Dissecting what Drives Dopamine in Drinking

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Brady B131 Auditorium, 310 Cedar St.

Abstract:
Striatal dopamine has long been thought of as a key neurotransmitter that encodes the rewarding properties of both natural rewards and drugs of abuse. Beyond the reward itself, dopaminergic transmission is also thought to reflect that which comes to be associated with, and predictive of, the reward’s reinforcing properties. This talk will present data from human PET imaging studies that show how alcohol itself, as well as alcohol’s attendant non-pharmacologic sensory properties and surrounding expectancies, are related to ventral striatal dopaminergic transmission. Understanding how the constituent components of the drinking experience drive striatal dopamine should then permit a more precise investigation of the neural vulnerabilities that underlie alcoholism risk.

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