

American indians (native americans) drug and alcohol use

[Health & Medicine](#), [Drug Abuse](#)



People who engage in substance abuse like drugs, alcohol and tobacco have their own different reasons, some maybe complicated but what is evident is that the society plays a significant role why these people are involved in substance abuse. The consequence for this abuse is seen in our hospitals and emergency departments through the direct damage to health by substance abuse and its relation to physical trauma. Those who are jailed and go to prison are known to have a strong connection to substance abuse and dependence.

A high percentage of this substance abuse is very evident among the American Natives. American Natives are the indigenous people from the region of North America now encompassed by the continental United States. They comprise a large number of distinct tribes and ethnic groups, they are also known as American Indians or the first nation's people. American Indians represent a unique population within the U. S. not only because of their oppression suffered from the development of the country but also in gaining recognition.

The long history of oppression in the U. S. had a devastating effect on the health and well-being of the natives. The history of these people includes the colonization, outlawing their practices and languages and forced relocation, which created the mistrust on the U. S. programs. This event continues to affect the experiences of the natives which are impacted by poverty, ill health, family violence and drug and alcohol abuse. According to the survey made by the National Household survey on Drug Abuse about fifty percent of teenagers nowadays are engaged in alcohol drinking.

The figures show that 80 percent of these are Natives youth engaging in both alcohol drinking and drug use. This happens because these youths are predisposed to different factors like cultural conflict, post-traumatic stress and low self esteem that increase the risks of these youth to additional hazards in their environment. (Gale 2000) According to the reports made by the NSDUH, among the other racial groups, American Indians suffer from substance abuse greatly. The National Drug survey and health examines the rates of substance abuse like drugs and alcohol among the American Indians aged 12 and older.

During 2002-2005, American Indians aging 12 and above are already engaged in alcohol drinking. American Indians male shows a high percentage of drinking than those of the other racial groups in the past year. This report also shows that American Indians have high percentage than other racial groups in terms of drug use and disorders. (Substance Use and Substance Use Disorders among American Indians and Alaska Natives 2007) A national Indian Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention task Force was established under the National Congress of American Indians in September 2000.

This aim for the leadership involvement and expand the efforts and membership of the National committee to include a wider and more diverse geographically representative group of Tribal leaders throughout Indian Country. This helps prevent the tribes, tribes' leaders, elders, adults and youth recognize the value of preventing alcohol and substance abuse to preserve the overall well being of the community, the culture and traditions. It

developed and established a strong political leverage that will support initiatives for alcohol and substances abuse prevention in Indian country.

It also aims to improve the incidence of alcohol and substance neglect for any adult and youth and to recognize that prevention must take place for all our people, not just early life and that it is a long development. Approximately 1.5% of the U. S is composed of these Native Americans which are American Indians, and with this high percentage is the problem it inflicts as well. Traditional natives' values when clashed with the values of the domain society, cultural conflict arise. Native youth are mostly affected by this are caught up in confusion about their identity and self image.

Conflicts arise in coping up with their adolescence as well as to their identity as an Indian. This may produce a harmful effect in terms of the racialdiscriminationand oppression that they may get involve with because of their native background, hence this becomes a factor for native youth to engage in alcohol and drug abuse as a form of an escape from the society to which they belong. Because of the pressure and the stress due to the cultural conflict related to the low socio-economic status among the natives this causes a great increase in the risks of those who are engaged in alcohol and substance abuse.

Acculturation is one of the many factors why natives engage in substance abuse. This is a stressful and causes a lot of conflict for the natives in order to cope with the stress and pressure alcohol and drug use are often the coping mechanism in this situation. An approach used to prevent substance abuse among the American Indians is called bicultural competence skills.

This approach helps American Indian youth to combat the substance use and its related problem. This was first advanced by LaFromboise, wherein its way is to blend the adaptive values and roles of both the culture in which they are raised and by which they are surrounded.

Its roles are in the knowledge and practice in communication, coping, and discrimination skills which provide the theoretical foundation in the prevention of substance abuse to the American native's youth. Knowledge and practice in the bicultural skills can occur through cognitive and behavioral principles drawn from the social learning theory. Directed by learning theory, cognitive values of information, problem solving, and self-instruction can be merged with behavioral principles of nonverbal and verbal communication, coaching, and social network building.

This gives the American Indians to individualize themselves for them to for the better coping up abilities and helps manage stress related situation. This approach gives them an idea of the things that they are not familiar with and with this adaptation through learning is much easier. DISCUSSION National attention to the health hazards and societal costs attributed to substance abuse use led to sharply decreased tolerance for any use of illicit drugs or abuse of illicit drugs alcohol and tobacco.

The percentage of young people reporting substance use has been high although out the United States even those belonging to the ethnic groups like the American Indians. Many factors are to be considered on why these groups of people engage in alcohol and substance abuse. American Natives known as the American Indians are one of the widest ethnic groups that are

in the United States. Although consider a minor to many, this group of people have high increase in problems that are associated with drinking and substance abuse like the use of drugs.

