



AWARENESS ABOUT THE CAUSE AND EFFECTS OF DRUG USE AMONG NURSING STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Over the last few decades, drug consumption has become one of the biggest problems affecting millions of children and youth in the country. Students who abuse substances lose interest in activities such as changing their eating or sleeping habits, reducing their interaction with others, making dramatic changes in their studies, and getting into trouble with school officials or legal trouble, all of which affect the emotional and psychological aspects of addicts and their parents. The present study was conducted in Mangalore, which is one such city known for its quality education. There are eight medical colleges and other professional courses, and now it seems to have become a place where, just dialling a number or sending an SMS, one can receive a drug at his doorstep. As per the report, drug abuse has increased following the start of offline classes. The drugs were supplied to the rooms of medical, management, hotel management, nursing and engineering students' rooms through online food deliveries. The present cross-sectional study attempts to yield the responses of 115 nursing students, selected through a purposive sampling technique, and a questionnaire was used to obtain data. The girls (70.47%) represent the highest number, while 69.6 per cent of the respondents are pursuing their BSc nursing and most of them fall under the age group of 18 years (52.20%). According to the findings, curiosity is the major reason for substance use among adolescents (83.50%), whereas 60 per cent of them said failure in the relationship can cause substance use. Further, 61.7 per cent of them believed that substance use can lead to a chemical imbalance, while 79.10 per cent of them were unaware that addiction causes dementia. Educating the youth can reduce the adverse health, social, and economic consequences of drugs among adolescents.

KEYWORDS : Adolescent, Alcoholism, Drugs & Substance use**INTRODUCTION**

Despite the positive outcome of substance use, there have always been people who could not restrict their use of mind and body-altering substances to culturally prescribed limits and who have fallen into the trap known as addicts today (Dombeck, n.d.). Regardless of age, race, or background, some people from all lifestyles can experience problems with their drug use. Out of curiosity, some of them experiment with recreational drugs, either because their friends are doing it or to ease problems such as stress, anxiety, or depression. However, it is not just illegal drugs, such as cocaine or heroin, that can lead to abuse and addiction, prescription drugs such as painkillers, sleeping pills, and tranquilizers also cause addiction (Robinson, Smith, and Segal, 2019). Drug use refers to the harmful use of psychoactive substances, including Alcohol, Opiates, Cocaine, Amphetamines, and Hallucinogens, that can cause significant health, economic, and social problems for the people who use them and their families and communities as a whole (Chandra, 2017). Substance use is characterised by a strong desire to take the drug, difficulties in controlling its use, increased tolerance, persisting in its use despite harmful consequences, and giving the drug a higher priority, which can lead to dependence syndrome (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2016).

Drug Use Among Adolescents

Over the last few decades, drug consumption has become one of the biggest problems affecting millions of children and youth worldwide. India too is caught in this vicious circle of drug abuse, with the number of drug addicts growing by the day and the epidemic of substance abuse among the younger generation reaching alarming proportions (DARA, 2018). Various factors such as changing cultural values, increasing economic stress, and dwindling supportive bonds are the leading causes of substance abuse among adolescents (Sharma, et al., 2017). In India, besides alcohol and tobacco, cannabis, opium, heroin, and hashish are the most commonly used drugs, mainly among young and predominantly males. The factors that contribute to addiction among adolescents include the desire for new experiences, an attempt to deal with problems or perform better in school, simple peer pressure, and the desire to carve out their own identity (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2016). Drug availability and an unhealthy family environment, such as violence, physical or emotional abuse, mental illness, or drug use in the household, can increase the likelihood of using drugs. Even adolescents' inherited genetic vulnerability, personality traits such as poor impulse control or a high need for excitement; mental health problems like Depression, Anxiety, or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and wrong notions about

drug consumption can make it more likely that an adolescent will use drugs. Trying drugs, on the other hand, may satisfy normal developmental desires in an unhealthy way that can have serious long-term consequences for adolescents (Sussman, Skara, and Ames, 2008).

Need For The Study

Adolescence is a time for experimentation and risk-taking, and substance use experiments are common during this time. The consequences of drug use are often multifaceted and not only affect health, education, and occupational careers but also incur a huge financial and social burden on society. Children and Adolescents experiment with drugs for fun in the company of friends in the beginning, and later they get addicted to them (Goswami, 2015). According to the study, in India, 13.1 per cent of the people involved in substance abuse are under 20 years old, and 63.6 per cent of the drug users seeking treatment were introduced to drugs at a young age (15 years). In recent years, drug use has begun much earlier in life, and drug use has been steadily declining across the country (Jiloha, 2017). The most commonly abused drugs by Indian children and adolescents are alcohol and tobacco, both of which are gateway drugs for use and addiction. It is estimated that by the time children reach the ninth grade, about 50 per cent of them have tried at least one of the gateway drugs, and every day, 55,000 children in the country abuse tobacco, hail from low socioeconomic strata, and are often victimised by deprivation and discrimination (Daniel, Krishnan, and John, 2017).

