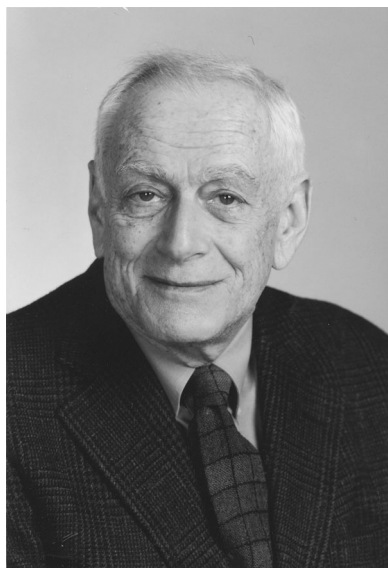




IN MEMORIAM

Conan Kornetsky, B.A., D.Phil., M.A.

Jerome H. Jaffe¹ and Roger E. Meyer^{2,3}*Neuropsychopharmacology* (2019) 44:1174; <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41386-019-0352-5>

Dr. Conan Kornetsky, a founding member of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology, died of complications of Alzheimer's Disease at age 92, on 21 December 2018. His long and distinguished career in psychopharmacology began in 1949 almost by chance. As a psychology graduate student at the University of Kentucky, he accepted a job at the United States Public Health Service Hospital (USPHS) in Lexington, Kentucky administering IQ tests in exchange for room and board. The job brought him into contact with some of the pioneering researchers at the Addiction Research Center: Harris Isbell, Abraham Wikler, and William Martin. Conan participated in several of the classic studies published in the early 1950's. In 1952, while employed by the USPHS, he was sent to New York City to work with Donald Gerard to gather data on heroin addiction in adolescence. In addition to their own pioneering studies, they helped Isidor Chein and his team to collect and analyze data leading to the classic work, *The Road to H*.

In 1954, Conan and his family moved to Bethesda where he was given research space in the Laboratory of Clinical Science under Seymour Kety. There he studied the effects of chlorpromazine and other drugs in normal volunteers and patients with schizophrenia. Conan's interest in schizophrenia dated back to his years as an undergraduate when he worked part-time at the Maine State

Hospital. In that earlier era, before the introduction of neuroleptic drugs, he was convinced that the abnormal postures and movements of the patients suggested a neurological disorder. During his time in the intramural program he began a long collaboration with Alan Mirsky. Using amphetamine "psychosis" in a rodent model, they observed that, with increasing doses of amphetamine, attention was improved up to a point. Beyond that dose, attention plummeted. Chlorpromazine reversed the effects of the high dose amphetamine, just as it improved attention in medicated research participants with schizophrenia. In the patients and in the rodent model, they employed a Continuous Performance Task of attention. As with so much that Conan did that was relevant to understanding addiction, his work with Alan offered a bridge between human and animal studies that was ahead of its time.

In the mid-1960's, Conan moved to the departments of psychiatry and pharmacology at Boston University Medical School where he remained as an active faculty member and researcher until his retirement. His research on schizophrenia continued into the 1970's, including an interest in cannabis psychosis; but, the focus of his work shifted completely to drug abuse by 1974. With Joseph Cochin, Conan studied protracted tolerance to morphine; but his major focus was in measuring the hedonic effects of drugs. To do this, he adapted the classic methods of psychophysics to measure the effects of drug abuse on the threshold for electrical self-stimulation in the brain. Using this method, he and his students studied the effects of a wide range of drugs, such as cocaine and opioids and combinations of drugs. Those studies were extended to using the 2-deoxyglucose method to measure local cerebral metabolism in order to assess long-term effects of the drugs and the ways by which environmental cues might influence long-term drug effects.

Conan was an extraordinary mentor to graduate students, post-docs, and young faculty (including aspiring young research psychiatrists like Roger Meyer and Gerald Wohlberg). He received the Mentorship Award and the Nathan B. Eddy Award from the College on Problems of Drug Dependence and Distinguished Alumni awards from the University of Maine, his alma mater, and the University of Kentucky, where he earned his doctorate.

Conan had a large network of friends and he was dedicated to his wife Marcia (who died in 2007), his daughter Lisa, son David, three grandchildren, and extended family. In our view, Conan's research and teaching career was marked by his rock solid character and by innovation and creativity. He was one of our giants.

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