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The role of social cognitive theory in addiction

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Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (Albert Bandura) remains one of the most widely supported theories explaining the acquisition and maintenance of human behaviour. In SCT, Bandura identifies two key constructs: outcome and self-efficacy expectancies. Outcome expectancies, sometimes referred to as "if... then" expectancies, are the perceived behavioural and affective consequences of engaging in specific behaviours. Self-efficacy expectancies, considered by Bandura as the "foundation of human agency", refers to a person's belief they can successfully or unsuccessfully regulate their behaviour. Both belief systems can develop vicariously, impacting on health behaviours from a very early age. This presentation examines the application of SCT to addiction. It initially describes the conceptual approach and then presents data from clinical and non-clinical studies to test the SCT addiction model. Findings highlight that self-efficacy plays an important mediational role in the development of addiction. Both expectancy and self-efficacy constructs are likely to be effective a targets for treatment when used in tandem.

Biography

Jason Connor is a an Associate Professor in Clinical and Health Psychology in the School of Medicine, and Director of the Centre for Youth Substance Abuse Research, both at The University of Queensland, Australia. He is also a National Health & Medical Research Council (NH&MRC) of Australia Career Development Fellow. Since moving from full-time clinical practice, he has combined teaching and clinical activities with research, primarily in the area of Addiction and Health Psychology. Recent research interests have included identifying genetic markers of alcohol and nicotine dependence, the efficacy of anticraving medications, measurement of alcohol craving, novel psychological models of problem drinking and the prevention of youth substance abuse

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Page 90