



Conclusions and Recommendations

Symposium “Progress and Challenges in Scientific Research on Treatment, Pharmacological Strategies and Vaccines against Drug Addiction”

Between 12 and 14 November 2012, the Symposium “Progress and Challenges in Scientific Research on Treatment, Pharmacological Strategies and Vaccines against Drug Addiction” was held in Santiago, Chile, organized by the Presidency Pro Tempore of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile and the Millennium Scientific Initiative Nucleus “Stress and Addiction”. The event is part of the program of activities of the Presidency Pro Tempore of Chile in preparation for the I Summit of Heads of State and Government of the CELAC, to be held in Santiago on 27 and 28 January 2013.

Scientists and international experts on drug addiction participated in the Symposium. There was consensus among the participants on the following issues:

- 1) Addiction is a chronic brain disease that presents numerous psychosocial causes, with devastating effects on the individual, social interaction, public security, democratic governance, the economy, and the productivity of the region. It is a disease that requires innovative approaches based on scientific evidence;
- 2) The CELAC member States possess the scientific capability, on different levels, to perform preclinical and clinical research with the aim of developing and/or adapting prevention and treatment strategies to reduce the demand on drugs and their consequences;
- 3) It is highly likely that during the next decade the global scientific community will make significant progress towards the development of more effective treatments to address drug addiction.

The authorities are encouraged to understand that preclinical, clinical, and epidemiological research on drug addiction is an investment that in the short-, medium- and long-term will result in substantial savings, since by treating the problem of drug addiction and its associated medical and psychiatric consequences, you will also improve the health, social, economic and security conditions of the world’s population.

In matters of security, it has been shown that by treating and rehabilitating persons with drug addiction, one is reducing the likelihood that they will commit crime, among other benefits. With respect to those persons that have already committed offences, in whom the rate of drug consumption is high, the application of effective treatment will also significantly diminish the probability that they will reoffend. Research has progressively

improved the effectiveness of treatments and there is room for further improvement, with the positive consequences described above.

During the Symposium, various presentations and discussions took place on matters of high scientific and social interest. The debate and exchange of views led to the following recommendations:

- The establishment of permanent and focused funds in each country to strengthen preclinical and clinical research, as well as to train experts and build our expertise.
- The establishment of a regional fund to strengthen preclinical and clinical research. This fund should consider the inclusion of countries where research is less developed as well as the creation or strengthening of cooperation networks among the States. It should also promote the exchange of research trainees (at the graduate and postdoctoral levels) among regional research centers.
- Urge that policies on public health and on the prevention of drug addiction should promote programs on healthy living, prevention, and treatment, considering the high comorbidity between addiction and other psychiatric pathologies.
- Increase the number of programs for prevention and education on drug addiction, especially among young people and the most vulnerable groups.
- Propose to Governments that the taxes collected from alcohol and tobacco consumption be allocated for research to treat addiction to alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs.

Those that participated in this Symposium agree to establish a network to bring their research centers together, in order to coordinate activities, exchange experience, carry out joint research, and in particular, collaborate to develop vaccines and medicines to more effectively treat alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug addictions.

The undersigned scientists and international experts thank the Government of Chile for hosting this event and request that adequate follow-up be provided to this initiative.

Signed by:

Luis Aguayo, University of Concepción (Chile)

María Estela Andrés, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile

Rosana Camarini, University of Sao Paulo (Brazil)

Jorge Campusano, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile

Marilyn Carroll, University of Minnesota (United States)

Bruce Cassels, University of Chile

Jair Guilherme dos Santos, Santa Casa de Sao Paulo (Brazil)

Maria Ines Forray, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile
Jose Fuentealba, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile
Katia Gysling, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile
Yedy Israel, University of Chile
Carlos Jimenez-Rivera, University of Puerto Rico
Michael Kuhar, Emory University (United States)
Bernard Le Foll, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (Canada)
Daniel Martinez, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile
Maria Elena Medina-Mora, Ramón de la Fuente National Institute of Psychiatry (Mexico)
Mariano Montenegro, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (Chile)
Ricardo Pautassi, National Council on Scientific and Technical Research (Argentina)
Eduardo Jose Perez, Anti-drug National Office (Venezuela)
Oriana Ramirez-Rubio, Coordinator of research activities led by DGPNSD (Spain), in the framework of the Cooperation Program between Latin America and the European Union on Drug Policy (COPOLAD)
Miguel Reyes, University of Santiago (Chile)
Carlos Roncero, Vall d'Hebron Hospital, Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain)
Juan Emilio Sandoval, "General Calixto García" University Hospital (Cuba)
Cecilia Scorza, Clemente Estable Institute of Biological Research (Uruguay)
Annabell Segarra, University of Puerto Rico
Jacqueline Sepulveda, University of Concepción (Chile)
Marta Torrens, Parc de Salut Mar, IMIM-Hospital del Mar, Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain)
Rodrigo Varas, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile

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