

**EVALUATION OF FACTORS INFLUENCING SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG YOUTH**

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ABSTRACT**Introduction:**

Drug addiction is a serious public health problem across the world and is among the preventable causes of current sickness and fatalities. Since there are numerous dangers that can influence teenage substance use, understanding the risk factors is essential to prevention. The study's goal was to evaluate the prevalence and seriousness of substance usage among young people.

Methodology:

At the government general hospital, RIMS, Kadapa, a cross-sectional observation research on the factors influencing substance addiction among 200 adolescent patients was conducted over the course of six months. cross-sectional

Results:

In the evaluation of substance abuse among 200 patients, a gender disparity was evident, with 81% (162) being male and 19% (38) female. Age of initiation revealed that 50% (100) of males began substance abuse between 15-20 years, with 16.5% (33) initiating above 20 years. Females displayed initiation patterns, with 10% (20) between 15-20 years, and 4.5% (9) each below 15 years and above 20 years. Factors contributing to initiation included curiosity (35.5%) and academic failure (5%) for males, while peer pressure (6.5%) and family discord (0.5%) influenced females.

Conclusion:

The study underscores the gravity of the substance abuse problem among young people and provides valuable insights into its prevalence and influencing factors.

KEYWORDS:

Substance addiction, Suicidal tendencies, Youth, Curiosity about drugs.

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INTRODUCTION

Substance abuse is a term which implies the use of harmful psychoactive substances including alcohol, tobacco, and other illicit drugs like opioids, heroin, and many more.⁽¹⁾ It has reached an alarming proportion in recent years, particularly among the young population aged between 10-24 years.⁽²⁾ Psychoactive substances as those, the self-administration of which produces mental and behavioural disorders. This may lead to abuse and subsequently addiction and dependence.⁽³⁾ Cannabis, heroin, and Indian-produced pharmaceutical drugs are the most frequently abused drugs in India.⁽⁴⁾ The most common causes of substance abuse can be Peer pressure, Curiosity, Unemployment, Influence of social media.⁽⁵⁾ Some of the most common types of drug abuse include stimulants, Cocaine, Adderall, opioids, Heroin, Sedatives, and hallucinogen abuse.⁽⁶⁾

The clinical manifestations of substance abuse include Neglecting responsibilities, Using drugs under dangerous conditions, and Experiencing legal trouble and problems in relationships.⁽⁷⁾ Use of drugs and substance abuse leads to effects on an Individual, Family, and community.⁽⁸⁾ Several factors can contribute to emotional and psychosocial stress, compelling one to practice drug abuse. Students are particularly prone to indulge in substance abuse due to various reasons, like academic and peer pressure, the appeal of popularity and identification, readily available pocket money, and relatively easy accessibility of several substances, especially in industrial, urban elite areas, including nicotine (cigarettes).⁽⁹⁾

Reason for Perceiving drugs and substance abuse includes the benefits of Feeling confident, Feeling closer to people, Feeling euphoric, Open up to new experiences, relief from anxiety/depression, and helping to get to sleep.⁽¹⁰⁾ The consequences leads to World wide the harmful use of alcohol results in 2.5 million deaths each year, 320,000 young people between the ages of 15 and 29 die from alcohol-related causes, resulting in 9% of all deaths in that age group.⁽¹¹⁾ It affects not only the user additionally, their family members, the community, and the entire society.⁽¹²⁾

The Preventive measure involves Effectively dealing with peer pressure, Dealing with life pressure, Seeking help for mental illness, Examining the risk factors, and keeping a well-balanced life.⁽¹³⁾ Medications and devices can be used to manage withdrawal symptoms, prevent relapse, and treat co-occurring conditions, Drugs like opioids help patients reduce drug seeking and related criminal behavior and help them become more open to behavioral treatments, Nicotine replacement therapies help to prevent relapse in people trying to quit. Naltrexone, Acamprosate, and Disulfiram have been FDA-approved medications for treating alcohol addiction. To treat other Co-occurring Health conditions like depression and anxiety, medications are available to treat individuals contributing to their condition.⁽¹⁴⁾

METHODOLOGY:

A 6-month (between November 2022 to April 2023) cross-sectional observational study carried out in the Government General Hospital in Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh. 200 young people who are with substance abuse aged 15-30 years are included by taking consent. Complete demographic details regarding type of substance abuse, lifestyle, marital status, occupation, education, parent's educational status, factors that are influencing to consumption of substances and perceived benefits because of substance abuse. Total data compiled in MS Excel 2019 software version to build graphs and tables of collected data and evaluation of factors influencing substance abuse is also performed in this software.

