

Research report on substance related disorders



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Substance use is a common factor world-wide throughout our social society. Substance related disorders are also on the rise due to its abusers. In today's world we witness thousands of people who pass away due to substance related disorders. Ask anybody in today's society if they know someone who has died, or has suffered severely due to any substance related use or abuse. Then ask them if that person who suffered a car accident or a short coma continues the substance use. Several who were asked, said yes to both. This is why our nations share this negative similarity worldwide. Millions of dollars are used in ways to "clean-up" and prevent substance users. Illegal substances are a major crisis that is shared all over the world. Treatments may vary among countries, but the enforcement of its illicit substance use is seen with the same urge of abolishing the trafficking and use.

A substance user can be lead to the substance abuse, withdrawal, and even dependence. When referring to "substance" it refers to any natural or synthesized product that impairs psychoactive effects-it impairs behaviors, judgments, awareness, and emotions. (Susan Nolken-Hoekesma2008)

Common symptoms that might give you an idea that someone you know may have a substance-related disorder according to the substance that is encapsulate by them is as follows below. In accordance to the substance alcohol, one may show signs of cognitive impairment, unable to walk straight, lack of motor skills, slurred speech. And depending on the mood or if depressed and depending on how much alcohol was consumed, depends on their change of behavior. For example, if a person were to start drinking due to work related stress or problems, that then will cause them to have a

temperamental change to get physically and verbally aggressive. If a person were to drink passively and not consuming so much at once, may just cause relaxation, or even depression leading them to becoming sad and vulnerable. Alcohol withdrawal has its own set of symptoms such as rapid heart rate, trembling, and aggressiveness. When the body is being forced to stop a negatively daily routine the body starts to express the need and want of the substance, and is not able to function or focus without its intake on that certain substance it's lacking. Alcohol withdrawal on the other hand can be a little scarier when chronic users of alcohol try to stop and have not consumed alcohol for a long time can have medical conditions as serious as hallucinations, or seizures. Alcohol although is a part of substance related disorders it contains different symptoms and treatments. Marijuana for instance is also a part of substance related disorders which contains its own set of symptoms. For example, dry mouth, feeling at a good state "high", hallucinations, slowing down time and speech, and the desire for food. And as mentioned the chronic users are affected with stronger symptoms which may include psychiatric behaviors, red eyes, obsessed delusions, and neglecting others from society. Opioids is another subcategory of substance related disorders. Opioids are different sorts of pain medications such as morphine, heroin, codeine, and methadone. Females who get addicted to opioids, have a higher rate of serious risk factors. For example, if a female is addicted to crack she will possibly have sex for drugs which will then increase her possibilities of becoming pregnant. If the female is then dependent of sex for drugs during her pregnancy the use of crack and heroin affects the baby before it is even born because they cross the placental barrier. As a result the babies who have taken crack through their mother's

stomach they now have to go through the withdrawal stage right after birth, and may cause low birth weight babies due to the lack of maternal care.

After abusing opioids, drugs symptoms may include; constriction of pupils, behavioral changes, drowsiness, having a hard time focusing, and illusions.

Overdosing on opioids may also cause seizures, and can even be life threatening or eventually lead to death. Withdrawal from opioids includes its own classification of withdrawal symptoms which include; nausea, vomiting, sweating, fever, insomnia, diarrhea, dilation of pupils, and contraction of the stomach muscle.

According to research, a person who abuses or are dependent on the substance can respond differently psychologically and physiologically to substances compared to those who were not dependent or abusive to the substances. Age also may vary. The age of the user may affect them on a many different of ways among similar symptoms and side effects. Children, who may possibly be substance users, will be affected by growth effects. Not just growth, but motor skill development and cognitive development.