The present study was conducted in Mangalore, which is one such city known for its quality education. There are eight medical colleges and other professional courses, and now it seems to have become a place where, just dialling a number or sending an SMS, one can receive a drug at his doorstep. As per the report, drug abuse has increased following the start of offline classes. The drugs were supplied to the rooms of medical, management, hotel management, nursing and engineering students' rooms through online food deliveries. The present study attempts to shed light on students' awareness of the causes and effects of drug use.

Objectives

- To understand the demographic details of the Nursing Students;
- Find out the awareness about the causes of drug use among Nursing Students;
- Elucidate the participants' views about the effects of drug use on health.

Methodology

The universe of the study is confined to selected colleges in Mangalore Taluk, Dakshina Kannada district. The cross-sectional study attempts to yield the responses of 115 Nursing students about the causes and health effects of drug use. The participants were selected through a purposive sampling technique, and a questionnaire was used to obtain data. Self-prepared, semi-structured questions were prepared to find out the awareness among respondents about the causes and consequences of drug abuse.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

1. Demographic Details: The respondents' demographic variables, such as age, gender, place of stay, type of family, parent's education and income, and branch of the study, were collected through the self-prepared semi-structured tool.

Table No. 1 Demographic Details of the Respondents

Sl.No	Variables	Particulars	Frequency N=115	Percentage
1	Age	17 years	27	23.47
		18 years	60	52.18
		19 years	24	20.87
		20 years	4	03.48
2	Gender	Boys	34	29.56
		Girls	81	70.47
3	Branch of Study	BSc Nursing	80	69.6
		General Nursing	35	30.4
4	Place of Stay	Hostel	87	75.7
		Paying Guest	14	12.2
		Staying with relatives	5	4.3
		Home	9	7.8
5	Type of Family	Joint family	19	16.5
		Nuclear Family	78	67.8
		Extended family	18	15.7
6	Father's Occupation	Illiterate	2	1.7
		Primary/Secondary	43	37.4
		PUC	40	34.8
		Graduation	25	21.7
		Post-Graduation	3	2.6
		Technical Education	2	1.7
7	Mother's Occupation	Illiterate	3	2.6
		Primary/Secondary	33	28.7
		PUC	47	40.9
		Graduation	25	21.7
		Post-Graduation	7	6.1
8	Father's Occupation	Unemployed	6	5.2
		Agriculture	33	28.7
		Self Employed	49	42.6
		Private Employee	24	20.9
		Government Employee	3	2.6
9	Mother's Occupation	Unemployed	62	53.9
		Agriculture	17	14.8
		Self Employed	18	15.7
		Private Employee	17	14.8
		Government employee	1	.9

The demographic details of the respondents show that the majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 18 years (52.2 per cent); female participants (70.41 per cent) were found in greater numbers. The majority of respondents (69.6 per cent) opted for the BSc Nursing course, 75.7 per cent of the respondents stay in hostels, and 67.8 per cent belong to Nuclear families. Both boys and girls put their lives at risk by abusing drugs and alcohol. However, a recent study showed that even girls abuse substances as often as boys do. As per the report from NIDA (2020), in the year 2019, 19.5 million females (15.4 per cent) ages 18 or older have used drugs, including marijuana.

2. Awareness Of The Respondents About The Causes Of Drug Use

In order to find out the awareness, the variables such as curiosity, academic pressure, seeking pleasure, failure in relationships, peer group pressure, family conflict, health issues, problems with personality, low self-esteem, and matters of prestige were included.

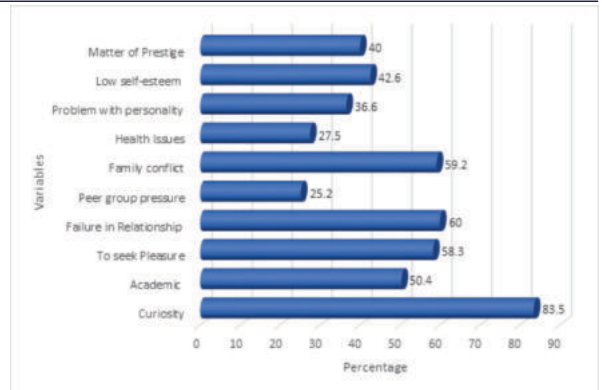


Figure No. 1 Awareness Of The Respondents About The Causes Of Drug Use

According to the data, 83.5 per cent of respondents believe that people of the younger generation abuse substances out of curiosity, 50.4 per cent believe it is due to academic pressure, 60 per cent believe it is due to family pressure, 59.2 per cent believe it is due to family conflict, 58.3 for pleasure, while 25.2 per cent consider peer group pressure is the cause for substance use among teenagers.

