

Week3 dq team



Running Head: DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN HABIT/ADDICTION AND  
INFLAMMATION/ALLERGY Habit/Addiction and Inflammation/Allergy

Name:

Institution:

Abstract

The terms habit and addiction tend to be used interchangeably in substance abuse. However, the two differ in the degree of dependence and also in terms of compulsion, negative consequences and the occurrence of withdrawal symptoms. An allergy is a hypersensitivity to certain foreign substances in the body. An allergic reaction produces an inflammation in the tissue which is affected by the allergen.

Habit and Addiction.

The terms habit and addiction are clearly distinguishable in connotation. However, in the area of substance abuse, there is often a tendency to use the terms interchangeably. The clear distinction between the two terms can be understood on the basis of their definitions. A habit, or habituation, is “ becoming accustomed to any behavior or condition, including psychoactive substance use.” In contrast, an addiction is defined as “ Repeated use of a psychoactive substance, to the extent that the user is periodically or chronically intoxicated, shows a compulsion to take the preferred substance, has great difficulty in voluntarily ceasing or modifying substance use, and exhibits determination to obtain psychoactive substance by almost any means” (WHO Lexicon, 2008).

Based on the above, we can clearly distinguish between habituation and addiction. Habituation differs from addiction mainly in the absence of physical and psychological dependence, as a desire rather than a compulsion

for the substance and the absence of a tendency to progressively increase the dose. A habit is a pattern of behavior which tends to be repetitive and is executed by conscious choice. It is regular, tends to result in beneficial outcomes and usually increases efficiency. On the other hand, an addiction dominates one's life to the exclusion of all other activities and responsibilities and has a detrimental effect on the individual and society. Withdrawal symptoms characterize an addict's efforts to stop usage of the substance. Habits and addictions basically differ in the degree of dependence. Unlike habits, addictions include compulsion, craving, increased tolerance for the substance and withdrawal symptoms. A nightcap, which becomes the customary pre-requisite for a good night's sleep, is a habit. The need for increasing quantities of alcohol to feel good is an addiction.

#### Allergy and Inflammation.

An allergy is defined as " abnormal sensitivity to a substance which is normally tolerated and generally considered harmless" (AAAAI Website). The immune system is the body's defense mechanism against foreign bodies, or antigens, which are protein molecules that enter the body through inhalation, ingestion, absorption or injection. The immune system produces millions of different antibodies, or immunoglobulins, which circulate in the bloodstream and specifically target and bind to corresponding antigens. An antigen which triggers an allergic reaction is called an allergen (such as pollen, dander and dust mites). It is the IgE class of antibodies which are particularly sensitized to allergens. The IgE molecules coat the surface of mast cells in the lining of the nose, eyes, lungs and gastrointestinal tract and trigger allergic reactions when they come into contact with specific allergens. Allergic reactions include coughing, sneezing, itching and,

significantly, inflammation.

An inflammation is another defensive body mechanism, in which the leucocytes in the blood release certain chemical substances to protect against infection and from invading bacteria and viruses. The released chemicals result in increased blood flow to that particular area, causing redness and warmth. There is leakage of fluid into the tissue, causing the characteristic swelling. Nerves may be stimulated, causing pain (Cleveland Clinic Website).

Allergic reactions produce inflammations in the tissues where they occur. The mast cells, activated by exposure to allergens, release chemical mediators. These combine with other inflammatory cells in the bloodstream and the resident cells in the affected tissue to cause inflammation in the tissue. This results in allergic symptoms such as redness, excessive mucous gland secretion and hypersensitivity to irritants. Thus, allergic inflammation of tissues is produced by allergic reactions in these tissues (AAAAI Website).

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