

# Alcoholism Research Agency Names New Director

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## *Science:*

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced yesterday that it has tapped neurobiologist George Koob of the Scripps Research Institute in San Diego, California, to direct the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), starting January 2014. The move signals the end of a long period of limbo for the agency, which has operated under an acting director for several years while NIH deliberated on whether to merge the agency with the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

“We are delighted with his appointment and how this reflects the breadth of what research into alcohol abuse and alcoholism means—to NIH, yes, but even more so for the importance of it for our nation’s public health,” says Alan Kraut, executive director of the Association for Psychological Science. Although APS was “open” to the idea of merging the two agencies, Kraut says that Koob, an expert in alcoholism who also specializes more generally in the neurobiology of addiction, will bring “exactly the right perspective, acknowledging that barriers between substantive areas of science are becoming fewer and fewer these days.’ ” Both alcohol researchers at NIAAA, who feared that their work would be subsumed by NIDA’s broader focus if the two agencies were joined, and researchers and administrators who hoped that such a marriage would foster more efficient and coordinated research are likely to be pleased by the selection, Kraut predicts.

Read the whole story: [Science](#)