**DRUG ADUSE**

 **Drug Abuse** is one of the banes of modern society. It has hit all regions and all sections of our society. It is found in rural and urban areas, among poor and the rich, among the men and women, among, young or old. But it is most overwhelmingly practiced by young boys and girls especially in hostels and in almost all educational and technical institutions. Thus drug abuse is there in almost all the countries of the world. Day by day alcohol is becoming increasingly available and is used widely. Addiction has become really a curse upon human beings. It affects not only the drug addicts but also others directly or indirectly. For common people, it is a weakness of character. A moral theologian may see it as a matter of vice while as sociologists see it as a social problem. It is considered sin by religious people and as a crime by law enforcement groups. The psychiatrist can describe it as a personality disorder problem. The alcoholics anonymous groups and the treatment centres call them patients and alcoholism is handled as a disease.

Drug abuse is also known as substance abuse, and can be defined as a patterned use of a drug in which the user consumes the substance in amounts or with methods which are harmful to them or others. And when an individual persists in use of alcohol or other drugs despite problems related to use of the substance, substance dependence may be diagnosed. Thus compulsive and repetitive use may result in tolerance to the effect of the drug and results in withdrawal symptoms when use is reduced or stopped.. Drugs are chemical substances. Pharmaceutical preparation or a naturally occurring substance used primarily to bring about a change in the existing process or state (physiological, psychological or biochemical) can be called a drug. In other words, any chemical that alters the physical or mental functioning of an individual is a drug. Drugs, by interaction change the biochemical systems of the body. If a drug alters sensory perceptions, mood, thought process, feelings or behaviour it is known as a psychoactive drug. Pharmacology is that branch of science, which investigates drug actions.Certain drugs are legally permitted and at the same time others are illegal. Alcohol and tobacco are legally permitted as certain drugs for medication. However, medically used drugs can also be abused. It can be used too much, too long, too often, with wrong combinations etc. As a result, tolerance and dependency is produced illegal drugs like Heroin, Cocaine, etc. are detrimental to both body and mind. These drugs are taken for reasons other than medical, in an amount, strength, frequency manner that damages the physical or mental functioning of an individual and is called as 'Drug abuse'. Its use leads to addiction, which develops tolerance and dependence while others cause both physical and psychological dependence.

 Now a days different classification systems of drugs exist. Broadly speaking it can be divided into two major groups –

* Legal drugs
* Illegal drugs

Legal drugs are those drugs which are manufactured, produced, bought and sold within the confines of the law. Drugs like aspirin cough syrups, laxatives, antacids, vitamins and certain contraceptives etc. are legal drugs, which can be obtained without a prescription from the physician. These non-prescription drugs are used for hunger control, sedation, stimulation, dandruff, constipation,relief etc. and are produced and marketed for billions of dollars throughout the world. Drugs and medications dispensed by pharmacists on prescriptions given by doctors and dentist are called prescription drugs. They include analgesics, contraceptives, antibiotics, medicated shampoos, stimulants,sedatives, antidepressants,anaesthetics etc. At the same time many psychoactive prescription drugs like amphetamines, barbiturates, narcotics etc. are abused to alter the state of consciousness and sensitivity to pain etc. Huge quantities of alcohol, tobacco, coffee, and tea are used, abused and misused as social drugs. They are legally available psychoactive drugs. Thus these are divided into 3 categories:

(a) Non-prescription drugs

(b) Prescriprion drugs

(c) Social drugs – nicotine, caffeine and alcohol

**Illegal drugs** are those, which are not used legally but are abused. Largely it can be further divided into two according to its potentiality to produce high and low dependence:

* The amphetamines, cocaine, the depressants and the narcotics etc. produce high dependency.
* Marijuana and other hallucinogens produces low dependency.

IllegaI drugs are varying in nature according to their ability to produce clinical dependency. Heroin, cocaine, amphetamines, barbiturate etc. are strongly dependence producing drugs. At the same time Marijuana, LSD, Psilocylin etc. are weekly dependence producing drugs.

 Addictive Drugs are divided according to its nature, origin, mechanism of action and effects. They are studied under various categories, viz.

