

Prof David Nutt: ‘More deaths more pain: the hidden legacy of 50 years of failed drugs policy’

David Nutt is a psychiatrist and the Edmond J. Safra Professor of Neuropsychopharmacology in Imperial College London. He has been president of the European Brain Council, the BAP, BNA, and ECNP plus member/chair of the UK government ACMD for nine years. He is currently Founding Chair of the charity DrugScience.org.uk. David has published 40 books and over 1000 papers, including in Nature, Cell Lancet and New England Journal of Medicine. These define his many landmark contributions to psychopharmacology including GABA and noradrenaline receptor function in anxiety disorders, serotonin function in depression, endorphin and dopamine function in addiction and the neuroscience and clinical utility of psychedelics and cannabis.

Abstract:

Many drugs have long been subject to policies supposedly designed to reduce use harms but in practice driven by political machinations and moral judgements. As well as being unjust and encouraging the use of relatively harmful but legal drugs such as alcohol and tobacco, these policies seriously inhibit research and clinical treatment. The worst example is the global ban on psychedelics that was initiated under the 1971 UN Conventions and still exists today. Other drugs such as cannabis and MDMA have similarly been banned though not for as long. Together these bans represent the worst censorship of research in the history of science, that have held back research for patient benefit for decades. The extent of the harm this ban has done is becoming apparent from the recent renaissance of research with medical cannabis psilocybin and MDMA. These have revealed major effects in disorders such as addiction PTSD and depression. My talk will explore the misconceptions that drive the international bans, reveal the latest data on the comparative safety of these compounds and also reveal some of the neuroscience advances that have been made with these compounds that help explain their therapeutic effects

Further reading: ‘Drugs: without the hot air’: David Nutt

Prof Roger Knaggs: ‘Does the UK have a problem with (prescribed) opioids?’

Associate Professor in Clinical Pharmacy Practice, University of Nottingham Specialist Pharmacist in Pain Management, Primary Integrated Community Services, Nottingham and Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust. Roger is a clinical academic pharmacist. His current position provides teaching and research opportunities whilst maintaining regular clinical practice. Roger’s main research interests focus on the appropriate use of analgesic medicines and associated clinical outcomes and healthcare utilization.

He aims to promote the importance of pain within pharmacy and the role of pharmacy within pain management. Roger was the inaugural chair of the United Kingdom Clinical Pharmacy Association pain management group. He is the current President of the British Pain Society after having been Vice President, Honorary Secretary, a co-opted and elected Council member. In 2019 he was appointed a member of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (a Scientific Advisory Committee to the UK Government) and is the Chair of their Technical Committee. In addition, he has associations with several other healthcare policy and government organisations in the UK, including the Faculty of Pain Medicine, Care Quality Commission and NICE. Roger has chaired the European Pain Federation (EFIC) COVID-19 taskforce since March 2020.

Opioids have been considered some of the most potent analgesic medicines. Their benefit for acute and trauma pain and pain at the end of life is very clear. However, their use for chronic pain

has become much more controversial and debated. Although trials of relatively short duration suggest some benefit, currently there is no evidence of effectiveness over longer periods. In addition, there is an ever-growing body of evidence regarding harms of opioids for non-cancer pain. The antecedents and development of the 'opioid crisis' or 'opioid epidemic' in North America are well documented. In the US there was an increase in opioid-related deaths between 2000 and 2018 from 3 to almost 15 per 100,000 population per year.

However, whether a similar 'opioid crisis' or 'opioid epidemic' exist in the UK, or other European countries has been considered much less. During the session we will consider the opioids prescribing trends in the UK and reported harms. We will also consider one of potential iatrogenic cause for persistent opioid use, namely following surgery.

Dame Clare Gerada: 'Gambling Addiction'

Dame Clare Gerada, Lady Wessely, DBE, FRCP, FRCGP, FRCPsych (born November 1959) is a London-based general practitioner who is a former President of the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and a former chairperson of the RCGP Council (2010–2013). She has professional interests in mental health, substance misuse, and gambling problems. Clare is a convenor of the cross-party political movement, More United. She is a patron of Humanists UK. Having first trained in psychiatry at the Maudsley hospital, Clare followed her father's footsteps and became a general practitioner, working in her practice in South London for more than thirty-four years.

