I really found helpful was the first chapter on neuroscience. Other than that, the book didn't have a lot of the information, the facts, that I needed for the quizzes. The author will sometimes go into stories, which is fine, but not helpful to me. I don't think it was badly written, but I just found it incredibly unhelpful for the class. Had I known that before, I wouldn't have bought it or I would have returned it and either way, saved the money I paid for this book.

I had this book for a college class! Its the best book I have ever read on drugs and their effect on the brain! It is a very thorough, well explained description that is easy to follow!

I was looking for a book that explained about what's going on in the brain with addiction and this was exactly what I wanted and more.

As a neophyte teacher in the field, I have been scouring bookstores and libraries for sources of information to update myself and to present to students. I have found this book as exiting to read as

any novel and chalk full of understandable information. Latest research, logical and clear analogies. Quickly became my #1 favorite resource

This book is approximately one of the lousiest I have ever read. It lacks precision, it lacks an awareness of the central concepts that are being used and it is inconsistent - all the way inconsistent. I thought when I was reading it, that the author cannot really mean this, it is too incoherent and flavored by other views, at one time he upholds the Native American Church from below, then he tells that all "these things" are bound to be dangerous in the western society. Then he asks questions like why do all these plants with all the psychoactives in them live by the humans and how could they have found the concocts. But he does not have an answer, and he stops reflecting when the interesting questions come up. Why is that? The chapter of hallucinogens is where the author is so non-cognizant that it is a complete shame. If the author had presented the field of hallucinogens in a precise way, and then led some descent argument forward, that would have been OK. Instead he discloses his ignorance for all to see. For example: He claims that the release of serotonin sets in motion an excitatory release of glutamate and that this explains the psychoactive effects. This contradicts the fact that all psychoactive effects are only partially explained biochemically, because set and setting factors play enormous roles in these respects. The author touches this, but seems to ignore it as soon as it is convenient throughout the book. Furthermore his citing of existing research is extremely bad. Look at this: " Some effects of the hallucinogens resemble some symptoms of schizophrenia ,,,,,,,,,, much research has been devoted to trying to understand this ". The book lacks precision and there are no references. Not even inside the book. He refers to the experiments by Albert Hofmann, but without mentioning his name. On LSD there are lots of inconsistencies. It does not mention that LSD in therapeutic doses is NOT dangerous, but instead makes it look like it is dangerous because ergot is. But ergot and LSD are not the same. To get ergot poisoning from LSD would claim doses that by far over-ranges the doses that have been used therapeutically or recreationally. He also claims that 25 micrograms of LSD is hallucinogenic. Well, it is not. You'll have to pass at least 100 micrograms. 20 micrograms are at present being used as active placebo in the legally controlled study that is currently running in Switzerland. By the way, to state that LSD is hallucinogenic is imprecise at the best. It can promote visions at quite low doses, but it never gives hallucinations like for instance a scopolamine can do. Goldstein does not mention this at all. The author uses arguments, such as the three year old that accidentally had gotten LSD, and then gets afraid and needs help. Of course: These things are not for the three year olds. Rather this is about grown-up persons that put something dangerous on the

table so the kid can take in its mouth. This is a responsibility that the grown-up will have to face. To withdraw a whole field of psychiatric research from history due to some adult accidents, like what happened in the mid seventies, is not responsible. This taken into account, this author does not present the truth, but a screwed version of what was said back in the seventies. For some reason this author leaves the Native American Church in peace, without saying anything else than that this ritual is safe due to a safe setting . What about all the other safe ritual settings in the world? The churches using Ayahuasca, the therapeutic settings that were created during the fifties and sixties, the ones that can still be created? The author claims that MDMA can be toxic. Yes it can, but the author does not cite a single reference indicating this. Even if it can be toxic, if used responsibly by doctors within a therapeutical range, it is not dangerous. By the way, MDMA is first and foremost a metamphetamine, not a visual aider like the classic hallucinogens. Then he moves directly to PCP. What is so interesting with PCP, it doesn't say from the book, and the way it is placed is meaningless. It should have been placed along with a discussion on the NMDA-receptor, but it is never integrated within the book. Then he claims that hallucinogens (as he calls them though this is a misnomer) disturb the chemical regulation in the brain. From where does he have this information? He does not say. Anyway, there is research available today that indicate that classical hallucinogens integrate brain function by first destabilizing it, a process known from psychotherapy to work favorably in a variety of disorders. He further states that release of serotonin has the consequence of disturbing cognition, perception and, mood. Isn't it strange that all experience throughout the world in case studies and in more or less controlled studies indicate the opposite? There is no mention of this research, and I wonder if the author knows it. See for example Grob et al (1996).

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