

Original Article

Drug abuse among the students

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Abstract

Drug abuse is an intense and often willful misuse of drugs. The overuse of substance or drugs leads to addiction. In the eastern world the incidence shows a decline or a static pattern but the number of drug addicts is still enormous. The major abusive drugs are heroin and marijuana but designer drugs (cannabinoids) have shown on the peak. The aim of the study is to determine the ratio of the drug abuse in student. For this purpose we were selected different institutes, including two private universities and two government universities and conducted survey in 500 student. High proportion of students was found abusing drugs. From this study, we came across multiple factors which are the main cause of drug abuse in medical student including depression, anxiety, peer pressure, schizophrenia, as well as personality disorder. The most commonly abused drugs include stimulants, opioids, and benzodiazepines, antihistamines and LSD. Although survey have indicated high rate of illicit and prescription drugs misuse among college students. Drug abuse regarded as a personality disorder, also be seen as worldwide epidemic with evolutionary genetic, physiology and environmental influences controlling and affecting human behavior. Globally, the use has reached all time high. The study showed males are more drug abusers as compared to females. The drug abuse ratio in students of private sector is more as compared to Government sector.

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Introduction:

Substance abuse is defined as a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, wherein the person may also suffer from tolerance and withdrawal (Gelder M et al). Substance abuse is not limited to mood altering or psychoactive drugs. Activity is also considered substance abuse when inappropriately used (as in steroids for performance enhancement in sports). Therefore,

mood altering and psychoactive substances are not the drugs of abuse. Some of the drug most often associated with this term includes alcohol, amphetamine, MDMA, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, cocaine, methaqualone, and opioids. Use of these drugs may lead to criminal penalty in addition to possible Physical, Social, and Psychological harm. Substance abuse is a common problem worldwide. (Majidshafique et al). Alcohol is widely consumed by various sections of the society, most notably by the very tributary and the impoverished.

The epidemiology of drug addiction in a given society seems to be dependent on cultural values, beliefs and attitudes to drug use, which are quite variable across cultures and geographical regions (Emmanuel, Akhtar & Rahbar et al). Drug abuse refers to the use of a drug for purposes for which

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it was not intended or using a drug in excessive quantities. All sorts of different drugs can be abused including illegal drugs (such as heroin and cannabis), prescription medicines (pain killers) and the other medicines that can be bought off the super market shelves (cough mixers)

There are number of biological, psychological, and social factors, called risk factors, that can increase a person's likelihood of developing a drug -abuse or drug dependency disorder. The frequency to which drug-abuse disorders occur within some families seems to be higher than could be explained by an addictive environment of the family. Parent's substance abuse habits were the most influential factor in affecting a child's substance abuse. (Foo YC, Tam CL, Lee TH et al). Social risk factors for drugs abuse and addiction include male gender, being between 18 and 44 years of age, unmarried marital status and lower socioeconomic status. According to statistics by state, men are more at risk for developing a drug dependency like alcoholism; women seem to be more vulnerable to becoming addicted to alcohol at much lower amounts of alcohol consumptions. There are many social and ethical issues surrounding the use and abuse of drugs. These issues are made complex particularly because of conflicting values concerning drugs use within modern societies. Values may be influenced by multiple factors including social, religious and personal views.

There are no one test that definitely indicates that someone has drug abuse or addiction. (Kristen Bush et al). Therefore health care practitioners diagnose these disorders by gathering comprehensive medical, family, mental health information. They evaluate with quiz or self-test as a screening tool for substance abuse or dependence. Since some of the drug of the misuse and dependence can occur in other mental illness. The mental health screening is to determine if the individual suffers from bipolar disorder, an anxiety disorder, schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder and other psychoactive

disorder. The primary goal of drug abuse or addiction treatment (recover) are abstinence, relapse prevention, and rehabilitation. During the initial stage of abstinence an individual who suffers from drug dependency may need help avoiding or lessening the effects of withdrawal. That process is called detoxification or detox. That aspect of treatment is usually performed in a hospital or other inpatient setting, where medication used to lessen withdrawal symptoms and frequent medical monitoring can be provided.

The therapy used for detox is determined by the drug the individual is dependent upon. For example, people with alcohol dependence might receive medication like anxiolytic, blood pressure medications to decrease palpitations and blood pressure, antiepileptics during the detoxification process. For many drugs of abuse, the detox process is the most difficult aspect of coping with the physical symptoms of addiction and tends to last days to a few weeks. However those who have more severe addiction have relapsed after participation in outpatient programs, or who also suffer from a severe mental illness might need the higher structure, support, and monitoring of provided in an inpatient drug treatment center sometimes called "rehab".

