



The causes of drug abuse, along with the typical risk factors

Dr. Anjana Verma

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, BSR Govt. Arts College, Alwar, Rajasthan, India

Abstract

When does someone start abusing drugs, and what causes it? It doesn't matter how accessible drugs are, some individuals will choose to avoid using them anyhow. Some people take drugs on a casual or even daily basis for years on end without ever developing a dependency. And a few folks become hooked and can't live a normal life anymore. There is a correlation between upbringing and consumption of drug habits. Several factors contribute to drug use progressing to abuse. The most fundamental reasons for this are the urge to relieve stress, to experience a short-lived high, or, in the case of young people, to simply "fit in" with their friends. A person's dependence on drugs may quickly grow to the point that they begin to fear for their own lives without them. In this paper, we go into this topic extensively.

Keywords: drugs, abuse, addiction, alcohol, medication, symptoms

Introduction

An illness that affects a person's brain and behaviour, drug abuse, also known as drug use disorder, is a condition that causes an inability to exercise control over the use of a drug or medication, regardless of whether it is legal or illegal. Alcohol, marijuana, as well as nicotine are all examples of drugs that might be categorised as drugs. When you are addicted to a drug, you may want to use it notwithstanding the negative effects it has on your life.

An individual's first foray into drug abuse may have been an exploratory usage of a recreational drug while in the company of others; thereafter, the frequency of the individual's drug use may have increased. For some people, the first time they experiment with drugs, especially opioids, is when they take recommended medications or get them from other people who have scripts for them.

The potential for abuse, as well as the rate at which it might develop, varies greatly from drug to drug. Opioid medicines are one example of a drug that may create dependency more rapidly than others, in addition to carrying a greater risk (Newcomb, 1992) ^[3].

As time goes on, you could find that you need a higher quantity of medicine to have the same effect. You can end up needing the medicine even though you're feeling OK. You may discover that it becomes progressively challenging to abstain from the drug as the frequency of your usage of the drug rises. It's possible that quitting drugs can produce extreme desires for the drug, as well as leave you feeling physically unwell. These signs and effects are known as withdrawals.

Your healthcare practitioner, family members, colleagues, support groups, or participation in an organised treatment programme may all help assist you in overcoming your drug abuse and remaining drug-free after treatment.

Literature review

Drug Addiction

Drugs use disorder, often referred to as drug addiction, is a chronic brain and behaviour problem characterised by obsessive drug seeking and use despite adverse effects. In addition to illicit drugs, drugs also include alcohol, cannabis, and cigarettes. If you are addicted to a drug, you may continue to use it while knowing that it is unhealthy.

For some people, experimenting with a recreational drug in social situations may be the initial step toward addiction. For some persons, particularly with opioids, the use of prescription medications or the purchase of pharmaceuticals from others who do may be the initial step toward addiction. Different drugs have different rates and potential for addiction. Painkillers containing opioids represent a substantial risk due to the rapidity with which they may induce addiction.

Over time, increasing doses of the medication may be necessary to get the same effect. To experience happiness in the future, you may need medication. Increased drug use may make it more difficult to abstain in the future. A quick withdrawal from drugs may cause intense desires and possibly physical illness. These are known as withdrawal symptoms.

You may overcome drug addiction and sustain sobriety with the aid of a physician, family members, community services, or a structured treatment programme.

Drug abuse

According to the facts on drug abuse, anybody of any race, age range, socioeconomic class, or gender is capable of developing an addiction. Drug use is not a moral fault but a chronic condition. Although there is evidence that drug abuse tends to run in families, there is no clear explanation for why some individuals acquire a drug problem and others do not. (Benowitz, 1997) ^[6]

The Drug Abuse Report considers the following as possible antecedents to drug abuse

- Rivalry with parents.
- The absence of adequate adult supervision of a teen's whereabouts and behaviour.
- Drug abuse in social circles.
- Pessimistic view on drug abuse prevention and treatment.
- Irresponsible parenting and behavioural problems.
- Lack of concern for or implicit approval of drug use by instructors, students, and neighbours.
- Drugs are readily available via social and personal networks.