Over this time, alongside her clinical practice, she has held several national leadership positions including both the Chair and President of the Royal College of General Practitioners, only the second women in its history to hold both position

Clare has also set up and led, until 2021 the award-winning service for doctors and dentists with mental health problems, NHS Practitioner Health. She has also set up and leads the Primary Care Gambling Service, a unique GP-led multidisciplinary service straddling the primary, secondary and third sectors.

Clare was awarded an MBE in 2000 for her services to drug misuse and received a Dame hood in 2020 for services to mental health.

Dr Tim Johnson in conversation with Polly Atkin

DR TIM JOHNSON MBBS FRCA

Tim studied medicine at King's College Hospital. His anaesthetic and Pain training was in Bristol UK, New Zealand and USA. He has been a consultant in pain management in Salford since 1993 and he has devoted all of his clinical work to managing pain since 2006. He is Post Graduate Tutor for the hospital with responsibility for the training of all the junior doctors and has conducted research on how doctors learn to perform complex, high risk clinical procedures. He is a Clinical Lecturer at the University of Manchester, the University of Zambia and an Associate Tutor at Edge Hill University. Tim uses hypnosis in his work with chronic pain.

Polly Atkin is a multi-award-winning poet, essayist, nature writer and academic in the UK. She has taught both English Literature and Creative Writing at the University of London, Strathclyde University, Lancaster University and University of Cumbria

She has published three poetry pamphlets and two collections – Basic Nest Architecture, and Much with Body. Her nonfiction includes Recovering Dorothy: The Hidden Life of Dorothy Wordsworth, a Barbellion-longlisted biography of Dorothy's later life and illness. She works as a freelancer from her home in the English Lake District. In 2023 she and her partner took ownership of historic Grasmere bookshop Sam Read Bookseller.

Her recent book, *Some Of Us Just Fall: On Nature and Not Getting Better* is a memoir, exploring place, belonging and disability:

“When I was thirty-four, I was diagnosed with a hereditary connective tissue disorder. This diagnosis changed my life, before it and after it. I had been sick, to some degree or other, all my life, but for most of it, I’d been told my symptoms were either meaningless, or worse, something I was creating myself.

A year later, directly because of that first diagnosis, I was also diagnosed with Genetic Haemochromatosis, and began the long process of de-ironing, reducing the toxic levels of iron that had been building up in my organs, unnoticed, for decades. I could finally begin to understand my own body, and my own life.

Some Of Us Just Fall is a book about trying to find a sense of belonging in the world, and a place in it. It is about how a diagnosis can upturn our sense of self, our plans for the future, and our understanding of the past. It is a book about inheritance, and continuity, and finding a way to go forward in your life knowing that what makes you sick is also what makes you. It is about how I found a home in the English Lake District and learnt a different way of living alongside our nonhuman co-tenants. It is about learning to live flexibly, and taking joy in the small things when you can: birds at the feeder, sun on your face, a starlit night, a swim in a reflective lake.

Illness makes storytellers of us all, whether we want it or not. This book explores bodies, the stories we tell about them, the stories that form us as people. I am a passionate advocate for a radical reframing of how we treat ongoing conditions, and the people who have them - calling for a total overhaul in how we diagnose, manage and care for people who live with long-term illness and pain.”

Sarah Partridge: 'What few words: Navigating the treatment of Pain using clinical Hypnosis'.

Dr Sarah Partridge is a Consultant Clinical Oncologist at Imperial Healthcare NHS Trust specialising in Head & Neck cancers. Her interests in Hypnotherapy were initiated during a Research Fellowship in 2002, and she went on to do a Diploma in Clinical Hypnotherapy in 2005 after which she founded a Hypnotherapy service at Charing Cross Hospital in 2007 with Dr Rumi Peynovska, charitably supported by the Mind-Body Foundation. They later provided Self-Hypnosis training for patients within the Maggie's Centre and set up a web-based initiative 'www.Tranceform-Medical.com' aimed at expanding its use, education and availability for cancer patients, alongside self-care and stress management resources for healthcare professionals.

