

Frequency of drug Addiction in youth: A case study from Hyderabad region, Pakistan

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Objective: To assess the frequency of drug addiction amongst youth residing in Hyderabad, Pakistan and to explore the types and causes of drug addiction in study population.

Methodology: This descriptive observational study was carried out from March 9, to August 20, 2018 and included 120 young adults who were directly or indirectly involved in drug abuse/misuse. Random sampling method was used. A modified questionnaire was used to collect demographic information, types and frequency, causes of drug abuse and awareness about drug addiction harms. Data analysis was done by SPSS version 21.

Results: The participants between age 15-20 years were 70% harmed by drug abuse; most

affected people were uneducated (38.3%) and unmarried (76.6%). Most of the students (41.6%) were involved in drug addiction. Mostly, 73.34% participants were involved in different types of drug addiction in which 25% used alcohol. Remaining 14.99% were involved in cigarette smoking and 11.66% were addicted to chewing tobacco, gutka and niswar. Possible causes of drug addiction were drug dependence in 15% and 55% were not aware about drug addiction.

Conclusion: It was concluded that drug dependence is the major factor that leads to drug abuse. (Rawal Med J 202;45:318-322).

Keywords: Drug addiction, drug abuse, drug dependence, psychological dependence, adolescence.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the significant issue of youth in our society is the drug addiction/abuse. Any one in the age of 15 to 29 years is recognized as youth.¹ The survey based on Drug use in Pakistan showed that 7.6 million peoples were drug addicts and every year there is a addition of 40000 drug addicts.² Increasing number of heroin addicts are under the age of 24 and suffer from psychological stress and low confidence level.³

Cannabis is the top listed drug used in Pakistan, with 4 million abusers. Afghanistan is responsible for 75 percent of the world's total supply and production of heroin.² Other drugs used are alcohol, cocaine, stimulants, lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), mescaline, tranquilizers, narcotics, pain killers, phencyclidine (PCP), sniff gases or fumes.⁴ Drug addiction starts from substances like gutka, niswar, tobacco and then gradually moved to drugs that produce high physical/psychological dependence like heroin, cocaine, hypnotics, sedatives and

opium.⁵

A study from Iran reported four factors that affected tendency of drug abuse were the family factor, social factor, environmental factor and personal factor, environmental factor being the most significant.⁶ The factors responsible are the combination of the social and environmental influences, ignorance of the family members, illiteracy, unemployed ignored by community and failures.⁷ Age and gender are also influential factors on mental health and illness.⁸ The aim of present study was to identify the demographic parameters, types and reasons of drug addiction among adolescents of Hyderabad, Pakistan.

METHODOLOGY

The observational study was conducted by visiting Universities' hostels situated in Jamshoro, streets of Hyderabad city and shrines situated in various areas of Hyderabad. The study used random sampling method and was conducted from March 9, to August

20, 2018. A pre-designed questionnaire collected demographic parameters, types and frequency of drug abuse, causes of addiction and knowledge about demerits of drug addiction.

All young adults between age 15-29 were included in this study. Beyond the upper mentioned age limits and who refused to participate were excluded in this study. The questionnaires were filled by researchers through the direct observation and interview.⁴ An Informed consent was taken from each participant and study was approved by university officials. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 21.

RESULTS

Out of 120 young adults, 84(70%) were between age 15-20 years. The significant portions of participants were uneducated 46(38.3%) and primary pass 36(30%), also 92 (76.6%) person were unmarried. Majority were students 50(41.6%) followed by 42(35%) lived in their homes, in streets 18(15%) and in shrines 10(8.3%) (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic parameters (N=120).

Age	Frequency (%)
15-20 years	84 (70%)
21-23 years	36 (30%)
24-29 years	0
Educational level	
Primary	36 (30%)
Secondary	22 (18.3%)
Higher	16 (13.3%)
Uneducated	46 (38.3%)
Marital status	
Unmarried	92 (76.6%)
Married	28 (23.3%)
Place of residence	
Home	42 (35%)
Hostel	50 (41.6%)
Street	18 (15%)
Shrine	10 (8.33%)
Parents marital status	
Married	26 (23.3%)
Single parent	38 (31.6%)
Divorced	56 (46.6%)

Table 2. Types and frequency of drug addiction (N=120).

