

By Susan J. Negus, Ph.D

**Addiction: The Hidden Epidemic** by Pam Killeen (ISBN 978-1-4535-0373-7; Xlibris, [www.Xlibris.com](http://www.Xlibris.com), [Orders@Xlibris.com](mailto:Orders@Xlibris.com); hardback, paperback & ebook, 399 pages; \$11.99-\$32.99)

Warning: A “perfect storm” is currently raging through society. Not only do we have more things to become addicted to, we are also feeling so lousy that an increasing number of us will gravitate to addictions in order to help make ourselves feel better.

As I began reading *Addiction: The Hidden Epidemic*, I suddenly realized how serious our addiction epidemic really is. I always believed that our major health problems were cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. Little did I realize that substance abuse is, in fact, our main health problem. There are more deaths and disabilities from substance abuse than from any other cause. Substance abuse costs our economy over \$500 billion annually.

Like many people, I turned a blind eye to substance abuse and classified addiction as a dysfunction that only happens to people who are morally weak. Thanks to this book, I understand that there’s much, much more behind the causes of addiction. Rather than judge people who are suffering from addiction, I now understand that they are physically ill with blood sugar, thyroid, adrenal problems, neurotransmitter deficits, heavy metals, and malnutrition. Not only has this revelation helped me understand addiction, it could help society as a whole.

*Addiction: The Hidden Epidemic* provides insights into the biochemical imbalances that contribute to addiction. Author Pam Killeen also provides a wealth of resources to help guide people to rehab centers that acknowledge the important connection between food and mood. These centers have an 80% recovery rate – as opposed to conventional rehab centers that have about an 80% *failure* rate.

I’ve had friends go to rehab several times over – only to relapse every time. It’s heartbreaking to watch them self-destruct. Even if they do abstain from using their substance or activity of choice, they still feel terrible and take on other addictions as a substitute for the one they’ve given up. Now, it is easy to understand the reasons behind this vicious cycle of addiction.

With hundreds of thousands of food items to choose from in the grocery store, one would think that we would be well-nourished. But we’re not. Millions of us are deficient in some key nutrients that help support our brain. Brain starvation is contributing to a host of mood disorders, including depression (the leading cause of disability in North America and one of the main risk factors for developing addiction). Pharmaceutical


drugs and talk therapy cannot override nutritional deficiencies. So the mainstream options available to treat depression have limited, if any, success in helping people overcome this very crippling disability. Ms. Killeen points out that we should be doing much more to both prevent and cure this illness. We talk about preventing cancer. Why not talk more about preventing depression? After all, rates of depression are expected to get worse. By 2020, depression will be the second leading cause of disability in the World.

In the second half of her book, Ms. Killeen interviews a variety of experts who share their insights into addiction, including the ever-important food-mood connection. I was delighted to read one of the last interviews with a pioneer in nutritional psychiatry, Dr. Abram Hoffer, prior to his passing last year.

One of society’s newest and most dangerous addictions is to prescription and over-the-counter medications. In Ms. Killeen’s compelling interview with John Abramson, M.D., author of *Overdosed America*, he warns readers about the dangers of over-prescribing dangerous and ineffective pharmaceutical drugs. He urgently states, “There’s no time to waste. We’re in a crisis. We have an obligation to speak out. . . . If not, our health will deteriorate.” He’s right. The more we’ve been spending on health care, the sicker we’ve become. We spend billions on drugs that either do not work, are addictive, or are even fatal. With

over half of all Americans taking at least one prescription drug, we need to pay attention to Dr. Abramson’s warning.

In Aldous Huxley’s novel, *Brave New World*, social control is achieved using a drug called *soma*. There is no question that Huxley foreshadowed the pervasive drug culture we live in today. Just how much worse do things have to get before society finally says “no” to drugs? For the sake of future generations, there really is no time to waste. We simply must take the solutions proposed in this book seriously so that we can not only reduce current addiction rates but prevent addiction from happening in the first place.

*Addiction: The Hidden Epidemic* by Pam Killeen is available at Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com. For more information about the book, you can visit [www.addictionthehiddenepidemic.net](http://www.addictionthehiddenepidemic.net). 

Susan J. Negus, Ph.D graduated from the University of Southern California with a degree in business and finance. She is a member of the NHF Board of Governors, its treasurer, and the NHF International Coordinator. Susan has been active many years in the natural-foods community and is co-founder and co-owner of Dreamous Corporation ([www.dreamous.com](http://www.dreamous.com)).

