

## JOURNAL EXPLORES WHERE ETHICS AND NEUROSCIENCE MEET

PHILADELPHIA, PA. – Signaling a new era in the study of the brain, the mind, and moral behavior, the *American Journal of Bioethics (AJOB)* will feature new issues that will advance the study of “neuroethics.”

Starting in 2007, the *American Journal of Bioethics* will increase frequency from 6 issues to 12 issues each year and devote three of its issues -- collectively titled *AJOB Neuroscience* -- to critical topics in this emerging field. These issues will explore both the ethical implications of advances in neuroscience and the neurologic basis of ethical behavior.

“It is my great pleasure to launch *AJOB Neuroscience* in order to foster international discourse and provide a platform for debating current issues in neuroethics,” says editor Judy Illes of the Center for Biomedical Ethics at Stanford University.

The journal will address such questions as:

- Can addictive behavior be explained in terms of neural pathways?
- Are lie-detector tests reliable and ethical?
- How can functional MRI be used and misused in the study of the mind?
- How does neuroscience affect national security?
- Can sophisticated computers develop a sense of right and wrong?

“The overriding goal is to capture the clear cross-disciplinary excitement about neuroethics and capitalize on the extraordinary momentum it has acquired,” says Illes. “Neuroethics is for everyone – theoreticians, philosophers, research, clinicians, lawyers, engineers, and all citizens of science.”

*AJOB Neuroscience* will feature target articles on important issues in neuroethics followed by commentaries on the target article by prominent scholars. The inaugural issue of (Volume 7, Number 1 of *AJOB*) features two target articles, one on the neurobiology of addiction and one on personhood and neuroscience.

In “**The Neurobiology of Addiction**,” Steven Hyman of Harvard University explains what is known about the neural networks involved in addictive behavior. Hyman outlines a model in which the neurotransmitter dopamine, which is released by all addicting drugs, hijacks brain circuits that convey information about natural rewards such as food and reproduction.

“Mechanisms that evolved to motivate survival behaviors, the pursuit of natural rewards, are usurped by the potent and abnormal dopamine signal produced by addictive drugs,” says Hyman. “The result is a brain in which drug cues powerfully activate drug seeking.”

Commentators use Hyman’s observations as a springboard to debate whether addiction is best conceptualized as a disease, as a moral condition, or as some combination of the two.

“The fact that individuals with an addiction retain some control over their decisions about drug use and that the impulse to use drugs *is* resistible must be stated clearly,” say Adrian Carter and Wayne Hall of The University of Queensland. “Neuroscientists need to be aware of how their research is read by individuals outside the scientific community.”

Hyman agrees that an understanding of the neural mechanisms of addiction does not absolve addicted persons of responsibility for their behavior. “This model does not reduce addicted individuals to zombies who are permanently controlled by external cues,” he says. “Addicts can cease drug use and regain a good measure of control over their drug-taking.”

A second target article in the current issue, “**Personhood and Neuroscience**,” focuses on attempts to define personhood and the neural underpinnings of our intuitive sense of a “person.” Martha Farah of the University of Pennsylvania and Andrea Heberlein of Harvard University argue that human beings have evolved a tendency to conceptualize the world in terms of persons, even though this concept is fraught with complexities when attempts are made at a rigorous definition.

The target articles in the second issue of *AJOB Neuroscience* (Issue 7/5) will be “**Neuroethics and National Security**,” by Turhan Canli and colleagues, and “**Thinking About the Human Neuron Mouse**,” by Henry T. Greely and colleagues.

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***The full Target Articles and peer commentaries are available to members of the media. Please contact Sean Philpott at *The American Journal of Bioethics*, sean.philpott@bioethics.net (email) or 518-262-2639 (phone).***

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*Neuroscience and Ethics: Intersections*

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**Editorial**

*Ipsa Scientia Potestas Est (Knowledge is Power)*  
Judy Illes

**Perspective**

*Neuroscience and Ethics: Intersections*  
Antonio Damasio

**Target Article**

*The Neurobiology of Addiction: Implications for Voluntary Control of Behavior*  
Steven E. Hyman

**Open Peer Commentaries**

*Voluntary Control of Behavior and Responsibility*  
Stephen J. Morse

*Wrestling Satan and Conquering Dopamine: Addiction and Free Will*  
Tia Powell

*The Social Implications of Neurobiological Explanations of Resistible Compulsions*  
Adrian Carter and Wayne Hall

*Addiction, Responsibility and Moral Psychology*  
A.M. Viens

*Affective Neuroscience and Addiction*  
Louis C. Charland

*Addiction, Molecules and Morality: Disease Does Not Obviate Responsibility*  
Peter J. Cohen

*Brain Disease or Moral Condition? Wrong Question*  
Thomas I. Cochrane

*Addiction as an Amoral Condition? The Case Remains Unproven*  
Hans Madueme

*Normative Judgments, Responsibility and Executive Function*  
Greg Loeben and James D. Stoehr

*Addiction is Not an Affliction: Addictive Desires are Merely Pleasure-Oriented Desires*  
Bennett Foddy and Julian Savulescu

*Ameliorating and Exacerbating: Surgical "Prosthesis" in Addiction*  
Paul J. Ford and Cynthia S. Kubu

*The Social: A Missing Term in the Debate over Addiction and Voluntary Control*  
Neil Levy

## **Target Article**

*Personhood and Neuroscience: Naturalizing or Nihilating?*

Martha J. Farah and Andrea S. Heberlein

## **Open Peer Commentaries**

*The Neuroscience of a Person Network*

Elizabeth A. Phelps

*Border Zones of Consciousness: Another Immigration Debate?*

Joseph J. Fins

*The Necessary-and-Sufficient Boondoggle*

Patricia Smith Churchland

*The Illusion of Personhood*

Adina L. Roskies

*Persons and Personification*

William Grey, Wayne Hall and Adrian Carter

*Neuroscience and Metaphysics (Redux)*

Chris Buford and Fritz Allhoff

*Personhood: Elusive But Not Illusory*

John Banja

*Is Personhood an Illusion?*

Zahra Meghani

*Personhood: Empirical Thing or Rational Concept?*

Christopher Meyers

*Illusions about Persons*

James Lindemann Nelson

*Against Scientism, For Personhood*

Christian Perring

*Persons, Metaphysics and Ethics*

Walter Glannon

*Differing Vulnerabilities: The Moral Significance of Lockean Personhood*

Russell Blackford

*A Transcendental Argument for the Concept of Personhood in Neuroscience*

Mark Sagoff

*Identifying Challenges and Conditions for the Use of Neuroscience in Bioethics*

Eric Racine

## **Book Reviews**

Review of Erik Parens, Audrey R. Chapman, and Nancy Press (eds.), *Wrestling with Behavioral Genetics: Science, Ethics, and Public Conversation*

Jonathan Rosier

## **Correspondence**

*Response to Open Peer Commentaries on "Personhood and Neuroscience: Naturalizing or Nihilating?": Getting Personal*

Martha J. Farah and Andrea S. Heberlein