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Prevalence of Drug Abuse Among Under Graduate Students in the City of Mysore (In Karnataka, India)

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Abstract:

Drug abuse among youths is a heart breaking reality of our society. The allure of drugs often entices young minds seeking an escape from the pressures of life, only to trap them in a vicious cycle of addiction and despair. Tragically, the consequences ripple far beyond individual lives, fuelling a surge in crime rates that prey upon communities already grappling with social and economic challenges. The desperation born of addiction drives youths into the wrath of criminal activity. 60 undergraduate students of 4 different colleges in Karnataka were sent questionnaires in the form of online Google forms after receiving their informed consent. Results were analysed using Microsoft excel for mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistics such as t-test was used to understand the difference between variables. Results: The sample's mean score on the Prevalence of Drug Abuse was 2.65. Standard deviation of the scores of all participants on the domain of Drug Abuse was 3.965. The female participants showed a mean score of 2.03 while the male participants showed a mean score of 3.26 on Drug Abuse. The computed T-test results showed a p-value of 0.124089 indicating that the results are not significant at $p < 0.1$, stating no significant difference between male and female subjects. Conclusion: This study underscores the importance of understanding the involvement of youth in damaging lifestyles such as drug abuse. Here the prevalence of drug abuse among college youth in the city of Mysore, in Karnataka state of India is focused on.

Keywords: *Drug Abuse, Youth, Alcohol, Mysore, Karnataka, Addiction.*

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Introduction

Drug Abuse And Crime

Three models have been proposed to analyse the connection between drugs and crime. The first model suggests that drug-induced effects can lead to criminal behaviour. The second model highlights economic motives, where individuals commit crimes to fund their drug habits. The third model, known as the systemic model, suggests that crime among drug users is linked to the illegal drug market. Goldstein acknowledges these models but also recognizes that factors beyond drug use may contribute to criminal activity. Essentially, there are three basic models for explaining the relationship between drug use and crime: substance use leading to crime, crime leading to substance use, or both being influenced by common causes **(Powell, 2011).** Substance use can lead to crime due to drug effects, economic incentives, or systemic violence associated with the drug market. Various biological and neuropsychological mechanisms have been proposed to explain how drug use increases the risk of violence, with chronic use of certain drugs like marijuana, opiates, and amphetamines being linked to violent behaviour. However, the evidence regarding cocaine, PCP, and LSD's association with violence is less conclusive. Additionally, drug and alcohol use may interact to influence violent behaviour.

The economic motivation model suggests that drug users resort to criminal activities like robbery and burglary to finance their drug addiction **(Hassan *et al.*, 2022).** Studies on heroin addicts support this idea, showing a correlation between changes in drug use frequency and crime rates, particularly property crimes. The systemic model asserts that the drug trade is intertwined with violent crime, leading to disputes over territory, enforcement, and transaction-related offenses such as robberies and assaults **(Hassan *et al.*, 2022).** This model likely explains much of the violence associated with illicit drug markets, including drug-related homicides. Crime leading to substance use proposes that individuals prone to deviant behaviour may be drawn to social settings where heavy drinking and drug use are prevalent. For instance, income from criminal activities like robbery may facilitate drug acquisition, reinforcing drug-related behaviour. It's also suggested that aspects of the criminal lifestyle, such as sporadic employment and mobility, may contribute to substance abuse. Additionally, some individuals may use drugs to self-medicate or justify their deviant actions. It's possible that both models are valid, with substance use and crime reinforcing each other in a reciprocal relationship **(Jeffris and Titus, 2000).**

The common cause model suggests that substance abuse and crime are linked because they share common factors like genetic traits, antisocial personality disorder, and family history of alcoholism **(Powell, 2011).** Additionally, factors such as poverty, social support, peer influences, and unstable employment contribute to both drug abuse and criminal behaviour. Growing up in an environment where drug use is prevalent, especially among parents, increases the risk of addiction in children. Environmental factors like living in poor, densely populated, and racially segregated neighbourhoods contribute to higher rates of violent crimes and delinquency **(Hassan *et al.*, 2022).** Alcohol and certain drugs, like benzodiazepines, are associated with increased risk of violent behaviour, while others, like cannabis, may lead to specific methods of suicide. Drug use by perpetrators during assaults increases the likelihood of more severe violence and injury to victims. Some drugs, particularly potent benzodiazepines like flunitrazepam, can induce aggressive behaviour and memory loss, leading to extreme acts of violence with no recollection afterward. Drugs are directly related to crime through their illegal possession, distribution, and associated illegal activities like drug trafficking **(Lundholm, 2013).**

Hypothesis:

1. There is no Prevalence of drug abuse among under graduate students in the city of Mysore.

2. There is no difference between male and female subjects on the prevalence of Drug Abuse.

3. There is no association between independent variables like, age and socio economic status in drug abuse among UG students in the city of Mysore.

