

Original Research Article

The Level of Awareness and Attitude on Ill-Effects of Substance Abuse among Adolescent Students in Selected High Schools at Belgaum District, India

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ABSTRACT

Adolescents are a positive force of a nation and are responsible for its future productivity. Adolescents are those in the age group of 10-19 years which constitute over 23% of the population in India. Adolescence's period of nature is exploration and exploitation. In both developed and developing countries, adolescents face overwhelming problems such as early pregnancy, substance abuse, and violence is making them more vulnerable to life-threatening disease condition. The study population (N=320; M=75; F=245) comprised of adolescents in the age group of 12-18 years studying in selected high schools in Belgaum district, Karnataka. In the first stage, schools are identified using simple random sampling method and in the second stage, adolescent students are selected using convenient sampling method. Structured interview questionnaire used to collect the data prepared by the investigator. The questionnaire includes awareness regarding addictive substances, substance abuse, physical effects of substance abuse, psychological effects of substance abuse, social effects of substance abuse and treatment modalities. 5 point Likert scale used to assess the attitude. Overall awareness regarding ill effect of substance abuse was 43%. Sixty seven percentages of adolescent's students had favorable attitude expressed towards the negative effects of substance abuse. There was positive correlation ($r=0.4524$) between awareness and attitude among adolescent students on ill effects of substance abuse. The adolescents' students had average awareness and favorable attitude towards substance abuse found in the study. The study suggests that need of strategies and intervention to enhance the awareness and attitude among younger population.

Key words: Awareness regarding ill effects of substance abuse, effects of substances, attitude of adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, substance abuse is a major public health and social concern. With changes in lifestyle, globalization in substance marketing, the erosion of powers of censure that have existed in traditional societies, and an increased acceptance of

such substances, it is clear that their use is growing in low- and middle-income countries, particularly in the children, adolescents and the youth. [1] The transition from adolescence to young adulthood is a crucial period in which experimentation with illicit drugs begins in many cases. [2]

India too is caught in this vicious circle of drug abuse, and the numbers of drug addicts are increasing day by day. According to other recent data, among those involved in drug and substance abuse in India, 13.1 per cent are below 20 years. A survey reveals that of the children who came for treatment to various NGOs, 63.6% were introduced to drugs at a young age below 15 years. Overall 0.4% and 4.6% of total treatment seekers in various states were children. Twenty million children are estimated to be getting addicted to smoking every year, and nearly 55,000 children are becoming smokers every day in comparison to 3,000 in the US. Recent available data points out that among the alcohol, cannabis and opium users about 21%, 3% and 0.1% respectively were below 18 years. [3] However according to a nationwide survey spread over 13 states by the NGO Prayas in association with the Ministry of Women and Child Development and other organization, 32.1% children, below the age of 18, have tasted alcohol, bhang, ganja, heroin or other form of narcotics. It reveals that 70.3% of those kids have been first exposed to one or the other form of drugs by their friends and relatives, 11.7% by their parents. [4]

Studies confirmed that adolescents used addictive substances in spite of having the knowledge about their hazardous influence on their health. [5,6] However, some studies reported that adolescents had less knowledge about drug abuse, its effect on body and complication. [6-9] Another study result also showed that there was significant positive relationship between knowledge and year of study, family income and drug abuse. [8] Some of the studies had concluded that association was found between use of Substance abuse and delinquent aggressive behavior and ill health. [10-14]

The common substances of abuse among children and adolescents in India are tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, and opium; even intravenous use of drugs has also been reported. Those drugs cause increased energy, rapid heart rate and elevated blood

pressure, but they also produce racing thoughts and make you feel overly-stimulated. Continued use causes rapid breathing, irritability, impulsiveness, aggression, nervousness, insomnia, weight loss, tolerance, addiction, and possible heart failure. These drugs also cause an impairment in cognitive functioning which negatively affects memory and impacts the ability to learn. [15] Substance abuse is also responsible for decreased job productivity and attendance, increased healthcare costs, and an escalation of domestic violence and violent crimes. [16] Substance abuse can disrupt family life and create destructive patterns of co-dependency, out of love or fear of consequences, inadvertently enables the user to continue using drugs by covering up, supplying money, or denying there is a problem. [17]

