



## **Editorial**

# **Rompiendo el ciclo adictivo y disipando la maldición de Sísifo**

## **Breaking the Addictive Cycle and Dispelling the Curse of Sisyphus**

Humberto Garcia Penedo<sup>1</sup>  

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Havana, Cuba.

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*"The greatest enemies of us alcoholics are resentment, jealousy, envy, frustration and fear."  
(A.A. "Blue Book" p. 108).*



Much has been researched about drug addictions, where it has been found that they are always associated with emotional disorders. On the one hand, the search for sensations has been higher in people with drug addiction,<sup>(1)</sup> anxiety and depression<sup>(2)</sup>, anger, irritability, impulsivity,<sup>(3-5)</sup> the unpleasant affection in general typifies as the strongest factor associated with the craving for consumption,<sup>(6)</sup> as well as the emotional self-control deficit.

Associations have also been found between having been victims of childhood trauma, which defines a type and severity of addiction.<sup>(7)</sup> On the other hand, Volkow,<sup>(8)</sup> in summary, described an addictive cycle that has three essential components: binge-intoxication, consumption withdrawal- negative emotions, and preoccupation-anticipation phase, prior to binge-intoxication. This cycle is often repeated compulsively for many years, and those who suffer from it perceive themselves as having no strength or resources to stop it, and turn their lives towards mental health in a favorable direction.

When reading Alcoholics Anonymous literature, testimonies from various people are usually published whose common element turns out to be that they highlight negative emotionality as the essential part of their respective addictions. Associations of addictions with complicated grief have also been found.<sup>(9)</sup>

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that what may have been contributing to the revolving door syndrome, understood as the cyclical return of patients, a relatively short time later, to the care institutions from which they were discharged, must have included the neglect of this elementary principle of recognizing the sensitive weight of psychopathological comorbidities in the clinical picture from its trait approach.

Belief system, daily habits, constant morbid attitudes are usually endorsed through a pattern of neuroconnectivity that Taylor<sup>(10)</sup> calls "automatic or pre-programmed reactivity of the limbic system" p. 24, Lewis<sup>(11)</sup> calls "neural habits" and Maté<sup>(12)</sup> names "brain patterns" or "programs of early painful experiences" p. 341. Automatism at the synaptic level endorses the "Sisyphus" cycle because it evokes the tragedy of that character in Homer's Odyssey, since the algorithm of dysfunctional behaviors, typical of people who are victims of an addiction, is presented in a cyclical and tragic way, loaded with enormous suffering for those who go through it and for their loved ones.

There is no doubt that clinicians tend to focus on negative affection as a state, but negative affection should be addressed as a trait, and from this approach the history of the individual must be enhanced, especially the events perceived as psychotraumatic from which these people coined attitudes and personal decisions to face life, its challenges, interpersonal relationships in dysfunctional ways that largely explain the difficulties of social adaptability

Based on so many findings that support the ever-present involvement of negative affection, it can be categorically stated that, at least, in the majority of people suffering from some addiction there are psychopathological comorbidities of the neurotic level of psychological functioning,<sup>(13)</sup> and from there, it must be defined what was primary, if addictions or emotional comorbidities.

It may be thought that the answer to this question may be very relevant to give prestige to the medication to be used, and the psychotherapeutic strategy. However, it has been seen in practice that whatever the answer to this crucial question, giving prestige to the treatment of emotional comorbidities contributes enormously to its effectiveness,<sup>(14)</sup> even more so, if testimonies of psychotraumatic events in the lives of these people that have contributed to emotional deterioration are included.<sup>(15)</sup>

By dissolving the negative affection, the addictive cycle is deprived of its most prominent component, and therefore of its tendency to perpetuity. With this strategic principle, good evolutionary prognoses are envisioned for a considerable number of patients who until now were resistant to dissimilar care treatments; at the same time the nature of the addiction disease is demonstrated, and it contributes to eliminate the social stigma on these patients.

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