RESULTS:

Demographic features:

In the evaluation of substance abuse among 200 patients, a gender disparity was evident, with 81% (162) being male and 19% (38) female (Table 1). The study highlighted that males exhibited a higher propensity for substance abuse. In the context of residential status, 72.5% (145) hailed from urban regions, while rural regions accounted for 27.5% (55) of the patients. Parental educational status varied, as 49% (98) had literate parents, and 51% (102) had illiterate parents.

Table 1: Allocation of the subjects by gender:

S.NO.	Gender	No. of Patients	Percentage (%)
1	Male	162	81
2	Female	38	19

Education, Marital Status, and Socioeconomic Factors:

Educational levels were a notable factor, where 87% (174) of patients were literate, comprising both residents (80) and non-residents (94). Conversely, 13% (26) were illiterate (Table 2 &3). Marital status distribution revealed that the majority were unmarried at 81% (162), while married patients constituted 16.5% (33), and the minority were divorced at 2.5% (5) (Table 4). Monthly family income depicted a distribution of 51.5% (103) with high income, 43% (86) with medium income, and 5.5% (11) with low income.

Table 2: Parents Educational Status

S. No.	Educational status	No. of Patients	Percentage
1	Literate	98	49%
2	Illiterate	102	51%

Table 3: Educational Status of the Patient

Literate		Illiterate
Residential	Non-Residential	26
80	94	

Table 4: Marital Status

Married	Unmarried	Divorced
33	162	05

Factors of Substance Abuse and Initiation:

Factors of substance abuse displayed diversity. A significant 65% (130) consumed over two substances, predominantly among males, whereas females recorded 14% (28) in this category.

Regarding consumption frequency, 32.5% (65) of males consumed substances daily, while 10% (20) of females consumed them monthly. Family history of drug abuse was identified in 38% (76) of males and 7% (14) of females, contrasting with 43% (86) of males and 12% (24) of females with no such history.

Age of initiation revealed that 50% (100) of males began substance abuse between 15-20 years, with 16.5% (33) initiating above 20 years. Females displayed initiation patterns, with 10% (20) between 15-20 years, and 4.5% (9) each below 15 years and above 20 years. Factors contributing to initiation included curiosity (35.5%) and academic failure (5%) for males, while peer pressure (6.5%) and family discord (0.5%) influenced females (Figure 1). The types of drug abuse was shown in figure 2.