The witnessed of previous study results that the substance abuse is one of the rapidly growing problems among adolescents due to overwhelming peer group pressure and lack of knowledge regarding its ill effects. Limited studies are conducted among adolescents' students in India. Hence, the investigator felt the need to assess the level of awareness and attitude on ill-effects of substance abuse among adolescent students in selected high schools at Belgaum district, Karnataka.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive design was adopted to see the awareness and attitude on ill effects of substance abuse among adolescents, age group of 12-18 years were selected from high school in Belgaum districts of Karnataka. The total of 320 participants was selected using convenient sampling methods from class 8th to 10th standard both the male and female adolescents who fulfill the inclusive criteria were included in the study. The questionnaire had three parts; it includes Part 1 demographic data, Part 2 Structured interview questionnaire to assess the awareness, Part 3 5 point Likert scale to assess the attitude. Part -1 demographic data which includes age, gender, religion,

education level of father, education level of mother, occupation of father, occupation of mother, type of family, socioeconomic status, area of staying, any previous knowledge of addictive substances, history of any substance abuse in the family. Part 2 structured interview questionnaire which includes awareness on addictive substance, substances abuse, physical effects, psychological effects, social effects and treatment modalities. Which consisted of 25 questions. Part 3: 5 point likert scale which includes 20 items 10 positive items and 10 negative items regarding attitude towards substance abuse.

Methods of data collection procedure

Prior permission was obtained from the concerned authorities of the selected high schools. Keeping in mind the ethical aspect of the research, data was collected after obtaining informed consent of the participants. The respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality of the information provided by them. The researcher introduced herself to the participants. The objectives of the study were explained to the adolescent students. Data was collected using a structured interview questionnaire it took sixty minutes to collect the relevant data.

Statistical Analysis

The collected data was recorded systematically and organized in a way that facilitates computer entry and data analysis. Frequency and percentage of data was calculated for describing demographic variable. Mean, mean percentage and SD was used to assess the level of awareness and attitude score on ill-effects of substance abuse. Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient formula was used to find the correlation between awareness and attitude on ill-effects of substance abuse. Chi-square test was used to find the association between awareness and attitude with demographic variables.

RESULTS

The study finding on the awareness scores of adolescent students on ill-effects of substance abuse revealed that most (54%) of the adolescents had average awareness, 29% had good awareness, 16% had poor awareness and least 1% had very good awareness. The overall ill effect mean awareness score was 10.42 ± 3.74 , with a mean percentage of 41.68 revealed that the awareness of the adolescent students regarding ill-effects of substance abuse was average. The components wise ill effects of substance abuse revealed that the adolescents had highest awareness on 'Social effects of substance abuse' with a mean percentage of 60%, followed by 'Psychological effects of substance abuse' with a mean percentage of 45%, 'Treatment modalities of substance abuse' with a mean percentage of 42%, 'Physical effects of substance abuse' with a mean percentage of 40%, 'Concept of substance abuse' with a mean percentage of 38%, and 'Concept about substances' with a mean percentage of 32%. The overall component wise ill effect of substance abuse the mean awareness score was 10.39 ± 6.43 , with a mean percentage of 43% revealed that the effect of substance abuse of the adolescent students was also average.

The study findings on the attitude scores of adolescent students on ill-effects of substance abuse revealed that most (67%) of the adolescent students had favorable attitude and 33% had unfavorable attitude on ill-effects substance abuse. The mean attitude score was 53.50 ± 16.91 , with a mean percentage of 53.50% revealed that the adolescent students had favorable attitude regarding ill-effects of substance abuse.

There was positive correlation between awareness and attitude on ill-effects of substance abuse among adolescent students.

