

REVIEW ARTICLES

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS: A REFLECTIVE DISCUSSION

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ABSTRACT

Problem that affects developing nations worldwide. Indirectly or directly, illicit drug use is to blame for 11.8 million fatalities worldwide each year. Various factors might lead a person to use or abuse drugs, which can subsequently develop into addiction. This article, however, concentrates on environmental aspects, which influence substance misuse. Environment in this study is defined as "the aggregate of the social and cultural conditions that influence the life of an individual or community." To further investigate, this study has broken down environmental factors into sub-factors like family environment, peer influences, etc., to better understand how these factors affect an individual's decision to use drugs or alcohol and how family, society, and the community as a whole must be aware of these factors and take action to improve society and community. When a loved one in our culture develops an addiction or a substance use disorder, we frequently blame the appropriate external factors right away while completely ignoring our family environment, personal emotional problems, our society, cultural standards, etc. The article discusses how certain environmental circumstances can increase one's chance of using drugs or alcohol.

Keywords: Substance abuse, Drugs, Drug use, Environmental factors, Environment

INTRODUCTION

Substance abuse is one of the major issues, which is facing worldwide. According to World Health Organization (WHO), drug addiction and substance abuse are serious public health issues affecting developing countries around the world (Ursu, A. et al., (2022), WHO,2020). Indirectly or directly, drug addiction which includes smoking, drinking, and using illicit drugs causes 11.8 million fatalities worldwide each year. (Cheron et al.,2021, Roth, et al., 2017). The Global Burden of Disease study says this number is more significant than

cancer-related fatalities and represents a fifth of all. Most early-age teenagers aged 17 to 20 years are seriously addicted to some drug use . In India, people aged 10 to 75 years, 14.6 % alcohol,2.83% cannabis, and 2.1% opioid, indulged in these substances (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment,19 July 2022). Higher education Students constitute a risk group with regard to the consumption of psychoactive substances (Alves, et al. (2021), Allen et al. 2017; Helmer et al. 2014). Various aspects of student life, especially

among fresh undergraduates, increase their vulnerability to drug use. These include a switch from the constrained life censored by parents to a more self-directed life influenced by the university environment; peer influence, possibly resulting from shared living quarters with strangers from different cultural and social backgrounds; and poor coping or survival skills in response to academic pressure and a new environment (Olashore et al., 2020). Dependence on any substance has negative consequences for the individual's health, as well as their families and society. Sometimes various factors are responsible for drug abuse, or substance use disorder. However, this study wants to explore the how this environmental factor plays a role in drug addiction.

In our community, where Substance use and abuse have turned into serious issues, many young people are falling victim to it due to various causes. But this study aims to look into environmental elements that are connected to substance abuse. To further explore how environmental factors influence a person's decision to use drugs or alcohol, family, society, and the community must be aware of these factors and take action to improve culture and community. However, this article concentrates on environmental aspects, which influence substance misuse. The environment in this study is defined as "the aggregate of the social and cultural conditions that influence the life of an individual or society." this study has broken down environmental factors into sub-factors like a family environment, peer influences, etc. It has mostly used secondary data gathered from newspaper and magazine articles, Journals articles, and several web sources.

UNDERSTANDING SUBSTANCE ABUSE

When we hear of substance or drug misuse, we often conjure images of people involved

in unlawful activities. Have we ever considered how much we know about drug/substance misuse or substance use disorder or Drug addiction? or form where these youngsters are getting the knowledge about the substances, which they are consuming. In recent studies, the researcher tried to understand how individuals are gaining knowledge about drug or substances. A study by Faria E. A. et al. (2015) found that understanding the perception of drugs they related to disease, crime, and immorality by the participants. These meanings may be possibly associated with historical and socially constructed reproductions. The participants were used to listening to people and the media about different types of drugs, their effects, and their pleasures. They made inferences based on their prior knowledge without any major reflections. A similar study done by Hyde, A. et al. (2000) in the study where different age groups of children participated in the study, found that most of the children had a superficial knowledge about the drug, gained knowledge about the drugs from a variety of ways, including seeing drug users' evidence, relatives, family members, and other sources. The participants identified factors that lead to drug abuse, such as easy access, use by family and friends, idleness, dropping out of school and the characteristic vulnerability of adolescence (Faria E. A. et al. (2015). Children appear to be afraid of talking to adults about their drug dealing experiences, which will limit their ability to develop refusal skills (Hyde, A., et al. (2000)).