Dreadful to say, but the innocent neonates, who have been fed by their drug/alcohol addicted mother have it the worse. FAS (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome) are babies of mothers who consumed heavily on alcohol while being pregnant. Sadly to say the children are affected by growth delay, mental retarded, facial deformation, and damage to the central nervous system, heat defects, skeletal abnormalities, and sadly many more abnormalities. There are also the “ crack babies” the term comes from mothers who are addicted to crack and alcohol and other drugs while pregnant. The unfortunate neonates are clearly born addicted to the

mother's entire intake of crack and other substances that were consumed, therefore are always crying. They are born prematurely, with small size heads compared to an infant's sized head. The neonates also do not like to be touched or carried and have a difficult time bounding. They rate low on the APGAR scale, which consist of a test that measures their heart rate, complexion, muscle tone, reflex, and their breathing. Many of their organs are already destroyed and have a poor nervous system. Symptoms and dysfunctions only get worse with age. Needless to say fatality is also common among " crack babies."

Teenagers and young adolescents also have a dark substance abuse pathway. Many teenagers and young adults get together and gather their prescription drugs, such as Valium, Xanax, or Klonopin and either trade and or mix them as if they were baseball cards to produce euphoria feelings, and or to " relax". The " bring your own drugs" parties become more frequent creating them dependent on the drugs to keep them less agitated and in a euphoria state of mind. This usually happens when young adolescents are already dependent on other substances such as alcohol or even cocaine. Another common negative trail that is followed by the teenage substance abusers is known as the " club drugs" club drugs are legendary known to be popular at rave clubs for young adults. Taking into consideration the rave club's atmosphere these " club drugs" takes after its affect of hallucinogenic to the different neon colored lights, rave music and crowds of people; then can cause paranoia in a raving crowd. A major health fear of rave clubs is dehydration due to the large crowds of clustered people in one large room. The category " club drugs" include; Ecstasy, GHB also known as a " date

rape drug”, Ketamine, and Rohypnol also known as a “roofies”. Substance users who utilize ecstasy carry the affects of hallucinations, finely tuned energy, teeth grinding, and become very affectionate with others. It can also contain harmful effects on cognition. Chronic users who have been dependent are affected more rigorously such as cardiac problems and liver failure, increased rates of anxiety, and psychotic symptoms. GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate) its popular use is to relieve anxiety and help relax. Its destruction of side of effects includes; high blood pressure, liver tumors, violent and aggressive behavior lowering pulse rate, and lack of reflex. Ketamine, also known as the street name “kit kat” is known for the cause of hallucinogenic effects, and being “high” its side effects include; loss of coordination, aggressive or violent behavior, blocked speech, an empty gaze, and exaggerated sense of strength. Heavily chronic users although have more dangerous effects such as, oxygen starvation of the brain and muscles, and even death. Lastly the substance acknowledged as the “roofies” is also known as the date rape drug. Roofies have sedative and hypnotic effects, as well as a high, blackouts, and confusion. The side effects of the date rape drug contain muscle pain and seizures. It can even cause death if mixed with alcohol or the depressant substance.

Once a person starts to show the mentioned symptoms, they can be taken for an evaluation. There are 4 types of behavioral categories to test whether a person would be diagnosed with substance abuse. Any one of the four behavioral types must occur repeatedly during a one year time frame. The first category consists of the inability to perform toward the importance of a social priority such as home, work, or school due to the substance intake.

The second category consists of knowing the physical harm it may bestow upon them, but will still use the substance repeatedly. The third category that may be diagnosed as a substance abuse is, getting involved numerous times as a consequence of the utilizing the substance. The last behavioral test deals with the abuse interfering continually with problems socially, professionally, and legally as an outcome of the use. Diagnosis of substance abuse and its treatment is only decided by a physician and or psychiatrist.

Substance abuse is usually first seen in young adolescents and in college students. According to research, the average age of substance related disorder is 15-54 years old. A new research is starting to show that a substance such as drugs is not developing the same in females as in males in form of legal substances to illegal substances. Studies show that more women are cigarette smokers than men, and men are larger consumers of alcohol than women. In regards to illegal substances women experiment with cocaine more than men to use for intimate relationships. Men on the other hand are more prone for drug trafficking than women. Women who become substance abusers tend to have their life a bit more negatively complicated. For instance, women initiate childhood fears, anxiety, and failed relationships. Studies also show that 70% of female substance related abusers have been sexually abused or raped in their past history, and 32% of those women were pregnant before or at 18 years old. Therefore, women with substance related disorders show more vulnerability, and carry a higher risk of obtaining posttraumatic stress disorder compared to men. Women can also affect their baby if pregnant while being under the influence of illegal substances. A main concern of substance use while being pregnant is very

hazardous, that could lead to a miscarriage, low birth weight, newborns with smaller head size than healthy newborns, or even a child born with AIDS due to a mother injecting herself with used needles or maternal sex with a drug user.

