



**Data from basic science, epidemiology and clinical research converge in suggesting that heavy use over time (HUOT) should replace current concepts of addiction or substance use disorders**

substance-attributable  
burden of disease  
**definition**  
**HUOT**  
addiction

The following main reasons seem to point for heavy use over time as a better conceptualization for addiction or substance use disorders (Rehm et al., 2013; 2014b):

- Heavy use over time is responsible for the changes in the brain, and other physiological characteristics of substance use disorders.
- Heavy use is responsible for intoxication, and for the loss of control characterizing current definitions of addiction.
- Heavy use over time is responsible for the main social consequences of addiction such as problems to fulfill social roles.
- Heavy use over time is responsible for the majority of substance-attributable burden of disease and mortality.
- Heavy use over time as a definition would eliminate some of the current problems with definitions and operationalizations.

The publication of these principles has provoked a lively ongoing discussion (see e.g., Alcohol and Alcoholism, 2014, Issue 1, including Rehm et al., 2014a). Current efforts concentrate on clinical consequences of the above definitions.

## READ MORE

Rehm, J., Anderson, P., Gual, A., Kraus, L., Marmet, S., Nutt, D.J., Room, R., Samokhvalov, A.V., Shield, K.D., Scafato, E., Trapencieris, M., Wiers, R.W., & Gmel, G. (2014a): [The tangible common denominator of substance use disorders: a reply to commentaries to Rehm et al.](#) (2013). Alcohol and Alcoholism, 49(1), 118-122. doi: 10.1093/alcalc/agt171.

Rehm, J., Marmet, S., Anderson, P., Gual, A., Kraus, L., Nutt, D.J., Room, R., Samokhvalov, A.V., Scafato, E., Trapencieris, M., Wiers, R.W., & Gmel, G. (2013): [Defining substance use disorders: do we really need more than heavy use?](#) Alcohol and Alcoholism, 48(6), 633-640. doi: 10.1093/alcalc/agt127

Rehm, J., Probst, C., Kraus, L., & Lev-Ran, S. (2014b): *The addiction concept revisited*. In P. Anderson, G. Bühringer, & J. Colom (Eds.), [Reframing addiction: policies, processes and pressures](#), (pp. 103-117). Barcelona, Spain: ALICE RAP. ISBN: 978-84-697-1647-2

Rehm J (2014) Classification of addictions: a report examining the various classifications of addictions and extracting common elements of addiction classifications. Addictions and Lifestyles in Contemporary Europe - Reframing addictions project (ALICE RAP): [Deliverable 4.1](#)

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