

Letter to the WPA Sections

To: the Chairs and bearers of WPA Sections

From: WPA Section on Dual disorders Pathology

Dear Friends and colleagues

We would like introduce ourselves and explain who we are and our aim as a new Section on Dual Disorders/Pathology –addiction and other mental disorders-.

The reason why we need to provide so many explanations on the above questions is because Dual Disorders/Pathology remains controversial even its own name uses to be questioned.

This clinical situation has not been recognized until now and that lack of recognition has lead to increased morbidity and mortality of our patients. Beyond the scientific controversies dual disorders are a strong clinical reality. It is demonstrated that the vast majority of patients treated for addictions behaviors (to substances including tobacco or pathological gambling) present others mental disorders. 50% of patients requiring care for different mental disorders also present at some point in their lives an addiction behavior. Despite the scientific evidence, there are beliefs and interests and therefore some resistance or barriers to incorporating this new knowledge. In fact those different barriers have hindered the recognition and acceptance of the reality, namely dual disorders/pathology.

The new theories of addictions disorders are moving away from old paradigms centered on drugs to new ones centered on individual vulnerability: the strong association of addiction with certain personality traits or comorbid mental disorders –for instance.

We are thinking that it is necessary to redesign the care pathway of those patients according to these new insights that come from the neurosciences. Our Section has written the attached info-flyer as a working document.

Best Regards

Nestor Szerman MD

Chair WPA Section on Dual Disorders/Pathology