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Addiction, the disease of non-enjoyment

Contrary to the intuition people suffering from substance use disorders seem to be impaired in their capacity to enjoy reward and even lust. However, the relationship between hedonia and the use of substances is complex. Many substances of abuse can have, initially, have a positive effect on feelings of wellbeing, desire and lust. Indeed, some are of use in treatments, e.g. the current fascinating research showing good results in the use of illicit drugs such as ketamine or LSD in the treatment of depression or post-traumatic stress disorder. However, excessive use can progress to compulsive use patterns that are characteristically associated with the loss of hedonic experiences. In this presentation we will focus on the relation between substance use and the different aspects of human (and animal) hedonia.