

Substance Abuse Among College Going Females In Kashmir: A Cross Sectional Study

Mudasir Nazir, Tariq A Mir, Bilal A Rather

BACKGROUND: Drug abuse is a global public health problem. It is rampant and a growing problem which is posing a significant threat to the human civilization. Primarily the problem was concentrated in the male section of the society, but currently major portion of female are also involved.

METHODS: The present descriptive study was conducted on college going females of Kashmir through a self-administered questionnaire DAST-10, to assess Drug Abuse among these females.

RESULTS: The study concluded that 20.44 % of the college attending females were involved in Drug Abuse and commonly used Drug was sleeping pills and relationship issues being the most common reason.

CONCLUSION: Drug Abuse is a preventable public health problem in females which requires attention, counselling and redressal.

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I. Introduction:

Drug Abuse is a consequential public health problem of the modern world. It is considered as most common premature and preventable cause of death [1]. In our society Drug Abuse is difficult to estimate due to under reporting [2]. commonly abused substances in this region are cannabis, amphetamine like stimulants, opioids[3][4][5][6] Kashmir valley is showing a rising trend of Drug Abuse. According to the report published by UNDCP, there are 70,000 drug addicts in Kashmir out of which approximately 31% are females and majority of the patients fall under age group of 18-30 years. [7]

II. Methods:

The study was conducted in female colleges of Kashmir valley and a total of 5 colleges were selected, catering the majority of subjects of interest. A convenience sample of 180 female students between age groups of 17-25 years were chosen. and the questionnaire elected for the study was DAST-10[8], consisting of an exhaustive list of queries ranging from the substance abused to the range of effects observed.

III. Results:

Prevalence of drug abuse among college attending females (n=181) was 20%. Sleeping Pills were the most common used (64.8%), followed by Cannabis 18.9%, Nail Polish 16.2%, Alcohol 13.5%, Steroids and Erasing fluid 8.1% and Solvents 2.7%, while as 13.5% of drug abusers were reluctant to mention the name of the drug.

Problems reported with drug intake by majority of subjects were memory loss, convulsions, withdrawal symptoms, negligent towards family and criminal activities

About 54 % were reluctant to reveal cause for substance intake. In others relationship issues was reported as a cause by 24.3%, curiosity about drug by 16.21% and peer pressure by 5.4%

IV. Discussion:

Female student flock is actively involved in substance abuse in Kashmir, as per UNDCP females contribute to the 30% of drug burden of the valley [9]. In India the most common substance of abuse is alcohol but in valley it is Benzodiazepines due to very limited availability of alcohol. Easily accessible substances required in day-to-day life like nail polish, erasing fluids and solvents are also commonly abused.

Among college going students relationship related problems are very prevalent thus making it as the commonly reported cause for substance abuse. Other reasons found are family circumstances, personality traits, childhood experiences, influence of friends and peers, the communities where they live and sometimes advertising and media messages.

Usually, subjects started drug abuse in late teen age, which is a transition phase from adolescence to adulthood and is marked as the most stressful period of life, characterized by decision making, future worries, relationship issues, therefore necessitates psychological support.

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