

## Drug Dependence- A Curse to the Indian Society

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### ABSTRACT

Drug addiction is the curse to the Indian society. All the State and Union territory are affected but the condition is worst in Punjab. Statistics reveals that at least 25,426 people committed suicide due to drug and addiction related problem in last 10 years across India. This comes to an average seven suicides per day. Appalling truth is that suicide due to drug related problems exceeds dowry, poverty and money related suicides in India in most of the last 10 years. According to official data from the ministry of Social justice and empowerment, India has an estimated 3.4 million drug abuse victims. The number excludes alcoholics, who figure at around 11 million in the country. India is highly vulnerable because it is sandwiched between two infamous drug routes and poppy growing areas, namely the 'golden crescent' on the northwest and 'golden triangle' on the northeast where drugs is easily available. The Government undertakes remedial measure like Integrated Rehabilitation Centre for Addicts (IRCA) that provides counseling, treatment and rehabilitation services to drug abuse victims. But the numbers of IRCA are only 401, which is an average of overwhelming 8478 victims per IRCA. Out of these 3.4 million drug abuse victims, only 0.3 million have registered themselves in these addiction centers, which is just 10% of total figure. So the whole responsibility cannot be left on Government, so health care professional should come forward to fight addiction.

**Keywords** Drug<sup>1</sup>, Addiction<sup>2</sup>, Golden triangle<sup>3</sup>, Golden crescent<sup>4</sup>



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## INTRODUCTION

**Drug** is any substance, when taken into the body, may modify one or more body function. **Psychoactive drugs**<sup>5</sup> are an agent that is capable of altering the mental functioning of a person.

**Drug dependence**<sup>6</sup> is a compulsion to take drug to produce desired effect or to prevent unpleasant effects when the drug is not taken. Drug becomes necessary for physical or psychological well being. Drug dependence includes both drug addiction and drug habituation.

Drug habituation means desire to take but there is no compulsion; dependence is psychological not physical, dose of drug constant, withdrawal symptoms are none or mild and it harm only individual. While in drug addiction compulsion of drug, dependence is both physical and psychological, tendency to develop tolerance, withdrawal symptoms present and addiction is harmful for both individual and society. WHO has coined the term “drug dependence”<sup>7</sup> in place of drug addiction and drug habit. Tolerance<sup>8</sup> is the phenomena where repeated administration of the same

dose of the drug has decreasing effect of drug on the body.

Entry of drugs into the Indian market is another cause of grave concern. During the last four years (2011-2014) around 100 million kilograms of drug were seized across the India. Punjab and the northeastern states lead the pack of drug seizures. The types of drugs includes the following; Amphetamine, Cannabis plant, Cocaine, Ephedrine, Ganja, Heroin, Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD), Methylendioxy-N-Methylamphetamine (MDMA), Methamphetamine, Morphine, Opium, other manufactured drugs and other psychotropic substances.

## DRUG ADDICTION AND BRAIN

Addiction is a complex disorder characterized by compulsive drug use. While each drug produces different physical effects, but all abused substances share one thing in common that is repeated use can alter the way the brain looks and functions.

- Taking a recreational drug causes a surge in levels of dopamine in your brain, which trigger feelings of pleasure.

Your brain remembers these feelings and wants them repeated<sup>9</sup>.

- If you become addicted, the substance takes on the same significance as other survival behaviors, such as eating and drinking.
- Changes in your brain interfere with your ability to think clearly, exercise good judgment, control your behavior, and feel normal without drugs.
- The urge to use is so strong that your mind finds many ways to deny or rationalize the addiction. You may drastically underestimate the quantity of drugs you are taking, how much it impacts your life, and the level of control you have over your drug use.

### **SYMPTOMS OF DRUG ADDICTION**

Many people experiment with drug for many different reasons. Many first try drugs out of curiosity, to have a good time, because friends are doing it, in an effort to improve athletic performance, or to overcome problem, stress, anxiety, or depression. There is no specific level at which drug use moves from casual to problematic. Drug abuse and dependence is less about the amount of substance or frequency of consumption, and more to do with the consequences of drug use. No matter how

little or how often you are consuming, if your drug use is causing problem in your- at work, school, home, or in your relationships it means you are likely to have drug abuse or drug dependence problem.

Drug addiction symptoms or behaviors includes, among others:

- Feeling that you have to use the drug regularly — this can be daily or even several times a day
- Having intense urges for the drug
- Over time, needing more of the drug to get the same effect
- Making certain that you maintain a supply of the drug
- Spending money on the drug, even though you can't afford it
- Not meeting obligations and work responsibilities, or cutting back on social or recreational activities because of drug use
- Doing things to get the drug that you normally wouldn't do, such as stealing
- Driving or doing other risky activities when you're under the influence of the drug
- Focusing more and more time and energy on getting and using the drug
- Failing in your attempts to stop using the drug

- Experiencing withdrawal symptoms when you attempt to stop taking the drug

### **Recognizing drug abuse in family members**

- You are neglecting your responsibilities at school, work, or home because of your drug choice.
- Your drug is causing problem in your relationship with partner, family, friends, boss etc.
- You are using drugs under dangerous condition or taking risks while high, such as driving, using dirty needles etc.
- Your drug use is getting you into legal trouble, like arrest for disorderly conduct, driving under influence, stealing to support drug habit.
- Sudden request for money without a reasonable explanation or money is missing or has been stolen or that items have disappeared from home, indicating maybe they are sold to support drug use.

