Bulletin
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Addictions and Lifestyles in Contemporary Europe Reframing Addiction Project

Food for thought: Addiction, neoliberalism and personal responsibility

The ALICE RAP network has emphasised on many occasions that Addiction is not a phenomenon that has emerged recently. However, what is new, in historical terms, is to include all kinds of compulsions under a single label of 'addiction' in lay, public and political discourse, and to approach these as a whole. ALICE RAP can be regarded, in itself, as a product of recent trends in how we conceptualise addiction.

ALICE in the looking glass

Although all Work Areas of ALICE RAP will have to tackle the problem of conceptualising addictions in order to establish their object of investigation, Area 1 – Ownership of addictions - will immerse itself in this task: aiming to understand the 'addiction' phenomenon throughout history, in stakeholders' views, in lay and public discourse

Solutions to a cultural paradox

What is expected to emerge from the analyses is that the idea of addiction is a social and cultural construct shaped by certain societal and cultural trends. The current conceptualisation of addiction is a solution to a modern-day paradox: market trends and rights push consumption up while, simultaneously, societal pressures demand an increasing degree of restraint and self-control. The contemporary phenomenon of addiction has been suggested to be a result of individuals not being able to cope with this paradox.

Applying outcomes of Area 1

Researchers in Area 1 of ALICE RAP will strive to shed light on issues of value to the whole project. Expected outcomes include: Identifying hegemonies and normative processes in the idea of addiction; identifying hegemonies and normative processes in the different systems which address the 'problem of addiction', and; providing insight into how societies construct responsibility, social inclusion, welfare and public health.

Networking update

Call for ALICE RAP Joint Publications

As part of the communication and networking plan, we are calling for suggestions from partners of joint papers, arising from the project work, and involving different Work Areas. Please send ideas to: fleur.braddick@gmail.com

Related Events

2-3 November 2011 - IMAGES

(Theories of Addiction and Images of Addictive Behaviours – research consortium) final conference at the University of Helsinki. Paper presentations and invited speakers. Contact: maija.majamaki@helsinki.fi

Further reading

- Room, R. (2001) Critical Public Health 21(2): 141-151.
- Hellman, M. (2010) In-Spire, Journal of Law, Politics and Societies 5(2): 18-34.
- Ferentzy, P. (2002). Telos 125 (fall): 167-191.