

Breaking the Cycle of Addiction



Marsha Bates
Distinguished Research Professor

CURRENT RESEARCH

Empowering individuals with substance use disorder using behavioral interventions that target biological systems of addiction

Alcoholism, or alcohol use disorder, is the third leading cause of death in the US, killing nearly 88,000 Americans annually. People with substance use disorders often consciously want to stop drinking and using drugs, but cannot achieve or sustain this goal due to internal and environmental cues -- the sound of a beer can opening, the smell of a cigarette, or negative emotional state -- that automatically "trigger" the behavior. Thus, bolstering people's ability to withstand drinking triggers in real time can have a tremendous public health impact. Drs. Marsha Bates and Jennifer Buckman, Distinguished Research Professor and Associate Research Professor at the Center for Alcohol Studies of Rutgers University, are leaders of the Cardiac Neuroscience Laboratory (CNL) working to target these automatic triggers at the biological level. They are elucidating what biological factors control such reactions in the brain and how these unconscious reactions can be changed. Although much research has sought to strengthen conscious efforts to abstain and create cognitive-based interventions, like learning the skills to utilize in times of craving, this treatment approach is weakened when the triggered mechanisms of the body override the goal of the mind to refrain. Therefore, Drs. Bates and Buckman hope to introduce and validate non-pharmacological, non-invasive, and non-cognitive behavioral interventions to control the automatic arousal and attention orientation that people experience when they encounter triggers.

One mechanism Drs. Bates and Buckman are targeting is the baroreflex loop, which is an automatic physiological mechanism that maintains continuous communication between the heart and the brain, assessed by...

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AFFILIATION



Rutgers University

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. in Psychology 1980, Rutgers University

AWARDS

- Fellow of the American Psychological Association, Divisions 50 (Addictions) and 28 (Psychopharmacology) 2006
- Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award, Society of Addiction Psychology, American Psychological Association, Division 50, 2011
- Distinguished Service Award, Society of Addiction Psychology, American Psychological Association, Division 50, 2014

RESEARCH AREAS

Health & Wellness, Alcoholism, Addiction, Substance Abuse Research

FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will support Drs. Marsha Bates and Jennifer Buckman at Rutgers University as they develop behavioral techniques to target cues that trigger drinking at the biological level. Donations will fund the \$1M/year required to support personnel and equipment. As the ability to study the neural basis for the lab's physiologically-based interventions is limited by the lack of 3T MRI, donations will be crucial in accelerating breakthroughs. Help empower people with alcohol use disorders.