### **DIAGNOSIS OF DRUG ADDICTION**

Diagnosing drug addiction requires a thorough evaluation and often includes an assessment by a psychiatrist, a psychologist, and drug counselor. Blood, urine or other lab tests are used to assess drug use, but they're not a diagnostic test for addiction.

These tests may be used for monitoring treatment and recovery. For diagnosis of a drug addiction, most mental health professionals use criteria in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders<sup>10</sup> (DSM-IV), published by the American Psychiatric Association, to diagnose mental conditions. DSM-IV criteria for drug addiction include a behavior pattern of drug use that causes significant problems and distress, regardless of what drug is used.

You may have a substance use disorder if at least two of these issues occur within a 12-month period:

- You often take larger amounts of the drug over a longer period of time than you intended.
- You want to cut down or quit, but haven't been successful.
- You spend a good deal of time getting the drug, using the drug or recovering from the effects of the drug.
- You have intense urges for the drug that block out any other thoughts.
- You aren't meeting obligations and responsibilities because of your substance use.
- You keep using the drug, even though you know it's causing problems in your life.

- You give up or cut back important social, occupational or recreational activities because of your substance use.
- You use the substance in situations that may be unsafe, such as when driving or operating machinery.
- You use the substance even though you know it's causing you physical or psychological harm.
- You develop tolerance, which means that the drug has less and less affect on you and you need more of the drug to get the same effect.
- You have physical or psychological withdrawal symptoms when you stop taking the drug, or you take the drug (or a similar drug) to avoid withdrawal symptoms.

## 5 MYTHS ABOUT DRUG ADDICTION

1. **Overcoming addiction is a simply a matter of willpower.** You can stop using drugs if you really want to quit drug addiction. Prolong exposure alters the brain which makes it extremely difficult to quit drug by force.
2. **Addiction is a disease; there is nothing you can do about it.** Most experts agree that addiction is disease which can be treated and reversed through therapy, medication, exercise and other treatment.

3. **Addicts have to hit rock bottom before they can get better.** Recovery can begin at any point and the earlier is better.
4. **You cannot force someone into treatment; they have to want help.** People who pressured into treatment are just as likely to benefit as those who choose to enter treatment on their own.
5. **Treatment did not work before, so there is no point trying again.** Recovery is a long process and relapse doesn't means that treatment has failed, it is signal to get back to the treatment or changing the treatment approach.

## TREATMENT OF DRUG ADDICTION

An unfortunate fact about the treatment of drug is that it remains largely unutilized by most sufferers of this condition. The primary goals of drug addiction treatment are abstinence, relapse prevention, and rehabilitation. The treatment of drug addiction involves few basic steps:

- Deciding to make change
- Detoxification
- Counseling
- Learning healthy ways to cope stress
- Prevention of relapse

**Deciding to make change-** For many people struggling with addiction the first step “deciding to make change” is very

difficult. Recovery from addiction is a long process that require time, motivation, commitment and support. Once the decision to challenge the drug addiction is made, then we should explore treatment options. The best chance of recovery is through integrated treatment of drug addiction and mental health problem.

**Detoxification-** The goal of detoxification is to enable you to stop taking the addicting drug as quickly and safely as possible. Withdrawal from different categories of drugs like depressants, stimulants or opioids produces different side effects and requires different treatment approaches. Medication can be used to reestablish normal brain function and to prevent relapse and diminish craving. Detoxification may involve gradually reducing the dose or temporarily substituting other substances, such as methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone for opioids, naltrexone, acamprosate and disulfiram for alcohol etc.

**Counseling-** As part of a drug treatment program, counseling — also called talk therapy or psychotherapy — can be done by a psychologist, psychiatrist, and drug counselor with an individual, family or group. The therapist or counselor can:

- Help you develop ways to cope with your drug cravings
- Suggest strategies to avoid drugs and prevent relapse
- Offer suggestions on how to deal with a relapse if it occurs
- Talk about issues regarding your job, legal problems, and relationships with family and friends
- Include family members to help them develop better communication skills and be supportive

**Prevention of relapse-** Relapse is common part of the drug addiction recovery process. It is very discouraging and frustrating, it is also an opportunity to learn from previous mistakes and make necessary correction to the treatment course. Various trigger can put person into old pattern of drug use. Causes differ person to person but few common trigger includes:

- Negative emotional states
- Physical discomfort
- Testing personal control
- Positive emotional states
- Conflict with others
- Social pressure to use

## CONCLUSION

Both legal and illegal drugs use cause serious public health problem and evidence

for the same is now available in our country. The best way to prevent an addiction to an illegal drug is to take drug at all. We should take care of addictive prescription drugs. Doctor prescribes these medications at safe doses and for specified period. If you need to take more than prescribe dose of medication, talk to your doctor. Drug addiction is very harmful for the society and country. So health care professionals should also take responsibility and motivate these addicts to take help from IRCA to overcome addiction and live healthy drug free life for better future.

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