Figure 1: Causes for Initiation

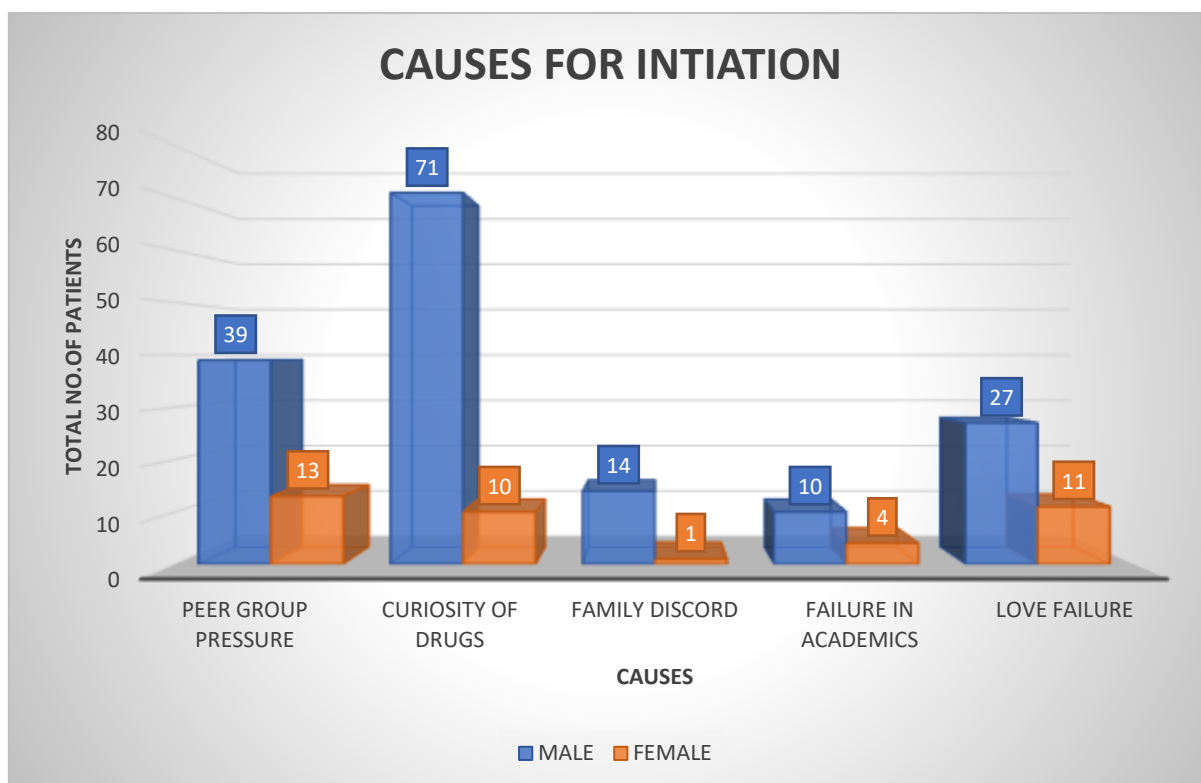
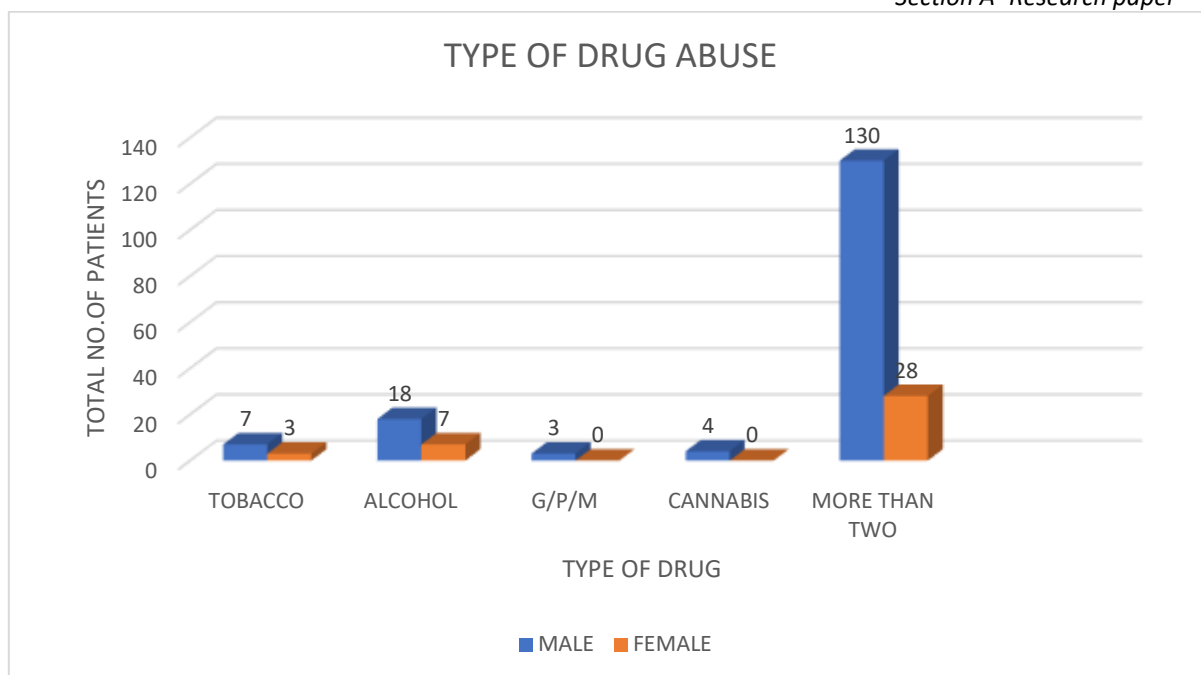


