

# Impact of Drug Abuse on Educational Life of Students: A Review Article

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**Abstract:** *Our brain develops until the age of 25 years. Anything disrupts this process including substance will affect brain development. During the brain's development stage, any type of trauma and/or changes in the brain's wiring could affect brain function. When the students use alcohol in their teen age it affects their brain development and thereby losing their educational life. It causes increase the level of drug abuse among teenagers and it also affects their family. The students will lose their wonderful life. The liberty in student's life, easy availability, less illicit drug abuse polices and their cultural background are made the students vulnerable to drug abusers. This need to be change by providing proper education to students and their parents about the consequences of drug abuse. The importance of avoiding he drug abuse need to council to the students and their parents.*

**Keywords:** Students, drug abuse, education

## Introduction

Our brain develops until the age of 25 years. Anything disrupts this process including substance will affect brain development. During the brain's development stage, any type of trauma and/or changes in the brain's wiring could affect brain function. Drug use is one of the ways that can mess up the wiring. According to search results National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), the brain relies on chemicals called neurotransmitters to get messages from one part of the brain to the other. Each neurotransmitter attaches to its own kind of receptor like how a key fit into a lock. This allows messages to travel through the brain on the right path. When you use drugs, it interferes with the normal traffic patterns that the neurotransmitters use. The chemical structure in the drugs can imitate and fool the receptors, lock on to them and alter the activity of the nerve cells. This "alteration" can result in messages going in the wrong direction and reset the way your brain should act or react. Ultimately this affects the way the brain processes and retains information and how you think, learn, remember, focus, and concentrate.<sup>1</sup>

Research shows that there is a definite link between teen substance abuse and dropout from school. Teens who abuse drugs have lower grades, a higher rate of absence from school and other activities, and an increased potential for dropping out of school. Although we all know or hear stories about people who use drugs and still get great grades, this is not typical. Most people who use drugs regularly don't consistently do well in school.<sup>2</sup>

Studies show that marijuana, for example, affects your attention, memory, and ability to learn. Its effects can last for days or weeks after the drug wears off. So, if those are smoking marijuana daily, who are not functioning at their best. Students who smoke marijuana tend to get lower grades and are more likely to drop out of high school. One recent marijuana study showed that heavy marijuana uses in teen years and continued into adulthood can reduce their IQ up to as much as 8 points.<sup>3</sup>

High school dropout rates have also risen as a result of substance abuse. A study of teens in 12<sup>th</sup> grade (16-18 years of age) who dropped out of school before graduation are more likely than their peers to be users of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana and other illicit drugs. Illicit drug use among dropouts was higher than for those in school (31.4 percent vs. 18.2 percent). Dropouts were more likely to be current marijuana users than those in school (27.3 percent vs. 15.3 percent) and non-medical users of prescription drugs (9.5 percent vs. 5.1 percent). Teens who smoke, drink alcohol, binge drink or use marijuana or other drugs are more likely than non-users to drop out of school and less likely than non-users to graduate from high school, attend college or obtain a college degree. One study found that nearly one-third of school dropouts indicate that their use of alcohol or other drugs was an important contributor in their decision to leave school.<sup>4</sup>

## Prevalence of substance abuse in India

Substance abuse is found worldwide including among students. A recent WHO estimate shows a burden of worldwide psychoactive substance use of around 2 billion alcohol users, 1.3 billion smokers and 185 million drug users<sup>5</sup>. Substances such as tobacco, alcohol, cannabis and various allopathic drugs have been widely abused by students for various reasons despite their known ill effects<sup>6</sup>. Studies conducted worldwide including India have estimated a prevalence rate of substance abuse to be around 20-40 per cent among students from various streams including the medical field; however, these restrict themselves to tobacco or alcohol use and many of these are gender biased.<sup>7</sup>

Recreational drugs are legal and illegal drugs used without medical supervision. The four categories of recreational drugs include analgesics, depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogens. The increasing use of recreational drugs among students has become a rising and disturbing phenomenon worldwide<sup>8</sup>. Consumption of marijuana and other stupefying drugs has been reported amongst medical and nursing students elsewhere. The prevalence of recreational drug use among students in the health sector

generally ranges from 2% to as high as 64%. The reasons for which students consume recreational drugs include pleasure and relaxation, peer influence, cigarette smoking, and heavy drinking<sup>9</sup>.

Medical and nursing students have been shown to have high rates of mental health disorders such as burnout, stress, anxiety and depression. Several reports suggest that stressed and depressed students, tend to use alcohol and other recreational drugs more often as a coping strategy<sup>10</sup>.

Sharma, B et al. conducted a study on Drug abuse uncovering the burden in rural Punjab. This study explains that the prevalence of nonalcohol and nontobacco substance abuse was 34.8%. The prevalence of substance abuse among study group was 65.5% and most common substance abused was alcohol (41.8%), followed by tobacco (21.3%).<sup>11</sup> Some people in Northeast India prepare rice-based alcoholic drinks in the household. People use these drinks in religious and social functions, and these are taken even in the presence of parents and elders. Easy access to illicit substances in industrial towns and lack of social inhibition for intake of homemade alcohol might increase the vulnerability of youth to these habits. About 36% out of 1285 students have tasted/used homemade alcoholic drinks (HADs) and 12.3% used commercially available alcoholic drinks (CADs). Significantly higher numbers ( $P < 0.001$ ) of adolescent students ( $\geq 15$  years) used CAD in comparison to children ( $< 15$  years). However, the number of younger students was higher in using HAD. Minimum age at first experience of CAD was 7 years and that of HAD was 4 years; the duration varied from 1 to 8 years and 1–15 years, respectively. Parent's behavior of taking tobacco and/or alcohol influenced the habit of their children. Father's habit was found to be associated with male offspring's habit of taking CAD. About 16% of the students used one or more substances along with alcohol. High percentage of adolescents in the industrial town of Assam use alcoholic drinks with a male preponderance. They taste alcoholic drinks at a very young age. Parent's indulgence in taking tobacco, alcohol, or both was found to influence higher intake by their offspring.<sup>12</sup>