This Minority like in other people in the state are in the over use of drugs and excessive drinking. Factors like stress, pressure among the youth especially with teens, coping mechanism for some and most of all the oppression and culture conflict that arises are the contributors to the high percentage of Native Americans misuse of alcohol and drugs. Reports shows that a high percentage of these Native comprises of the most involved racial group in substance abuse and disorders. Even the minors are drawn out from this type of scenarios.

Among the racial groups in the United States, 60% of these people are engage in alcohol and drug use including the youth and still continue to rise. This is one of the major problems that are encountered by the Government in the States and the American Indians leaders. Cultural conflict this is one of the predisposing factors why substance abuse and disorders arises. When the culture of the American Indians are collides with the dominant groups, conflicts arises specially to the beliefs and values of these Natives. Discrimination usually occur creating confusion and loss of self esteem among the natives.

The imposed culture is cannot easily be integrated by the natives causing a confusion and dilemma within their part. In order to cope up with this situation this people find drinking and drug use a form of an escape from the pressure of the domain society they are in. It has been very crucial for the

Native Americans to adjust to the culture that is imposed to them given to them because of the less support and rights they are getting from the Government. It has caused them a lot of stress to incorporate all the beliefs and values that they have no knowledge about causing a great struggle to the culture they are brought up with.

This high incidence of drinking and drug abuse is also very evident among the American Indians youth. At the studies that was conducted in the United States regarding minor drinking and drugs use, a high percentage of this comprises the American Indians youth. Mostly the reason why youth are engage in these activities is because of the peer pressure they are involved with. This problem of the youth regarding their peers is mostly about the racial issues they are in, in order to identify themselves with the domain society they tend to follow what is done by those people regardless if its beneficial for them or not.

Youth of the American Indians are on a very critical situation because of the Native background they have. Due to this culture conflict still arises and it is hard for the teens to identify themselves and tend to loose their own identity because of the presented situation. Due to this pressure arises among other youths and in order for them to identify and belong they are easily influenced to engage in drinking and drug abuses. Another factor why Natives have a high percentage of alcohol and drug abuse is that in terms of their economic status.

Most of the natives have a low socio-economic life that is very evident in the type of living they are in. Since the natives are given less recognition and

support their economic life has not improved since. Due to this as a created pressure is added to the natives causing them to withdraw from the society and engage in drinking. This drinking becomes habitual and eventually becomes an excess or over use causing drinking related disorders. Some after engaging in drinking also use drugs as a form of escape to the reality that is against them.

Problems that arise because of this factor is very evident among the Natives now even the yearly surveys regarding the American Natives shows a high and still rising percentage of drugs and alcohol misuse. These Natives are not given much recognition and are oppressed mainly of their rights that it is why it is hard for them to cope up with the environment and imposed culture that they are in. The society plays much of a big role on how these Native Americans are persuaded to engage in alcohol drinking. The society that they are in accepts drinking in their culture where it is seen to the daily activities of these people.

Not ware of the damage it has on them because of the domain society's involvement in this they tend to engage on it as well hoping that this would help them in coping up with the society. Alcohol has become the primary substance of abuse among American Indians. It has accounted of about 62% of all those who have been admitted of those being treated. The prevalence of this alcohol abuse is high on both men and women. Marijuana is the most elicited drug of choice among American Indians, it was reported that 12% of those being admitted are treated because of this.

Drug abuse and excessive alcohol has a great impact on health. Most of those who engage in this are predispose to the different problems regarding their health. Alcohol has a great effect on the body as this caused depression to the central nervous system, as a depressant it has a great effect on the functions of the brain. Most of the people that are engage in excessive alcohol drinking have been reported to have brain malfunction causing a slow impulse and movement in the brain. Alcohol causes liver disease and most of the people who are alcoholics die because of the liver diseases such as liver cirrhosis which is fatal.

Those that are into drinking are also at risk to cancer and sexually transmitted diseases. Drugs interfere with the brain's ability to take in, sort, and synthesize information. They distort perception, which can lead users to harm themselves or others. Drug use also affects sensation and impairs memory. Many approaches have been used in order to compensate in the high percentage of the Native Americans that are engaged in alcohol and drug abuse. Programs like youth organization have been established for better self actualization and esteem building which provides the framework for the youth.

Peer support groups and other programs ranging in traditional cultural practices like dancing, sweat lodge, or other ceremonies are initiated to provide a sense of feeling of the individual's tribal pride and unity would be transmitted. The Indian Alcohol and Substance Abuse program was developed by the U. S. government. This has been established by the public law 106-553, which provides the funding and technical assistance to

federally recognized government to plan, develop, implement and enhance tribal justice strategies involving alcohol and crime related and substance abuse.

The objective of this program is to establish a multidisciplinary advisory team plan, to implement and monitor the propose strategy. It identifies and prosecutes individuals who illegally transport and distribute and used the alcohol and substances to tribal communities. The government also established a National Indian Alcohol and Substance Taskforce which assists the tribe leaders and their youth in the prevention of alcohol and substance abuse and assist to their personal healing, recovery and lifetime wellness.

