

Exploration of Psychosocial Factors among Substance Abusers and Non Abusers in Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

The present study was carried out on a sample group of 35 abusers and 35 non abusers and it was found that there is no significant difference in perceived social support of substance abusers with respect to abusers and non abusers. Although it was expected that the constructs of hardiness and perceived social support will differ significantly among abusers and non abusers, the same was not reflected in the results. The same may be due to the lesser sample size involved in the study as it is very difficult to detect effects in case of lower sample size studies. Nevertheless, the hardiness levels and perceived social support levels were assessed among the abusers and non abusers and the mean scores were found to be 1.52 and 4.82 respectively.

Keywords: *Exploration, Psychosocial factors, substance, abusers, Kashmir*

In India the number of substance abusers is rapidly increasing, which is a matter of concern.. Statistics reveal that at least 25,426 people committed suicide due to drug and addiction related problems in the last 10 years across India. This comes down to an average 2,542 suicides every year, 211 per month and 7 per day. Appalling truth is that suicides due to drug related problems exceed dowry, poverty and money related suicides in India in most of the last 10 years (Data Team, Hindustan Times, 2014).As far as the Kashmir region is concerned, the situation is equally grave. According to a study conducted by the United Nations drug control program in 2008 there are 60,000 substance abusers in the valley. Margoob(2008) stated that the valley has 2.11lakh drug abusers. Besides this the occurrence of frequent unrests in this state since 1989 creates a breeding ground for the compromising health behavior and negative coping strategies like substance abuse. The present study is thus an attempt to explore the psychosocial factors of substance abuse in Kashmir region of Jammu & Kashmir. Various studies in this regard have been carried out, however, a very few studies have been carried out in Indian context. The present study will provide an insight into the psychosocial factors of substance abuse in Kashmir,

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which in turn will provide a base for all stake holders related to substance abuse especially the patrons of Drug de-addiction counseling professionals and related NGO's.

The psychosocial factors that will be studied in the present research are psychological hardiness and perceived social support. Psychological hardiness is a psychological style associated with resilience, good health, and performance under a range of stressful conditions (Bartone, 1999; Kobasa, 1979; Maddi and Kobasa, 1984). People high in hardiness have a strong sense of commitment to life and work, and are actively engaged in what's going on around them and hence are less involved in substance abuse. Kobasa (1979) introduced the hardiness as a complicated personal characteristic that is formed by three constituents: challenge, control and commitment, which are supposed as a set of mediators that can modulate stress effects. Hardiness is mainly related to the adjustment and positive agreement encountering problems (Issacson, 2002). Those individuals who are well adjusted and show a positive commitment to their life and life related problems are less involved in substance abuse. Researchers believe that hardiness and vulnerability are two opposite poles of a same continuum (Fergus and Zemmerman, 2005). According to Procidano and Heller (1983), perceived social support is "the extent to which an individual believes that his/her needs for support, information, and feedback are fulfilled". It is an individual's subjective view of how other people, in particular families or peers, are available to meet and/or assist with meeting the individual's needs for comfort and support. Social support can be occur in three forms: Information support involves an individual help which a person provides another to understand a problematic event better and to ascertain what resources and coping strategies may be needed to deal with it. Instrumental support involves the provision of tangible assistance such as services, financial assistance, and other specific aid or goods. Emotional support involves providing, contentment and nurturance to another individual and reassuring the person that he or she is a valuable person who is cared about. The persons who have a broad network of social support from family, friends and society are less involved in substance abuse and those who are less sociable are indulged in many psychological problems and substance abuse.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Various studies have also been carried out on the understudy constructs in the context of substance abuse. As far as psychological hardiness is concerned, **Abdollahi and Talib (2014)** in a study entitled "Hardiness, Spirituality and Suicidal Ideation among Individuals with Substance Abuse: The Moderating Role of Gender and Marital Status" indicated the importance of hardiness as a protective factor against suicidal ideation in individuals with substance abuse, as well as the particular role of hardiness for men. **Commander, et.al (2008)** in a study found that after controlling for age and sex, low psychological hardiness and high avoidance coping are significant predictors of alcohol use and abuse. **Maddi and Kobasa, (1984)** found that those low in hardiness more often revert to regressive or avoidance coping strategies which could include excessive alcohol consumption or drug abuse. **Eid, Jarle et al (2009)** conducted a study in which

