

# Biography of Dr. Nora Volkow



Nora D. Volkow, M.D., became Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) at the National Institutes of Health in May 2003. NIDA supports most of the world's research on the health aspects of drug abuse and addiction.

Dr. Volkow's work has been instrumental in demonstrating that drug addiction is a disease of the human brain. As a research psychiatrist and scientist, Dr. Volkow pioneered the use of brain imaging to investigate the toxic effects and addictive properties of abusable drugs. Her studies have documented changes in the dopamine system affecting, among others, the functions of frontal brain regions involved with motivation, drive, and pleasure in addiction. She has also made important contributions to the neurobiology of obesity, ADHD, and aging.

Dr. Volkow was born in Mexico, attended the Modern American School, and earned her medical degree from the National University of Mexico in Mexico City, where she received the *Robins* award for best medical student of her generation. Her psychiatric residency was at New York University, where she earned the *Laughlin Fellowship Award* as one of the 10 Outstanding Psychiatric Residents in the USA.

Dr. Volkow spent most of her professional career at the Department of Energy's Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) in Upton, New York, where she held several leadership positions including Director of Nuclear Medicine, Chairman of the Medical Department, and Associate Director for Life Sciences. In addition, Dr. Volkow was a Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Associate Dean of the Medical School at the State University of New York (SUNY)-Stony Brook.

Dr. Volkow has published more than 600 peer-reviewed articles and written more than 95 book chapters and non-peer-reviewed manuscripts, and has also edited three books on neuroimaging for mental and addictive disorders.

During her professional career, Dr. Volkow has been the recipient of multiple awards. In 2013, she was a Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal (Sammies) finalist; and she was inducted into the Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) Hall of Fame. She was elected to membership in the Institute of Medicine in the National Academy of Sciences and received the International Prize from the French Institute of Health and Medical Research for her pioneering work in brain imaging and addiction science. She has been named one of *Time* magazine's "Top 100 People Who Shape Our World," "One of the 20 People to Watch" by *Newsweek* magazine, *Washingtonian* magazine's "100 Most Powerful Women" and "Innovator of the Year" by *U.S. News & World Report*. Dr. Volkow was the subject of a [2012 profile piece by CBS's 60 Minutes](#) and was a [featured speaker at TEDMED 2014](#).