

Prevalence and Effect of Substance Use and Psychological Co-Morbidities in Medical and Dental Students of a Medical University of Nepal

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Abstract : Background: Medical and Dental students are vulnerable to higher levels of Psychological distress than other age matched peers. Many studies reveals that there is high prevalence of psychoactive substance use and Psychiatric co-morbidities among them. Objectives: -To study the prevalence of substance use among medical and dental students of a Medical University. -To study the prevalence of depression and anxiety in medical and dental students of a Medical University. Materials and Method: A cross-sectional descriptive study in which simple random sampling was done. Semi-structured questionnaire, AUDIT for alcohol use, Fagerstrom test for Nicotine dependence, Cannabis screening test (CAST), Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI), Beck's Anxiety Inventory (BAI) were used for the assessment. Results: Total sample size was 588 in which the mean age of participants was 22 ± 2 years. Among them the prevalence of alcohol users was 47.75%(281) in which 32%(90) were harmful users. Among 19.55%(115) nicotine users 56.5%(65), 37.4%(43), 6.1%(7) had low, low to moderate and moderate dependence respectively. The prevalence of cannabis users was 9%(53) with 45.3%(24), 18.9%(10) having low and high addiction respectively. Depressive symptoms were recorded in 25.3%(149) out of which 12.6%(74), 6.5%(38), 5.3%(31), 0.5%(3), 0.5%(3) had mild, borderline, moderate, severe and extreme depressive symptoms respectively. Similarly anxiety was recorded among 7.8%(46) students with 42 having moderate and 4 having severe anxiety symptoms. Among them 6.3%(37) had suicidal thoughts and 4(0.7%) of them had suicide attempt in last one year. Statistically significant association was noted with harmful alcohol users, Depression and suicidal attempts. Similar association was noted between Depression and suicide with moderate use of nicotine. Conclusion: There is high prevalence of Psychoactive substance use and psychiatric co-morbidities noted in the studies sample. Statistically significant association was noted with Psychiatric co-morbidities and substance use.

Keywords : alcohol, cannabis, dependence, depression, medical students

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