ENVIRONMENTS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

When we talk about the environment, our consciousness makes us think about the ecosystem of plants, animals, etc. However, the definition of environment in social sciences means "the aggregate of the social and culture condition that influences the life of an individual or community" (Merriam-

webster.com). Substance abuse is the use of any legal or illegal chemical substance that results in physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral impairment in a person (encyclopedia.uia.org). Substance abuse impacts individuals' social functioning, often creating a burden for the family and its members (Daley, D. C. (2013). substance abuse is a severe issue tearing apart the country's social fabric. Dependence on any substance harms the individual's health, as well as the health of their families and society as a whole. Individual addiction arises because of consuming numerous psychoactive substances on a regular basis. Some chemical substances have been related to neuropsychiatric problems, cardiovascular disease, car accidents, suicides and violence. While substance use disorders/drug addiction is known to affect people of all regions, races, and socioeconomic statuses, certain segments of the population are more likely to use particular substances. Initiation into substance use may stem from a variety of factors, including genetic, biological, cognitive, affective, family, and peer characteristic (Mennis,etal, 2016 ,Scheier L.M 2010). Many studies have found that person's risk of developing a drug addiction is based on their genetics. This means that specific genes passed down in your family may put you at a higher risk for drug addiction. But while genetics can play a large part in addiction, they're not the only thing that leads to the condition. Your surroundings your family, friends, lifestyle, and other things in your environment – can also put you at a higher risk for it. (Alexandra Benisek , 2022). A person's environment can include many settings, including home, work, school, neighborhoods, recreation areas, and social events. If your environment is one in which drugs or alcohol are available and widely accepted, it can have a strong effect on your potential for abuse and addiction.

(tpoftampa.com, 2019).

ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS THAT AFFECT SUBSTANCE ABUSE

One of the most severe issues facing the world today is drug addiction or substance use disorder, and there are many factors that influence people's decisions to use drugs. Various study has shown that the environment greatly impacts those of all ages; young people are particularly vulnerable (tpoftampa.com,2019). Form nicotine, alcohol, and cannabis, familial environmental factors were critical in influencing use in early adolescence and gradually declined in importance through young adulthood(Kendler, 2008). From the community, home life, and friend groups to culture and social media influences, there are numerous environmental factors that influence addiction and might contribute to substance use disorder. The following is a breakdown of these factors:

Easy Availability of Substances

One of the major environmental factors is the easy access to substances in the area where individuals reside. A recent study suggests easy access to drugs or alcohol during the teen years increases the risk for a problem in adulthood (Feller, 2016). The researchers found teens with easy access initiated consuming substances at a younger age and were more likely to be using one or both as they got older (Broman,2016).similarly, in Bangladesh, youth are in cannabis and Yabba addiction because these drugs are available in local markets. This drug is also cheaper than the chemical drug to buy for them (Ahad, et. al., 2017). In developing countries such as India, there are many local substances that are easily available in Indian society at a lower cost, and people who fall into addiction due to social, situational, and environmental factors are more likely to be influential in low-

level substance use. Such environmental cues can have a significant detrimental impact on persons in treatment for substance use disorders as well as those in long-term recovery striving to maintain abstinence from substance use.

Every human being's family is crucial to their existence because it teaches them how to live a better life. However, family not only helps to improve one's life, but it can also provide unsettling experiences that can lead to substance abuse. Some of the family factors causing drug abuse are parents' behavior, the relationship between parents and the individual, the relationship between the parents, the family atmosphere, and the family's economic standing (Foo, 2012). Drug addiction in a family result from three factors, the effect of pathological families on young people's behavior, easy access to drugs, and influence of groups of people of the same age. (Jêdrzejczak, M. ,2005). In environments like High-stress families are a risk factor for early and dangerous substance use (SAMHSA). The entire family is affected by the impacts of a substance use disorder. The individual using substances uniquely impacts every family member, but not limited to unmet developmental needs, damaged attachment, financial difficulties, legal issues, emotional pain, and occasionally violence being committed against him or her. Additionally, there is a higher chance of children getting SUD themselves. (Lander, 2013, Zimic, 2012). Inadequate parenting and other parent-child interaction patterns that promote aggressive, antisocial behavior in children increase the offspring's risk of an alcoholism subtype associated with antisocial personality disorder. (JACOB, 1997).

Peer Influence

Peer pressure to use drugs and alcohol can potentially cause addiction and be a factor in substance use disorders. Peer pressure may

be both good and bad, as some people may pressure others to refrain from using alcohol and drugs for recreational purposes. Studies and surveys find close friends hold more sway over behavior than acquaintances or strangers (addictioncenter.com). Typically, young people are the focus of conversations about peer pressure. Students that share their interests and are of a similar age like to hang out together. Experts generally agree that, in relation to alcohol, college-age kids are most at risk for peer pressure influencing them into substance use (addictioncenter.com). Peer pressure works the same way with drugs as with alcohol. Alcohol use is more acceptable and popular than illicit drug use, even if it's underage. Peer pressure's power to drive someone to engage in risky behavior can be disrupted by the impression of repercussions, which may make it less likely that people will succumb to pressure to take drugs. Peer pressure of some forms might not only result in risky short-term behavior but also lay the foundation for damaging lifelong habits.