1. **Narcotic Analgesics** In Greek, the prefix ‘narco’ means to deaden or to be numb. Analgesic means 'pain killing' or 'pain relieving'. These drugs slow down a person and create feelings of euphoria. Dentists and doctors mostly prescribe these as painkillers. Codeine. Morphine, Percodan etc. are important among them. Some illegal drugs like Heroin and Brown sugar are narcotics. Medically the term 'narcotic' signifies opium and opium derivatives or synthetic products that have opium-like effects. They arc rather painkillers with high addictive nature.
2. **Stimulants** Chemicals and drugs which temporarily stimulate mind and body and excite or speed up the central nervous system, are called stimulants. Substances that people take to attain extraordinary powers of' mind and body are called "pep" pills. These are called "uppers" because they lift the person up from despair and despondency and give them mental balance, exhilaration and a super sensual feeling of happiness. Stimulants are available in the form of pills and are prescribed by doctors. But young men misuse them for getting a kind of intoxication and ecstasy feeling.Commonly used stimulants are Nicotine and Caffeine. The active and powerful stimulants are Cocaine and Amphetamines. The younger generation is badly attracted to these drugs. 'They reach the brain through blood and upset the nervous system.
3. **Depressants** Depressants at times called "downers", depress or slow down the functions of mind and especially the central nervous system, the heart beat and respiration. People resort to chemicals to have relaxation, calmness and proper sleep.
4. **Cannabis** Cannabis is the term, which refers to marijuana and other drugs, produced from Indian limp-plant, cannabis sativa. It has been cultivated for centuries in different parts of the world for its tough fibre of the stem, for the oil in its seed, and for its psychoactive properties. More than 60 cannabinoids can he prepared from cannabis plant, the important drug under this category are charas(Hashish), Ganja(Marijauna), Bhaang etc.

Addiction to any drug may include these general characteristics:

• Feeling that one needs the drug on a regular basis to have fun, relax or deal with your problems;

• Giving up familiar activities such as sports, homework, or hobbies;

• Sudden changes in work or school attendance and quality of work or grades;

• Doing things one normally wouldn’t do to obtain drugs, such as frequently borrowing money or stealing items from employer, home or school;

• Taking uncharacteristic risks, such as driving under the influence or sexually risky behaviour;

• Anger outbursts, acting irresponsibly and overall attitude change;

• Deterioration of physical appearance and grooming;

• Wearing sunglasses and/or long sleeve shirts frequently or at inappropriate times;

• No longer spending time with friends who don't use drugs and/or associating with known users;

• Engaging in secretive or suspicious behaviours such as frequent trips to storage rooms, restroom, basement, etc;

• Needing to use more of the drug of choice to achieve the same effects;

• Talking about drugs all the time and pressuring others to use with him;

• Feeling exhausted, depressed, hopeless, or suicidal.

**Risk Factors for Drug Abuse**

Certain factors predispose teenagers to drug abuse. These include

• Family history of substance abuse,

• History of depression and low self-esteem,

• Feelings of not fitting in, and dropping out of the mainstream.

• A smoking habit has likewise been correlated with substance abuse. Teens who smoke are eight times more likely to use marijuana, and twenty-two times more likely to use cocaine.

**Warning Signs a Teenager has Problem of Drug Abuse**

• **Physical Signs:** Fatigue, repeated health complaints, red and glazed eyes, lasting cough.

• **Emotional Signs:** Personality change, sudden mood changes, irritability, irresponsible behavior, poor judgment, general lack of interest.

• **Family Dynamics: S**tarting arguments, negative attitude, breaking rules, withdrawing from family, secretiveness.

• **School Behaviours’:** Decreased interest, negative attitude, drop in grades, many absences, truancy, and discipline problems.

• **Social Problems:** New friends, problems with the law, changes to less conventional styles in dress and music, sudden disregard in physical appearance and requests for money that are out of the ordinary.

**Implications of Drug Abuse**

• Risk to personal safety (danger of death or injury by overdose, accident or aggression)

• Damage to health (including brain damage, liver failure, mental problems etc.)

