



# Dispelling the Myths About Addiction: Strategies to Increase Understanding and Strengthen Research

*Committee to Identify Strategies to Raise the Profile of Substance Abuse and Alcoholism Research, Institute of Medicine*

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Every year about half a million men, women, and children in the United States die from the effects of using nicotine, alcohol, and illegal drugs: one of every four American deaths. Yet research to solve this terrible problem is often perceived as less important than other types of biomedical investigation.

Focusing on four major classes of drugs with the greatest social and economic impact--nicotine, alcohol, opioids, and stimulants--**Dispelling the Myths About Addiction** examines what is known about addiction and what is needed to develop a talented cadre of investigators and to educate the public about addiction research. The committee explores these areas:

- Economic costs of addiction.
- What has been learned about addiction from research into basic neurobiology and the brain, psychosocial and behavioral factors, and epidemiology.
- Education and training of researchers and the research infrastructure.
- Public perceptions and their impact on public policy in this field.

This volume outlines the challenges and opportunities in addiction research today and makes recommendations to educators, treatment professionals, public and private institutions, and others for how to build support for addiction research and treatment.

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