A cross sectional study in the high schools of Pagappara PHC area which is the urban health training centre attached to Government medical college Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India. Sample size was calculated based on the prevalence of a previous study conducted in Kottayam district Kerala and estimated as 300. Data was collected using a pre tested questionnaire through interview technique. Data entry was done in SPSS 16 and percentages were calculated to express the results. The prevalence of drinking among the high school students was 21% and 1% of students were regular drinkers. Among those consumed alcohol 38.15 have used it before the age of 10 years. 61.9% started drinking for experimentation and beer was commonly used type (71%). According to this study 21% of students have consumed alcohol and 1% is regular users of alcohol.<sup>13</sup>

One of the most widely discussed public health problems in the world is the health impact of tobacco use, which kills more than 6 million people globally every year. The

mortality due to tobacco is more than that associated with tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and malaria combined.<sup>14</sup>

#### Causes of substance abuse among students

The epidemic of substance abuse in young generation or students has assumed alarming dimensions in India. Changing cultural values, increasing economic stress and dwindling supportive bonds are leading to initiation into substance use. Cannabis, heroin, and Indian-produced pharmaceutical drugs are the most frequently abused drugs in India. Drug use, misuse or abuse is also primarily due to the nature of the drug abused, the personality of the individual and the addict's immediate environment. The processes of industrialization, urbanization and migration have led to loosening of the traditional methods of social control rendering an individual vulnerable to the stresses and strains of modern life.<sup>15</sup>

According to the Times of India, Bollywood has now been blamed for fueling India's love for alcohol. Alcohol use in Bollywood movies is directly influencing the alcohol consumption habits of India's adolescents, according to a recent study presented at the World Congress of Cardiology. Overall, 10% of Indian students, between 12 to 16 years of age, reported that they had already tried alcohol. But students that had been most exposed to alcohol use in Bollywood movies were found to be 2.78 times more likely to have tried alcohol as compared with those who were least exposed. The young people are the backbone of India, as per current statistics, 65% of our 1.25 billion population are younger than 35 years of age. The fundamental fact is that the lifestyle choices of this young generation will have tremendous bearing on India's immediate and long-term future.<sup>16</sup>

#### Educational issues due to substance abuse among students

High school graduation is a key milestone on the pathway to success for many Americans; however, many youths drop out of high school each year. In the United States, about 82 percent of youths who enter public high school as freshmen eventually graduate from high school in 4 years (calculated from the average freshman graduation rate and the adjusted cohort graduation rate). This indicates that approximately 1 out of 5 students did not graduate with a regular high school diploma within 4 years of the first time they started 9th grade<sup>17</sup>.

According to the 2012 Current Population Survey (CPS), approximately 478,000 youths aged 16 to 18 were "status dropouts," meaning that they were not enrolled in high school and had not earned a high school diploma or alternative credential. Younger youths were more likely than older youths to be enrolled in school. For example, the 2012 CPS data show that high school enrollment rates by age group were 95.4 percent for 16-year-olds and 90.1 percent for 17-year-olds.<sup>18</sup>

Students who fail to graduate face a wide array of negative consequences including higher rates of unemployment, earning less when employed, being more likely to receive public assistance, being more likely to suffer poor health, and being more likely to have higher rates of criminal

behavior and incarceration. In addition, the failure to complete high school has intergenerational implications on socioeconomic attainment because children whose parents did not complete high school are more likely to perform poorly in school and eventually drop out themselves<sup>19</sup>.

### Preventive management for students to prevent substance abuse

The persistence of college drinking problems underscores an urgent need to implement prevention and counseling approaches identified through research to reduce alcohol-related harms among college students.<sup>20</sup> Colleges have made online alcohol-policy information more available and accessible to their students and other interested parties, including parents. This may reflect a greater engagement of colleges and universities in the issue of drinking on campus in general.<sup>21</sup>

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) created the Rapid Response to College Drinking Problems initiative so that senior college administrators and students facing an alcohol-related crisis could get assistance from well-established alcohol researchers and NIAAA staff.<sup>22</sup>

In spite of being aware of the harmful effects of substance use, students take up this habit. This requires comprehensive prevention and control programs in schools and the community, targeted toward adolescents, students and their parents and other family members. Effective measures are required to encourage shaping the attitude of school children toward self-confidence and adequacy, as also to prevent risk behavior among students.<sup>23</sup> Shaping the attitude of students and promotion of a healthy lifestyle, including constructive behavior is essential in the formative years of life.<sup>24</sup>

Education is the only solution. We need to make students aware about alcohol and its effects on their body as a part of their curriculum. They need to be explained why underage drinking is discouraged. Also, parents need to encourage a discussion around it instead of scolding their children after they get caught.<sup>25</sup>

### Conclusion

Students are future of nation. If they fail in their life, the nation also fails in its future. Substance abuse is the main cause of student's failure in their education. So, it is necessary to provide proper education to avoid substance abuse towards students, teachers and parents. School dropout, antisocial activity, and robbery are some of the issues related to drug abuse among students. There are so many researchers explained the need to avoid drug abuse among students. They explained how to avoid, how to prevent educational dropout and improve student's life. They are the good sources of information. They will help us to provide good counselling to the students to takeoff them from drug abuse.

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