Stressors in life and trauma

When trauma dominates a person's life, they frequently suffer from acute anxiety when exposed to situations that trigger them, and they may abuse drugs or alcohol to cope with the disturbance in their emotions. Although a person may believe that alcohol or opioid reduce their emotional pain, these substances can actually have the opposite effect and cause addiction. In the United States, traumatic childhood experiences like sexual and physical abuse and also neglect occur at an alarming pace and are seen as a serious public health issue (Khoury, et al., 2010). Teenagers who experienced physical or sexual abuse or assault were three times more likely to report prior or current substance addiction than teens without a history of trauma in the National Survey of Adolescents (Kilpatrick et al., 2003). Depending on the type of trauma,

how long it lasts, the developmental stage it occurs in, the genetics and gender of the person experiencing the trauma, and whether or not they have a sensitive, supportive caretaker, traumatic experiences in childhood may have a variety of adverse effects on an individual. The period of development during which the trauma takes place, the gender and genetic makeup of the person suffering the trauma, and the presence or absence of an attuned and supportive caretaker. (Amanda, 2021, De Bellis & Zisk, person's appeal to businesses or other people who wish to spread an idea or sell a product increase as their power grows. However, it also has some negative impacts on people, especially on the young generation; for example, Alcohol, in particular, is frequently portrayed in the media as not only acceptable but also desired behavior. Alcohol, marijuana, and other addictive substances are often glamorized in music videos, movies, TV shows, and by famous people. One study found that teenagers who indulge in social media activities are more likely to use tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana than their peers who don't (Costello, et. al., 2017). Many argue that social media glamorizes drugs and alcohol, and it is easy to see why. One study found that 97% of alcohol-related posts of youth on Instagram and Facebook showed alcohol in a positive social context (Hendriks, et al. 2018). Since social media is still a relatively new phenomenon, more research needs to be done. Some speculated causes of the link between social media and drug use include the glamorization of substance usage, harm to mental health, increased exposure to such substances, and availability of additional drug-purchasing options. The environment in which you were raised, common cultural beliefs, teachings about shame, and the exclusion of or participation in religious activities are just a few examples of how culture and religion can cause

addictive behavior. For instance, some cultures permit men to drink while forbidding women (2014; Levin et al., 2021; Nakazawa, 2015). People who have experienced trauma may be more susceptible to developing addictions as a way to control their mood, block out intrusive thoughts, and lessen the arousal brought on by elevated stress hormone levels (Amanda, 2021, Levin et al., 2021; Van der Kolk, 2014).

Media and Culture

Social media has become one of the most significant aspects of modern living. A person's power to influence others' opinions in an online social group is referred to as social media from the same behavior (greenestone.com). Problematic behaviors can be influenced by cultural norms, particularly if they are generally accepted by the entire society and are introduced to a person while they are young. People frequently become addicted as a form of protest against particular cultural norms and upbringing. Your neighborhood, like your house, workplace, or school, can have an impact on your drug or alcohol usage. You risk losing awareness of the risks associated with drugs if you reside in an area where they are sold and are viewed as socially and culturally acceptable. Additionally, living in a drug-filled neighborhood can be stressful, which may lead some community members to turn to drugs or alcohol use as a coping mechanism.

REFLECTIVE DISCUSSION

When a loved one in our home or in a community develops an addiction or a substance use disorder, we frequently blame the relevant external factors right away while completely ignoring our family environment, personal emotional problems, our society, cultural norms, and other relevant factors. However, we cannot eradicate this problem from society. Still, we can try to reduce the influences of these factors, which lead to

substance use disorder, or help the person with substance use disorder. Psychotherapy can help reduce the effects of family dynamics and influence triggers. It enables individuals to accept their patterns, look for solutions to change them and comprehend their background and how it has shaped their worldview and ability to handle stress. Similarly, some people think they should avoid friends if they use drugs or alcohol. Instead, help them to make it a habit to stay away from certain hangouts when individuals anticipate the temptation and trigger to be greater (gatewayfoundation.org). It is probably unrealistic to avoid social media. Still, family members or friends can help establish a rule to use social media for a short period or during influence. certain hours. Open communication with your teenager can reduce the likelihood of unpleasant emotions, mental health issues, and even substance usage (turnbridge.com). Discuss the potential risks of teenage drug usage with your child. Talk to your teen about social media reality and how it isn't reality. Ensure your kid understands that social media likes do not accurately reflect one's worth despite how much it may seem to matter now. Instead, let them know they are attractive, loved, and supported. Maintain these discussions and build a relationship of continuing trust with your youngster (turnbridge.com). By doing this, an individual can avoid going down the rabbit hole of feeling self-conscious and wasting time on social media. The community or culture plays an important role in the likelihood of abusing drugs. So, the member of the community has to work on reducing the belief or prejudice created by the preoccupied notion and create a better society.

CONCLUSION

A person's environment greatly impacts addiction development, from family dynamics and peer pressure to culture and social media. The present study primarily focuses on how environmental factors contribute to substance use. In our society, when a loved one develops an addiction or substance use disorder, we immediately blame the external elements that are appropriate for the scenario. At the same time, we entirely ignore our family environment, individual emotional issues, society, cultural norms, etc. This article attempts to help you explore more, identify addiction triggers, and better understand how environmental factors contribute to a loved one's problems. Understanding these "risk factors" may make some people depressed. People can make choices that lead to a higher quality of life rather than surrendering to habit. Individuals or societies can make little modifications to their surroundings to make them protective rather than risk factors for their addiction. Thus, it can only be eliminated via cultural renaissance and community sensitization and awareness in our society.

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Conflict of interest: None

Role of funding source: None