

Résumé conference Marcello SOLINAS

“Environmental stimulation and drug addiction: lessons from animal models”

Drug addiction is a prominent social and economical problem that costs billions of euros to our society. Although a great deal of information has been collected on the psychological, neurobiological, cellular and molecular mechanisms of drug addiction, effective therapies for addiction, are still very limited (O'Brien, 2005). Animal model can help finding new strategies that can help people suffering from addictive disorders in their recovery efforts is a pressing necessity.

In the last decade, our laboratory has investigated the effects of positive environmental conditions on the recovery from addiction. In fact, we have found that housing “addicted” animals in enriched environments (big cages that provide social, physical and cognitive stimulations) during periods of abstinence drastically reduce the risks of relapse. Our current research aims at determining the brain and the behavioural mechanisms underlying the positive effects of environmental enrichment on addiction.