
NIDA NOTES

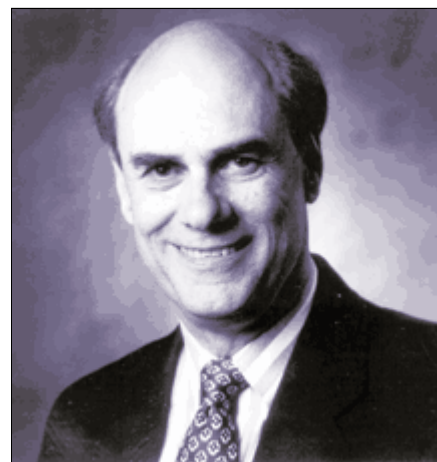
Bulletin Board

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NIDA Scientist Granted Honorary Degree by Italian University

Dr. Roy Wise of NIDA's Intramural Research Program in Baltimore was awarded an honorary doctorate in medicine by the University of Cagliari in Sardinia, Italy, this spring.

At the honors ceremony in Cagliari, Sardinia's capital city, Dr. Wise discussed "Brain, Pleasure, and Addiction" and met with the mayor of Cagliari and the director of social services of Sardinia. Sardinia is experiencing serious drug problems in many of its villages, Dr. Wise noted. The University of Cagliari recognized Dr. Wise for his research on the biological basis for the habit-forming or reinforcing actions of drugs of abuse.



Dr. Roy Wise

Gender Differences in Progression to AIDS

NIDA-funded research on injecting drug users (IDUs) conducted by Dr. Homayoon Farzadegan and his colleagues at The Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health in Baltimore has shown that the course of HIV infection differs in women and men, so that gender-specific treatment may be needed. This study of 2,960 adult IDUs, begun in 1988 with followup in 1992 and 1997, revealed that although women progressed to AIDS as rapidly as men, they had approximately half the viral load in their bloodstreams when they developed AIDS. Initiation of AIDS treatment is based on HIV viral load, and current treatment guidelines are derived mainly from studies with men.

The researchers speculate that physiological factors such as hormones may account, in part, for their findings. Dr. Farzadegan and the research team believe that these gender differences must be explored further, and the possibility that women are being under-treated based on current guidelines warrants considering a change in when women start therapy. The study was published in *Lancet* in 1998.

Drug Discrimination Bibliography Available on the Web

A comprehensive bibliography of drug discrimination literature is now available on the World Wide Web. In drug discrimination studies, researchers use animals to compare the subjective effects of different drugs. These studies provide information about why the drugs are abused and how they act in the brain. For example, NIDA-funded drug discrimination studies with mice determined that the mice perceive some types of inhalants as having effects similar to those of alcohol and barbiturates. This

suggested that people abuse inhalants in order to achieve depressant effects similar to those of alcohol and barbiturates and that inhalants are acting in the brain in a manner similar to that of these drugs. Since then, drug discrimination research with human drug abusers has largely confirmed the findings from these animal studies.

The Drug Discrimination Bibliography was created with NIDA funding by Dr. Ian Stolerman of the Institute of Psychiatry in London and Dr. Jonathan Kamien of BioPsych Consulting in Denver. The bibliography contains nearly 3,000 references, including journal articles, abstracts, book chapters, and books. The bibliography can be searched online or downloaded to a computer. The Drug Discrimination Bibliography can be accessed on the Web at [/www.dd-database.org](http://www.dd-database.org).

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