suggested that low hardiness levels in people could serve as a risk marker for stress related alcohol and substance abuse. **Jocoy, Jon C. Laberg and Bjorn H Johnson (2015)** conducted a study which examined psychological hardiness and avoidance coping strategies as predictors of risk for alcohol abuse for military personal. The results suggested that alcohol screening programmes for returning veterans may be improved by including assessment of such psychological variables as hardiness and avoidance coping. **Abbaas Abdollahi and Mansor Abu Talib(2012)** conducted a cross sectional study in 2012 in Tehran which suggested that people with low level of spirituality and low levels of hardiness were more prone to suicidal ideations due to substance abuse. **Maddi and Kobasa, (1984)** found that those low in hardiness more often revert to regressive or avoidance coping strategies which could include excessive alcohol consumption or drug abuse. As far as perceived social support is concerned, **Panchandeswaran (2008)** in a study entitled “An examination of the perceived social support levels of women in methadone maintenance treatment programs who experience various forms of intimate partner violence “by making use of Face-to-face, structured interviews on 416 women addicted to methadone found that lower levels of perceived social support were significantly associated with physical aggression which is a potential factor of drug abuse **Atkins and Hawdon 2007; Humphreys(2011)** in a study stated that social support is so crucial that several approaches to addiction treatments focus on the reorganization of social support. **Thomas Ashby Wills, Roger Vaughan** extracted from two cohorts of urban adolescents, and stated that peer support was positively related to substance use. **Patricia L Dobkin, Mirella De Civita, Antonios Paraherakis and Kathryn Gill {2002}** suggested that both high and low social support groups experienced marked declines in negative affect and in severity of substance abuse overtime. Higher functional social support at intake is a positive predictor of retention in treatment and a modest predictor of reductions in alcohol intake. **Dustin A. Pardini, Thomas G Plante , Jamie E Stump** conducted a study on recovering individuals the result of which indicated that among recovering individuals, higher levels of religious faith and spirituality were associated with a more optimistic life orientation, greater perceived social support, higher resilience to stress and lower levels of anxiety. As can be seen from the review of literature, the psychosocial factors of psychological hardiness and perceived social supports do play a significant role in with regard to substance abusers. Such a study will thus be relevant in order to understand these variables in substance abusers there and suggest suitable intervention strategy based on the results obtained. Further the study will focus on substance abusers in Kashmir where the problem of substance abuse is rapidly growing and require suitable attention.

Significance

Many studies have been conducted in the field of psychology with main objective of devising intervention strategies in order to help the substance abusers. However, one of the main challenges that is faced in this regard is the non availability of empirical evidence on the basis of which appropriate strategies can be framed. Besides, there is a dearth of studies which have studied the certain significant psychosocial factors like psychological hardiness, and perceived

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social support in substance abusers. In this context the present study will be carried in order to access the psychological hardiness and perceived social support of substance abusers in Kashmir. The substance abusers will also be compared with non abusers on these variables. It is hoped that the results of the study will be made use of policy makers and counselors so that they can deal with problems of substance abusers effectively.

Objectives & Hypothesis

The research objectives of the study are as follows,

1. To assess the psychosocial factors (psychological hardiness, and perceived social support,) Amongst substance abusers.
2. To compare the psychosocial factors like psychological hardiness, and perceived social support, of substance abusers and non abusers.

On the basis of these objectives, following hypotheses were formulated,

1. There is no significant difference in the psychological hardiness of substance abusers and control group of non abusers.
2. There is no significant difference in the perceived social support of substance abusers and control group of non abusers.

METHODOLOGY

Sample Description

The present study will consist of 35 substance abusers and a control group of 35 non abusers selected purposively from the Anantnag and Srinagar Districts of Jammu and Kashmir. Only males were included in the study. Among the substance abusers those addicted with tobacco, alcohol, cannabis and amphetamine were considered for the study.

Procedure

The study involved the collection of both secondary and primary data. Secondary data was collected by visiting various libraries and referring to information available on substance abusers especially with reference to the variable selected. Purposive sampling technique was used to select participants for the study. After data collection, suitable statistical techniques were used to analyze the data and derive conclusions.

