

Changing Pattern of Drug Abuse: An Outpatient Department Based Study from India

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Abstract : Background: Punjab, a border state in India has achieved notoriety world over for its drug abuse problem. People right from school kids to elderly are hooked to drugs. This pattern of substance abuse is prevalent in both cities and villages alike. Excess of younger population in India has further aggravated the situation. It is feared that the benefits of India's economic growth may well be negated by the rising substance abuse especially in this part of the country. It is quite evident that the pattern of substance abuse tends to change over time which is an impediment in the formulation of effective strategies to tackle this issue. Aim: Purpose of the study was to ascertain the change in the pattern of drug abuse for two consecutive years in the out patient department (OPD) population. Method: The study population comprised of all the patients reporting for deaddiction to the psychiatry outpatient department over a period of twelve months for two consecutive years. All the patients were evaluated by the International Classification of Diseases; 10 criteria for substance abuse/dependence. Results: A considerably high prevalence of substance abuse was present in the Indian population. In general, there was an increase in prevalence from first to the second year, especially among the female population. Increase in prevalence of substance abuse appeared to be more prominent among the younger age group of both the sexes. A significant increase in intravenous drug abuse was observed. Peer pressure and parental imitation were the major factors fueling substance abuse. Precipitation or fear of withdrawal symptoms was the major factor preventing abstinence. Substance abuse had a significant effect on the health and interpersonal relations of these patients. Summary/Conclusion: Drug abuse and addiction are on the rise throughout India. Changing cultural values, increasing economic stress and dwindling supportive bonds appear to be leading to initiation of substance abuse. Need of the hour is to formulate a comprehensive strategy to bring about an overall reduction in the use of drugs.

Keywords : deaddiction, peer pressure, parental imitation, substance abuse/dependence

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