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The role of the DRD2 gene, impulsivity and expectancies in severe alcohol dependence

Parallel research in disciplines of molecular genetics and clinical psychology has contributed significantly, but independently, to our understanding of both the etiology and treatment of Alcohol Use Disorders. This presentation argues that cross-disciplinary research is essential to progress our understanding of genetics, the reward deficiency syndrome and effective alcohol use disorder treatment. A series of studies are reported that move beyond DRD2 association studies to examine phenotypes of severity in samples with severe alcohol dependence. Studies reporting robust psychological mechanisms also known to be associated with alcohol dependence are also discussed. Recent findings that combine the A1 allele of the DRD2 gene and key psychological markers are then presented. The presentation concludes that addiction scientists must embrace research design technologies and evidence-based findings from multiple disciplines to improve alcohol use disorder treatment outcomes.

Biography

Jason P Connor is a Principal Research Fellow in the Centre for Youth Substance Abuse Research at The University of Queensland, Australia. He also holds a National Health and Medical Research Council (NH&MRC) of Australia Fellowship. He is a clinical psychologist by training and a Fellow of the Australian Psychological Society (APS). Since moving from full-time clinical practice to academia (PhD, 2002), he has successfully combined teaching and clinical responsibilities with research, publishing over 100 peer reviewed papers. Over the past 10 years he has received \$4.75 AUD million in peer reviewed research funding and \$2.6 AUD million in industry and philanthropic funding as a chief investigator.

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