

A Study on Drug Abused Youth of North Kashmir Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir India

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to find out the drug abuse among the population of north Kashmir. In the present study 70 respondents were studied voluntarily in various drug addiction centers across the north Kashmir. Respondents of the study were of different age groups, 40 (57%) respondents were of the age of 21 to 26. Were 20(28%) were of 17 to 20 followed by 10(14.1%) were between 27 to 31 years of age. It was founded that most of the drug abusers were addicts of nicotine 40(57%), polysubstance 20 (28%) followed by alcohol 5 (7.1%) and other substance 5 (7.1%). Our study also revealed that most of the cases education was up to high school, 40 (57%). Understanding the drug abuses in population will be helpful for the societies, law enforcement agencies and various government organizations to work for the eradication of this evil from the root.

Keywords: North Kashmir, Drug abuse, Nicotine, Polysubstance, Alcohol

One of the main issues at the moment is the young drug addiction epidemic in Kashmir's valley. The issue is not just affecting men; it has also begun to affect young women. Nobody can dispute the fact that drug addiction has a negative influence on the addict's family as well as on the addict alone. Drug misuse may also lead to a wide range of dysfunctional behaviors that disrupt everyday life in the family, the workplace, and the larger community. Untreated drug addiction costs families a lot of money, including costs for domestic violence, property crimes, child abuse and neglect, lower productivity, and even unemployment. There is sufficient literature on the subject of drug usage in different regions of India. The researchers discovered that, despite a thorough online search, there is a conspicuously low amount of literature regarding drug misuse in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The researchers decided to perform a study to close any gaps as a result. Goyal, et al. (2022). [1]

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According to the World Health Organization's (1992) definition of drug addiction, it is a "behavioral pattern of drug use marked by excessive preoccupation with the use of drugs, obsessive drug-seeking behaviour, as well as a significant chance of relapse after cessation." Peer drug use and dysfunctional family connections also increase the likelihood of a youngster acquiring a drug problem (Gilvary, 2000) [2]. According to global statistics, the medicine industry, which has a \$500 billion annual revenue, is the third-largest global industry behind the oil and arms trades. Worldwide, drug use affects over 190 million people (Carballo and Nerukar, 2001) [3].

Due to the constant conflict, Kashmiri young have severe psychological and social problems, which contribute to their drug addiction. Changes in cultural values and rising economic hardship are contributing to the onset of drug misuse, according to Nadeem et al. [4]. The study also demonstrated how the stresses and strains of modern life are a result of industrialization, urbanization, and migration.

According to a survey by the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), there are 40,000 drug users overall, with 4,000 of them being women, in the Kashmir division alone. 65% to 70% of pupils in Kashmir Valley are drug users. According to statistics from government-run psychiatric disorder hospitals, 90% of drug users are between the ages of 17 and 35 and have a lifetime prevalence of drug addiction. Due to Kashmir's popularity with tourists and migrant workers, the number of various drugs used by drug users has increased. Young individuals between the ages of 12 and 15 frequently use gateway substances that are easily accessible from parents, such as cigarettes, naas, and hookah [5].

The most important factor is having a parent or other family members who abuse drugs or alcohol. Alcohol and drug misuse are associated with low levels of success, particularly in school, and low self-esteem. Teenagers that are aggressive and impulsive are more likely to take drugs.

Objective of the Study

To identify drug abusers in North Kashmir region of J&K, as well as their educational backgrounds and the age at which they began using drugs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In a de-addiction facility in Northern Kashmir, a descriptive study of people with drug abuse problems was conducted. All patients with drug abuse problems who visited the de-addiction centre were included in the research sample. The investigation was conducted in December 2021. Seventy people (70) with drug abuse problems who visited the de-addiction centre during the study period made up the study sample. Persons with drug abuse disorders are characterized as follows by the American Psychiatric Association: Individuals with substance use disorders [6] are individuals who have a physical and psychological reliance on the drug as well as the accompanying symptoms:

1. A strong desire to use the substance; desire or failing attempts to reduce or restrict substance usage.
2. Inability to fulfill key responsibilities at work, school, or home; abandonment or reduction of social, work, or leisure activities.
3. Continuous usage despite recognizing problems.
4. Symptoms of withdrawal.

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Individuals using drugs who were attending the de-addiction centre where the study was conducted were included in the study.

Individuals who use drugs and attend a de-addiction centre but are unwilling to engage were omitted from the research. A semi-structured pretested questionnaire was used as the research tool.

