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CONTROLLING LOVE

*The Ethics and Desirability of Using
'Love Drugs'*

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Controlling Love

The Ethics and Desirability of Using 'Love Drugs'

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Abstract: Recent research in neurochemistry has shown there to be a number of chemical compounds that are implicated in the patterns of lust, attraction, and attachment that undergird romantic love. For example, there is evidence that the phenomenon of attachment is associated with the action of oxytocin and vasopressin. There is therefore some reason to suppose that patterns of lust, attraction, and attachment could be regulated via manipulation of these substances in the brain: in other words, by their use as 'love drugs'. A growing bioethical literature asks searching questions about this prospect, and especially about the use of such drugs to enhance or reignite attachment in flagging relationships. This Element examines some of the central arguments on the topic and sounds a note of caution. It urges that there are reasons to think the states of attachment produced or facilitated by the use of such drugs would not be desirable.

Keywords: love drugs, authenticity, neuroethics, oxytocin, love

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	The Core Argument for the Use of Love Drugs	8
3	The Relationship between Romantic Love and Biology: Avoiding Reductionism	11
4	The Influence of Endomimetic Love Drugs: The Productive Account and the Facilitative Account	22
5	The Object of Love and the Object of the Use of Love Drugs	28
6	In Search of True Love: The Issue of Authenticity	39
	Notes	55
	References	58