The treatment of addiction is helping the parents, other family members and friends of the addicted person refrain from supporting addictive behaviors. More successful are integrated treatment programs that include interventions for both disorders such interventions are more improved by the inclusion of assessment, intensive case management, motivational interventions, final treatment as well as services for housing, rehabilitation, and medication treatment.

Plan of work

Study was carried out to determine drug abuse in students and treatment plan selected for them Study was carried out under these steps.

- Study was conducted among students of different universities for specific time span.
- To determine the reason for drug abuse.
- Pattern of drug abuse
- Gave awareness to students about drug abuse through questionnaire.
- **Methodology**

It was a cross-sectional study conducted among the undergraduate students of private and public universities of Punjab. The study was conducted in compliance with “ethical principle” among the students of different universities. Study

protocol was discussed with students; all possible measures were taken to ensure the confidentiality of all participants. Verbal informed consent was obtained from the students. Five hundred students were selected and information was collected by the help of questionnaire with the duration of two months. The questionnaire was developed on the basis of thorough literature reviews .Informal interviews and verbal counseling was done to enhance our understanding of previous and existing ratio of drug abuse in students. The eligibility criteria were adjusted in such a way that both genders (male, female) were studied. Students of age between 17-25 years were selected. Chronic cases of students were selected with multiple reasons of drug abuse. The students with age group below than 15 years were excluded from the study. The collected data was entered and analyzed by statistical tool.

Questionnaire:

Table1.Demographic response of participated students profile:

	Response (%)	
	Yes	No
Have you ever tried to quit?	45	58
Is it affects your socioeconomic status?	60	38
Are drugs easily available to teen-agers in your community?	85	15
Is drug abuse increasing day by day?	60	40
What do you think smoking is preferred over alcohol?	75	25
Have you over used prescription drug?	60	45
What do you think pharmacist can play an important role in stopping drug abuse?	80	20
What do you think that drug abuse is more common in students as compared to others-stude	50	48

Table 2.Comparison of different parameters between different gender(male, female).

	Response (%)			
	Female		Male	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Have you over used prescription drugs?	53%	48%	13%	86%
Are drugs easily available in your community?	92%	15%	70%	30%
Is it affects your socioeconomic status?	63%	38%	20%	80%
Do you take any medicine as performance enhancer?	39%	60%	76%	62%

Table 3. Comparison of different parameters among Govt and private sector

	Response (%)			
	Govt		Private	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Are drugs easily available in your community?	59	107	107	92
Do you take any medicine as performance enhancer?	40	75	75	124

Table 4: Comparison of different parameters among different age group

Response	Age					
	17-19		19-22		22-25	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Do you take any medicine as performance enhancer?	17	30	51	76	47	80
Have you over used prescription drug?	27	20	67	60	72	55

Result:

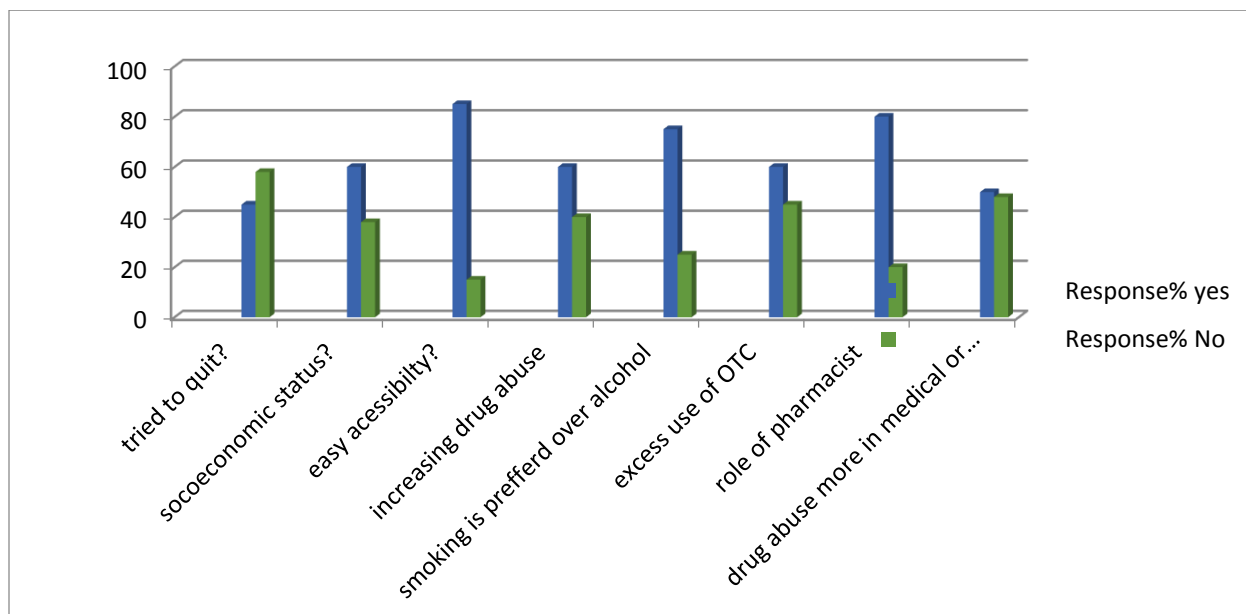
Our exploratory survey about the drug abuse from different universities has given various acceptable results. According to this survey out of 500 students, 68% of student has admitted that drug abuse seriously affected their socioeconomic status. The percentage of drug abuse is greater in males as compare to females. About 57% students take performance enhancer. The use of performance enhancer is greater in males as compared to females. The percentage of excessive use of drug is 83%. About 80% of the drugs are abuse by the age group of 15-22years. According to our research study student of private sector about