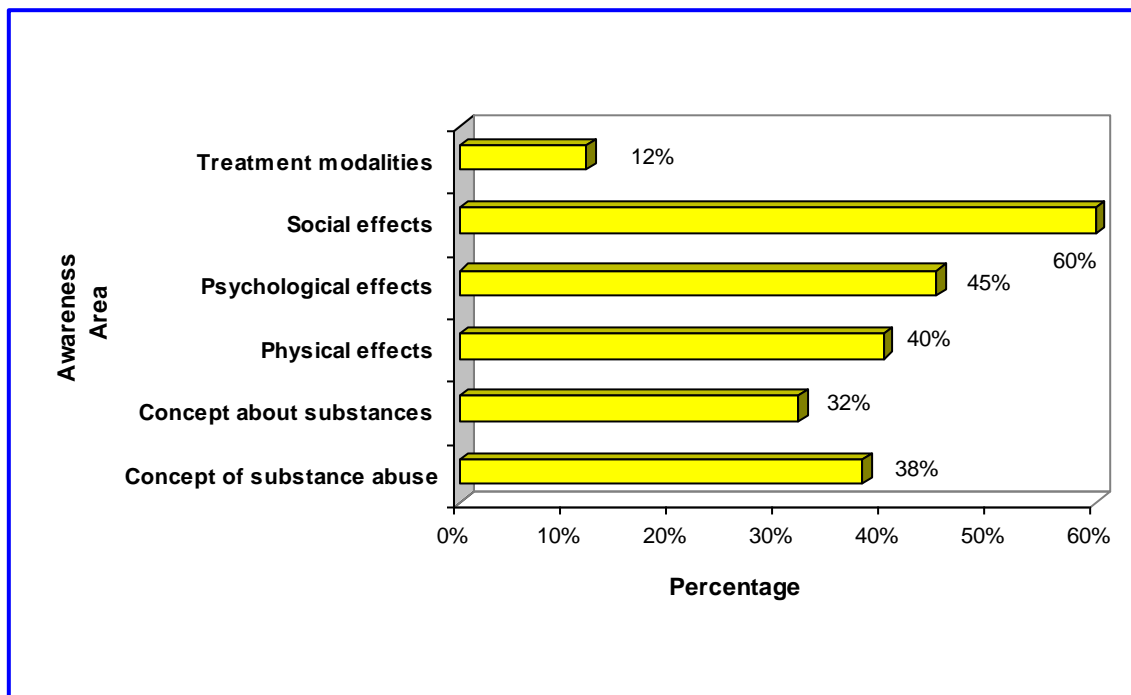


Figure 1: Component wise mean, SD and mean percentage of awareness scores of the adolescent students regarding ill-effects of substance abuse (N=320)

Table 1: Correlation between awareness and attitude of the adolescent students on ill-effects of substance abuse (N=320)

Group	Between	'r' Value	Inference
Adolescent students	Overall awareness and attitude	0.4524	Positive Correlation

The association of awareness score and selected demographic variables revealed that there was significant association between the awareness scores and age, gender, occupation of father, occupation of mother, type of family, socio-economic status and previous awareness of addictive substances.

The association of attitude score and selected demographic variables revealed that there was significant association between the attitude scores and age, gender, socio-economic status, area of staying and previous awareness of addictive substances.

DISCUSSION

Substance abuse is a universal phenomenon with its roots in history and tradition. It has become a global challenge. [18] Adolescent students are the most vulnerable group and are at high risk of substance abuse related problems compared to other population. The prevalence of

substance abuse is highest among young adolescents, a large majority of whom are students.

In the present study highest percentage (68%) of adolescent students was in the age group of 15-16 years. Majority (77%) of the sample were females. Majority (66%) of the adolescent students were belongs to Hindu religion. Most (40%) of the fathers of adolescent students were studied up to primary school level. Most (35%) of the mothers of adolescent students were studied up to primary school level. Most (49%) of the fathers of adolescent students occupation was agriculture. Most (33%) of the mothers of adolescent students occupation was agriculture. Majority (51%) of the adolescent students were from nuclear family. Most (48%) of the adolescent students were belongs to low socio-economic status. Majority (84%) of the adolescent students were living in streets in old city (crowded, congested area). Majority (68%) of the adolescent students were not having previous awareness regarding addictive substance. Majority (77%) of the adolescent students were not having history of any substance use in their family. The

present study was related with the UN report on drug addiction in India has reported that of the 4 million registered drug addicts in South Asia, 1.25 lakh are in India, and distribution of alcohol-42%, Opium-20%, Heroin- 13%, Cannabis-6.2% and others-1.8%. Heroin abusers are now estimated to be around 40,000. The majority of drug addicts are aged between 16 and 30 years. These substance abusers are mostly unmarried and from the lower socioeconomic strata: 33% of them are engaged in antisocial activities. [19]

