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Causes and Effects of Drug Abuse Among Youth

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ABSTRACT :

This paper explores the intricate causes and adverse consequences of adolescent drug abuse, with special reference to the Indian context. Adolescent drug abuse is a new emerging issue driven by peer pressure, family issues, mental illness, early exposure, and socio-environmental determinants. The impact of drug abuse is broad and includes academic performance, mental and physical health, family, peer relationship, and school. Along with adolescent drug addiction and its effects on society, including increased crime rates, financial losses, and public health problems, the paper emphasizes the significance of adolescent developmental vulnerabilities. The paper aims at informing about causes and effects of Drug abuse.

Keywords : - Drug Abuse, Adolescents, Youth, Peer Pressure, Mental Health, Substance Use, Addiction

Introduction

Drug abuse is described as the use of drugs in large quantities and in ways that are harmful to the user. Drug abuse is a type of substance-related disorder, and different definitions are used in the fields of criminal justice, medicine, and public health. Sometimes people who are under the influence of drugs engage in criminal or antisocial activity, which can potentially lead to long-term personality changes in the individuals involved. Certain drug usage may result in criminal consequences in addition to potential bodily, social, and psychological harm, however these might differ greatly depending on the local jurisdiction.

India's child drug usage problem has grown to alarming proportions. It is causing cultural shifts, a rise in the financial load, poverty, ignorance, migration, and exploitation (child labor), all of which contribute to the start of substance misuse. According to the World Medicine Report, 322 billion dollars is a measure of the extent of unlawful trafficking and illegal dealing. Afghan opium is marketed for 61 billion dollars a year. In Western Africa, the global cocaine market is valued at approximately 85 million dollars. In order to safeguard global security, UNO General Secretary Ban Ki Moon declared war on illegal drug trafficking during the 2011 World Summit and has emphasized raising people's knowledge of the harmful drugs that ruin societies.

Teenage drug abuse is caused by peer pressure, family problems, and social factors, and it results in severe outcomes such as physical and mental health decline, academic failure, and enhanced criminal activity.

Causes of Drug Abuse

There is no one element that can predict a person's risk of being addicted to drugs. Many factors influence the chance of addiction. Addiction is directly caused by alterations in the brain that promote both psychological and physical dependence on chemicals that modify cognition, but these alterations are not random. For instance:

Problems at school

A sudden lack of interest in school activities, frequent absences, or a decline in performance or grades.

Relationship problems

Addiction may be more likely to occur if you had family issues growing up and don't have a close relationship with your parents or siblings.

Peer pressure

The majority of drug users start using drugs when they are teenagers, and peer pressure, particularly during adolescence, is frequently the deciding factor in the onset of addiction.

Biology

About half of an individual's susceptibility to addiction is determined by their innate DNA. The likelihood of drug use and addiction may also be influenced by factors such as gender, ethnicity, and the existence of additional mental illnesses.

Early age of initial usage

A person's risk of developing a substance addiction increases with the age at which they begin using drugs. Drug usage has the potential to alter a child's developing brain. Therefore, using drugs when you're young may increase your risk of developing an addiction as you become older.

Mental illnesses

You are more likely to develop an addiction if you suffer from depression, have difficulties focusing, or worry all the time. You might try to feel better by using medicines. In order to cope with their terrifying and incapacitating symptoms, many persons with mental health disorders turn to drugs and alcohol.

Environment

From friends and family to financial standing and overall quality of life, a person's surroundings can have a wide range of effects. Stress, peer pressure, parental monitoring, early drug exposure, and physical and sexual abuse are some of the elements that might have a big impact on a person's likelihood of being addicted to drugs.

Family history

Approximately half of your odds are determined by your genes. You're more likely to struggle with drugs if your parents or siblings struggle with drugs or alcohol. Women are just as prone as men to suffer from addiction. One of the most reliable indicators of genetic risk is having parents or siblings who have experienced drug dependency. Research has shown that hereditary variables account for roughly 50% of the development of drug addiction.