What are the most often abused drugs?

Tobacco, alcohol, and other narcotics are all classified as "drug abuse." The facts about drug abuse demonstrate that both legal and illegal drugs may be abused. Essentially, any drug with a genuine medical application could also be abused.

The following drug classes are often involved in instances of drug abuse

- Alcohol and cigarettes are examples of drugs that may be lawfully obtained without a prescription.
- Methadone, oxycodone, & Zolpidem are all entirely lawful with a doctor's prescription and are all part of this group.
- Drugs of a chemical nature, including inhaled drugs
- Marijuana, opiate narcotics such as heroin, stimulants such as methamphetamines & cocaine, and hallucinogens all seem to be instances of "illegal" drugs (like acid)

Cause of drug abuse

The exact origin of drug abuse is unknown; however, it is believed to entail genetic susceptibility, co-occurring disorders, or ecological factors. Pre-adolescent or teenage drug use as well as experimenting is prevalent, although only a tiny fraction of those consumers will go on to abuse drugs.

A. Co-Occurring disorders as drug abuse factors

Drug abuse often co-occurs with other conditions, such as mental illness. Although mental illness is not known to induce drug abuse directly, the two diseases may be related. Attempts to ease the suffering caused by a mental condition may be the fundamental cause of drug use.

Sad people, for example, may routinely "get high" on pharmaceuticals to soothe their unpleasant feelings (called self-medication). While depression probably played a part, there were other causes for drug abuse. Even though some persons with mental illness are addicted to drugs, it is evident that this is not the case in every instance.

B. Environmental factors contributing to drug abuse

Some conditions may function as risk factors rather than real causes of drug abuse, particularly among novice users. Many individuals relate drug abuse to a childhood blighted by parental abuse or neglect. When a young child frequently takes drugs to modify their surroundings, whether to connect with an absent parent or to escape an abusive one, addiction may develop. In addition to the presence of a drug user or drugs, the presence of a drug user or drugs in the home may also induce drug addiction.

- Additional risk factors that contribute to the underlying causes of drug abuse are as follows:
- Domestic instability, often caused by parental drug abuse or mental illness
- Interactions with one's parents that are discordant
- Factors such as usage by peers and availability of drugs
- Pessimistic view on drug abuse prevention and treatment
- Irresponsible parenting and behavioural problems.
- Not meeting academic expectations
- Access to drugs based on friendship

C. Genetics as a factor of drug abuse

Even though only a tiny fraction of persons who take drugs also abuse them, it has been observed that drug addiction tends to run in families, which suggests that heredity may be one of the factors that contribute to drug abuse. A kid can grow up without developing any issues related to drug usage, although having parents who consume drugs puts the child in danger. It is also conceivable to take drugs in the absence of any other family members who have a history of doing so. It should not be assumed that drug abuse is caused only by heredity.

D. The interplay of multiple factors that lead to drug abuse

Although probable causes of drug abuse include psychiatric disorders, environmental factors, and genetics, it is more possible that a mix of risk variables is what leads to drug abuse in the first place. If a person is genetically predisposed to abusing drugs, at least one of their parents probably has a problem with drug abuse. Because of this, there is a possibility that the individual's home life may become unstable, which may lead to emotional or psychological issues. When combined, these factors may constitute the cause of drug abuse.

Drug utilization signs as well as drug utilization symptoms

If hazard variables for drug utilization are known, it is usually possible to identify drug utilization symptoms (Freye, 2009) ^[8]. Among the risk variables for drug utilization are

- The wide availability of medications
- Drug abusers in the household
- Friends who take illegal drugs
- A miserable home life
- A mental ailment

Checking for symptoms of drug use in someone who has these risk factors is appropriate since it raises the possibility that they may use drugs.