It also helps in the improvement of the life of the American Indians families and communities in enhancing their cultural preservation, the upholding in the dignity and autonomy of the Indian Nations. It also gives focus to leadership and deals with the devastating problem of alcohol and substance abuse of the country. This task force is working with the federal government Agencies in obtaining a consistent funding to support the different programs regarding the alcohol and drug abuse. The U. S. Department of Justice supports tribe groups' efforts to deal with alcohol and substance abuse in communities where Natives live.

This community is composed of the Indian tribes and native villages which they create an appropriate approach to address the alcohol and substance abuse. The Government provides the resources needed by the Indian Countries in order to create the awareness, conduct prevention and intervention that would help control alcohol and drug abuse. The

government is also giving privilege to the tribal leaders to create policies that would help in eradicating alcohol and drug abuses among the Natives. 90% of arrests that have been reported by the Tribal law enforcement are caused by alcohol related problems.

The arrests made were conducted on the small group of individuals in the community comprising of the tribal justice system, health service system and family support system. This law enforcement taskforce often experience high violent crime and offenders that are associated with drug and alcohol abuse which make it hard for the tribal communities to keep peace and order. The drug Court Discretionary Grant program is one the many programs that helps aid and fund assistance to the states, courts and local services that is needed to help the government to lessen the alcohol and drug offenders.

This program is aimed on nonviolent offenders and is targeted to implement a drug court based components. It supports the drug court implementation and improvement of the technical assistance that is directed to the National Drug court Training and Technical Assistance Program in increasing the knowledge of those that are in the drug court practitioners plan to carry on efficient drug programs giving emphasis on the roles and trainings that would develop teams and coordinated study on treatment system. The Nevada Urban Indians, Inc.

substance abuse program is dedicated to providing quality outpatient treatment. Efforts are made to help each client become aware of the relationship between substance use and the effects it may have on the

individual's life. The client deals with feelings and behaviors that are a result of substance abuse or dependency. It is a program concerned with the culture and helps attempt to guarantee that the client is treated with respect. In this program the client is to learn the impact of substance abuse to their life.

Its goal is to restore the client's life productively and to help the client to learn ways on how he/she would be able to adapt to the changes and the different stressors that are present nowadays. The department of education has provided a safe and drug free program on the schools, this provides the support on the school to help assist in the communities in preventing drug and alcohol abuse and violence. This program grants the technical assistance and training for the school.

The American Indian Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (AIRRTC) identify the need to address the increase dependency of American Indians to drug and alcohol. Many research findings shows that alcohol and drug abuse among the American Indians are often associated with certain circumstances in their lives which affects the rate of employment opportunities to American Indians because of the myth that is tagged to the American Indians. Employees that are American Indians are in struggle to get a job because of they are faced with employers that stereotypes them.

All these programs are made available by the Government in the attempt to help improve the increasing percentage of the American Indians that are engaged in alcohol and substance abuse. Aiming to somehow if not totally eradicate but lessen the incidence of the Natives involvement in substance

abuse. These programs somehow are trying to aid the level of living and acceptance of the natives regarding their situation and help to somehow uplift the standard of that living. CONCLUSION

Alcohol and drug abuse are known to be a major health problems on American Indians nowadays. Efforts in the treatment and prevention of this may be more effective if the approach that it is going to undergo is if the native's way and beliefs are also incorporated. It is not enough that programs are established but what is important is that it is implemented and actions are taken among the leaders to actually put into works all the said programs that have been funded by the Government.

It is important also to involve the Natives in the different programs that the government has for them not only those that are engaged in alcohol and drug abuse but also those that are not in order to prevent them from doing the same thing. It is important that the youth are educated regarding the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol to them and it is important that they are able to identify themselves on the community they belong. It is important that the American Indians youth are given the emphasis because of the developmental stage they are in.

Parents should be able to give the support and information needed to their minors in order to reduce the alcohol and drug related problems. It is important when addressing to this situation the culture of the American Natives is not neglected and should be given a more emphasis. The culture that they belong would help improvement in understanding why these natives are engaged in alcohol and drug abuse. Through the Government

and other leaders could develop a program not only for the improvement of those under the substance abuse but even those that are risk for it.

It is important that the programs that are implemented would coincide with the beliefs or the culture of this people so that it would not be hard for them to integrate the programs they are undergoing. It is important that the Natives are aware of the effects of drugs and alcohol to their body as this is significant in their health. It is important also that the government should somehow recognize the other needs of these Natives that are contributing to the prevalence of alcohol and drug abuse.

It is important that every aspect should be examined in order to give a better option for the improvement of the programs that are addressed to these situations. Health care facilities should also be readily available to the Natives; this would aid in the awareness to their health and would somehow improve their knowledge regarding the effects of these abusive substances to their health. The government and the Natives leader should coordinate with each other more often so that the needs and improvements regarding the treatment and other related problems regarding these natives are addressed.

Support and recognition should be given to these natives. It is important that they should be given the same privileges and recognition as those of the domain society. They should not discriminated instead the culture and beliefs that they have should be respected so that this would help boost the moral confidence of the Natives and would aid in determining their identity I therefore recommend further studies should be conducted on the Native

Americans response regarding the treatment and the program should be further evaluated.