Development

Addiction risk is influenced by the interaction of genetic and environmental factors with significant developmental phases in an individual's life. Addiction can result from drug use at any age, but the sooner drug use starts, the more probable it is to develop into addiction. Teenagers are especially affected by this. Teenagers may be particularly vulnerable to risky activities, such as drug use, since portions of their brains that govern judgment, self-control, and decision-making are still growing.

Effects of Drug Abuse

Adolescents who continue to use drugs frequently face a variety of issues, such as trouble in school, health issues (including mental health issues), strained relationships with their peers, and participation with the juvenile criminal system. Family members, the neighborhood, and society at large also suffer as a result. Under the following topics, the general effects of substance misuse and addiction can be explained:

Peers

Adolescents who abuse substances frequently experience stigma and estrangement from their peers. In addition to abstaining from school and community activities, adolescents who use alcohol and other drugs also deprive their friends and communities of the beneficial contributions they may have otherwise made.

Families

Along with personal hardships, juvenile alcohol and drug abuse can lead to family crises, endanger many facets of family life. Adolescents who use drugs or alcohol have a significant impact on their parents and siblings. The financial and emotional resources of a family can be depleted by substance misuse.

Academics

Declining grades, absenteeism from school/college and other activities, and increased potential for dropping out of school/college are problems associated with youth substance abuse. The cognitive and behavioral issues that young people who use drugs or alcohol develop may have an impact on their academic performance and create barriers to learning.

Mental Health

Adolescent drug abuse is often associated with mental health issues such as depression, developmental delays, apathy, withdrawal, and other psychosocial dysfunctions. Adolescents who abuse substances are more likely to experience mental health issues such as depression, conduct issues, personality disorders, suicidal ideation, attempted suicide, and suicide than those who do not. The second most common cause of death for college students is suicide. It has been demonstrated that marijuana use, which is common among young people, impairs learning, psychomotor skills, and short-term memory. Psychosexual/emotional development and motivation may also be affected.

Safety and Health

Psychoactive substances change a person's emotions, ideas, and behavior via influencing the central nervous system. They work by directly influencing the brain or central nervous system (CNS), which might result in a number of complications as well as behavioral and physical issues. The health repercussions of teenage substance usage include physical disabilities and diseases, injuries from accidents (including auto accidents), and the effects of potential overdoses. Adolescents who use alcohol and other drugs in disproportionate numbers are more likely to die from sickness, accidents, homicide, and suicide. Substance misuse is linked to trauma, aggression, damage to organ systems, a variety of malignancies, hazardous sexual practices, early mortality, and low nutritional status in families with fathers who drink excessively.

HIV/AIDS is mainly spread via sharing contaminated injection equipment or by coming into touch with an infected person's bodily fluids during intercourse. Mothers to babies during pregnancy or childbirth are another major source of transmission. Many young people who abuse drugs participate in activities that put them at risk of catching HIV/AIDS or other STDs. This could involve the actual use of psychoactive substances, especially those administered by injection, or actions brought on by a lack of self-control and poor judgment when under the influence of mood-altering drugs. Compared to the majority of other age groups, teens now have comparatively low rates of AIDS diagnoses. However, many young adults with AIDS were probably infected with HIV as teens, given the disease has a long latency period before symptoms manifest.

These few instances highlight the disastrous effects of teen substance usage on one's health. In addition to personal and family hardship, the community is burdened by higher healthcare expenses and lost future production.

Conclusion

Teen drug abuse is a multifaceted and deeply disturbing issue with serious consequences for the individual, the family, and society as a whole. The interaction of genetic, environmental, psychological, and social factors at a critical phase of development places adolescents at unique risk for using and becoming addicted to substances. The consequent outcomes range from school failure and mental illness to crime and medical risks. To fight this evil, a whole-of-society approach that covers awareness campaigns, early education, family support environment, available mental health services, and robust community participation is the need of the hour.

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