

# Drug Addiction and its Effects on the Structure of Society

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to identify the psychological and social characteristics of drug addicts. This study is also designed to recognize when and where drugs are first taken, as well as the causes, factors and the effects of the addiction. The researcher has applied a questionnaire to a sample of 50 addicts. The researchers have come to the conclusion that drug addiction is caused by family problems that push to bad companions.*

**Keywords:** drugs, substance abuse, addiction

## 1. Introduction

The problem of drug abuse is the most important and serious problem facing the individual, the family and society all over the world due to the large number of types of drugs and the rapid spread of their trade among all levels of society. The problem of drug abuse that afflicts the world did not arise from a single factor, but is caused by many social, economic, psychological, cultural, educational and other factors.

What increases concern is what the numbers confirm about the steady increase of this scourge and the negative impact of this increase on societies and on the economy of countries, and what appears to be the failure of policies and programs so far to stop this creep that threatens humanity. All of this requires further mobilization of efforts, conclusion of agreements, and support for joint action among countries within the framework of comprehensive strategies and in - depth treatments.

Drugs have taken on an epidemiological dimension, contributing to the exacerbation of a series of social problems, including violence, organized crime, corruption, unemployment, poor health conditions and poor educational outcomes, all of which harm individuals and societies.

## 2. The problem of the study

The problem of drug abuse and addiction is one of the most serious health, social and psychological problems facing the whole world. Addiction is an epidemic disease and its spread in society leads to an increase in the number of patients who are unable to work and produce.

The reports of the World Health Organization confirm that the problem of drug abuse is getting more complicated, especially in light of the compulsive desire to continue using it in all its forms and types, with a tendency to gradually increase the dose, which causes psychological and physical

dependence on it. This is what affects a significant number of youth and adolescents and the society in which they live.

In order not to stand idly by in front of this sweeping current, it was necessary to conduct scientific research that reveals the dimensions of this phenomenon by presenting data showing the real size of the phenomenon of addiction among Algerian youth.

Therefore, this study came to answer the following questions:

- What is the age of onset of drug use and how to get addicted to it?
- What are the causes and factors that led to drug abuse?
- What are the effects of drug addiction and its consequences?

## 3. Study Terminology

### Drugs

An anesthetic is a chemical substance that causes drowsiness, sleepiness, or unconsciousness with pain relief [1]. Drugs can be considered everything that disturbs, discourages, or numbs the mind in the thinking and personality of the individual. Narcotics are a group of psychotropic substances that are legally prohibited and contained exclusively in the international convention known as the "Unique Convention on Narcotic Substances of 1961". As for these substances, they are cannabis and its derivatives, opium and its derivatives, and the coca tree and its derivatives [2].

### Abuse

It is the use of narcotic drugs that society does not allow to take with the intent of obtaining a physical, psychological, or mental effect. In the sense that abuse is the use of narcotic substances experimentally, intermittently, or on a regular basis [3]. Substance abuse is the repeated use of a substance whose effects cause harm to the abuser psychologically, socially and economically.

Recent studies indicated the need to distinguish between three categories or levels of abuse, namely:

- Exploratory use or as an experiment and curiosity.
- Dealing with the occasion, that is, on occasions only, such as holidays and weddings.
- Organized or continuous abuse, this group perseveres in using regularly, regardless of whether there is an occasion or not.

This category is closer to the concept of addiction or psychological and physical dependence in the strict scientific sense [4].

#### **Addiction**

The World Health Organization defined addiction as a psychological and sometimes physical condition that results from the interaction of the organism with the drug. Among its characteristics are different responses and patterns of behavior that always include the urgent desire to take the drug continuously or periodically to feel its psychological effects or to avoid the disturbing effects that result from its lack of availability. Addiction to more than one substance [5].

Addiction means repeated abuse of a psychological substance or psychoactive substances, to the extent that the abuser (the addict) reveals an intense preoccupation with abuse, as well as an inability or refusal to stop or modify his abuse, and often shows symptoms of withdrawal if he stops using. And the addict's life becomes under the control of abuse to the point of excluding any other activity.

