

Good research paper about drug addiction, consequences and remedies

[Health & Medicine](#), [Alcoholism](#)



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Abstract

The habit of addiction to drugs and alcohol among the youth affect their future career. Drug addiction also leads to spreading deadly infectious diseases as well since drug addicts are more likely to use same needles to administer drugs to feel a quicker and intensive high. Since youngsters around the world are more susceptible to drug addiction, nations are threatened with huge loss in human capital and productivity. A person's Physical appearance and behavior patterns reveal to others his addiction. Addiction is a serious social problem since an addicted person, through his crimes and other actions, in fact, hurt many others. Therefore, it is very important to identify addiction at the right time to save an individual's future.

Drug addiction continues to be the cause of many problems across the world today in spite of the severe control measures undertaken by countries across the globe. National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence reports that crimes like murder, robbery, rape, burglary, aggravated assault, arson and many other dangerous crimes in the United States are associated with the use of illegal drugs (" Drugs and crime," 2009). The council also reports that 80 % of the offenders in the United States abuse alcohol and drugs while 60 % of the individuals arrested on most charges tested positive for illegal substances during arrest (" Drugs and crime," 2009). Drug use has a wide range of negative implications on the society, the most dangerous one being exposure and addiction at a very young age. Alcohol addiction results in many accident deaths. Also, the habit leads to degradation of family values

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and breaking down of good relationships in the neighborhoods. Many people believe that drug addiction affects only the drug user. As known to families, friends and neighbors of people affected with drug addiction, drug abuse is a social menace that affects not only the users and their families but also the entire society. For example, a person addicted to drugs cannot control himself and may be exposed to various diseases in addition to self-inflicted injuries that may affect other family members and friends. Also, drug addiction leads the persons to commit a chain of unfavorable deeds including telling lies or stealing money for buying drugs, continuous absence at workplace that warrants firing from job which in turn affects the entire family, and committing serious crimes that affect many other families in the neighborhoods and society. Drug addiction ruins the future of individuals by affecting their body, mind and spirit and it is important to detect the behavior in individuals at an earlier stage and rehabilitate them to secure their future.

Drug Addiction

Drug addiction is defined as a persistent and degenerating brain disease characterized by uncontrollable seeking and use of drugs in spite of the harmful consequences (Volkow, 2014). Drug addiction is categorized as a brain disease since it changes the structure and functioning of the brain. The brain change which lasts for a longer period leads to a wide range of harmful and mostly self-destructive behavior patterns (Volkow, 2014). This complex disease of drug addiction, in addition to putting the life of the user in danger, continues to threaten the family, neighborhood and society.

It is estimated that in America alone addiction to substances like alcohol, nicotine, illicit and other prescribed drugs costs the population annually more than \$ 700 billion toward additional healthcare costs and expenses associated with crimes and loss of productivity (“ The Economic Impact of Illicit Drug Use on American Society,” 2011). In America 90, 000 deaths are attributed each year to drugs, both illicit and prescribed, and alcohol over use. Tobacco is associated with the death of more than 480, 000 people in America (“ Alcohol-Related Disease Impact,” 2010).

During the initial stage of addiction, a drug user makes voluntary decisions concerning use of a particular drug or alcohol. When the habit of addiction to drugs and alcohol takes control of the person, he loses the ability to exert control on his own self. Alcohol and drugs, upon entering the brain, result in effecting significant changes in the areas of brain that are crucial for making decisions, judgments and learning. Addiction motivates the persons to repeatedly use the substances without any control or fear about the consequences. The fact that individuals lose memory on overuse of drugs and alcohol puts their friends and family members in embarrassing situations that hurt them mentally (“ The Truth about Holiday Spirits: How to Celebrate Safely This Season,” 2014).

Drug Abuse

A person is said to indulge in drug abuse when he uses a drug obtained by legal or illegal means for pleasure. People may use drugs and other intoxicating substances for different purposes. Drug abuse is associated with cases in which the substances are used for getting pleasure. For example,

repeated use of a drug or any other substance for pleasure, reduce mental stress, altering or avoiding the reality and using a prescribed drug in manners other than indicated by the prescriber (Hall, Hawkinberry & Scott, 2010). More often, teens across the world are known for abusing prescribed drugs, mainly narcotics that are prescribed to relieve pain, and certain stimulant medications that treat various disorders (Hall, Hawkinberry & Scott, 2010).

