

Prevalence of Initiation of Substance Abuse among Teenage Students of Schools and Colleges in Visakhapatnam

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The epidemic of substance abuse in young generation has assumed alarming dimensions in India. Changing cultural values, increasing economic stress and dwindling supportive bonds are leading to initiation into substance use. Typically, school and relationships, notably family relationships, are among the life areas that are most influenced by drug use and abuse. One of the most telling signs of a teen's increasing involvement with drugs is when drug use becomes part of the teen's daily life. Current research was done to study the factors encouraging initiation & promotion of substance abuse among teenagers and to know the possible measures to prevent initiation or continuation of substance abuse among teenagers.

Material and Methods: A community based cross sectional study was done in teenagers in schools and colleges in and around visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, during the period of July 2019 to December 2019.

Results: In the present study, factors that help the children to refrain from substance use in non users were banning advertisements and substances, followed by media messages, school health education.

Conclusion: "Attitudes are not taught but caught." Users with positive attitude should be regularly counselled and motivated towards quitting through media.

Keywords: Prevalence, Substance Abuse, Teenage Students

INTRODUCTION

Substance abuse is one of the serious problems affecting youth in the world. The increasing problem of substance abuse and dependence has drawn both public and scientific attention to be focused. Although the present knowledge concerning substance abuse and dependence is far from complete, investigating them as maladaptive patterns of adjustment to life's demands rather than as moral deficiencies is leading to rapid progress in both understanding and treatment of substance abuse.

Although most adolescents who use drugs do not progress to become drug abusers, or drug addicts in adulthood, drug use in adolescence is a very risky proposition. Even small degrees of substance abuse (for example, alcohol, tobacco, and inhalants) can have negative consequences.^{1,2}

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Typically, school and relationships, notably family relationships, are among the life areas that are most

influenced by drug use and abuse. One of the most telling signs of a teen's increasing involvement with drugs is when drug use becomes part of the teen's daily life. Preoccupation with drugs can crowd out previously important activities, and the manner in which the teen views him or herself may change in unrealistic and inaccurate directions.

Friendship groups may change, sometimes dramatically, and relationships with family members can become more distant or conflict. Further bad signs include more frequent use or use of greater amounts of a certain drug, or use of more dangerous drugs, such as cocaine, amphetamines, or heroin. Substance abuse and dependence may occur at any age, but seem to be most common during adolescence and young adulthood. Though research in this area is sparse on Indian population, a number of studies have been reported in other countries especially United States of America and Europe.^{3,4,5} Current research aimed to study the factors encouraging initiation & promotion of substance abuse among teenagers and to know the possible measures to prevent initiation or continuation of substance abuse among teenagers.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study was a population-based, cross-sectional study, conducted on 400 students in two high schools and two colleges, selected by multistage random sampling, in Andhra Pradesh, India, with no interventions. A self-administered anonymous questionnaire was administered. This study was conducted during the period of July 2019 to December 2019. The understanding level of the students school onward, allows the administration of a self-administered questionnaire. Initiation of substance use usually begins at the age of 13- or 14 years. Students of these age groups are usually present in schools and colleges. Therefore the schools and colleges chosen represent an ideal population for this study. Main outcome measures were substance use: knowledge regarding

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the harm, attitude, and opinion.

Study instrument

The pre-tested, close-ended questionnaire contained questions relating to addiction and the attitude towards it. These were related to the socio-demographic situation prevailing in India. The questionnaire was custom-made for the new study. The data collection tool used for the study was an interview schedule that was developed at the institute with the assistance of the faculty members and other experts. The interview schedule included the demographic variables that covered their personal characteristics such as age and gender, as well as educational level and socioeconomic status. All aspects of substance use were queried including frequency, associated factors, knowledge, attitude, and their opinion regarding substance use.

Data collection procedure

Out of the entire list of urban schools in Visakhapatnam, one school in each category was chosen randomly. Subsequently, all the 400 students in both schools and colleges (100 in the schools, 100 in the colleges) were initially taken as the study population. They were given anonymous self-administered questionnaires.

The permission to conduct the study in these two schools, two colleges was taken from the Heads of the schools and colleges well ahead of the data collection. The school teachers actively co-operated during the whole period of the study. All the participants were explained the purpose of the study and were ensured strict confidentiality. Next verbal informed consent was taken from each of them before the interview. The participants were given the choice of not

participating in the study if they did not want to. Principal investigator collected the data and disseminated information on substance use in health education sessions to complement the findings of the study.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data collected were thoroughly cleaned and entered into Excel spread sheets and analysis was carried out. The procedures involved were transcription, preliminary data inspection, frequencies and percentages were calculated.

RESULTS

In the present study, in users, media (37%), movies (49%), friends (0%) were major influencing factors for promotion of substance use in government institutes. Coming to private institutes, media (63%), movies (51%), friends (0%) were major influencing factors for promotion of substance use (table-1).

