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Commentary: The Neurobiology of Addiction Recovery.

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Abstract

An unprecedented investment in research funding has produced stunning revelations about the neurobiological mechanisms of addiction (Nature, 2005). This research buttresses the proclamation that addiction is at its most fundamental level a brain disease and promises a new generation of treatments for addiction (Leshner, 1997). As the focus of addiction science moves to the laboratory, a broader social movement is calling upon those in the alcohol and other drug problems arena to shift their organizing center from a focus on pathology and treatment to a focus on resilience and recovery (White, 2005). Such a shift would require achieving consensus on a definition of recovery (Betty Force Consensus Panel, 2007) and formulating and funding a broad recovery research agenda (Laudet, 2008). This brief commentary summarizes recent findings on the neurobiology of addiction, notes the scant information available on the neurobiology of recovery and identifies key questions in this area that are crucial to the future of addiction treatment and recovery.