

Beyond dopamine: The science behind how and why the brain works to make us happy

[Dopamine is] one of the many, many chemicals (aka neurotransmitters) found in the human brain, where it has many [functions](#). However, if you were to go solely by the context in which dopamine is mentioned in much of modern culture, you'd be forgiven for concluding that it has just one fundamental, very specific, function in the human brain – producing happiness and pleasure.

...

There's a wealth of evidence to demonstrate that simply 'boosting your dopamine' doesn't automatically result in happiness. And it comes via research into Parkinson's disease.

...

The go-to therapy for Parkinson's disease is the drug levodopa, which masks the symptoms of Parkinson's by increasing the availability of dopamine in the brain... If increasing dopamine levels in the brain automatically led to pleasure and happiness, then levodopa should be one of the most popular recreational drugs in history. But that's not the case at all.

Follow the latest news and policy debates on sustainable agriculture, biomedicine, and other 'disruptive' innovations. Subscribe to our newsletter.

[SIGN UP](#)

You could say that dopamine is to happiness what petrol is to a car; it's an integral part of making it work, but if you were to literally fill your car with petrol, to the point where it's leaking out the windows, that wouldn't help anyone.

[Read the original post](#)