Tools for Data Collection

The tools for the present investigator to collect the data are as under:

1. ***Personal Data Sheet:*** A personal data sheet will be used to collect socio-demographic and other information about the participants.
2. ***Psychological Hardiness Scale by Kobasa and Maddi (1982):*** For the assessment of psychological hardiness, psychological hardiness scale developed by Kobasa S.C & Maddi S.R (1982) will be used. It is a 20 item instrument divided in two sections, section A(1-

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14)measures commitment hardiness and section B (15-20)measures control hardiness. The scale has been found to have high validity and a reliability of 0.86.

3. Perceived social support scale by Zimet et.al (1988): For the assessment of perceived social support scale developed by Zimet, G.D. ,Dahlem,N.W., Zimet, S.G & Farley, G.K. (1988) will be used. It is a 12 item questionnaire with a high validity and a reliability of 0.88.It covers three dimensions pertaining to friends, family and significant others. It is applicable in diversity of contexts. The items of the scale are culturally relevant in Indian context as well.

Statistical Analysis

For achieving the objectives of present study, the collected data was analyzed by using the appropriate statistical techniques with the help of SPSS-20.

RESULTS & INTERPRETATION

The results and their interpretation is reflected in the tables that follow

Table 1: Showing descriptive statistics of sample group

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---------------------|----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| Hardiness | 70 | .75 | 2.06 | 1.5286 | .25795 |
| Valid N (list wise) | 70 | | | | |

The above table indicates the mean score of hardiness with mean 1.5285 and standard deviation .25795.

Table 2: Showing Normality check of Hardiness Construct.

| | | Statistic | Std. Error | |
|-----------|----------------------------------|-------------|------------|--|
| Hardiness | Mean | 1.5286 | .03083 | |
| | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | Lower Bound | 1.4671 | |
| | | Upper Bound | 1.5901 | |
| | 5% Trimmed Mean | 1.5293 | | |
| | Median | 1.5000 | | |
| | Variance | .067 | | |
| | Std. Deviation | .25795 | | |
| | Minimum | .75 | | |
| | Maximum | 2.06 | | |
| | Range | 1.31 | | |
| | Interquartile Range | .44 | | |
| | Skewness | -.053 | .287 | |
| | Kurtosis | .086 | .566 | |

The above table indicates normality check of sample group with respect to hardiness & indicates that skewness is -.053 and kurtosis is .086 which indicates that the data are within limits .

Table 3: Showing Normality check of Perceived Social Support

| | | Statistic | Std. Error | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|------------|--|
| PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT | Mean | 4.8274 | .15907 | |
| | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | Lower Bound | 4.5100 | |
| | | Upper Bound | 5.1447 | |
| | 5% Trimmed Mean | 4.8578 | | |
| | Median | 4.9583 | | |
| | Variance | 1.771 | | |
| | Std. Deviation | 1.33086 | | |
| | Minimum | 1.50 | | |
| | Maximum | 7.00 | | |
| | Range | 5.50 | | |
| | Interquartile Range | 2.27 | | |
| | Skewness | -.175 | .287 | |
| | Kurtosis | -.709 | .566 | |

The above table indicates the normality check of abusers and non abusers with respect to perceived social support and it is found that skewness and kurtosis are -.175 and -.709 which indicates that the data are under normal limits.

Table 4: Showing Results of t-test

| Construct | df | t-value | P-Value |
|--------------------------|----|---------|---------|
| Psychological Hardiness | 68 | 1.4 | .95 |
| Perceived Social Support | 68 | 1.0 | .17 |

The earlier table reflects that the obtained t-values are insignificant at 0.05 level of significance, consequently our hypotheses, “There is no significant difference in the psychological hardiness of substance abusers and control group of non abusers” and “There is no significant difference in the perceived social support of substance abusers and control group of non abusers” stand accepted.

CONCLUSION

The present study yielded many findings as shown below.

1. Mean score in case of hardiness was found to be 1.52
2. Mean score in case of perceived social support was found to be 4.82.
3. There is no significant difference in hardiness of substance abusers and non abusers.
4. There is no significant difference in perceived social support of substance abusers with respect to abusers and non abusers.

Although it was expected that the constructs of hardiness and perceived social support will differ significantly among abusers and non abusers, the same was not reflected in the results. The same may be due to the lesser sample size involved in the study as it is very difficult to detect effects in case of lower sample size studies. Nevertheless, the hardiness levels and perceived social

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support levels were assessed among the abusers and non abusers and the mean scores were found to be 1.52 and 4.82 respectively.

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Conflict of Interests: The author declared no conflict of interests.

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