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Love drugs: Why scientists should study the effects of pharmaceuticals on human (romantic) relationships

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Abstract

There is ongoing disagreement about the moral implications of developing and/or using neurotechnologies that would affect romantic love and relationships. In this paper, we argue that scientists should actively pursue a research program into such technology. Our call for research is based in part on the fact that a number of pharmaceuticals already in use are very likely to have ramifications for our relationships (romantic and otherwise); and we suggest that we should attempt to understand the effects of these drugs on our interpersonal commitments. In a similar vein, we argue for a shift in scientific research norms, according to which the study of relationships and other social factors would be given higher priority. Finally, in an appendix, we discuss our use of the term “love drug,” and consider whether it is appropriate in light of debates about neuroreductionism.

Key words: love drugs, neuroenhancement, medicalization, pharmaceuticals, relationships

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