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## **An Article Regarding Prevalence and Drug Abuse among Adolescents in Indian Population**

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### **Introduction:**

Adolescence is a critical stage in human development where physical, emotional, and cognitive changes take place. It is a period of experimentation, learning, and exploration, which can also make young people vulnerable to risky behaviors such as drug abuse. Drug abuse is a global problem affecting millions of people worldwide. In India, drug abuse is becoming increasingly prevalent among adolescents, which is a cause for concern. This paper aims to explore the prevalence of drug abuse among Indian adolescents, its causes, and its impact on individuals and society.

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### **Prevalence of drug abuse among Indian adolescents:**

Drug abuse is defined as the use of illegal drugs, prescription drugs, or over-the-counter medications in a manner that is harmful to the individual or society. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), in 2021, around 9.7 million people aged 12 or older in the United States had misused prescription pain relievers, 5.9 million had misused prescription tranquilizers, 5.5 million had misused prescription stimulants, and 2.0 million had misused prescription sedatives in the past year.

In India, there is limited data on the prevalence of drug abuse among adolescents. However, a study conducted by the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC) at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi in 2020 revealed that the prevalence of drug abuse among adolescents in India is increasing. The study found that the most commonly abused substances among adolescents were tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, and opioids.

#### ***Tobacco use:***

Tobacco use is a significant public health problem in India. According to the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), in 2019, 14.6% of Indian adolescents aged 13-15 years reported current tobacco use. Tobacco use is associated with various health problems such as cancer, respiratory diseases, and cardiovascular diseases.

#### ***Alcohol use:***

Alcohol use is also a prevalent problem among Indian adolescents. According to a study conducted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in 2019, around 26% of Indian adolescents reported using alcohol in the past year. Alcohol use is associated with various health problems such as liver disease, pancreatitis, and cancer.

#### ***Cannabis use:***

Cannabis use is becoming increasingly prevalent among Indian adolescents. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), in 2021, around 4.4 million people aged 12 or older in the United States had used marijuana in the past year. In India, cannabis is illegal, and its use is associated with various health problems such as psychosis, cognitive impairment, and addiction.

#### ***Opioid use:***

Opioid use is also a significant problem among Indian adolescents. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), in 2021, around 2.0 million people aged 12 or older in the United States had misused prescription opioids in the past year. In India, opioids are commonly used to treat pain, but their misuse can lead to addiction and various health problems such as respiratory depression, overdose, and death.

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## **Causes of drug abuse among Indian adolescents:**

Drug abuse among Indian adolescents is a complex problem with multiple causes. Some of the common causes are:

### ***Peer pressure:***

Adolescents are influenced by their peers, and peer pressure can lead them to experiment with drugs. Adolescents who want to fit in with their peers may try drugs to feel accepted, which can lead to addiction.

### ***Stress:***

Adolescence is a stressful period, and adolescents may turn to drugs to cope with stress. Stress can be caused by various factors such as academic pressure, family conflicts, and social pressures.

### ***Availability of drugs:***

Availability of drugs is another contributing factor to drug abuse among Indian adolescents. Drugs are easily accessible in many parts of the country, and drug dealers often target vulnerable groups such as adolescents.

### ***Parental influence:***

The family environment can also play a role in drug abuse among Indian adolescents. Parents who abuse drugs or alcohol may model this behavior for their children, making them more likely to experiment with drugs.

### ***Mental health issues:***

Adolescents with mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, or ADHD may turn to drugs as a way of self-medicating. This can lead to addiction and other health problems.

## ***Impact of drug abuse among Indian adolescents:***

Drug abuse can have a significant impact on the physical, emotional, and social well-being of Indian adolescents. Some of the common impacts are:

### ***Physical health problems:***

Drug abuse can lead to various physical health problems such as respiratory problems, cardiovascular disease, liver disease, and cancer. Adolescents who abuse drugs are also at higher risk of accidents, injuries, and overdose.

### ***Mental health problems:***

Drug abuse can also lead to mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and psychosis. These conditions can be long-lasting and have a negative impact on an individual's quality of life.

### ***Academic performance:***

Drug abuse can also impact academic performance. Adolescents who abuse drugs are more likely to skip school, perform poorly in exams, and drop out of school. This can limit their future opportunities and affect their long-term prospects.

### ***Social problems:***

Drug abuse can also lead to social problems such as strained relationships with family and friends, isolation, and criminal behavior. Adolescents who abuse drugs may engage in risky behaviors such as theft, violence, and unprotected sex, which can have long-lasting consequences.

Prevention and treatment of drug abuse among Indian adolescents:

Preventing and treating drug abuse among Indian adolescents requires a multi-faceted approach. Some of the strategies that can be used are:

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**Education:**

Educating adolescents about the dangers of drug abuse can help to prevent drug abuse. Schools and community organizations can provide drug education programs that teach adolescents about the risks associated with drug abuse and the importance of making healthy choices.

**Parental involvement:**

Parents can play an important role in preventing drug abuse among adolescents. Parents should be involved in their children's lives and provide a supportive and stable home environment. Parents should also educate their children about the dangers of drug abuse and monitor their behavior.

**Access to treatment:**

Adolescents who abuse drugs should have access to treatment programs that can help them overcome their addiction. Treatment programs should be age-appropriate and should address the unique needs of adolescents.

**Community involvement:**

Communities can play a role in preventing drug abuse among adolescents by providing safe and healthy activities for young people. Community organizations can also provide support for families affected by drug abuse.

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**Conclusion:**

Drug abuse among Indian adolescents is a complex problem that requires a multi-faceted approach. The prevalence of drug abuse among Indian adolescents is increasing, and the impact of drug abuse on individuals and society can be significant. Prevention and treatment strategies should be implemented to address this problem and to ensure that adolescents can make healthy choices and achieve their full potential.

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