

The impact of Dutch and Flemish scientists on the progress of addiction medicine

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Dutch and Belgian contributions to general science are well known throughout history, both physical sciences and biological science. This excellent volume confirms that their contributions to the science of addictive disorders have continued in this tradition. Some of the earliest achievements in basic science leading to a fundamental understanding of reward came from Dutch laboratories. A good example is the work of Jan van Ree who was a great synthesizer of the fields of chemistry, physiology and psychology. This interweaving of fields had a great impact, not only on his Dutch students, but also on scientists throughout the world.

The broad range of papers in the current volume shows how contemporary Dutch-Flemish scientists have built on this background and have pursued addiction studies using the latest technology. A measure of the impact of Dutch scientists is their role in international scientific organizations. Professor van den Brink has not only been a leader in European science, but he was a member of the original working group to revise and update the classification system of the American Psychiatric Association, DSM-IV. The weight of his opinions and the work of his group in Amsterdam using modern brain imaging were important factors in the decision to include gambling disorder with drug addictions in DSM-5.

This special issue of the *Journal of Psychiatry* brings together important new studies by Dutch-Flemish scientists that might not yet be as well known as earlier high impact work. For example, the publications on heroin-assisted treatment for difficult heroin addicts are widely quoted and the Dutch approach to the cannabis conundrum is discussed in councils and legislatures throughout the United States and elsewhere. The subjects addressed are important and difficult.

For example, the subject of early cannabis use as a risk factor for the later development of psychosis such as schizophrenia is included in this volume. The cannabis review is insightful and highly relevant to current policy questions faced by many governments.

The range of subjects from impulse control to dopamine neuro-modulation provides topics of interest to a broad range of addiction scientists. To those interested in treatment, there are papers on cognitive behavioral therapy and pharmacogenetics, plus novel uses of the anti-narcolepsy drug modafinil. The papers on direct brain approaches involving EEG, fMRI, TMS/tDCS and DBS cover an area that may be premature, but considering the reports of benefit in treatment resistant depression, such a discussion is appropriate.

In summary, this special volume demonstrates that Dutch-Flemish scientists continue to work at the cutting edge of addiction science. It is a pleasure to review this wealth of thought-provoking information. All consumers of addiction science should be grateful that this work is available to the world.

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