

Impulsive Children on Psychostimulants: A National Scandal in the Making?



A lecture by

Jaak Panksepp

Department of Psychology,
ICS Scholar in Residence

**Wednesday, April 1, 2:30 PM
Room 223, Olscamp**

"There are now enormous disjunctions between the ancient adaptive environments in which our brains evolved over the last three million years of biological evolution and the socio-cultural environments we have constructed during the last three millennia. With the increasing concentration of human habitats in large and anonymous communities, the spaces available for safe and healthy dissipation of youthful energies have diminished markedly, especially in the last 50 years." Jaak Panksepp

The use of psychostimulant drugs to control classroom behavior has risen dramatically in the past few decades, to the point where many believe it has become a national scandal. Such medical "solutions" for childhood problems, many of which may be socially created, may have widespread consequences for the future of our children. This talk explores whether the widespread medical treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders reflects an increase incidence of a neurological disorder in American children or an increased intolerance of childhood impulsivity. Professor Panksepp explores more natural ways to accommodate the ancient functions of the human brain - such as natural playful urges - with the educational expectations of society, suggesting proposals for alternative policies that might be pursued without resort to the use of mind-altering drugs.

Jaak Panksepp is a Distinguished Research Professor in the Department of Psychology and an Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry, Medical College of Ohio at Toledo. His work during the past two decades has focused on the nature of emotional processes in the brain and relations to physical disorders. Some of his findings have been translated into a new therapy for the treatment of early childhood autism. His current work is devoted to understanding the play mechanisms of the brain, especially how they relate to childhood/societal disorders such as ADHD. He is the author of over 200 scientific articles, and is editor of the series *Advances in Biological Psychiatry*, and a text entitled *Affective Neuroscience: The Foundations of Human and Animal Emotions* (Oxford University Press, 1998).



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