



INFORMATION PLATFORM "CENTER FOR INNOVATIVE THINKING"
UKRAINIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENTIFIC STRATEGIES
EUROPEAN UNION RESEARCH DEPARTMENT
SCIENTIFIC AND PUBLISHING CENTER "PROGRESS"

SCIENCE
AT THE
FRONTIER
OF
PROGRESS

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC
AND PRACTICAL CONFERENCE

JUNE 8-10, 2026
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PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

25. *Akhmetova Anastasia, Cherusheva G. B.* 91
FROM DISASTER TO TOURISM BRAND: THE ETHICS OF CHERNOBYL TOURISM

RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND THEOLOGY

26. *Рябко Ігор Володимирович* 96
ТЕОРЕТИКО-МЕТОДОЛОГІЧНІ ЗАСАДИ КАНОНІЧНОГО ТА ЦЕРКОВНОГО ПРАВА

PEDAGOGY AND EDUCATION

27. *Nataliia Tonkonoh* 99
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS IN THE CONDITIONS OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL CHALLENGES FORMATION OF UKRAINIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY
28. *Горбаньов Олександр Сергійович* 102
ІНФОГРАФІКА ДЛЯ УРОКУ ЗА ДОПОМОГОЮ СЕРВІСУ CANVA
29. *Салогуб Ольга Олександрівна* 105
ЗАСТОСУВАННЯ ПОВЕДІНКОВИХ СТРАТЕГІЙ У КОРЕКЦІЙНО-РОЗВИТКОВІЙ РОБОТІ З ДІТЬМИ З РОЗЛАДАМИ АУТИСТИЧНОГО СПЕКТРА
30. *Якименко Світлана Іванівна* 107
МЕТОДИЧНІ ОРІЄНТИРИ ПАТРІОТИЧНОГО ВИХОВАННЯ В УМОВАХ ЗВО: НОВІ ПІДХОДИ
31. *Головатюк Людмила Михайлівна, Пелех Тетяна Юрївна* 110
ВПРОВАДЖЕННЯ СУЧАСНИХ ОСВІТНІХ ТЕХНОЛОГІЙ З МЕТОЮ ІНТЕНСИФІКАЦІЇ НАВЧАННЯ БІОЛОГІЇ
32. *Полудень Євген* 114
ОСОБЛИВОСТІ СТАНОВЛЕННЯ ПРОФЕСІОНАЛІЗМУ МАЙБУТНЬОГО ЮРИСТА
33. *Люшин Микола Олександрович, Люшина Валентина Миколаївна* 116
РЕАЛІЗАЦІЯ ПОЛІТИКИ «ОСВІТА ДЛЯ ЖИТТЯ» ЯК ПЕРЕЗАВАНТАЖЕННЯ НОВОЇ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ШКОЛИ
34. *Войтенко Аліна Олексійвна* 120
«ІННОВАЦІЙНІ ПІДХОДИ ДО ВИКЛАДАННЯ МАТЕМАТИКИ В ШКОЛІ ЯК ВІДПОВІДЬ НА ВИКЛИКИ СУЧАСНОСТІ»
35. *Загоруйко Наталія Михайлівна, Глущик Дмитро Олександрович* 122
ФОРМУВАННЯ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ МАЙБУТНЬОГО ВЧИТЕЛЯ ПОЧАТКОВИХ КЛАСІВ В УМОВАХ ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЇ СУЧАСНОГО ОСВІТНЬОГО ПРОСТОРУ
36. *Бреславська Ганна Богданівна* 124
ІННОВАЦІЙНІ МЕТОДИ НАЦІОНАЛЬНО-ПАТРІОТИЧНОГО ВИХОВАННЯ У СТУДЕНТСЬКОМУ СЕРЕДОВИЩІ