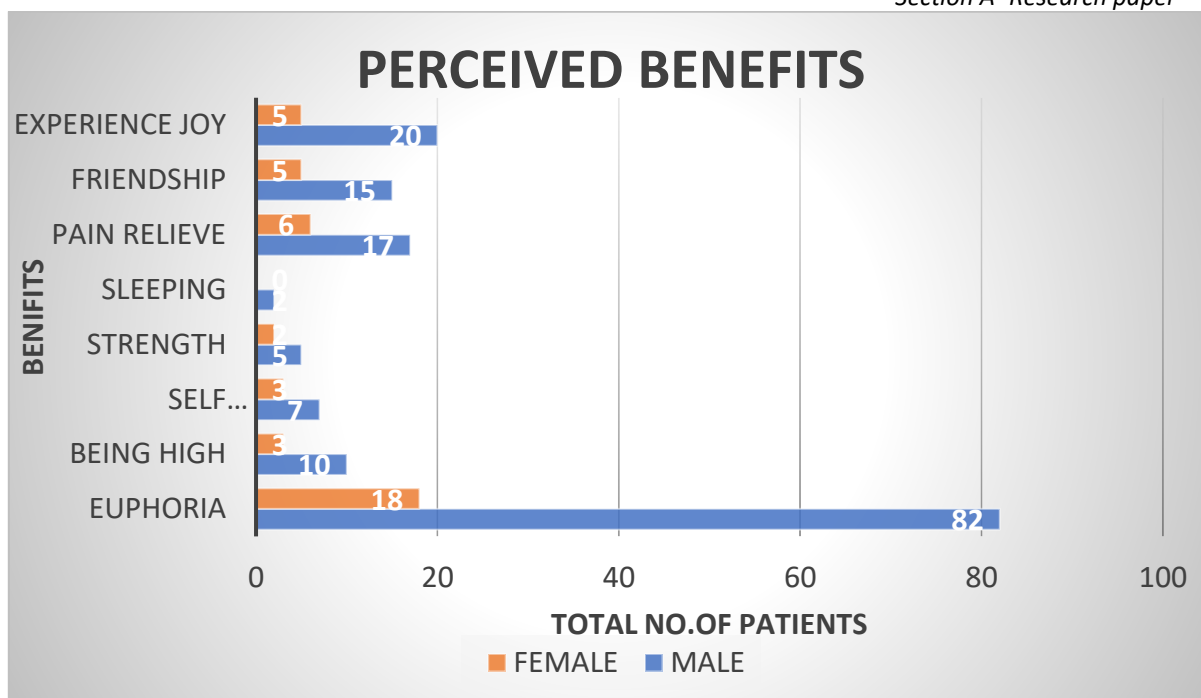
Figure 2: Types of drug abuse



Perceived Benefits and Gender Differences:

Evaluation of perceived benefits showcased that 41% (82) of males experienced euphoria as the primary benefit, while 1% (2) found benefits in sleeping. In females, 9% (18) derived euphoria, and 1% (2) reported strength as a benefit. The study highlighted gender differences in how perceived benefits were experienced among substance-abusing youth (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Perceived benefits with the substance intake



DISCUSSION:

Based on the results of our study, what we found is extremely plausible/remarkable. Every neighborhood has been severely impacted by substance misuse, which also lowers the socioeconomic standing of the area. Our study primarily focuses on the variables that contributed to drug addiction, including those caused by tobacco, cannabis, gutkha, pan masala, and other substances. The history of substance misuse in the family was also covered.

Substance misuse is a serious public health challenge. It includes the use of illegal drugs and the inappropriate use of legal substances, such as alcohol and tobacco. Whether through overindulgence in alcohol, misuse of prescription medication, or use of illegal drugs. Substance misuse is the use of alcohol or illicit or prescription drugs in a manner that may cause harm to users or to those around them.

The psychiatry division of GGH-RIMS is where we get the data for our research. In this study, there was an extremely greater frequency of substance addiction among young male candidates (81%) than young female candidates. It demonstrates the stark gender disparity in the frequency of substance misuse. Male candidates were higher in participation for research study than the female candidates. Similar findings were made in Tuffel baba, Abdul, Ganai et al. 2013's research study, which discovered that male students (37.5%) were more than female students (19.6%) who participated in substance misuse research study.

According to Kapoor et al. (2013) research study which was conducted in Haryana revealed that the prevalence of substance misuse was 14.2% in men and 2.3% in women. This indicates

that men are more likely than women to abuse drugs or alcohol. Person who abuse drugs are more likely to be violent against their wife and children, this may involve not only sexual violence but also physical and psychological violence. According to Juyal R et al. (2018) research study, the male students had a much higher prevalence of substance misuse (45.8%), whereas female students had a significantly lower prevalence (7.3%) in substance misuse.

In our research, we discovered that, when compared to rural areas (27.5%), metropolitan areas had the highest percentage of pupils who used drugs (72.5%). According to Himanshu Goswami's 2015 report, drug misuse was more common among young people residing in urban regions (92%) than in rural ones (8%). According to Dube et al 1977, Verma et al 1977, and the National Commission on Drug Addiction in India 1977, the urban population is a significant factor nowadays for misuse of the substance. According to the research work conducted by Joseph C Georer, rural areas people were significantly lower in misuse of illicit drugs than metropolitan areas people but alcohol and tobacco misuse is more in rural areas than the people living in urban areas.