Substance related disorders do have treatment options available. There are also new preventive groups forming due to the intensity of encouraging the education of negative and life threatening affects of substances related use and abuse. AA groups are also a very helpful growing treatment option that has been available since 1935. Alcohol Anonymous is a self-help group based on a disease model, which is one of the most common forms interventions for the alcohol substance abuse. Another form of group intervention is known as the harm-reduction model. The harm-reduction model which creates their focal point on how they got started on substance use and how they can control the substance use through behavioral and cognitive interventions. (Abnormal Book) When people start to withdrawal from substance there are therapies merged with comprehensive substance treatment programs that are used to help them through the process. Medications are also used to help someone diminish the need of substance use. Medications such as anti-anxiety, anti-depressants, and antagonists are all used to help eliminate substance related disorders. There are also numerous behavioral techniques that are used to eliminate substance use. For example, encourage the person to stop the drug intake, and trying to find something to replace the substance whenever it's craved, and learning how to manage to stay away from the desire of the substance. Other therapies include, aversive classical conditioning, covert sensitization therapy, and cue exposure and response

prevention. The NIDA (National Institute on Drug Abuse) created a neuroimaging technique that enables them to look into the brain of conscious and behaving individuals to see the reflective effects that negatively impact the brain. NIDA is also in the process of creating a new medication and is currently in the testing development for the new drug. NIDA's new medication that is currently in its testing stage is intended for heroin addiction, buprenorphine and buprenorphine combined with naloxone. NIDA is also working on new prevention treatment programs with their latest technology and discoveries involving the neuroimaging technique.

Like all disorders, each has its own set of prognosis upon each type. Substance-related disorder prognosis is determined by numerous factors per individual and their situation. For example determining which substance is used, how many being used, the reason of abuse, personal vulnerability, socioeconomic status, social support, any sort of psychiatric disorder history, and duration of abuse. Common prognoses for people who are drug abusers include an antisocial life, and frequent factors of death such as accidental overdose, car accidents, and HIV. There is about a 10-15% mortality death rate between 10 years for opioids user. Cocaine users on the other hand have a higher success rate of withdrawal treatment. Due to the fact that cocaine is a heavy substance to obtain and many adolescents give it up at some point in time. However having a greater chance of substance withdrawal is only possible with seeking medical treatment and committing to a therapy treatment, or a support group.

People with substance related disorders do get very aggressive and will go out their ways for drugs. Working at a pharmacy, gives a little more

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perspective and an “ inside look” at how much and how far substance abusers will go. Many will pay whatever high and over priced narcotic medication just to get the drugs. Many will even start a fight if not given a drug, or invent false counterfeit stories every week of how 120 tablets of vicodin were gone in a 10 day period.

Is there a difference between the word “ addict” when it applies to complete different objects? How about when one craves this one thing, and must have a little of it every single day? When one is constantly thinking of that one crave that will not go away until the desire is fed, even though you know the damage it will do to you. This then brings me to a conclusion that I have an addiction, an addiction for sweets. Reading and investigating substance related disorders brings an understanding state of mind towards those with substance related disorders and its difficulty of withdrawal. Even though you may know the harm that it’s affecting when you fed the crave for that addiction sometimes feels worth it, until you look at yourself in the mirror and realize all the harm it has done to you and your body. Nevertheless, sweets and substance related disorders are complete opposite and are not close to even compare against. The point is after engaging and relating to my research to the smallest way, it can be done especially when it comes to the circumstances of becoming a life and death situation. When it becomes a “ situation” that’s where the difference of “ addict” is. There is a way to prevent drug abusers behavior and different ways to treat drug addictions.

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