Level of awareness of adolescent students regarding ill-effects of substance abuse

Majority (54%) of the adolescent students had average awareness regarding ill-effects of substance abuse. Least (1%) had very good awareness. The overall mean awareness score was 10.42 ± 3.74 , with a mean percentage of 41.68%. The area-wise analysis revealed that the adolescents scored highest (11.12%) in the area of social effects of substance abuse. Area wise the overall mean awareness score was 10.39 ± 6.43 , with a mean percentage of 43%.

The study findings are supported by a study conducted in Krakow on evaluation of level of student's knowledge about psychoactive drugs. The vast majority of the surveyed know the definition of psychical and physical addiction. Students are not capable of listing the consequences of smoking for health. [9]

Level of attitude of adolescent students regarding ill-effects of substance abuse

Majority (67%) of the adolescent students had favorable attitude regarding ill-effects of substance abuse. Least (33%) had unfavorable attitude. The overall mean attitude score was 53.50 ± 16.91 , with a mean percentage of 53.50%.

The study findings are supported by a study conducted in Punjab to assess the popular attitudes towards alcohol use and alcoholism. The results of the study revealed that, the attitude of alcoholism current users gave the most permissive and non-users the most restrictive responses as regard the norms of drinking.

Association of knowledge of adolescent students with selected demographic variables

There was a significant association between the awareness score and the age, gender, occupation of father, occupation of mother, type of family, socio-economic status and previous knowledge of addictive substance of the adolescent students. The null hypothesis was accepted for all variables except age, gender, occupation of father, occupation of mother, type of family, socio-economic status and previous awareness of addictive substance.

The study findings are supported by the study conducted on knowledge about psychoactive substance among students in Rajasthan. The findings revealed that age and sex are having association with knowledge scores. Family income, year of study and living status did not have any relationship with the knowledge scores. [18]

Association of attitude of adolescent students with selected demographic variables

There was a significant association between the attitude score and the age, gender, socio-economic status, area of staying and previous awareness of addictive substance of the adolescent students. The null hypothesis was accepted for all variables except age, gender, socio-economic status, area of staying and previous awareness of addictive substance.

The study findings are supported by the study conducted on attitude about drug dependence among undergraduate students of Kerala. The findings revealed that there was significant positive relationship between knowledge and year of study, family income and drug abuse. [8]

CONCLUSION

In the modern society, the pattern of consumption of medical and non-medical drugs, especially by preadolescents, adolescents and young adults, is both complex and changing. This involvement may be due to many factors, such as adventurous and risk-taking behaviors,

acceptable to peers, curiosity to acquaint oneself with the ecstatic experiences or due to an inner urge to avoid frustrations and boredom. Substance abuse by students in high schools, colleges and universities is a serious problem because their students' form the core from which the leadership in all walks of life will eventually emerge.

Substance abuse has become a major problem in any growing society. It has a strong impact on personal and family life. Drugs and alcohol have a direct relation to sexually transmitted diseases, and AIDS. India is high up in the list of danger countries because of the population growth and high birth rate. Today, people are less concerned about socialism, capitalism and economism, and more worried about drugs, alcoholism, rape and terrorism. So people are least bothered about the ill effects of the addictive substances.

Here are the following conclusions have been drawn keeping in mind the findings of the present study:

Conclusions based on the study

The study concluded that the overall findings in relation to awareness and attitude regarding ill effects of substance abuse is average awareness, favorable attitude and both are positively correlated. Thus it suggests the need of strategies to enhance the awareness and attitude. The researcher provided the compact disc to all the study participants which comprised of ill effect of substance abuse to provide awareness and improve their attitude. So that every human remains away from the substances abused. The nurse researchers can further plan, implement and evaluate a planned awareness programme for adolescent students on the ill effects of substance abuse.

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