83% abuse more drug as compare to Government sector.

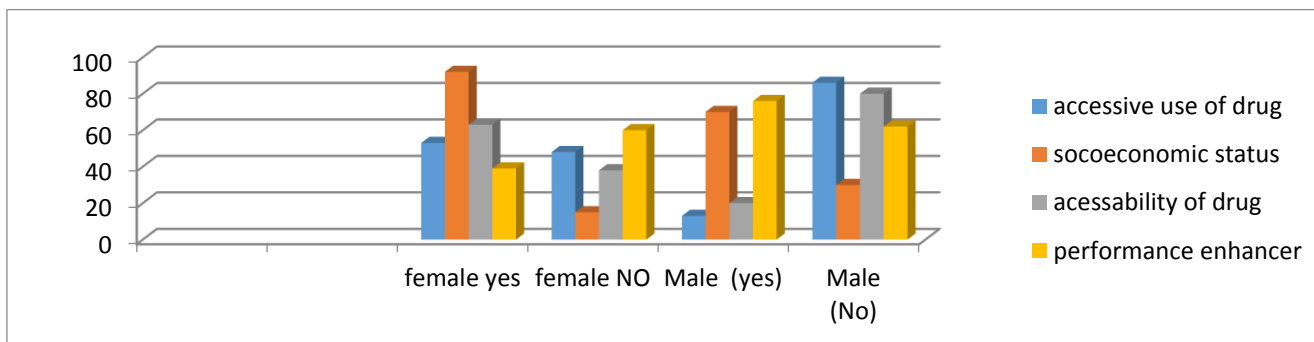
Discussion:

Substance abuse and use of alcohol are the basic dilemma of today's health issues among younger population. A large number of studies focusing on these issues have been carried out. Students make up a substantial population of drug users and are known to use illicit substances as aid in academic efficiency and recreation. Life of a student or a health care professional can be very stressful. Mild, moderate, and high levels of stress and even burnout have been reported amongst students and

Graph1. Demographic response of participated students profile:



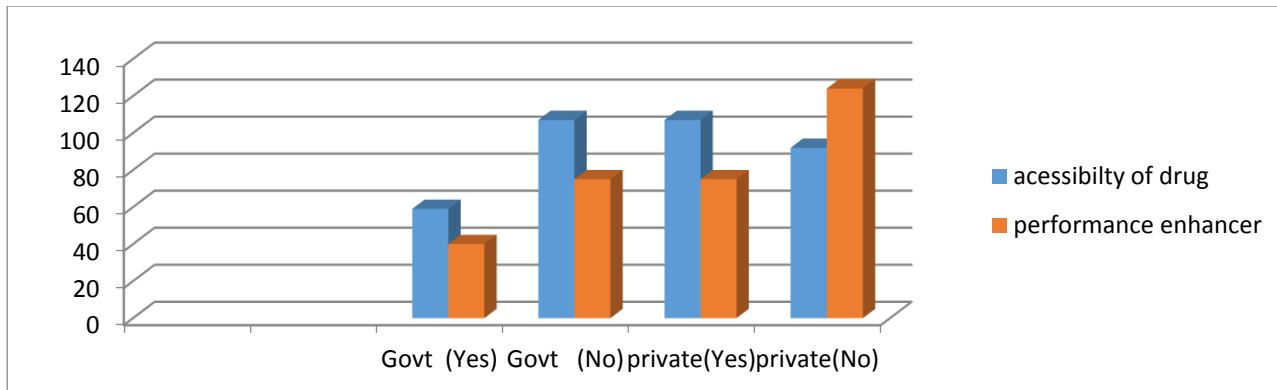
Graph 2. Comparison of different parameters between different genders (male, female).



