

## **DRUG ABUSE**

Drug abuse is a serious social problem. Without realizing the negative consequences of its use some people use it as a source of entertainment and recreation. Some others use drug which may lead to serious problems at work place, home, schools and relationship. Drug use is not good for the health, nor for the family and not for the society at large. It is one of the major threats to one's body's health and well-being. A minor gesture of drug 'use', may ultimately end in 'drug abuse' or addiction.

## **CONCEPT AND DEFINITIONS OF DRUG ABUSE**

A drug is any chemical substance that changes the way the mind or body works. Some drug are medicines. Medicines can be helpful when used properly, but any drug, including missused medicines, can be harmful to the body's organs and systems.

Drug addiction is detrimental to the individual and the society. It concerns with an abnormal use of certain drugs like hashish, charas, marijuana, cocaine, LSD, mandrax, valium, dexedrine etc. The excessiv use of these intoxicating drugs leads to increased tolerance and physiological or psychological dependence. As a result the person feels miserable whenever a particular drug is not administered. The person begins to show withdrawal symptoms like lack of appetite, loss of weight, constipation, restlessness, nervousness, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, disinterest in sexual and social relationships and even epileptic seizures. There is also an intense craving for a particular drug which the person tries to fulfil in anyhow. When this happens, the person is said to be drug abuser.

### **DEFINITIONS OF DRUG ABUSE :**

1. According to **American Psychiatric Association (1932)**, "drug abuse-apply to the legal, non-medical use of a limited number of substances which have a property of altering the mental state considered undesirable and harmful."
2. **The National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse (1973)** defined drug abuse as, "...an eclectic concept having only one uniform conotation : societal disapproval."
3. According to the fourth edition of the **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (1994)**, "When an individual persists in the use of alochol or other drugs despite problem related to use of the substance or drug is drug abuse."

### **CAUSES OF DRUG ABUSE :**

No person is born as drug abuser. The causes of drug abuse are therefore to be found within the environment of an individual. Drug abuse is learned and acquired like other personality traits and later mintained for its physiological and psychological dependence. Following are the causes of drug abuse.

1. Because of peer pressure individuals starts taking drugs. First they try drugs to have fun and pleasure with the company of few friends. They do not want to feel left out when their friends start using drugs.
2. Sometimes the first dose of drugs may be taken in the form of prescribed medicine. Gradually, the tolerance level of a particular drug and the dose increases.
3. Out of curiosity also the individual may become addicted to drug. When the drugs are constantly in the news the young people takes the risk of tasting it.
4. Another cause of drug abuse is that some drugs are legal for adults. Many adults hurt themselves and their families every year by using legal drugs, mainly alcohol and tobacco.
5. Some People takes drugs for looking new thrills and mystic experience.
6. Sometimes persons takes drugs to become free from mental stress, anxiety and depression.
7. People may also take drugs to free themselves from their inhibitions, guilt, shame and disappointment in life.
8. The highly competitive, success oriented style of living today creates many odds for a large number of young people. As such they become habituated to drugs.
9. Youth may also take drugs when the job opportunities for the youth are rare.

Due to above reasons the people may be addicted to drugs. When drugs are abused for the first time the effect is short lived. But gradually, larger and larger doses are needed for same results and one become dependent, physiologically as well as psychologically, on a particular drug. Thus, what begins as an innocent experiment ends in disaster.

## **SYMPTOMS OF DRUG ABUSE :**

No test can definitely indicate the symptoms of drug abuse. After gathering comprehensive information from the family, physical examination and laboratory tests the health care practitioners diagnose these disorders. The symptoms of different types of drug abuse are quite similar and common though different drugs have different physical and mental effects. Following are the symptoms of drug abuse.

1. The drug abuser repeatedly fails to fulfill major obligations at home, school or work.
2. They are inclined to do certain activities which are physically hazardous like driving an automobile when under the substance's influence.
3. The drug abuser may invite legal problems. They may invite arrests for irresponsible conduct, forcible rape or stealing or kidnapping etc.
4. They may also invite social problems like physical fights and become out of control and violent.
5. Drug abuser loses concentration, memory and perception and often they are confused and fearful.
6. Use of drugs can lead to worried feelings, depression, panic, paranoia or long-term mental disturbances. Sometimes the depression can lead to suicide.
7. They may invite problems in their relationship.