• Legal consequences (risk of imprisonment, fines and criminal record).

• Destructive behaviour (harm to self, family and friends).

• Drug dependency is also a common cause of financial problems and difficulties at work or school.

• People may lie or steal in order to continue using the drug, as a result, and may lose the trust of their friends and family.

• They may feel shame and guilt, due to repeated failures in trying to control their drug intake.

**Various preventive measures for drug abuse are as follows:**

* Teaching and awareness programs
* Resist peer pressure
* Manage stress and anxiety
* Increase taxes on addictive materials like cigarettes
* Campaigns to appeal youth against it
* Control on OTC medication
* Role of parents is imperative

**Various ways to help drug addicts would include following:**

* Easy and affordable access to Rehabilitation centres
* Employment opportunities
* Widespread education
* Entertainment avenues
* Mandatory physical fitness classes in the schools and colleges
* Individual contribution in the society to spread awareness about drug-abuse

**Conclusion**

It becomes clear that there is no part of the world that is free from the curse of drug trafficking and drug addiction**.** Drug abuses have become a serious problem which has affected millions of people including the youth who are supposed to be the torch bearers of the next generation. Drug abuse has deterioted lives of millions of drug addicts throughout the globe, as it has forced them to live a miserable life, where they cannot distinguish between life and death. The world statistics on drug scenario reveals a grim picture of drug abuse. It is the third largest business in the world, after petroleum and arms trade, and has an annual turnover of $500 billion. About 190 million people thought the globe consume drugs in one or other form. Drug abuse has many inherent problems in it, as it causes immense human distress and also its illegal production and distribution of drugs increased to crime and violence worldwide.The world community has undertaken many tasks to sensitize, the people in general and youth in particular about the menace of drugs. Celebration of June 26 as International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking every year is one such exercise. The position in India too is not better and the number of drug addicts is increasing day by day. The official report of UN reveals that there are at least one million heroin addicts registered in India, while the unofficial reports suggest that the number has reached upto 5 million. The Indian state is committed to face and crush the menace of drug trafficking and in this regard several measures have been taken both at central as well as at state level. Adequate steps including innovative changes in enforcement, legal and judicial systems have been taken to give effect to the crusade against drug abuse/addiction/trafficking. With a view to give deterrent message to potential offenders strict penalty has been provided for some offences relating to drugs. The NDPS Act 1958, with all its stringent provisions has been enacted to curb this menace. Strict provisions including, imprisonment with a minimum of 10 years extendable to 20 years, and fine from rupees 1 lakh to 2 lakh have been made to crush the menace. The state has come with comprehensive strategy involving specific programmes to bring about an overall reduction in use of drugs, and various government and NGO agencies are working in this regard. Steps like providing of education, counseling treatment and rehabilitation programs are taken to discourage the drug addiction/trafficking. As is well said –“it is never too late”. Therefore, we all need to focus strictly on this important matter now. Government should set targets to reduce the drug-abuse levels. It should ensure that efficient preventive measure are been taken. At our individual level we should contribute effectively in eradicating this problem. Besides, it is a major responsibility of parents to talk to their children and shape up their minds positively. They should not pressurize them academically and socially so much that they fall into this menace. Parental control including a healthy home environment is a must for controlling drug addiction. Parents, the guiding light must teach their children to feel empathy and compassion for others. Drug addiction can be a preventable disease. Research has shown that prevention programs that involve the family, schools, communities, and the media are effective in reducing drug abuse. Although many events and cultural factors affect drug abuse trends, when youths perceive drug abuse as harmful, they reduce their drug taking. It is necessary, therefore, to help youth and the general public to understand the risks of drug abuse and for teachers, parents, and health care professionals to keep sending the message that drug addiction can be prevented if a person never abuses drugs.

 “It is not the drug that makes a Drug Addict

rather it’s an escape from the reality”

NAME : EZEJELUE KAMSIYOCHUKWU CHIMUANYA

 MATRIC NUMBER: 19/MHS11/059

 DEPARTMENT: PHARMARCY

 COURSE CODE: GST 122

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