

AMY'S DRUG PROBLEM

► In your article regarding Amy Winehouse going to rehab in Israel (*JC*, May 23), Andre Waismann is quoted as saying that addiction is a neurological problem and not a social or psychological one. As an accredited addiction counsellor, I beg to differ. Chemical dependency may be a neurological problem, but addiction is a psychological illness which cannot be rectified by simply blocking the opioid receptors, which does not address two very significant problems.

Firstly, if the illness of addiction is not treated appropriately, the addict will substitute one addictive substance or behaviour for another when their drug of choice no longer works. Consequently, addicts treated this way will quite likely turn to other drugs, alcohol or compulsive behaviours to relieve the internal chaos that they will no doubt be experiencing as their underlying issues have been overlooked.

Secondly, and perhaps more worryingly, Naltrexone (the drug which blocks the opiate receptors) simply stops opiate drugs from having the desired effect.

However, an addict can, and often will, relapse and when they find that the first hit hasn't worked, they will try again and often again until it does. In many cases, this leads to an overdose which can prove to be fatal, as the quantity of opiates being ingested is dangerously high.

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