



Science and non-science in drug policy

Professor David Nutt FMedSci

Neuropsychopharmacology Unit, Division of Experimental Medicine,
Imperial College London

WOLFSON LECTURE THEATRE, CHURCHILL COLLEGE

7.30 p.m., Monday 23rd January, 2012

The regulation of drugs – including alcohol and tobacco – is an issue of pressing importance due to the increasing health care costs associated with their use and the new sorts of synthetic agents being developed and sold over the internet.

My talk will reflect on these issues in the light of my ten years experience on the governments Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs from which I was sacked about a year ago. I shall present new analyses that compare the harms of drugs and alcohol using more sophisticated methodology and challenge many of the current misconceptions about drugs – their harms – and how to deal with them.

- Nutt DJ King LA Phillips LD (2010) Drug harms in the UK: a multicriteria decision analysis *Lancet* 376: 1558-66
- Nutt D (2011) The role and basis of the drug laws Prometheus <http://bit.ly/90MSBU>

About the speaker:

Professor Nutt received his undergraduate training in medicine at Cambridge and Guy's Hospital, and continued training in neurology to MRCP. After completing his psychiatric training in Oxford, he continued there as a lecturer and then later as a Wellcome Senior Fellow in psychiatry. He then spent two years as Chief of the Section of Clinical Science in the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism in NIH, Bethesda, USA. On returning to England in 1988 he set up the Psychopharmacology Unit in Bristol University, an interdisciplinary research grouping spanning the departments of Psychiatry and Pharmacology before moving to Imperial College London in December 2008 where he leads a similar group with a particular focus on brain imaging especially PET.

He is currently Chair of the Independent Scientific Committee on Drugs (ISCD), Past-President of the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ECNP), Vice-President of the European Brain Council, President of the British Neuroscience Association and a member of the International Centre for Science in Drug Policy. In addition, he has edited the *Journal of Psychopharmacology* for over a decade and acts as a psychiatry advisor to the British National Formulary.

He has published over 400 original research papers, a similar number of reviews and books chapters, eight government reports on drugs and 26 books.

Previously he has been member and Chair of the Advisory Committee on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD – 1998-2009), President of the British Association of Psychopharmacology (BAP), member of the HEFCE/NHS Senior Lecturer Selection Panel and member of the MRC Neuroscience Board. Other previous national contributions include membership of the Independent Inquiry into the

Misuse of Drugs Act (2000 Runciman report), and membership of the Committee on Safety of Medicines (2000 – 2005) and member of the Ministry of Defence Science Advisory Board (2005-2007). He was the clinical scientific lead on the 2004/5 UK Government Foresight initiative “Brain science, addiction and drugs” that provided a 25-year vision for this area of science and public policy and in 2006 he was Director of Bristol Neuroscience.

He broadcasts widely to the general public both on radio and television including recent BBC Horizon on drug harms and their classification. He also lectures widely to the public as well as to the scientific and medical communities; for instance has presented three times at the Cheltenham Science Festival and several times for Café Scientifiques. In 2010 he was listed as one of the 100 most important figures in British Science by The Times Eureka science magazine.

Additional note

The CSAR Lectures are open to all; CSAR members are admitted free. Non-members are asked to make a nominal donation of £3.00.

Coffee and biscuits will be available in the Wolfson Foyer from around 7pm until the start of the lecture. Location information: <http://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/about/visitors/directions.php>

The talk will be held in the lecture theatre in Wolfson Hall (4):