She continues to integrate hypnosis within clinical practice, educating medical students and Specialist Trainees as to its potential to improve well-being & symptom control. As current President for the Royal Society of Medicine Section for Hypnosis & Psychosomatic Medicine she remains dedicated to forge cross-specialty links to highlight the fascinating history, evidence-base and applications of adjuvant clinical hypnosis within a broad scope of medicine, given its adaptability, safety, and potential cost effectiveness.

Niki Jones: 'Battleground; the harms of opioid prescription, dependency and withdrawal.'

Niki Jones recovered from 17 years of highly disabling facial pain and headaches in 2018 using the Curable App. However, she then found significant challenges arose when attempting to come off the very high doses of opioids that she had been taking for years. Prior to recovery, her life had become very small and dark - unable to work, have much of a social life or even walk a mile without pain and exhaustion. She had multiple surgeries including Motor Cortex Stimulator. Prior to being struck down with Trigeminal Neuralgia, TACs and migraines, she was Research Executive at the British Horseracing Board (now Authority) in London has a first degree in Environmental Science and did two years of a PhD in Atmospheric Chemistry. She also ran a small livery yard

and has worked with all kinds of horses from racehorses to trekking ponies. Now she works closely with the Flippin Pain™ campaign who aim to bring modern pain science to the public. She is Vice-Chair of the Footsteps Festival – a co-production of people with lived experience of persistent pain with HCPs and academics formed during COVID-19, which aims to provide support and information on living well with pain. She co-hosts an on-line monthly Journal Club which successfully brings diverse groups together to discuss the latest in pain science. She also works as an expert by experience/patient partner with various academic groups, including Prof Lormier Moseley (as part of PETAL), Prof Cormac Ryan, Dr Chris Penlington and Dr Jackie Walumbe.

Now qualified with Animas as a transformative Life Coach she is starting to build a coaching business with a focus on those with pain and chronic conditions and those tapering dependence forming medications. She runs group coaching sessions for those working with the Curable app or similar. Outside of the pain world she works part time as Assistant Manager at her successful local community shop and café – a project she was involved with since its inception 3 years ago. She still keeps horses and trains them with positive reinforcement, reads and writes for enjoyment, walks 15k steps most days, enjoys yoga, hikes in the Welsh Mountains and has an active and varied social life. She has joined two Flippin Pain™ Outreach tours (cycling and public speaking) and cycled the English C2C last year with friend Lee Vaughan raising £2k for Pain Concern.

Abstract: A personal insight into the challenges of the “journey” from high doses of used as prescribed opioids, through reduction to cessation - against a backdrop of systemic, political, ideological, societal and individual entanglements. Reflection and discussions on how to upstream to mitigate the harms and start to turn the battleground into an oasis.

Mary Smeeth: ‘Motivational Interviewing’

Mary is a qualified Family and Systemic Psychotherapist working part time in her private practice in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, and part time in a private mental health hospital. Mary lived in Phoenix Arizona for fifteen years, where she got her first MA in Professional Counselling and further qualifications in Clinical Mental Health. Returning to the UK in 2004, Mary was the Young People’s Substance Misuse Trainer for Suffolk for twelve years, during which time she gained a PG Dip in Addictive Behaviour and a MA in Systemic Psychotherapy. She has added to her professional skills by gaining a PG Cert in Clinical Hypnosis and is a qualified EMDR Therapist.

Mary works with individuals, couples and families, helping them create more satisfying relationships and to find practical approaches to dealing with difficult emotions. Mary loves her job, and the endless variety of concerns that her clients trust her with, from teenage angst to fertility worries, bereavement or divorce. She specialises in addiction, where her work as a Substance Misuse Trainer and her mental health and therapist training come together. Mary also provides supervision to professionals working with vulnerable populations and distressing content.

In her spare time, Mary does a lot of dog walking, goes regularly to the gym, knits and belongs to the Ladies’ Wine Group of Bury St Edmunds.

Mary will explain how one can develop an awareness of the process of change and understand when and how a client may be displaying motivation to change

Also, one can understand the stages, tasks and interventions relating to the cycle of change and she will explore the principles underpinning the technique.