Materials and Method

For this study following tools were used:

1. General information schedule.

2. DAST 20 Questionnaire.

Participants and Procedure

This study involved a total of 60 undergraduate students. To give out equal gender distribution, 30 students were male and 30 students were female. After taking the consent from the subjects, they were provided with the below mentioned questionnaire, in the form of online Google form.

1. General Information Schedule:

This is a scale that includes personal information of the subject. It elicits response for name, age, gender, occupation of mother and father, annual income of the family, name of their college, details of the subject. In the present study this schedule was used to obtain personal details of the subjects.

2. Dast 20 Questionnaire: The Drug Abuse Screening Tool (DAST) is a substance abuse screening instrument that has been developed by, Harvey A Skinner, in the year 1982, and is still an excellent screening tool. It is a 20 item yes/no self report instrument. The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide a brief, simple, practical, but a valid method for identifying individuals who are abusing psychoactive drugs and to yield a quantitative index score of the degree of problems related to drug use and misuse. The DAST may be used in a variety of settings to provide a quick index of drug abuse problems. It is quick and cheap to administer **(Harvey and Skinner, 1982).** Additionally, with the already available different versions of the test, more and more versions are being conceptualized to offer help by using different languages. The tool also delivers a quantitative interpretation as to the degree of severity of ones problems and helps much in assessing what kind of treatment is needed for the patient. The drug abuse screening tool has been used for several populations and settings and with this; it has continued demonstrating reliability and validity **(Harvey and Skinner, 2006).**

Statistical Analysis

After scoring the results manually, the results were analysed using Microsoft excel for mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistics such as t-test was used to understand the difference between male and female participants on the Prevalence of Drug Abuse.

Results

Table No. 1: shows the result and analysis of the total sample in drug abuse

DOMAIN: DRUG ABUSE				
TOTAL SAMPLE				
VARIABLE	TOTAL	MEAN	INTERPRETATION	STANDARD DEVIATION
TOTAL	60	2.65	Absence	3.965
PRESENCE	05	13.2	Presence	2.04
ABSENCE	55	1.69	Absence	3.84

Table No. 2: Shows the results and analysis of the sample in drug abuse based on gender and age

GENDER			
VARIABLE	TOTAL	MEAN	INTERPRETATION
MALE	30	3.26	Absence
FEMALE	30	2.03	Absence
AGE			
VARIABLE	TOTAL	MEAN	INTERPRETATION
17-19	30	3.26	Absence
20-22	30	2.03	Absence

From the table no.1 it can be observed that the sample‘s mean score on the Prevalence of Drug Abuse is 2.65; indicating that there is no evident presence of Drug Abuse in the given sample. Therefore, there is no prevalence of Drug Abuse among undergraduate students. The standard deviation of the scores of all participants on the domain of Drug Abuse is 3.965. Thus, the Hypothesis H1 is accepted. From the table no.2 it can be observed that the female participants show a mean score of 2.03 while the male participants show a mean score of 3.26 on Drug Abuse. This reflects that, there is no prevalence or no presence of Drug Abuse among either of the groups. Thus, the Hypothesis H2 is accepted. However, the overall results on the prevalence of Drug Abuse data was subjected to further analysis using inferential statistics such as t-test. The computed T-test results showed a p-value of 0.124089 which by the conventional criteria indicate that the results are not significant at $p < 0.1$(single tailed).These t-test significant results can be further interpreted asserting that the difference between male and female subjects on their prevalence of Drug Abuse is considered to be statistically not significant indicating that there is no considerable difference in male and female prevalence level of Drug Abuse. Thus, the Hypothesis 2 is accepted. The data was further analysed based on age variable which is primarily categorized as to age group 17 - 19 and 20 - 22 years old. It is observed that the age group 17 – 19 have obtained a mean value of 3.26 on Drug Abuse Test. This indicates that the age groups shows, there is absence of Drug Abuse, with no evident difference. Thus the, Hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Conclusion

This research, enabled in acquiring knowledge about the prevalence of drug abuse among under graduate

students in the city of Mysore, (Karnataka, India). The epidemic of substance abuse in young generation has assumed alarming dimensions in India. Changing cultural values, increasing economic stress and dwindling supportive bonds are leading to initiation into substance use. The study aimed at understanding the factors which may contribute to the drug abuse among youths. The effects of gender, age, socioeconomic status, education were also studied which may affect the drug abuse rates in the college going youth. The study also helps in understanding that substance abuse can be addressed at the individual level, at the local level (societal, national, etc.) and at the cross-national level. At the individual level, there has to be a synthesis of biological understanding with the exploration of background sociocultural factors. At the national and cross-national level, there has to be a concerted effort of all the countries in managing the issue of substance abuse, taking into account the local sociocultural and political scenario.

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