Observable behavioural changes are often the first sign of drug use. The user may lose interest in their typical pastimes and interests, preferring to spend more time in their social group rather than at home. Changes in sleeping habits and decreased performance at work or school are two other signs of drug use. It is critical to have an open talk with the individual to determine whether or not the signs and symptoms you are seeing are the results of drug usage. These signs and symptoms of drug use, on the other hand, might be a signal of something else.

Other indications of drug usage include

- Drug odour on body and clothes
- Constant drug discussion
- Putting people under duress to take drugs
- Frequent laundry, bathing, or spraying room deodorizer to eradicate drug odours
- Possession of drug paraphernalia such as a pipe, bong, or rolling papers
- Mood swings such as anxiety or despair
- Cool and sweaty skin or hot and dry skin
- A need for extra money or unexpected expenditures

Symptoms of drug abuse

All of the aforementioned are markers of drug usage, however, drug addiction is characterised by more severe symptoms. As a clear indicator of addiction, the user's appetite for the drug has intensified to an extreme degree. After an experiment, the drug has become a need for the consumer.

While the particular symptoms of drug abuse vary depending on the drug in question, one frequent indication is the substitution of drug use for regular activity. When an individual's life consists solely of drug use, addiction is present. In addition to changes in mood and sleep habits, drug abuse may cause a general deterioration in the job or school performance (Boyd *et al.*, 2014)^[9].

Other indications and symptoms of drug abuse include

- Unusual or odd conduct
- Unusual vital indicators, such as breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure
- Uncertainty
- Chest or lung discomfort
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, and abdominal discomfort
- Diseases caused by needle-sharing, including hepatitis B or C or HIV
- Consistent hangovers
- Disguising medications

Factors associated with drug abuse

Although many young people's first experiences with drugs come from peer pressure, some are more prone to develop a drug addiction problem than others. Adolescents often experiment with drugs because their peers are using them, but their usage may quickly spiral out of control if they are already dealing with depression, stress, or even other mental health issues. Parents and teachers may do a better job of keeping an eye on their students by learning to recognise the warning signs of drug usage (Macdonald *et al.*, 1999)^[10].

- Lack of academic drive or academic failure
- Exclusion from classmates or family
- Anti-social conduct, especially violent behaviour in childhood
- Adolescent drug usage
- The accessibility of drugs in the society
- Improper parenthood entails having parents who are aloof, uninterested in their children, inadequate monitors of their children's actions, or who have failed to create or complete lifecycle norms with their children.
- Extended working hours
- Loss of control/external locus of control - a sense that their lives are out of their hands.
- Low socioeconomic standing
- Drug abuse by a parent or sibling
- Parental divorce, remarriage, or even other changes in family life
- Sense-seeking conduct

Besides ecological factors, a person's biology may impact if or not they acquire a drug addiction. Although it is difficult to avoid these issues, recognising them exist may assist parents & teachers in providing focused assistance to children who are at greatest risk.

Several biological components are:

- Genetic vulnerability to addiction
- Psychiatric disease
- Metabolism
- In comparison to females, men are at a greater risk for drug abuse problems.

Drug abuse remedies

1. Rehab facilities for drug abuse

Recovery programmes for drug addiction may be situated inside a hospital or in a separate institution. Those with persistent or severe drug abuse issues may benefit substantially from drug treatment treatments. Rehabilitation for drug abuse may consist of an inpatient programme in which the patient gets 24-hour care or an outpatient programme in which the patient attends therapy only during the day (MILKMAN, 1991)^[12]. The objective of drug addiction rehabilitation programmes is to equip addicts with all they need to effectively stop their habit.

- The following instances illustrate this
- Care from a physician
- Individual and group therapy with a behavioural focus.
- Advantages of Having Friends: Having Individuals Communicate With
- A system of continued assistance after therapy has been finished.