29% were Banning Advertisement, Selling Products in the age group 17 years. 18% were School Health Education in the age group 15 years. 29% were Media Messages were influential factors preventing substance use in the age 18 years (table-2).

33% were Banning Advertisement, Selling Products. 45% were School Health Education. 23% were Media Messages were influential factors preventing substance use in users (table-3).

DISCUSSION

Teenage is the most susceptible population to initiate substance use in India.³ This is because teenagers are easily

Area	Institute	Movies/film actors		Friends		News paper/ media		Family members		Total	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Urban (n=200)	Govt	33	49%	32	57%	24	37%	0	0%	100	50%
	Private	35	51%	24	43%	41	63%	0	0%	100	50%

Table-1: Institute wise distribution of factors encouraging substance use in users

Area/age		Banning advertisement, selling products		School health education		Media messages		Total	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Urban (n=200)	13	6	9%	11	12%	8	18%	25	13%
	14	4	6%	12	13%	7	16%	23	12%
	15	5	8%	16	18%	2	4%	23	12%
	16	6	9%	12	13%	6	13%	24	12%
	17	19	29%	13	14%	4	9%	36	18%
	18	13	20%	12	13%	13	29%	38	19%
	19	12	18%	14	16%	5	11%	31	16%
Total		65	100%	90	100%	45	100%	200	100%

Table-2: Age wise distribution of influential factors preventing substance use in users

Area	Banning advertisement, selling products	School health education	Media messages	Total
Urban (n=200)	65 (33%)	90 (45%)	45 (23%)	200(100%)

Table-3: Distribution of influential factors preventing substance use in users

influenced by peer pressure, sibling pressure, substance use by parents, easy availability and cheap cost, colorful and attractive packaging of such substances, lucrative advertisements through mass media by celebrities and lack of awareness regarding consequences of substance use on health.

According to estimates of the World Health Organization, there are about 2 billion people worldwide consuming alcohol beverages and 76.3 million are diagnosed with alcohol related disorders in 1990. Globally alcohol consumption causes 3.2% of overall human deaths.⁶ Worldwide 5% of all human deaths were in the age group of 15 to 29 attributed to alcohol use.⁷

A study of 300 street child laborers in slums of Surat in 1993 showed that 135 (45%) used substances. The substances used were smoking tobacco, followed by chewable tobacco, snuff, cannabis and opioids. Injecting drug use is also becoming apparent among street children as are inhalants.⁸

The Global Youth Tobacco Survey in 2006 showed that 3.8% of students smoke and 11.9% currently used smokeless tobacco. Tobacco as a gateway to other drugs of abuse has been the topic of a symposium.^{9,10}

A study in the Andamans (2008) shows that onset of regular use of alcohol in late childhood and early adolescence is associated with the highest rates of consumption in adult life, compared to later onset of drinking.^{11,12}

Results from 2010 Monitoring the Future survey show that 48.2% of 12th graders report having used an illicit drug at some point in their lives. In the 30 days prior to the survey, 41.2% of 12th graders had consumed alcohol and 19.2% of 12th graders had smoked tobacco cigarettes. In 2009 in the United States about 21% of high school students have taken prescription drugs without a prescription.^{13,14}

In the present study, substance use was high in government institutes compared to private institute. School health education programmes should be emphasised particularly in Government schools regularly to improve their positive attitude to refrain from substance use.

In our study, movies and media were found to be major factors influencing substance use, promotion and projection of substance use should be curbed in them and surprisingly also play major role in imparting knowledge, whether it be pro or anti substance use, it should emphasise on shaping of positive attitude of teenagers.^{15,16,17}

CONCLUSION

Cognitive behavioural therapy and familial therapy are effective and pragmatic approaches towards the containment of substance abuse.

There is a need for developing a supportive environment involving both parents and teachers so that adolescent can decide and sustain with the right choices for healthy life.

In order to prevent teenagers from tobacco abuse, they can be assessed regularly by tobacco and standardised psychological rating scales such as CAGE (cut down, annoyed, guilty and eye opener), teen addiction severity index and Fagerstroms' test for nicotine dependence.

Children affected by substance abuse are considered as children in need of care and protection under JUVENILE JUSTICE ACT 2000.

Legal Approach is one of the widely used approaches to the prevention of some forms of drug abuse. Legislation may be directed at controlling the manufacture, distribution, prescription, price, time of sale, or consumption of certain substances.

"Psychosocial model" devised by WHO has been proved to be effective.

Community Approach: This includes educational programmes, information campaigns for public through electronic and print media and other channels. The information should be presented in a thought provoking and stimulating manner. It should be able to produce impact on the minds of the recipients.

There could be provision of alternative recreational activities, which may be able to help in preventing drug abuse.

For example Teen centres could be set up in community that would provide diversified activities for the adolescents that may drift towards drug abuse. Non - Governmental organizations can play a crucial role in the promoting positive attitude. curriculum framers and textbook writers have to incorporate topics like drug abuse text books and syllabi of in teenage curriculum

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