In light of the above, we can say that addiction is:

- Compulsive desire in the sense of urgency and the desire to continue using the drug and obtaining it by any means.
- The desire to increase doses, which is known as tolerance, although some addicts remain on a fixed dose.
- Psychological and organic dependence on the drug (in the sense of submission and psychological and organic dependence on the drug effect).
- The emergence of psychological and physical symptoms upon sudden abstinence, or immediate withdrawal from the drug, whether in a compulsory or voluntary manner, which is known as drug withdrawal (quitting).
- The resulting harmful and devastating effects on the individual and society together [6].

## **4. Field Study Procedures**

#### **Approach used**

This research aims to identify the psychological and social characteristics of drug addicts, and to know the age of the beginning of abuse and its duration, as well as the causes and factors that led to abuse and finally the effects resulting from this abuse, and therefore it belongs to the field of descriptive research, and the researcher used the descriptive analytical approach.

The descriptive approach is the most suitable research method for social reality as a way to understand its phenomena and extract its features.

It comes in two stages, the exploration and maintenance stage and the diagnosis and description stage, by analyzing the data and information collected in an analysis that leads to discovering the relationship between the variables and providing an appropriate interpretation for them [7].

#### **Study tool**

A questionnaire was prepared consisting of four axes, the first of which included primary and personal data, the second the beginnings of abuse and addiction, the third axis covered the causes of abuse, while the fourth axis included the effect of addiction and its consequences.

The interview questionnaire was applied in the major municipalities of the wilaya of Khenchela: Zoui, Qais, Shachar. Five master's students in sociology at the University of Khenchela were hired as assistants, within the framework of the Research Training Forum. Also, the choice of these particular students is that they know addicted people who are ready to cooperate and interview us.

#### **The study sample**

The research sample consisted of 50 young people who are addicted to drugs of all kinds, and the sample was chosen by means of the intentional sample at the beginning, as addicts were contacted, then the rest was collected by means of a snowball.

One of the most important characteristics of the sample in this research is the homogeneity in terms of the gender variable, as all the respondents to whom we were able to apply the questionnaire are males between the ages of 15 and 39 years, they were divided into five categories, the first category (15 - 19) represented a percentage of 8%, while the second category (14 - 20) represented 30%, and the third category (25 - 29) represented 40% of the respondents, and the fourth category (30 - 34) represented 16%, and the last category (35 - 39) which is 6%.

As for the civil status of those addicts, it was 80% single compared to 20%, and married women were represented. With regard to the educational level, the largest percentage was 36% for the secondary level, followed by the university level with 32%, then the intermediate level with 28%, and finally the primary level with a small percentage compared to With previous rates, it represented 4%.

As for the professional status of the respondents, it was mainly concentrated in the unemployed at a rate of 36%, then a student at a rate of 32%, a worker at a rate of 26%, and finally a student at a rate of 6%. Also, most of the respondents belong to the middle - income class, as expressed by 58% of the addicts, while the rest of the percentage was divided into the rich class, which represents 30%, and the poor class, which represents 12%.

## 5. The Results of the Study

### 1) The age of the onset of drug use and addiction

Through the field study, it was concluded that the age group for the age of the onset of drug use most frequently is (15 - 19), which represented 68%, while the category (20 - 24) represented 16%, and as for both the category of less than 15 years and the category (25) - 29) They represented 8%.

Through these data, it can be said that the age of drug initiation is in adolescence, this sensitive age stage in which the adolescent is exposed to fundamental changes and severe disturbances in all aspects of physical, mental, social and emotional development. These changes and disorders result in many problems that need guidance and guidance from the adults surrounding the teenager, so that he can overcome these problems, and so that his growth proceeds in its natural path [6].

