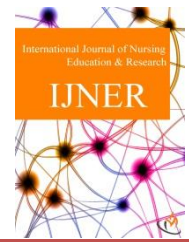




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AWARENESS AND PREVENTION OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

Background: Substance abuse is one of the major health challenges across the globe. Adolescents are among the most affected. This study aims to examine the reasons for initiation, maintenance of harmful use of substances and abstinence among adolescents and young adults by comparing the users and non-users. **Objectives:** To study the prevalence and pattern of substance use among adolescents and young adults and create awareness and prevention of substance abuse. **Conclusion:** The processes of industrialization, urbanization and migration have led to loosening of the traditional methods of social control rendering an individual vulnerable to the stresses and strains of modern life and the factors related to a child's socialization outside the family may also increase risk of drug abuse. But effective implementation of Plans on preventing substance abuse, role of parents, Teachers, Society, media and nurses in spreading awareness of health and other hazards substance abuse among adolescents helps in preventing substance abuse.

INTRODUCTION

Substance use refers to the use of any psychoactive substances or drugs, which include licit and illicit drugs, other than which are medically indicated. Psychoactive substance use poses a threat to the health and social and economic fabric of families, communities and nations [1].

Adolescence is the period where the person's future starts to take real shape. In childhood we mainly stress on understanding the surrounding and imparting the knowledge of what is good or bad for him or her apart from basic education and moral science. It is the period where one starts recognizing himself or herself as a self identity and thinks about one's place in family and society and acts thereupon to establish his own identity apart from various physical and hormonal changes during the period. They are subjected to a lot of mental stress and behavioral

modifications in order to overcome these mal adjustment and lack proper guidance and supervision they turn towards bad habits such as substance use.

Substance abuse among adolescents has become a global challenge and also an important public health concern and for the past two decades there has been a dramatic increase in the demand for interventions to address the substance abuse problem. This demand has led to the development of multiple primary, secondary and tertiary substance abuse prevention programmes. June 26, 1992 was declared by WHO as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. In addition, the years 1991-2000 were designated as the United Nations Decade against abuse [2].

According to WHO Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Psychoactive substance use can lead to tolerance and dependence syndrome - a cluster of behavioral, cognitive, and physiological phenomena that develop after repeated substance use and that typically include a strong desire to take the drugs

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People abuse substances such as drugs, alcohol, and tobacco for varied and complicated reasons, but it is clear that our society pays a significant cost. The toll for this abuse can be seen in our hospitals and emergency departments through direct damage to health by substance abuse and its link to physical trauma. Jails and prisons tally daily the strong connection between crime and drug dependence and abuse. Although use of some drugs such as cocaine has declined, use of other drugs such as heroin and "club drugs" has increased [3].

Types of commonly used psychotropic substance

- Alcohol
- Opioids
- Nicotine
- Cannabis
- Cocaine
- Amphetamines and other sympathomimetics
- Hallucinogens, Ex; LSD, Phencyclidine
- Sedative and Hypnotics, Ex: Barbiturates Inhalant Ex: Volatile Solvents [4].

Causes and Risk Factors of Substance Abuse: -Use and abuse of substances such as cigarettes, alcohol, and illegal drugs may begin in childhood or the teen years. Certain risk factors may increase someone's likelihood of abusing substances.

Family history factors that influence a child's early development have been shown to be related to an increased risk of drug abuse, such as

- Chaotic home environment,
- Ineffective parenting,
- Lack of nurturing and parental attachment,
- Parental drug use or addiction
- ❖ Other risk factors for substance abuse are related to the substance abuse sufferer him- or herself, like
 - Male gender,
 - Childhood attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD),
 - History of anxiety or other mood disorders,
 - Conduct disorder or antisocial personality disorder.
- ❖ Factors related to a child's socialization outside the family may also increase risk of drug abuse, including
 - inappropriately aggressive or shy behavior in the classroom,
 - poor social coping skills,
 - poor school performance,
 - Association with a deviant peer group or isolating oneself from peers altogether,
 - Perception of approval of drug-use behavior [5].

The cause of drug abuse is not fully known but likely includes genetic predisposition, co-occurring conditions and

environmental circumstances. Drug use and experimentation is common in pre-adolescents and adolescents, but only a small percentage of those users will go on to abuse drugs.

1. **Genetics as a Cause of Drug Abuse;** While many people use drugs, only a small percentage abuse drugs, but it has been noted drug abuse often runs in families, suggesting genetics is one of the causes of drug abuse. While having parents that abuse drugs puts a child at risk, it is possible for the child to grow up without drug abuse problems. It is also possible to abuse drugs without having any other drug abuser in the family. It is clear genetics alone is not the cause of drug abuse.

