

Name

Professor

Course

Date

Is Addiction a disease or a choice?

Addiction has increasingly become a huge problem in today's society. There has been an unending debate about whether addiction is a disease or a choice. Some hold the perception that addicts are as a result of poor choice and that it is a matter of willpower to break the chain of addiction. On the other hand, some believe that addiction is a medical condition which alters the functionality of brains and failure to receive professional support and care the victim will never be able to recover from being an addict. However, it is reasonable to assume that addiction is a medical condition rather than individual choice since the causes related to disease surpasses the personal choice of becoming an addict.

Initially, addiction is a disease since the line in the medical model of mental disorder reveals that addiction is a chronic and relapsing mental condition in which drug use becomes compulsive despite its negative consequences. The continuous use of drugs changes the brain of the user to become dependent on the drugs thus developing an involuntary habit of becoming a drug addict (Nurnberger, 50). Miller support this by saying that, "*Addictive substances hijack the brain's reward system... (1)*" Nonetheless, addiction has little or no correlation to personal choice since addiction is the resistance behavior to long-term changes (Nurnberger, 52). Thus, the addicts should not be condemned for their plight instead they should be assisted to alleviate stigma by opening better avenues of treatment.

Moreover, just like cancer and heart diseases, addiction follows the same pattern of relapse and remission. Ideally, this shows that addiction is a medical condition which can be treated. Considering, that addiction changes the circuitry of the brain it develop physical dependency which jeopardizes one's ability to make reasonable and effective decision toward his own interest. This condition compromises the addict ability to control his behaviour thus pushing an individual to the deeper pit, therefore, becoming hard for him to stop using the drugs (Wallis, 2). The factor that makes addiction a disease is the loss of control of individual from using substance. Simply put, this shows that addiction is not a choice since no one would choose to live a miserable life which is as a result of excessive use of drugs (Wallis, 3). In short, if addiction was a choice then addicts would be able to control their behaviours.

However, there exists an effective treatment for drug addiction thus this makes addiction a medical condition since it is treatable. The victims of addiction have the possibility of getting sober whenever they seek help from professionals to undergo the rehabilitation program (Wallis, 3). The success of addicts to regain their normalcy may be realized after several repeated treatment. The health facilities have a special and proven method which helps the patient to regain the ability to control their behaviors and craving for drugs so that they can remain drug-free for an extended period of time (Slate, 2). Thus, it is possible for the condition of addiction to be reversed through medical procedures hence showing that addiction is a disease.

Moreover, addiction is a disease since it is mostly influenced by generic factors where more than 40 % casualties of drug addiction have a strong correlation with genes. The people who come from the lineage of heavy drinkers have the likelihood of becoming an addict of drugs due to genetic factors (Miller, 2). However, addiction can be stopped through the process of gene editing which clearly reveals that addiction is a medical condition (DiSalvo, 1). Drug abuse is a derivative of self-medication where people abuse substance such as

alcohol in order to diagnose their mental condition (Akst, 2). A majority of people become addicts due to issues which would have been treated such as mental disorder. Hence they abuse substances so as to cope with their difficult conditions or even temporarily change their mind. In the long run, the abuse of drugs causes numerous side effects which worsen with time (Slate, 3). Initially, the mental condition is as a result of complex interference of genetics and environmental factors. People with this condition have the likelihood of abusing substances which may sharply increase the symptoms of mental illness (Miller, 2). This shows that addiction is a medical condition as it can be controlled through medication mostly for those suffering from mental illness.

On the other hand, addiction is a choice and those having the notion that addiction is a disease they are not only incorrect but also unhealthy. This is because people have a choice to make thus they decide when and how to abuse substances (Akst, 2). In fact, Slate supports this by saying that, *“If you change your thoughts, you change your brain physically—and this is voluntary (3).”* Basically, abusing drug is not a compulsive thing. Consequently, people make their own decision as some take the drug for leisure and they end up becoming addicts due to continuous use of the drugs such as alcohol and cocaine (Slate, 3). Thus, it will be appropriate to blame those individuals who fall into addiction since it is their personal will.

Additionally, majority of scientists concur that addiction is a brain disease. However, the claim suggests that addiction is characterized by dysfunction in certain neural pathways which in real sense is not sufficient to show it is a brain disease. Brain disease is realized only when there is sufficient impairment in the brain (Miller, 2). This clearly reveals that addiction is not a medical condition and refuting this claim should not entail a moralizing attitude towards those individuals who are suffering from addiction.

In short, addiction is a disease since no one would be willing to live a miserable life of addiction. Also, the addiction is related to both genetic and environmental factors which can be treated and controlled thus becoming a disease. Moreover, those who attempt to quit addiction they encounter tough times where even some are life-threatening thus showing addiction is not a choice but a medical condition. Also some research old the notion that addiction is a freewill thus it is a choice that one makes since it is not compulsive.



Want a similar paper?

ORDER NOW

Work cited

Nurnberger, John. "Alcoholism Is a Genetic Disorder." Alcohol Abuse, edited by Christine Watkins, Greenhaven Press, 2012. At Issue. Opposing Viewpoints In Context, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/EJ3010276235/OVIC?u=mbc&sid=OVIC&xid=4fbf82e3>. Accessed 21 Apr. 2018. Originally published as "Unraveling the Genetics of Alcoholism: Recent Discoveries Are Paving the Way to Improved Detection, Prevention, and Treatment Strategies for Alcoholism and Other Forms of Substance Abuse," Saturday Evening Post, vol. 279, Sept.-Oct. 2007, pp. 50-54.

- Akst, Daniel. "Addiction Is Not a Disease." Chemical Dependency, edited by Roman Espejo, Greenhaven Press, 2011. Opposing Viewpoints. Opposing Viewpoints In Context, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/EJ3010114274/OVIC?u=mbc&sid=OVIC&xid=b455730c>. Accessed 21 Apr. 2018. Originally published as "Interview with Gene M. Heyman: Is Addiction a Choice?" Boston Globe, 9 Aug. 2009.
- Wallis, Claudia. "Addiction Is Caused by Genetic and Environmental Factors." Chemical Dependency, edited by Roman Espejo, Greenhaven Press, 2011. Opposing Viewpoints. Opposing Viewpoints In Context, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/EJ3010114275/OVIC?u=mbc&sid=OVIC&xid=614bd17a>. Accessed 21 Apr. 2018. Originally published as "The Genetics of Addiction," CNNMoney.com, 16 Oct. 2009.
- Miller, Michael Craig. "Addiction Is a Brain Disease." Chemical Dependency, edited by Roman Espejo, Greenhaven Press, 2011. Opposing Viewpoints. Opposing Viewpoints In Context, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/EJ3010114272/OVIC?u=mbc&sid=OVIC&xid=9a41a5b2>. Accessed 21 Apr. 2018. Originally published as "Addiction: How to Break the Chain," Newsweek, 12 Dec. 2005.
- Slate, Steven. "Addiction Is a Choice, Not a Disease." Addiction, edited by Christine Watkins, Greenhaven Press, 2014. Opposing Viewpoints. Opposing Viewpoints In Context, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/EJ3010103402/OVIC?u=mbc&sid=OVIC&xid=9c9c82d2>. Accessed 21 Apr. 2018. Originally published as "Addiction Is NOT a Brain Disease, It Is a Choice," www.thecleanslate.org, 2010.

DiSalvo, D. "CRISPR Gene-Editing Technology Could Hold Key To Understanding

Addiction." 14 Nov. 2017, www.forbes.com/sites/daviddisalvo/2017/11/14/crispr-gene-editing-technology-could-also-hold-the-key-to-understanding-a.