

Good example of substance abuse in united states essay

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

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1. [Description of Substance Abuse in United States](#) \n \t
2. [Effects of Substance Abuse in United States](#) \n \t
3. [Sociological Theory Explaining the Causes for Substance Abuse](#) \n \t
4. [Interactionist Theory](#) \n \t
5. [References](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Description of Substance Abuse in United States

Studies show that approximately 12.8 million US citizens, about 6% of the family unit population aged 12 and above, consume illegal drugs on a regular basis (Rees & Wilborn, 2013, p. 12). This figure of drug users has decreased by about 50% from the year 1979 high of 25 million, a decline, which represents an extraordinary behavioral change. In spite of the drop, over a third of US citizens, twelve years and above, have attempted an illicit drug (Wish, 2012). Research indicates that 90% of illegal drug users use hashish or marijuana. About a third consumes cocaine or takes a prescription drug for nonmedical purposes. Approximately a fifth utilizes LSD.

Regrettably, about 60 million US citizens who use illegal drugs during early stage, as adults reject or decline the use of these substances (Rees & Wilborn, 2013, p. 12).

Youths who abuse substances increase the likelihood of getting life-long dependency difficulties or problems. Moreover, they are predisposed to greater health risks. Each day, approximately 3000 youths start smoking

cigarettes on a regular basis; consequently, a third of them will have shortened their lives (Rees & Wilborn, 2013, p. 13). Research indicates that, people or youths who smoke bhang are 85 times more probably to consume cocaine than their peers who have never attempted bhang (Wish, 2012). The consumption of illegal drugs amid eighth graders is approximately 150% over the last five years (Rees & Wilborn, 2013, p. 12). Even though the prevalence of illicit drug use is highly alarming, its current state has not been to epidemic levels experienced in the 1970s. The significant challenge for illicit drug policy is reversing dangerous trends.

Effects of Substance Abuse in United States

Early drug use always results in other forms of unproductive and unhealthy behavior. Illicit drugs are linked to premature sexual activity, involvement in criminal acts, dependence, and delinquency. Drug dependence is associated with three main processes namely tolerance, physical dependence, and psychological dependence. Tolerance occurs when repeated drug use results in diminished effects because the body of the user develops means to compensate for or balance chemical imbalance resulting from drug use (Wish, 2012). Physical dependence is defined by the symptoms of withdrawal if the use of drug is abruptly stopped. Psychological dependence is associated with an elevated rate of drug consumption, tendency to setback or relapse after halting use, and craving or longing for the drug (Rees & Wilborn, 2013, p. 12).

Another issue about substance use or consumption is its likely connections to crime. The reasoning that marijuana or opioid drugs may produce violent

criminality within their consumers is largely and an old discredited one.

Users of opioid seem to involve in crimes purposefully to get money instead of the argument that the drugs they use make them criminal. Alcohol is widely acknowledged as leading to violence and crime (Wish, 2012).

In United States, approximately over 1. 5 million arrests every year occur for drug-law infringements or violations. Laws created to the use of drugs have a justifiable social purpose, that is, to safeguard society from the problems or dangers of certain types of drug consumption. There is some concern or question, nonetheless, of whether the drug use dangers have been perceived rationally as well as whether laws have their intended effect (Wish, 2012).

Sociological Theory Explaining the Causes for Substance Abuse

Social process theories mainly focus on how individuals become involved with alcohol and drugs, how their inclusion or involvement changes with time, as well as what may initiate that change. Socialization theories are considered developmental in that they recognize main factors over duration of time, one defined by social boundaries as well as meanings resulting in alcohol and drug associated behaviors and consequences (Venanzi, 2008, p. 12).

Interactionist Theory

The theory posits that drug abuse and alcohol use can best be fathomed like a set of roles, identities, and behaviors or career type, which compromise way of life, running contrary to conventional society or culture in certain

ways or manners and consistent in other ways. Deviance, such as drug abuse, is understood to be a phenomenon, which changes with time, with an entry point or beginning and always having an end-point or desistance. The middle phase features enmeshment within deviance, with acquisition of drug-linked identities and roles. The idea of career embodies the concept of deviance like a lifestyle or way of life, having changes or fluctuations with time (Knutsson, 2009).

Interaction theory hold that some negative social reactions (stigma or label) to individual drug abuse facilitate more drug consumption since people probably internalizes or perceives the negative stigma applied, and persist in an abnormal or deviant activities. That is, when individuals are stigmatized and assumed or understood to have the negative characteristics, which accompany the drug abuser, their unique careers expands since they acknowledge or accepts pejorative view by society on them. This is termed self-fulfilling prophecy (Venanzi, 2008, p. 10). The negative labels internalization results in adoption of deviant identities and roles. When people adopt deviant roles or identities, they become enmeshed in abnormal or deviant careers. Therefore, the so-termed middle period or phase of the abnormal career features heavy involvement in deviant behaviors as well as related activities.

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