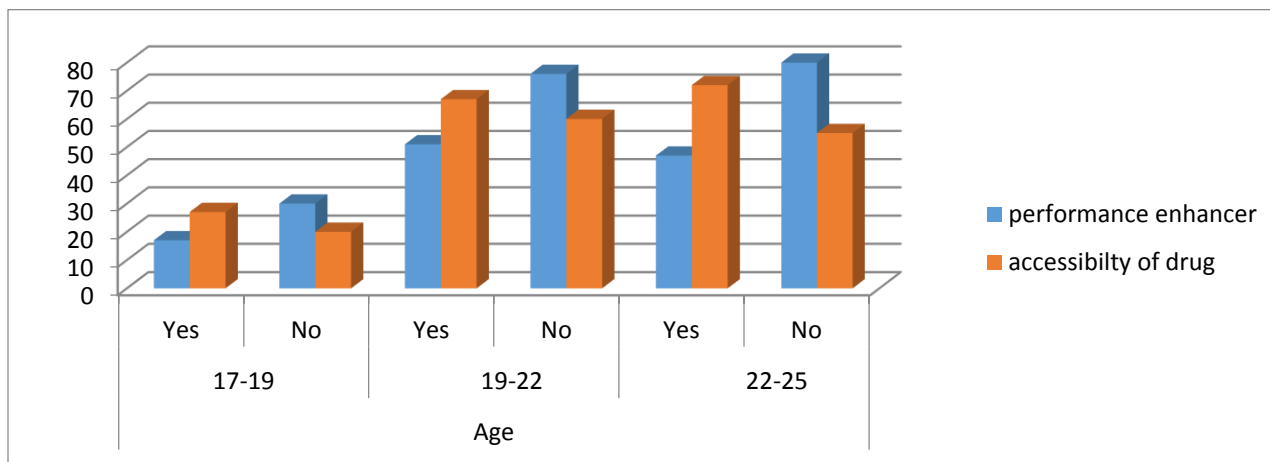
health care professionals.. The basic reason of the drug abuse that we have interpreted from the above survey is the easy access and availability of drug among the community. Lack of information about the drugs and over use of drug is a common factor to abuse drug among student. Peer pressure is the prime factor among the student as compares to non- student that increases the abuse of drug. Academic stress was identified as a very important factor in drug misuse. This illustrates the pressure felt by the students to surpass in their studies, which could result from overly competitive environments or from very high expectations

placed by teachers, family and friends(Wechsler, H).A conscious effort needs to be made in alleviating this pressure as much as possible without unduly decreasing the need felt by the students to study. The amount and severity of stress experienced by students may vary according the settings of their curricula, evaluation (examination) system etc. The important reasons for not indulging in illicit substance use as identified by the students included religion and health risk. An individual belonging to a supportive family is less likely to give in to drug abuse as compared to one coming from a strict family (S. Khalid et al).Another

Graph 3.comparison of different parameters among Govt and private sector



Graph 4:Comparison of different parameters among different age group



alarming predisposing factor was accommodation of students in hostel. Due to easy access of drugs in hostel made student more prone towards this act. The basic reason of the drug abuse that we have interpreted from the above survey is the easy access and availability of drug among the community. Lack of information about the drugs and over use of drug is a common factor to abuse drug among student. Peer pressure is the prime factor among the student as compares to non-student that increases the abuse of drug. Academic stress was identified as a very important factor in drug misuse. This illustrates the pressure felt by the

students to surpass in their studies, which could result from overly competitive environments or from very high expectations placed by teachers, family and friends (Wechsler, H). A conscious effort needs to be made in alleviating this pressure as much as possible without unduly decreasing the need felt by the students to study. The amount and severity of stress experienced by students may vary according the settings of their curricula, evaluation (examination) system etc. The important reasons for not indulging in illicit substance use as identified by the students included religion and health risk. An individual belonging to a supportive

family is less likely to give in to drug abuse as compared to one coming from a strict family (S. Khalid et al). Another alarming predisposing factor was accommodation of students in hostel. Due to easy access of drugs in hostel made student more prone towards this act.

There is a perceptual experience in Pakistan about drugs and alcohol abuse being more common and acceptable in posh families. We found that students belonging to private college (which has a higher tuition fee) who are likely to belong to wealthier and financially stable families had experimented more with drug abuse and alcohol (Nazish at et al). There is still a possibility of underreporting of substance abuse in our study as drugs and alcohol are considered a taboo in Pakistani society. Our study intensity includes large sample size and good response rate, but still various restrictions need to be conceived. The study was done in just four Institutions so results may not be extrapolated to all Institutes. So there is need in future to research more and find more elaborated results of this highly considerable issue.

Conclusion:

The results concluded that abuse of drug was more common in students of private institution due to abandoned opportunities. Male students were found more abusive than females. Substance abuse was greatly affected socioeconomic status of students.

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