The compulsive and excessive habit of damaging one's one body, mind and spirit seriously injures body parts like the heart, liver and kidney apart from causing dysfunctional patterns of behavior, memory loss and hallucinations that ultimately leads to death. It is a well-known fact that traumatized individuals have much difficulty learning skills to overcome addiction (Rothman and O'Gorman, 2008). To ensure better future to the victims and save their families, the habit of addiction needs to be identified and treated at the right time.

Physical and Psychological Addiction

Physical addiction is a compulsive need to use drugs or other harmful substances to the body despite the consequences. As an individual continues to use drugs, the body gradually adjusts to the existence of the drug so that in due course the body gets totally accustomed to the substance. This is also known as tolerance of the human body (Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment: A Research-Based Guide, 2012). A person gets physically addicted to a substance or drug when he or she has an increased bodily tolerance for the substance. For example, physically addicted people often

experience certain physical symptoms or symptoms of withdrawal in their body when they try either to stop or reduce the quantity of intake in a substantial manner. These symptoms include body aches of different kinds, nausea and vomiting, seizures, change of blood pressure and pulse rate, body tremors, high temperatures, sweating, diarrhea and change of respiratory rate (“ American Psychiatric Association,” 2010).

Drug cues or certain brain signals generated in a person addicted to alcohol and drugs continue to foster drug cravings and use. Cues drive a person to feel an additional pull for having a drink or drug. The drug causes several physical changes to the nerve cells of the brain. The changes remain in the brain even long after the person stops drinking alcohol or using a drug. A person using drug or alcohol and is in a highly inebriated state may be dependent on others for moving about and taking ordinary day to day (“ American Psychiatric Association,” 2010).

Individuals may be mentally dependent on certain substances even as they may be aware of the harm those products pose to themselves and their families (“ American Psychiatric Association,” 2010). For example, many people use drugs compulsively, over-eat, gamble or even shop nearly every time in response to situations that make them emotionally stressed. Thus, individuals addicted to certain habits are only dependent on certain experiences, and the response to certain chemicals or drugs is just an example. Because these psychologically driven addictions are neither based on brain effects of drugs, they explain why individuals often change addictive acts from a particular drug or drink to an entirely different one.

Psychological addiction refers to the condition in which individuals are

mentally dependent on some specific substances and behaviors. Even though they are aware of the harmful effects of the substances or behaviors, these psychological symptoms continue to drive their actions. Psychological addiction ranges from a wide range of symptoms including an intense craving to consume alcohol or a drug, feeling of anxiety toward satisfying the addictive behavior, less or no appetite for food, hiding personal feelings and problems, restlessness, mental obsession with drugs, alcohol or some other substance, insomnia, mood swings and loss of memory (Field et al., 2009).

Drugs and the Human Body

Even as different drugs have dissimilar physical effects in human bodies, the indications of addiction appear to be one and the same. Several bodily signs begin to show up in the individual's body and its functions. The major physical sign is that addicted individuals begin to lose appetite and change sleep pattern. They also lose body weight since certain drugs stop appetite and block the quantity of fat and other nutrient absorption of the body.

Drugs like alcohol, heroin, marijuana and barbiturates act as depressants of the central nervous system. These drugs on reaching the brain through the blood stream slow down vital body functions like heartbeat, breathing and digestion and thus making the body lose weight. Severe alcohol consumption is also found to influence the body's immune system by destroying the white blood cells that are responsible for fighting infections. (Molina et al., 2010).

As a result the body is prone to viral and bacterial infections. Thus, people who drink for a prolonged period are susceptible for highly infectious diseases like pneumonia, meningitis, hepatitis and tuberculosis (Molina et al.,

2010). Similarly, for some individuals, the high-calorie food taken along with alcoholic beverages, increases the body weight and puts additional burden on their vital body organs. Chaotic lifestyles of drug addicts also warrant significant metabolic and nutritional complications, as some studies have shown (Hendricks & Gorbach, 2009). Lack of exercise and healthy eating habits of individuals addicted to alcohol and drugs also make them gain weight rapidly.

Drug and alcohol addictions also adversely reflect in the physical appearance of the individuals. Uncontrollable obsession with drugs and alcohol motivate them to pay less attention toward dressing and keeping their body clean. Frequent use of needles for injecting drugs leave their skins with bruises or blood spots. Irritating throat and cough, slow speech, bloodshot eyes, tripping and constant scratching of skin are some of the prominent physical signs of individuals addicted to drugs and alcohol. The breath and body of drug addicts give unusual smell to other family members at home or fellow colleagues close by at the workplace. Many drugs induce sweat with strong obnoxious smell that gives the other family members of drug users an embarrassing situation, particularly during social gatherings or parties (“ The Authority in Drug & Alcohol Rehabilitation and Recovery,” 2015).

