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**A clarion call to the addiction science community: It's time to resist the anti-scientific policies of the US Trump administration**

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Abstract:	As a group of 28 addiction journal editors from 12 countries, we are urgently drawing our readers' attention to the abrupt and drastic changes in science policy now being enacted by the current US government. We are issuing a clarion call to the addiction science community to reverse the unethical, illegal and unscientific activities of the Trump Administration, and by analogy the activities of other governments that interfere with the pursuit of scientific knowledge to manage addiction-related problems.

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**A clarion call to the addiction science community:**

**It's time to resist the anti-scientific policies of the US Trump administration**

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47 As a group of 28 addiction journal editors from 12 countries<sup>1</sup>, we are urgently drawing our  
48 readers' attention to the abrupt and drastic changes in science policy now being enacted by the  
49 current US government. We are issuing a clarion call to the addiction science community to  
50 reverse the unethical, illegal and unscientific activities of the Trump Administration, and by  
51 analogy the activities of other governments that interfere with the pursuit of scientific knowledge  
52 to manage addiction-related problems (see Hall, et al., 2012; Balfe 2023). There are three  
53 reasons for this call to action.  
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3 First, the Administration is attempting to censor scientific discourse within peer-reviewed  
4 publications. Following President Trump's Executive Order on "Defending Women from  
5 Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth," the US Centers for Disease  
6 Control and Prevention (CDC) mandated that all scientific manuscripts authored by CDC  
7 personnel and currently undergoing peer review be withdrawn so that certain "forbidden terms"  
8 relating to gender can be removed (Heidt, 2025; Clark and Abbasi, 2025; Mandavilli, 2025). The  
9 terms include 'gender', 'transgender', 'pregnant person', 'transsexual' or 'non-binary'. This is  
10 clearly unethical (removing authors who contributed to a publication), possibly illegal (changing  
11 an article after copyright has been transferred to a journal), and definitely unscientific (editors  
12 should not publish articles that fail to accurately describe sample characteristics in terms of sex,  
13 gender and sexual minority composition, where relevant). Censorship by the Administration  
14 runs counter to long-standing efforts by the International Society of Addiction Journal Editors  
15 (ISAJE) to promote accurate and complete reporting of sex and gender information in scientific  
16 research (Heidari, et al., 2016) and to improve gender representation across member journals  
17 (Babor, et. al., 2023). Even worse, CDC and other government agencies have removed from  
18 public view epidemiological datasets related to a range of health topics, including the Youth Risk  
19 Behavior Survey, without explanation or justification (Clark and Abbasi, 2025; Cox, et al.,  
20 2025).

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22 Second, funding and human resources for scientific research are being arbitrarily reduced,  
23 without any viable justification in terms of improved efficiency or public policy. There are  
24 numerous reports (e.g., Gwynne, 2025) of frozen training positions, use of government databases  
25 to identify people who have worked on diversity issues, funding freezes on research and training  
26 grants, and mass firings of career employees in critical health areas. At this writing, the US  
27 Agency for International Development (US AID) is being threatened with complete elimination.  
28 Clinical trials investigating HIV treatments have been "paused," abruptly leaving patients  
29 without lifesaving treatment and risking the development of medication-resistant viral strains  
30 (Farmer, 2025).

31  
32 Third, consideration is being given to reducing the National Institutes of Health (NIH) budget  
33 and converting NIH grant funding into block grants to the states to fund research at their  
34 discretion (Severino, 2023). This is likely to result in reduced funding for marginalized and  
35 vulnerable populations. Will states' total funding for research on alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs  
36 and behavioral addictions match the current budgets of the National Institute on Drug Abuse  
37 (NIDA), the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and other agencies?  
38 NIH has already announced a reduction in the indirect (overhead) cost rates paid to grant-  
39 receiving institutions by as much as 4 billion dollars this year (Milman, 2025).

### 40 41 42 **What can be done?**

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44 The response to these dramatic changes in US science policy must be comprehensive,  
45 collaborative and led by the major addiction science organizations. The current worldwide  
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3 infrastructure of this field, perhaps as much as half of it concentrated in the United States,  
4 includes numerous federal funding sources, more than 90 specialized scholarly journals, scores  
5 of professional societies, over 200 research centers, more than 80 specialty training programs,  
6 and thousands of scientists (Babor, et al., 2017). Below we describe an initial plan of action that  
7 engages all parts of the addiction science field.  
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### 10 **Addiction Journals**

- 11 • The ISAJE Board should notify the CDC and the NIH that sound journal policies and  
12 scientific writing in our field dictate that terminology relating to sex, gender and sexual  
13 minority issues are consistent, interpretable and scientifically appropriate. The  
14 terminology for various contexts and realities is constantly assessed and discussed within  
15 scientific communities, and these discussions are integral to high-quality scientific  
16 processes. Because accurate and legitimate descriptions of study samples' sex and  
17 gender characteristics are a basic requirement in all human research, the publishers of  
18 addiction journals are encouraged to resist unjustified and unscientific efforts to interfere  
19 with them.  
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- 21 • ISAJE should also insist on adherence to authorship policies that disallow the arbitrary  
22 removal of US authors from manuscripts with “forbidden” terminology.  
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### 28 **Research Societies**

- 29 • The addiction field's major research societies should facilitate member petitions, position  
30 statements and editorials in their affiliated journals, re-affirming support for well-  
31 substantiated scientific terminology, diversity policies, and funding for addiction research  
32 and research training.  
33
- 34 • Annual meeting organizers should set programing agendas to take into account current  
35 threats to addiction research and treatment.  
36
- 37 • US addiction research organizations should inform the US Congressional leadership  
38 about the practical implications of the illegal, unethical and unscientific actions described  
39 in this editorial. They should also reaffirm their support for NIAAA, NIDA, CDC and  
40 other federal agencies that fund addiction research and training both nationally and  
41 internationally.  
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- 43 • Research societies should make concrete efforts to communicate broadly about the  
44 societal benefits of addiction science, which include basic research on the nature of  
45 addiction, clinical studies of the most effective treatments and policy research that  
46 demonstrates how to reduce the enormous costs of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs, as  
47 well as behavioral addictions associated with gambling, gaming, and problematic use of  
48 the internet.  
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### 53 **Individual scientists**

- Addiction scientists are encouraged to exercise the right of free expression in scientific publications, insisting on the continued application of the peer review system for grant funding and research publications that is independent of political interference.
- The scientific community is encouraged to speak up as citizens who have expertise in addiction science. They should describe the implications of the US Administration's executive mandates for addiction research and public health, both nationally and internationally.
- Investigators, regardless of career stage and seniority, on US federal grants need to push the leadership of research societies and the addiction journals to articulate their concerns, particularly with respect to research training and diversity issues.

## Conclusion

Common strategies and coordinated efforts are needed to protect the scientific infrastructure that has been developed over the past 50 years in the US and worldwide. We suggest the formation of a broadly representative Coordinating Committee consisting of the many stakeholders in the addiction science field. The Committee can be charged with the development of a resistance strategy designed to prevent the further dismantling of the global engine of addiction research that has made the US a world leader in the scientific understanding of addiction problems. The emerging intrusions into our scientific work by political and ideological operatives is not acceptable and it will make it more difficult and expensive to deal with these complex human problems in the future. The global addiction science community needs to act collectively to preserve the promise of scientific inquiry wherever it is threatened.

<sup>1</sup>This editorial is written by a group of 28 present and former editors of peer reviewed scientific journals specializing in the publication of addiction research. The authors have signed this editorial as individuals, not as representatives of any organization. Institutional affiliations are listed to demonstrate the authors' academic credentials.

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