2. **Peer Pressure:** Peer pressure is a powerful force at any age of life. It's especially influential during adolescent period which will contribute to initiation of substance use.

3. **To Look And Feel Like 'GROWN UP';**-Adolescents often want to be treated like adults. **"I'm not a kid anymore"** is a frequent mantra, it's no surprise that they're drawn to things that make them feel like an adult – older, more mature, more sophisticated. Drinking, smoking, and drug use can all boost that feeling; of look and feel like of **Grown Up**

4. **Modeling Parent Behavior;**-Teens that grow up with parents who have habit of substance abuse often follow the suit.

5. **Curiosity;**-The desire to try new thing and explore the world would lead to substance abuse.

6. **Boredom;**-It has said that idle hands are the devil's tool and idle mind is devil's play ground. The boredom can quickly get any one in to addiction.

7. **Urbanization;**-Modernization has its own negative effect by giving rise to circumstances which encourages substance.

8. **Self Medication;**-Teens who struggle with a lot of emotional pain are especially vulnerable to substance abuse. They use the drugs as self medication which turns into addiction.

9. **Rebellion;**-Those with nagging, over protective or strict parent often lash out in a passive aggressive manner, rather talking with parents about their frustration, strict rules, religious hypocrisy etc they may rebel by using substance use

10. **Ignorance;**-Ignorance of Parents and care taker and Faulty Attitude of Parents will also cause the substance use in adolescents'

11. **To Have Fun;**-The new adventure and for fun is common in teen which leads substance use in individuals

12. **They have addicted;**-Often the addicted the individual give the excuses that they are addicted to substance which cause the further deformity [6].



Effects and complications of substance abuse

1. **Substance Abuse is Detrimental to the Brain;**-The teenage years are vital to healthy cognitive function as an adult, so it is important to maintain a strict level of healthy behavior during these years. Drug abuse can impact the brain's ability to function in the short-term as well as prevent proper growth and development for later in life.

❖ Substance abuse affects teen brain development by:

- Interfering with neurotransmitters and damaging connections within the brain
- Reducing the ability to experience pleasure
- Creating problems with memory
- Causing missed opportunities during a period of heightened learning potential
- Ingraining expectations of unhealthy habits into brain circuitry
- Inhibiting development of perceptual abilities.

2. **Physical risks of teen substance abuse:** - Teens tend to be more likely than adults to binge drink and drug abuse (drinking enough or take large dose of drugs in a short amount of time to reach the legal blood alcohol and drugs content limit). Studies have also shown that the teen brain responds differently to alcohol and drugs than the adult brain does. People who begin drinking and using illicit drugs during adolescence, especially those who drink and take drugs a lot, are more likely to develop dependence syndrome than those who don't.

In addition to addiction risks, alcohol and illicit drugs poses a serious risk to the physical health and growth of teens. Studies have shown that excessive drinking and illicit drug abuse in teens can result in:

- Delayed puberty and/or negative effects on the reproductive system
- Lower bone mineral density
- Higher levels of liver enzymes that indicate liver damage
- Shorter limbs and reduced growth potential

3. Social and Professional Risks of Teen Substance Abuse

In addition to the physical risks of teen drinking and drug abuse, there are many other consequences that could haunt teens well into adulthood. Because substance abuse can muddy reasoning and encourage rash decisions, there are many side effects of substance abuse that go far beyond the biological and physiological aspects.

Some of these include:

- Criminal records that cannot be expunged
- Car accidents
- Assaults
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Unplanned pregnancies
- Wasted academic opportunities

- Late start in chosen career path
- Damaged relationships with friends and family.

4. Emotional effects of substance abuse include:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Memory loss
- Aggression
- Mood swings
- Paranoia [7, 8, 9].

Prevalence of substance abuse among adolescents

According to a study conducted among 256, randomly selected (by using random number tables) college going male students in Chandigarh, India, with the broad objective of studying substance use pattern among them. Prevalence of substance use was seen in 52.7% students who belonged to age group 19 to 21 years. Age was found to be significantly associated with substance abuse ($p=0.01$) [1]. Shown in fig.1

Age in years	Substance Abuse		Total	
	Yes	No	No. (%)	
16 – 18	03 (20.0)	12 (80.0)	15 (5.9)	$\chi^2 = 9.1$ ($p=0.01$)
19 – 21	81 (60.0)	54 (40.0)	135 (52.7)	
22 – 25	63 (59.4)	43 (40.6)	106 (41.4)	
Total	147 (57.4)	109 (42.6)	256 (100.0)	

Figure -1 .Substance Use by Age

Plans on preventing substance abuse

1. **Family based prevention programs;**-Prevention programs can strengthen protective factors among young children by teaching parents better family communication skills, appropriate discipline styles, firm and consistent rule enforcement, and other family management approaches. Research confirms the benefits of parents providing consistent rules and discipline, talking to children about drugs, monitoring their activities, getting to know their friends, understanding their problems and concerns, and being involved in their learning. The importance of the parent-child relationship continues through adolescence and beyond [10].