According to the center for Disease Control and prevention Alcohol was the substance most commonly reported (35.8%), followed by cannabis (24.9%), prescription opioid misuse (18.5%), illicit stimulants (14.0%), heroin (10.2%), misuse of prescription sedatives or tranquilizers (8.5%), cocaine (7.4%), illicit fentanyl (4.9%), and prescription stimulant misuse (1.8%). Persons who live with a substance misuse parent have a greater risk of health, psychological and social problems. In our study, we found that the parent's educational status was disclosed, hence the majority of the parents (51%) were uneducated. We discovered that illiteracy of the parents is one of the causes for substance misuse in children when compared to educated parents (49%).

According to Eliea Benedetti, Gilberto Gerra, and others in 2020 research work, Low parental educational attainment was not substantially connected with substance abuse in their study, but poor parental educational level was significantly associated with substance misuse often. Even without a history of intravenous drug use, an alcohol- and drug-abusing lifestyle places the abuser, partners, and unborn children at risk for HIV infection due to impaired judgment, reduction of inhibitions.

As compared to married (6.5%) and divorced (2.5%) people, single people (18.1%) were more likely to misuse of drugs. According to our study, we also discovered that the families of abused people tend to have monthly incomes of above \$5,000. (51.5%) were more prone to substance misuse than people with medium or low monthly incomes (43%) and 5.5%, respectively. According to Namrita sinha et al research study, many studies have shown that marriage actually accelerates a decrease in drug use when compared to those who remain single.

In our study, we found that when compared to single drug use, young male patients (or) consumers (65%) consumed more than two drugs than female consumers (14%). Misuse of prescription opioids has been associated with use of illicit drugs, especially heroin. According to our study, more over half of the male patients (65%) were using more than two drugs, as opposed to just one medicine like gutkha (1.5%) in men. Most patients who were female (14%) were taking more than two medicines. Compared to females who only use tobacco (1.5%) or other substances occasionally. Another finding from our study is that males consume more alcohol daily (32.5%) than they do monthly (4.5%).

When compared to males' monthly substance usage rates (4.5%), daily substance use was higher once (32.5%). When compared to daily abuse consumption (2.5%) among females, monthly substance usage was higher (10%). Males and females have different patterns in consumption of alcohol and tobacco abuse.

Our study found that, when compared to patients with a family history of drug abuse, people without such a background had higher rates of drug usage. In which (38%) males and (7%) females were discovered to have a family history of drug misuse, whereas (43%) males and (12%) females were discovered to no relevant family history on drug abuse. The meta-study found that students who had family histories of alcohol or drug problems did not drink more but they were likely to be more at risk for problems that are associated with drug or alcohol use.

Using alcohol and tobacco at a young age has negative health effects. Some teens will experiment and stop, or continue to use occasionally without significant. In our investigation, we discovered that the majority of patients who take drugs are between the ages of 15-20. Males between the ages of 15-20 made up 50% of the population, with more than 20 years of age making up the lowest percentage (which is 16.5%), and females between the ages of 15-20 make up 20% of the population. 10% is equal to 4.5% in both less than 15 and more than 20 years.

Josphine Kowira Niconge's research article states that he reported the findings about the causes of initiation. In contrast to other social and cultural factors, the study found that peer group pressure has a considerable impact on drug and substance misuse in the target region.

Drugs used by teenagers · 16% had tried cannabis, 2% had tried amphetamines, 5% had tried ecstasy, 18% had tried inhalants, 2% had tried cocaine, 1% had tried heroin. By comparison, roughly 54% of teens reporting two to three symptoms – indicative of “mild” substance use disorder. In our study, we found that the causes of initiation in males were curiosity about drugs, which contributed the most (35.5%), and another cause was academic failure, which contributed the least (5%); in females, peer pressure was found to be the most common cause (6.5%), and family conflict was the least common cause (0.5%).

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, alcohol and tobacco are the two most common substances teens abuse. Marijuana is also commonly abused by teenagers.

CONCLUSION:

We came to the conclusion that the benefits were seen by all patients. The majority of patients (41%), who were having euphoria, were thereafter followed, on average, by male patients, who benefited least from sleep (1%). When it comes to female patients overall, 9% of patients report feeling euphoric, and 1% report having stronger benefits. Effective prevention efforts should consider gender-specific, age-specific, and context-specific factors, involving families, peers, and communities to provide the necessary support and resources for at-risk adolescents.

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Conflict of interest:

No conflict of interest

Ethical approval

This study was approved by the Institutional Ethical Committee.

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