It can be noticed from the results that the respondents were unaware that certain areas, such as low self-esteem, personality issues, and peer group pressure can cause substance among adolescents. As mentioned by Alavi (2011), self-esteem plays a meaningful role in the individual's tendency to addiction, where those who have poor self-esteem tend to develop addictive behaviours compared to those who have better self-esteem. Even certain personality traits such as impulsive, risky, or thrill-seeking behaviour; dishonesty or a pattern of manipulating others, low tolerance, anxiety and dependent personality; and anti-social personality traits make people prone to abuse drugs (Hinders, 2017).

3. Views About The Effects Of Drug Use On Health

The variables such as Chemical Imbalance, Liver Cirrhosis, Heart attack, Renal failure, Dementia, Hallucination, Delusion, Suicidal Behaviour and HIV/AIDS were used to identify the views about the effects of drug use.

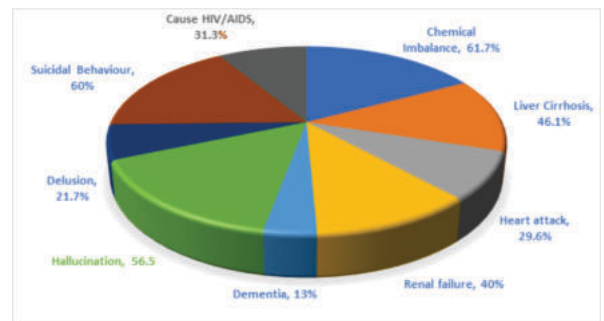


Figure No. 2: Views About The Effects Of Drug Use On Health

The result shows that 61.7 per cent thought that addiction to drugs leads to a chemical imbalance in the brain and only 46.1 per cent of them opined that it could cause liver cirrhosis. The respondents lack knowledge in the major areas such as heavy consumption of drugs leading to heart-related disease (29.6 per cent), renal failure (40 per cent), Dementia (13 per cent), Delusion (21.7 per cent) and HIV/AIDS (31.3 per cent).

Unfortunately, most of the time drug-related injuries or death takes place due to ignorance. The adolescent may not be mature enough to understand the severity and consequences of the ill effects of drug use, due to which they had to lose their life (Hart, 2017).

People addicted to the drug have more chances to develop Delusions which most of the respondents were unaware. According to American Addiction Centre (2019), various mind-altering substances can cause a person to develop various health problems and someone suffering from a delusional disorder may turn to drugs or alcohol to get away from the symptoms, which may serve to make them worse instead.

The study also denotes that, the respondents were unaware that, people who are addicted to the drug are likely to acquire HIV/ AIDS. People who abuse drugs put themselves at risk for contracting or transmitting viral infections such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), or hepatitis (NIDA, 2019).

Recommendations

Education about the effects of drug use can help adolescents to understand what drug abuse is; the warning signs of addiction; how alcohol and specific drugs affect the mind and body of an individual; family, relationships, and other areas of functioning. There is a need for imparting information on how to deal with a family member who is addicted to drugs or alcohol, as well as how to be supportive during the treatment process. Since adolescents spend the major part of their day in school, school personnel such as teachers and counsellors play a highly influential role in the life of an adolescent. Therefore, there is a need for educating these stockholders about the causes and consequences of drug use. It is more important for schools and colleges to be concerned with drug demand reduction, drug supply reduction, and mitigating the health and social consequences of drug use, with a major focus on demand reduction. Even parents and siblings of adolescents must be educated in order to detect and mitigate drug-related behaviour early on.

CONCLUSION

The prevalence of drug use among adolescents suggests that prevention and intervention efforts specifically geared toward young people are critical, and specific trends in alcohol or drug use vary a great deal among adolescents over time. Several clinical and school-based evidence-based treatment and prevention efforts are effective in reducing adolescent substance use. Parents and role models who consistently establish healthy social norms regarding alcohol and drug use throughout childhood and adolescence set the strongest foundation for preventing unhealthy substance use behaviours later in life.

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