RESULTS

Table no. 1 Demographic characteristic of respondents

Profile	Valid	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	70	100%
Age (years)	17-20	25	35.7%
	21-26	35	50%
	27-31	10	14.2%
Educational qualification	Under graduate	24	34.2%
	Up to high school	40	57.1%
	Uneducated	6	8.5%
Total		70	100%

Table no. 2 Distribution of cases based on drug abuse type and age of commencement

Substance abuse	N	%
Nicotine	40	57%
Polysubstance	20	28%
Alcohol	5	7.1%
Others	5	7.1%
Age in which substance abuse		
17 - 20	20	28%
21 - 26	40	57%
27 - 31	10	14.1%

All the respondents in the present study were males, the total respondents were 70 in this study there were no females. Again Table 1. Shows 25 (35.7%) cases were between 17 and 20 years of age, while 35 (50%) were in the age group of 21 to 26 years and 10 (14.2%) were in age group of 27 to 31. Further table 1. Shows the respondents educational distribution 24 (34.2%) respondents' education was under graduate. 40 (57.1%) respondents were up to the high schools while, 6 (8.5%) cases were un educated. From table 2. It can be clearly seen the distribution of the respondent's substance abuse. 40 (57%) cases where those who takes nicotine, while 20 (28%) takes Polysubstance. Further table 1. Also shows 5 (7.1%) were of alcohol takers and 5 (7.1%) were taking some other drug like substance.

Table 2. also shows the age of the respondents in which the substance or drug abuse was started. Group 1 was of 17 to 20 years it was found that 20 cases (28%) fall in this category. Group 2 comprising 40 (57%) were of the age group of 21 to 26, further table 2. Also shows 10 (14.1%) drug abusers were of the age group between 27 to 31. Further analysis regarding the association between type of family and duration of substance dependence, educational status and duration of substance dependence, type of family and age of starting drug use, educational status and age of onset of substance use and duration of substance dependence could not be carried out because the values in some cells were less than five.

DISCUSSION

It was founded that the majority (57%) of individuals with substance use disorders are between the ages of 21 and 26 years old, indicating that the majority of the adults in our study were involved in substance abuse. These findings are supported by another study that found that 50.5% and 60.33% of patients with substance use disorders were between the ages of 21 and 30 years old, respectively. [7,8] Another study done in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands found that the commencement of regular alcohol use in late childhood and early adolescence is connected with the greatest rates of use in adult life, as compared to the later onset of drinking. [9]

At a research conducted by Kumar et al. [10] in New Delhi de-addiction facilities, 21% of the addicts were illiterate or had only completed basic school, compared to 6% in the current study. According to a National Survey conducted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in 2002, 29% of drug users were illiterate, with a large percentage coming from lower socioeconomic groups. [11] According to Rather et al., [7] 78.8% of drug users had completed high school. These findings are consistent with our previous research, which found that 57.1% of individuals with drug use disorders had completed high school. However, findings of the present study contrasted with those of Baba et al. and Rather et al., [12,7]. Where they claimed that 44% and 51.33% of drug users, respectively, had completed high school. The same studies found that alcohol was the most often misused substance (82.5%), while Kadri et al. [13] found that alcohol was the most commonly abused substance in 70.2% of their individuals. According to a research performed in Punjab, the most often misused drug was alcohol (41.8%), followed by cigarettes (21.3%). These findings contrast from those of our study, in which we found nicotine use disorders in 40 (57% of patients) and alcohol use disorders in 5 (7.1% of cases). Polysubstance abuse was documented in 91.9% of patients by Rather et al. [7]. These findings contradict with our study, which found Polysubstance addiction in 28% of patients. Polysubstance abuse was documented in 35.1% of patients by Baba et al. [12]. These findings are consistent with ours.

The present study revealed that, the most prevalent age of commencement of drug use was between the ages of 21 and 26 (57%). However, Rather et al. [7] stated in their study that 76.8% of patients began drug misuse between the ages of 11 and 20. According to Kadri et al. [13], 39.6% of individuals began using drugs between the ages of 11 and 20.

CONCLUSION

The study finds out that adolescents and adults up to 30 years of age (100%) have started drug use at an early age with nicotine and Polysubstance as the most commonly abused substances in which maximum persons were educated up to high school (57%). Our study holds important implications for all the stakeholders concerned with combating the mounting challenge of increasing psychoactive substance use in our society. There is a great need for creating awareness about drug abuse among people. In Kashmir valley the problem of drug addiction has metastasized for several reasons. In rural Kashmir, families are unaware if a drug is being abused in their midst. “The women folk don’t know that the man of the house is an addict. Understanding the drug abuses in population will be helpful for the societies, law enforcement agencies and various government organisations to work for the eradication of this evil from the root.

Declaration of Participants

The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent forms. The respondents were given information that the data will be only used for research purpose. They were also given assurance that their identity will not be disclosed publically and not will be published in the research study.

Limitations of the study

Our study was mainly based on a population looking for treatment at various de-addiction canthers. Thus, the findings of our study possibly will be different from the accurate depiction of drug addiction in the society.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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