The problem of drug addiction is one of the most difficult problems that threaten the physical, mental and psychological health of adolescents. Addiction begins as an activity within the peer group in neighborhoods, schools and high schools. The problem of drug use among adolescents and addiction to them is mainly due to a kind of escape from the multiple conflicts experienced by the adolescent, whether with himself or with his family and society, these conflicts that lead to disorders, the most widespread of which is anxiety. Adolescent drug addiction is a kind of response and rejection to the pressures exerted on him and not giving him the independence he is looking for and the desire to be self - reliant [8].

As for the duration of abuse, it was confined to three categories, the first category of which (01 - 05) represented 36%, the second category (05 - 10) represented 34%, and finally the category of more than 10 years represented 30%.

As for the substance abused, the quality represented the largest percentage, estimated at: 54.54%, while hallucinogenic pills represented 36.36%, heroin 5.45%, and finally cocaine 3.63%.

Heroin is prepared from morphine, which is the most effective type, as its effectiveness is 05 - 06 times that of morphine, and it also causes addiction quickly. Heroin is only used medically in the treatment of addicts in Britain and in relieving the pain of terminally ill cancer patients.

While cocaine is the active substance found in the coca plant and causes local greening when in contact with the skin and mucous tissues, it is used in the form of a 4% solution. Cocaine does not cause increased endurance, but only psychological dependence and does not cause organic dependence like other drugs.

As for hashish, it is extracted from the Indian or Mexican cannabis plant, which contains effective chemicals, cannabinol, and the hashish sold by drug dealers contains many impurities, including cocaine, opium, spices and sometimes dried pyrazine. Continuous use of cannabis leads

to the emergence of tolerance, that is, the user has to increase the dose to obtain the same effect.

Hallucinogenic pills are drugs manufactured in the laboratory, and among these pills we find LSD, which doctors believed at first to be useful in psychotherapy sessions and help the patient to imagine and experience childhood experiences, but the complications of its use led to its medical dispensation. There are also other types such as DET, OM, DPT and DMT, as well as PCP, which are materials that were used in general anesthesia for operations, but it has been discontinued medically in general anesthesia due to its bad side effects.

These materials are obtained through friends by 70%, relatives by 16%, and finally by neighbors by 14%. 38% use in vacant places, 34% in the neighborhood, and 28% at home. As for companions while using, friends represented 74%, and relatives 14%.

### 2) The causes and factors that led to drug abuse

Almost all the psychological and social studies conducted on the causes of drug abuse, especially for the first time user, agree that the factor of curiosity and the insistence of friends is the most important incentive to experience as a method of emotional sharing with these friends.

The availability of narcotic substances through smugglers and promoters makes drug use easy and affordable for young people, and this is due to the fact that every society contains deviant and corrupt individuals who try to corrupt other members of society, so they bring drugs and spread them among young people, which they often present to the young man for the first time as a gift In order to gain his trust and ensure his addiction [3]. This could be through bad companions, who represented 36.11% in this study, or the residential neighborhood, which represented 27.77%. This atmosphere could also be supported by other problems such as unemployment 11.11% and emotional problems 8.33%.

The results of studies on drug abuse have shown that the lack of stability in the family atmosphere, represented by the low level of agreement between parents and the aggravation of differences between them to the point of abandonment and divorce, sometimes generates a feeling often in the individual that his parents are not interested in him. Among the most important reasons related to the family that contribute to children's drug use in addition to instability, we find the bad behavior and actions of one of the parents that cause the children to be shy, which can cause psychological trauma that leads the son to try to imitate them, whether these behaviors are the result of the influence of the drug That is, whether one of the parents is addicted or not [6]. This study concluded that family problems represented 16.66%.

Education scholars almost unanimously agree that if a son is treated harshly by his parents, such as severe beatings and reprimands, this will be reflected in his behavior, which will lead him to disobey his parents, leave the house and flee from it in search of a shelter for him. .