Role of Parent for Prevention Of Substance Abuse

❖ **Establish and maintain good communication with children.**

- Listen to children or teens concerns nonjudgmental. Repeat them to make clear that you understand. Don't preach.
- Be ready to talk to your children as early as the fourth grade, when they may first feel peer pressure to experiment



with alcohol, drugs, or cigarette

❖ **Get involved in your children's lives.**

- Support children's activities by attending special events, like recitals and games and praising them for their effort.
- Help children manage problem by asking what is wrong when they seem upset and letting them know you are there help.

❖ **Be a positive role model.**

- Demonstrate ways to solve problem have fun and manage stress without using alcohol or drugs.
- Point out examples of irresponsible behavior, such as ones you see in movies or hear in music
- Remember that you set the example. Avoid contradictions between your words and your actions. Use alcohol in moderation, don't smoke cigarettes, and never use drugs

❖ **Talk to your children about drugs.**

- Short discussion goes a long way. Engage your children in a conversation. Ask what they know how they feel, and what they think about the issue.
- Educate yourself about alcohol, tobacco, and drug use before talking to your children. You will lose credibility if you don't have your facts right [11].

2. Community based prevention programs; -Prevention programs work at the community level with civic, religious, law enforcement, and other government organizations to enhance anti-drug norms and pro-social behaviors. Many programs help with prevention efforts across settings to help send messages through school, work, religious institutions, and the media. Research has shown that programs that reach youth through multiple settings can remarkably influence community norms. Community-based programs also typically include development of policies or enforcement of regulations, mass media efforts, and community-wide awareness programs

3 School-based drug and alcohol prevention programs; - occur during the school day, or on school campuses. Because drug and alcohol use is highly influenced by the attitudes and perceived norms of peers, school-based approaches that are open to every student in the school are needed, in addition to approaches that target drug-using teens. School-based programs may include school-day, extended-day, or afterschool programs, may be delivered by school personnel or by community-based facilitators, and may be mandatory (like a health education class) or voluntary (like an elective or a drop in afterschool program).

- Effective approaches to school-based drug and alcohol prevention include teaching students how to resist peer influences, improving generic life skills, involving families,

and providing opportunities to become involved in positive experiences with others in the school and community [11].

❖ **Role Of Teachers In Prevention**

Teachers can also help develop and nurture the idea of school as a community. This creates a sense of belonging, attachment and protection for students, which counteracts tendencies towards abuse of drugs and other substances. The following actions teachers can take to turn a school into a community:

- Set clear classroom boundaries with clear rules and consequences
- Encourage a constructive use of time
- Foster an environment that encourages a commitment to learning
- Encourage reading for pleasure
- Praise student's achievements and accomplishments
- Acknowledge successes and abilities
- Model a sense of optimism and a positive view of learning
- Keep the channels of communication open
- Be a good listener
- Keep an open mind
- Ask students for opinions.
- Encourage participation in extracurricular activities [13].

❖ **Role of nurse**

- Nurses have an important role in Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral for Treatment (SBIRT) for alcohol use disorders and other substance abuse disorders [14].
- Encourage yoga, adopting a healthy lifestyle, and in personal activities and increasing self-awareness
- Helping the adolescents to cope with day to stress.
- Educating the adolescents coping skills to strengthen the individual's personal and social skills to increase the self-esteem and resistance to peer pressure
- Providing the information about the de-addiction center for de-addiction of substance abuse
- Concerning the clients and families having substance abuse to concerning welfare agencies.

❖ **Role of Media**

Introduction of social changes to affect the drinking pattern in the population as a whole. This is made possible by:

- Putting up the price of substance use products
- Controlling and abolishing the advertising of alcohol and other illicit drugs
- Restricting and abolishing the promotion of substance abusing products by the actor in films and advertisement

Conclusion

Prevalence of drugs and substance abuse among adolescents is high and cause significant problem in this



population, therefore there is necessity of targeted interventions to reduce this huge burden. In spite of being aware of the harmful effects of substance use, adolescents take up this habit. This requires comprehensive prevention

and control programs in community, targeted toward adolescents and their parents and other family members. Effective measures are required to encourage shaping the attitude of adolescent

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