

Presentation (Monographic)

Psychology and Addictive Behaviors

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In 2007, *Papeles del Psicólogo* published a special issue on psychology and addictions, presenting the psychological foundations of addictive behaviors that support preventive interventions and psychological treatment approaches with empirical evidence. Eighteen years later, the health, economic, and social impact of problems related to drug use and other addictive behaviors remains very high. Since 2007, new phenomena—such as new technologies and social networks—have emerged and become increasingly prominent, adding to traditional addictive behaviors and making the analysis of and potential solutions for these issues even more complex.

As was the case then, the medical or disease model—often presented as a biopsychosocial model—continues to be the dominant framework and the main inspiration for public policies and research programs in most of the world.

In recent years, as an alternative to this prevailing medical model, behavioral economics (a field that integrates principles from economics and psychology) has conceptualized addictive behaviors as disorders of choice, determined by the interaction of motivational and contextual factors, both proximal and distal. This perspective clearly interacts with the transdiagnostic approach in psychopathology and clinical psychology, since some of these individual factors are common to other psychological problems that often co-occur with addictive behaviors. While the medical model views addictive behaviors as the result of a diseased brain in

a normal world, the contextualized reinforcer pathology model, derived from behavioral economics, sees addictive behaviors as normal behaviors that occur in a dysfunctional environment.

The behavioral economics approach has implications for the development of public policy, research, intervention, and treatment of addictive behaviors, based on the central idea that these interventions should not only focus on empowering individuals or modifying supposed internal dysfunctions, but, above all, on changing the context, which is an essential part of the problem.

In this special issue, which contains six articles, we present the contextual approach to addictive behaviors as an alternative to the medical model and describe the main implications for the assessment, treatment, and prevention of these problems.

We hope that this issue will be inspiring for psychologists in general and especially for those whose professional work is dedicated to researching, preventing, or treating this important public health problem.

We would like to dedicate this special issue to the memory of Dr. Warren Bickel, who passed away recently. Dr. Bickel adopted an innovative approach to the study of addictive behaviors and the phenomenon of recovery, shedding light on the role of impulsive decision-making and other behavioral economic variables linked to addiction severity. He is a highly respected researcher internationally and a reference for those of us working in the field of addictive behaviors.