Consequences of Addiction

Many times individuals addicted to alcohol and drugs enter adulthood with no proper preparation to face the challenges of adult life, which motivates them further to turn to drugs, which in turn is reflected in sudden attitudinal change about the workplace on the part of the individuals. The United States

Department of Health and Human Services reports that approximately 23.2 million individuals of age 12 and older experienced either use or abuse of a substance warranting treatment and care (Hall, Hawkinberry & Scott, 2010). Absenteeism and poor performance at school or college are common behavioral signs of drug addicts. Other prominent behavioral changes in individuals given to drug and alcohol addiction include deterioration of relationships, frequent arguments with friends and family members on trivial issues, secretive and erratic behaviors characterized with more forgetfulness and indecisions, paying less importance to personal appearance and hygiene and restlessness associated with increased physical activity. Also, individuals addicted to drug are more likely to lose their job that leaves them with no steady source of income. Hence they often indulge in fights with friends and other family members over money. They are also susceptible to other illegal activities like drug trafficking and theft. The antisocial activities they involve in bring shame upon others and give their friends and family members a tough time.

Drug addicts also indicate certain distinct psychological behaviors and attitudes that are mostly unnoticed by other family members. For example, a youngster who had been more cooperative and friendly with other family members and neighbors would suddenly change his personality or attitude toward them without any significant reason. This unexplained attitudinal change could be interpreted as a possible chance of the individual falling prey to the habit of drug addiction with friends at school. Mood swings and sudden outbursts of anger are also more linked to addiction. Since drug addicts do not have any significant goals in their life, they lack self-

motivation and the ability to focus on certain important things. Appearing fearful for no apparent reasons, withdrawal and anxiety are some other key psychological symptoms of drug and alcohol addiction. Addiction and substance abuse are also often linked to sexual dysfunction apart from criminal, violent and suicidal behaviors (Kessler, 2012).

Treating Drug Addiction

With proper care and treatment through thousands of outpatient and residential clinics countless people are freed from the habit of drug and alcohol addiction every year. Treatment procedure of drug addiction typically includes imparting many behavioral skills like life management along with knowledge on recovery and symptom reduction (Clay, 2015). A study undertaken by Columbia University reports that around forty million Americans aged 12 and above qualify the criteria for addiction associated with alcohol, nicotine or other drugs ("Addiction Medicine: Closing the Gap between Science and Practice," 2012). This outnumbers the number of people suffering from diabetes, heart conditions or cancer. Many drug addiction programs fail to bring intended results since they fail to adopt proven methods that focus on various factors underlining the addictive behaviors of individuals. Evidence based treatment and care that is consistent and reliable in tune with established scientific knowledge is essential in treating addiction.

Residential rehabilitation centers give drug addicts an opportunity to reside along with other fellow addicts while still getting the guidance and help to defeat one's addiction. These centers insist that patients live there for a

certain period depending upon the seriousness of the addiction. Some residential treatment programs require the patients stay at the center for the entire period of treatment without allowing any visitors during the time whereas yet other programs are flexible and allow patients to come and go. Ambulatory or out-patient treatment method allows addicts for a few hours of treatment every day at a de-addiction center. Medical detoxification done under medical supervision in hospitals is another popular method of treating addiction. Detoxification is advisable for patients addicted for a quite longer period and hence are expected to experience heavy withdrawal symptoms. Strict supervision and care at a medical center and medication to fight withdrawal symptoms are the essential factors of detoxification. The 12-step recovery program is a spiritual de-addiction program that took inspiration from Carl Jung, eminent Swiss Psychotherapist (Lance, 2015). This spiritual remedy involves surrendering one's addiction problem to the divinely wisdom or God, and living with a self-awareness to transform one's self.

Conclusion

Drug abuse is one of the leading causes of death across the world today. Drug abuse and addiction have a series of negative consequences upon the individuals and society as a whole. Individuals start using drugs and alcohol in small quantities for pleasure initially before getting addicted to them totally. Alcohol and drugs affect the body and behavior of the individuals and make them lose their self respect. An uncontrollable urge to use drugs motivate the individuals to indulge in robbery or other crimes to get money. This affects the other family members as well. People addicted to drugs and

alcohol reveal it through their behavior pattern. Drugs spoil the body, mind and spirit of the individuals in addition to ruining the happiness of the whole family. Therefore, affected victims are to be timely rehabilitated to secure their future and the peace of other family members.

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