2. counselling & support organizations for people who abuse drugs

Medical drug addiction treatment may ease physical withdrawal symptoms and sometimes cravings, but long-term sobriety takes more than simply a change in attitude. The goal of drug abuse counselling is to treat these mental and behavioural issues. Counselling for drug abuse may involve

- Psychologically-oriented medicine
- Included in a facility for drug addiction treatment
- Provided by addiction therapists and other private practitioners.

Frequently, both the in-treatment and post-treatment stages of drug abuse therapy involve peer support groups. In these programmes, drug abusers may discover camaraderie and encouragement. Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous are both 12-step programmes that emphasise the members' total well-being. SMART Recovery, a nonreligious organisation, is frequently used by persons with drug abuse issues.

3. Therapy for pharmaceutical drug abuse

Many people who are seeking help for drug abuse first see a medical professional who can determine their unique requirements. A physician may recommend hospitalisation, pharmacological treatment, or therapy for their patient. As part of a comprehensive plan to address drug abuse, a physician may recommend medication. It is possible that this medicine could be used to reduce the severity of symptoms of withdrawal or to help stop a user from using it again.

Medication for drug abuse therapy is often used for

- Sedative benzodiazepines are used to treat alcohol and drug withdrawal.
- With methadone, heroin addicts may curb their appetites and avoid relapse.
- Replacement for the nicotine found in cigarettes that is applied through patches but whose effects are eased down over time.

Since drug abuse commonly happens in tandem with mental illness, medical drug addiction therapy will also include screening for these conditions. Drug abuse treatment programmes often incorporate mental health care for patients with co-occurring disorders.

Conclusion

However, the simple fact that you have some of these risk factors does not mean that you will inevitably engage in drug abuse or become addicted to a drug. By educating yourself on the risks associated with drug use as well as other preventative measures, you can better look after yourself or a loved one.

References

1. Drug addiction as incentive sensitization. (2011). *Addiction and Responsibility*. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/8681.003.0004>
2. Prevention of drug abuse: Targeting risk factors. (2012). *Persuasive Communication and Drug Abuse Prevention*, 57-72. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203052419-9>
3. Newcomb MD. Understanding the multidimensional nature of drug use and abuse: The role of consumption, risk factors, and protective factors. *Vulnerability to Drug Abuse.*, 1992, 255-297. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10107-010>
4. What is drug addiction? *Drug Discovery for the Treatment of Addiction*, 2014, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118943670.ch1>
5. A definition of Drug Abuse Prevention Research. *Persuasive Communication and Drug Abuse Prevention*, 2012, 25-42. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203052419-7>
6. Benowitz N. Medical complications of drug abuse, 1997. *Drug Abuse Handbook*. <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781420048292.ch8>
7. Data Watch: Drugs most often abused by eighth graders in. (2007). *Pediatric News*, 2006;41(3):4. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0031-398x\(07\)70143-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0031-398x(07)70143-1)
8. Freye E. Positive signs and symptoms of hard drug abuse. *Pharmacology and Abuse of Cocaine, Amphetamines, Ecstasy and Related Designer Drugs*, 2009, 247-250. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-2448-0_41
9. Boyd CJ, Young A, amp McCabe SE. Psychological and drug abuse symptoms associated with nonmedical use of opioid analgesics among adolescents. *Drug Abuse*, 2014;35(3):284-289. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08897077.2014.928660>
10. Macdonald S, Wells S, amp; Wild TC. Occupational risk factors associated with alcohol and Drug Problems. *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, 1999;25(2):351-369. <https://doi.org/10.1081/ada-100101865>
11. Drug abuse: Cause and effect. *Cultural Sociology of Mental Illness*, 2014. *An A-to-Z Guide*. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483346342.n86>
12. Milkman HARVEY. Remedies for alcoholism and drug abuse; an Overview. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 1991;10(1):63-74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09595239100185081>