



IN MEMORIAM

Herbert D. Kleber

Frances R. Levin^{1,2}, Jeffrey A. Lieberman² and Herbert Pardes³*Neuropsychopharmacology* (2019) 44:1007; <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41386-019-0318-7>

Herbert D. Kleber, M.D.

Dr. Herbert D. Kleber, a pioneer of addiction research and treatment, died on October 6, 2018 of an apparent heart attack, while vacationing in the Greek Islands with his wife and members of his family. It was a sad but, in many ways, fitting end to a very rich life—he passed quickly without suffering, among his family while vacationing in the Mediterranean.

At the time of his death, Dr. Kleber was Professor of Psychiatry and Emeritus Director of the Division on Substance Use Disorders, which he founded, at the Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons and the New York State Psychiatric Institute. This represented the culmination of his 50-year career, during which he and his colleagues probed the pathology of addiction, and developed treatments to mitigate withdrawal and promote recovery. When Dr. Kleber began his career, substance abuse was not a major focus of biomedical research and clinical medicine. Thus, his career importantly contributed to the emergence of addiction medicine and substance use disorders as a focus of research and treatment by the medical profession. Dr. Kleber's research began with his fortuitous deployment for his military service to the U.S. Federal Prison in Lexington, KY, the federal forerunner to the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the primary locus for narcotic addiction treatment and research. There he developed a clinical approach to treating inmates, which differed at the time from the moralistic and social deviance

context in which addiction was viewed and faith-based treatments that were prevalent. However, it was his appreciation of the need for a scientific understanding of the pathological basis of addiction and empirically based treatments that fueled his pursuit of addiction research and treatment when he completed his service and took a faculty position at Yale University. There he started the Substance Abuse Treatment Service at the Connecticut Mental Health Center and the Addiction, Prevention, and Treatment Foundation, the first such academic program.

Dr. Kleber's pioneering efforts were elevated to the policy level with his appointment as Deputy Director for Demand Reduction at the Office of National Drug Control Policy by President George H. W. Bush. Working under Director William Bennett, he implemented policies that led to decreased demand for illegal drugs through programs in prevention, education, and treatment. He also co-founded, along with former Health and Human Services Secretary Joseph Califano, the National Policy Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse. Through these efforts, Dr. Kleber raised the consciousness of academic medicine, health care providers, and health policy makers to the importance of substance use disorders and addiction.

Following government service, he joined the Department of Psychiatry, at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and the New York State Psychiatric Institute where he established, with his late wife Dr. Marian W. Fischman, what became one of largest and most successful research programs on substance abuse in the country. Relentless in his pursuit of better treatments, up until the time of his death, Dr. Kleber was pursuing innovative strategies for inducting individuals with opioid use disorders onto medication-assisted treatments.

Dr. Kleber was a longstanding and integral member of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP)—as well as the National Academy of Medicine—serving in numerous roles and participating in virtually every facet of the Annual Meetings.

In both his professional and personal lives, Dr. Kleber was highly generative and much loved. At Yale and Columbia Universities, he mentored several generations of clinical researchers who went on to become leaders in the substance abuse field. His many proteges and colleagues join his family (wife, Anne Lawver; children, Dr. Marc Kleber, Dr. Elizabeth Kleber Richards, and Pamela Shad; daughter-in-law, Judith Kleber; son-in-laws Rees Shad and Thomas Richard; and six grandchildren) in honoring Herb and grieving his loss.

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