## TREATMENT OF DRUG ABUSE :

Drug abuse is a social and psychological problem. It is not a law and order problem. It is necessary to distinguish the drug abuse from criminals who supply them drugs. The drug abused individuals depend on drugs to the extent of pathological craving so powerful that they try and manage to get the drug regardless of legal or other obstacles. For them it is really difficult to take remedial or preventive measures. In a number of cases formal steps become necessary to convince the drug abuser to accept the advice and any form of treatment suggested to him or her. The following measures prove fruitful in the treatment of drug abuser.

**1. Compulsory hospitalization :** For the treatment of drug abuser the most important step is compulsory hospitalization. Drug abusers are always reluctant to take treatment. They only want drugs. If the drug abusers will be hospitalized then the following major risks can be removed :

- (a) Rejection by family and society, that can neither understand nor manage the patient and makes the patient depressed. The situation is more worsed when drugs are not available during the withdrawal phase.
- (b) When the drug abuser are profoundly depressed there is a risk of killing themselves by taking overdose or committing suicide.
- (c) The tendency to go on to harder drugs or mixed drugs to get the desired effect may lead to disaster.
- (d) When the drug is injected in the body by themselves, there is a risk of infection or other complications.

2. **Deintoxicating or drying out the Patient** : An attempt should be made to deintoxict the patient. It can be achieved through sudden total dicontinuation of drugs, giving the patient progressively minimum doses of drugs and substituting a less addictive drug.
3. **Medical measures** : Tranquilizing drugs may prove quite helpful in this regard. Antibiotics should be provided for preventing infections. The withdrawal symptoms should be controlled glucose and vitamines should be given as an adquate diatary measures for compensating drug deficiency.
4. **Psychological treatment** : For psychological treatment patience and time is needed. For adjusting in the society without using drugs long run psychotherapy and sociotherapy is essential.
5. **Long term therapy and rehabilitation** : For curing the drug abuser long term therapy is essential through the following steps.
  - (a) By establishing proper relationship with therapists, doctors and nurses.
  - (b) With the help of specific drugs withdrawal reactions and complications should be tackled.
  - (c) They must learn to adjust and socialize without using drugs.
  - (d) The drug abuser once cured should be employed and helped in seeking occupational adjustment.
  - (e) They should be helped in getting adequate family adjustment and learn to accomodate.

The primary task in the prevention of drug abuse involves educating the public about the causes and consequences of drug abuse. There is a need of restructurization of unhealthy environment and reduction in the problems leading to frustrations, tensions and anxities among the youth. To prevent and control drug abuse the educational

institutions can take the following measures —

- 1. Organizing Anti-Drug Abuse Camps :** Society can never be free of drugs, it will continue to exist. To create awareness about the harmful effects of drugs anti-drug abuse camps should be organised by the educational institutions from time to time in the surrounding areas.
- 2. Spreading Anti-Drug Awareness message :** Educational institution should spread anti-drug awareness message across the community. The students teams should be formed to spread this message in the locality of their institution.
- 3. Forming teacher-Student Teams :** For visiting the surrounding localities teacher student team should be formed. They should identify the drug abusers in their locality and use motivational therapy to stop drug abuse.
- 4. Employment based courses :** It is the duty of the educational institutions to provide job-oriented and employment based courses because job opportunities can stop the youth to abuse drugs.
- 5. Creative Project Work :** The energies of students and youth should be channelized into constructive and creative projects like rural reconstruction, welfare of the society and nation and helping the needy and the poor.
- 6. Educating Parents :** From time to time the educational institutions should organise parents teacher meet to seek cooperation of parents to counter drug abuse menace. Parents should be requested to observe their children and their friends to detect drug abuser. Parents should handle their drug abused children sympathetically.
- 7. Use of Cognitive Technique :** Cognitive technique should be adopted as a preventive measures. It will help the children and adolescents to overcome the drug abuse problems. Reasonable knowledge about the harmful effects of drug abuse should be given to them.