Types of drug addiction	0 times/week	1-2 times/week	3-9 times/week	10-20 times/week	>than 20 times/week	Total
Alcohol	-	06	13	06	05	30 (25%)
Cocaine/crack	-	05	03	-	-	8 (6.66%)
Marijuana/pot	-	01	02	07	02	12 (10%)
Stimulant/uppers	-	-	03	03	-	06 (5%)
Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD)/ Mescaline	-	02	-	-	-	2 (1.66%)
Tranquilizers	-	01	03	-	-	4 (3.33%)
Pain Killer	-	02	02	-	-	4 (3.33%)
Heroin /opiates	-	02	03	01	-	6 (5%)
Phencyclidine (PCP)	-	01	02	03	-	6 (5%)
Sniff gases or fumes	-	-	-	02	06	8 (6.7%)
Others	-	-	01	01	-	2 (1.66%)
Smoke cigarettes less than 5/day	-	-	-	-	-	4 (3.33%)
Smoke cigarettes 5/day	-	-	-	-	-	4 (3.33%)
Smoke cigarettes More than 5/day	-	-	-	-	-	10 (8.33%)
Pan, beetle nut, tobacco by chewing	-	-	2 times/day	4times/day	2 /day	8 (6.7%)
Gutka,puriya	-	-	-	3times/day	1 /day	4 (3.3%)
Niswar	-	-	-	-	2 /day	2 (1.66%)

Table 3. Possible causes of drug addiction (N=120).

Causes of Drug Addiction	Frequency (%)
Anger control problem	10 (8.33%)
Emotional distress	16 (13.33%)
Low self esteem	10 (8.33%)
Lack of communication	10 (8.33%)
Influence from media	10 (8.33%)
Coping skills	08 (6.6%)
Drug with drawl	14 (11.6%)
Drug over dosage	08 (6.6%)
Drug dependence	18 (15%)
Gender & ethnicity	06 (5%)
Low socioeconomic status	10 (8.33%)
Total	120 (100%)

Table 4. Cognizance about merits and demerits of drug addiction (N=120).

Awareness about drug addiction	Frequency (%)
Fully aware	22 (18.3%)
Somewhat aware	32 (26.6%)
Not at all	66 (55%)
Total	120 (100%)

We have found 88(73.34%) participants were involved in drug addiction. Alcohol was used by 30(25%), followed by marijuana/pot, cocaine/crack and sniff gases or fumes (Table 2). Possible causes for addiction were drug dependence, followed by emotional distress and drug withdrawal symptoms, anger control problem and low self-esteem (Table 3). Majority (55%) were not aware about drug addiction followed by 26.6% who had some idea about demerits of drug addiction (Table 4).

DISCUSSION

A study reported 26% drug users between ages 14-25 years.⁹ Significant portion (39%) drug addicts were uneducated and 53.8% who injected drug were uneducated. This shows considerably high difference from our findings.¹⁰ In our study, 77% participants were unmarried as compared to a study where 52% drug users were unmarried.⁹ Our 8% participants lived on mazaar, however, another study from Hyderabad and Sukkur reported that 41.5% of IDU's lived on mazaar.⁹ That was quite higher from our findings. 46% of addicted persons' parents were divorced followed by 32% living as

single parent. A report reported that parents' divorce badly affects the children mental and emotional health.¹¹

In our study, 25% participants used alcohol 10% used marijuana/pot. This is much less than a study from Karachi which reported 37.9% and 7.8% abused alcohol and marijuana.¹² The use of cocaine/crack was in 6.66%. Deaths from cocaine in 2008 were 1022 followed by 169 in 2013 and 247 in 2014 in U.K.¹³ Stimulant/upper were used by 5%, similar to another study.¹⁴ revealed LSD was used by 1.66%, lesser than reported 4.2% reported from Europe.¹⁵

Tranquilizers were used by 3.33%, which much is less than US where 1 in 5 teenager abused them.¹⁶ Painkillers abuse was 3.33%, compared with 50% of heroin users misusing them in US.¹⁷ Our study found that 5% participants used heroin, that is lesser than reported by another study.¹⁸ Phencyclidine use was seen in 5% compared to a US study showing 2.4% people aged >12 years used it.¹⁹

Sniff gases or fumes of petroleum or gasoline were used by 6.7% participants.. That is slightly less than 10% of total population and 25% children 5-15 years using them a report.²⁰ Around 8.33% smoked more than 5 cigarettes/day. Smoking cigarette can lead to ischemic heart disease and lung cancer,²¹ and smokeless tobacco can cause oral cancer, as it contains about 28 carcinogenic agents.²²

The common cause of addiction was drug dependence in 15%, followed by emotional distress in 13.3% and drug withdrawal in 11.6%. There is relationship between childhood socioeconomic status and drug abuse in life.²³ Another study reported that 80% poly-substance abusers started due to company of peers and curiosity.²⁴ That was found higher number in our study. It was found that 55% participants were unaware about the demerits of drug addiction as compared to a study which identified 48% participants were unaware about drug addiction.⁹

CONCLUSION

Young students were mostly affected to the drug addiction. The most common causes were drug dependence and emotional distress. Majority of the participants were unaware about the demerits of

drug addiction. Special training and awareness program should be organized to educate masses about hazards of drug addiction. Government policy makers should pay special attention towards this matter and disrupt the supply of substances used for abuse.

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