MEDICAL SCIENCES AND PUBLIC HEALTH

37. *Natela Shardenivna Dovzhuk, Snizhanna Volodymyrivna Zhuk* 130
FEATURES OF DOPAMINERGIC SYSTEM FUNCTIONING IN EATING DISORDERS
38. *Шкондіна Олена Феліксівна, Швед Юлія Володимирівна* 132
АНАЛІЗ ЕПІДЕМІЧНОЇ СИТУАЦІЇ ЩОДО СКАЗУ У ВІННИЦЬКІЙ ОБЛАСТІ
39. *Полупан Олена Олександрівна, Живиця Олександра Віталіївна, Кондратенко Олена Костянтинівна, Маланія Мілена Давідівна* 135
КЛІНІКО-ФАРМАКОЛОГІЧНЕ ОБҐРУНТУВАННЯ ЗАСТОСУВАННЯ ТРАНЕКСАМОВОЇ КИСЛОТИ ПРИ МАСИВНИХ КРОВОВТРАТАХ
40. *Сердюк Олександр Іванович, Рогожин Борис Анатолійович, Просоленко Наталія Василівна, Крупеня Володимир Ілліч* 137
ПОСТТРАВМАТИЧНИЙ СИНДРОМ ТА ЙОГО РЕАБІЛІТАЦІЯ: ЦИВІЛЬНЕ НАСЕЛЕННЯ В УМОВАХ СИСТЕМАТИЧНИХ ВОЄННИХ ОБСТРІЛІВ ТА РУЙНУВАНЬ (АНАЛІЗ ДОСВІДУ)

MEDICAL SCIENCES AND PUBLIC HEALTH

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FEATURES OF DOPAMINERGIC SYSTEM FUNCTIONING IN EATING DISORDERS

Abstract. Eating disorders are among the most severe psychiatric illnesses, characterized by high morbidity, mortality, and a tendency toward a chronic course. Contemporary research indicates a significant role of the dopaminergic system in the development of pathological eating behaviors. The aim of this study was to analyze the characteristics of dopaminergic system functioning in various forms of eating disorders and to determine its role in the development and maintenance of pathological eating patterns. A review of current scientific literature devoted to the neurobiological mechanisms of anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder was conducted. It was found that disturbances in dopaminergic neurotransmission are associated with alterations in reward processing, motivation, and habit formation, which underlie pathological eating behaviors [1–3]. Anorexia nervosa is characterized by hyperreactivity of dopaminergic pathways to stimuli associated with weight loss and food restriction, whereas binge-eating disorder and bulimia nervosa demonstrate signs of dysregulation within the mesolimbic reward system, reduced dopamine sensitivity, and compensatory enhancement of food-related motivation [2,5]. The findings emphasize the importance of further investigation of dopaminergic mechanisms for the development of novel therapeutic approaches to eating disorders.

Keywords: dopamine, dopaminergic system, anorexia, bulimia, eating disorders, neurobiology.

Materials and Methods The study employed theoretical analysis, synthesis, and generalization of contemporary scientific literature regarding the functioning of the dopaminergic system in eating disorders. The analysis included clinical, neuroimaging, genetic, and experimental studies published in international scientific journals.

Results The analysis of the literature demonstrated that dysfunction of the dopaminergic system represents one of the key neurobiological mechanisms underlying eating disorders. Differences in the functioning of mesolimbic and mesocortical dopaminergic pathways were identified depending on the type of disorder. Anorexia nervosa is characterized by increased sensitivity to stimuli associated with weight loss, enhanced reward prediction error responses, and the formation of maladaptive eating habits [3–6]. In contrast, bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder are associated with dysregulation of dopamine D1 and D2 receptors, the development of a hypodopaminergic state, and increased motivation to consume highly palatable, calorie-dense foods [2,7]. Interactions between dopamine and hormonal regulators of energy balance, particularly leptin, also play a significant role in the formation of pathological eating behaviors.

Conclusions The conducted analysis demonstrated that eating disorders are accompanied by complex disturbances in dopaminergic system functioning, affecting reward processing, motivation, habit formation, and neuroendocrine regulation. Anorexia nervosa is primarily associated with pathological enhancement of dopaminergic responses to food restriction and weight-loss-related stimuli, whereas bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder are characterized by dopamine receptor imbalance and reduced sensitivity of the reward system. These neurobiological features support the necessity of a comprehensive treatment approach that combines psychotherapeutic, pharmacological, and neuromodulatory strategies. Further investigation of

the dopaminergic system may contribute to the development of more effective personalized methods for treatment and relapse prevention.

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