



Addiction at the Crossroads: Novel Treatment Frameworks, Emerging Technologies, and a Psychological First Aid Tool Kit

Infectious disease outbreaks create significant distress for the public and strain health care systems tasked with caring for affected individuals and containing the disease. Fear and uncertainty heavily influence public behaviors. Concerns focus on personal and family safety, inability to distinguish the new disease from more established and benign illnesses, potential for isolation and quarantine, effectiveness of treatments being used, and trust in institutions responsible for managing the response.

In this session, we will explore three aspects of the pandemic with an eye towards preparing ourselves for the next phase of recovery:

- **Treating Substance Use Disorders:** In addition to the explosion of telepsychiatry, we have developed a new—surprisingly simpler--framework for treating opioid use disorders and other addictions.
- **Understanding the New Frontier of the Technological Addictions:** Internet Gaming, Internet Gambling, Cybersex, Texting and Emailing, Online Auctions, and Shopping, and Infobesity are now being appreciated as serious mental health problems that demand proper diagnosis and treatment.
- **Preparing with Psychological First Aid:** While we all hope that recovery from the current pandemic will progress unidirectionally towards healing, we also have to brace ourselves for the possibility (some even claim likelihood) of a new version of an infectious disease outbreak.



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Petros Levounis, MD, MA, serves as Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Associate Dean for Professional Development at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, as well as Chief of Service at University Hospital.

Dr. Levounis is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Stanford University where he studied sociology, chemistry, and biophysics, and received his medical education at Stanford and the Medical College of Pennsylvania. He completed his residency in psychiatry at Columbia and his fellowship in addiction psychiatry at NYU. Dr. Levounis then served as director of the Addiction Institute of New York before coming to Rutgers. He is a Betty Ford Scholar, a recipient of a U.S. State Department Speaker and Specialist Award, and an honorary member of the World Psychiatric Association. In 2022, he was elected as president of the American Psychiatric Association.

Dr. Levounis has published 14 books including the textbook of “Substance Dependence and Co-Occurring Psychiatric Disorders,” the self-help paperback “Sober Siblings: How to Help Your Alcoholic Brother or Sister—and Not Lose Yourself,” and the first book on the “Technological Addictions” with Dr. James Sherer. He is currently working on the “Nature Therapy” book with Dr. Yoni Kaplan. His books have been translated into French, German, Hungarian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Spanish.