### 3) Effects of drug addiction and its consequences

Drug abuse and addiction has a tremendous ability to destroy the individual, and its effects affect all aspects of his life, not only the social and psychological aspects, but also the physical and economic aspects. The results of the research conducted on various types of drugs indicated that addiction to it affects the productivity of the individual in quantity and quality, as a result of the physiological changes that affect his nervous system, so there is a disturbance in time perception, sound perception, color perception, lack of clarity of vision for people and things, disturbances in the perception of distances and perception sizes, memory disorder, and decreased thinking efficiency. In the presence of such disorders, drug users are unable to perform the simplest work, whether in terms of intellectual or muscular production.

Drugs lead to psychological effects such as anxiety, constant tension, a feeling of instability, a feeling of constriction and decline, with nervousness, sharpness in mood, neglect of self and appearance, and inability to work or continue in it. Caring about the surrounding matters, and is characterized by negativity and failure in academic achievement [9]. The current study found that 80% of the respondents agreed that drug addiction has caused them a constant feeling of anxiety, fear and regret.

62% of the respondents stated that addiction mainly affects family relationships, relationships with friends by 30%, and professional and academic relationships by 8%. Drugs affect the general atmosphere of the family, where tension, discord, and disagreements prevail among its members. In addition to spending a large part of the income on drugs, which arouses emotions and distress among family members, the drug user performs habits that are unacceptable to the family, such as gathering a number of drug users in his home and staying up until the end of the night, which leads to Family members are born with a craving for drug use in imitation of the drug user, or they are born with fear and anxiety.

The addict does not have enough ability to take care of his children emotionally and financially, which puts his children at risk of behavioral deviations or psychological disorders.

Some studies in the United Kingdom have found that children at the age of 15 who live in families where one of the parents has been addicted to drugs during the past years are more than twice as likely to be addicted as children whose parents do not suffer from a drug problem [10].

Drug abuse causes severe effects and increased sensitivity, which leads to abuse of the addict's relationships with everyone he knows. It leads to a bad marital and family relationship, which leads to an increase in the possibility of divorce, child delinquency, an increase in the number of homeless juveniles, and a worsening of the relationship between the addict and his neighbors, and disputes and quarrels occur. The abuser's relationship with his colleagues and superiors at work also deteriorates, which leads to the possibility of his expulsion from his job.

It was also found that many addicts are deteriorating in their work and that their work efficiency is gradually decreasing, as the addict loses the professional energy, enthusiasm and will necessary to fulfill his daily duties, and all this affects the economy of the country as a whole, directly or indirectly [11].

## 6. Conclusion

The family bears a greater responsibility than other institutions in the prevention of drugs, for several considerations, the most prominent of which is that it is the first group that embraces the child and on the basis of which his behavior is formed. Continuous behavior of children, whether inside or outside the home, helps prevent children from falling prey to abuse. But if the son falls into the well of abuse, the family has several roles that must be taken into account, the most important of which are: Early treatment in treatment places, psychological and social support, and acceptance as an active member of the family after treatment so that he does not relapse.

The preoccupation of parents with raising their children by work or traveling abroad and not following them up or monitoring them makes the children vulnerable to loss and falling into the abyss of addiction.

Some recommendations can be made in order to confront the spread of the drug phenomenon and its dangers to young people, as follows:

- Bridging the legal treatment gap in the security and judicial dealings with the merchant, promoter, abuser and addict, and the need for strict application of the law.
- Develop awareness programs and spread a positive culture that limits the spread of drugs in the border areas, especially the crossings with Morocco.
- Paying attention to the development of scientifically planned media content aimed at promoting a positive culture among young people, which strengthens their immunity against the temptation of drug dealers.
- Invite universities to develop their role in limiting the spread of drugs among university students through cooperation with the competent authorities, and the dissemination of awareness and counseling programmes.
- Activating awareness days for young people and adolescents in intermediate and secondary schools, cultural centers and other facilities frequented by young people to warn and raise awareness about the seriousness of addiction.

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