



RESEARCH PAPER

**Causes of Drug Abuse Among University Students in Pakistan:
Variation by Gender And Drug Type**

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: January 08, 2020	Objective of this research was to describe the causes behind drug abuse among students of universities. Qualitative approach was adopted to conduct this study. Semi-structured interviews of eight university students were conducted by using purposive snow ball sampling technique. The collected data was analyzed by using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that there are different causes due to which university students started abusing drugs: individual, interpersonal and institutional. The hard drugs such as heroin and cocaine are used in a very small ratio at the universities, whereas sedatives, ecstasy pills, shisha, cannabis (Charas), injected drugs and alcohol (Murree Brewery, whisky, vodka) are commonly used drugs by university students. The findings of this research show that men and hostelized students are more frequent drug users as compared to girls and non-hostellers. It is suggested that government and administration of universities need to cater to the needs of the students with diverse cultural backgrounds of the students and likewise curriculum should be designed to apprise students of the consequences & risks of drug abuse
Accepted: March 18, 2020	
Online: March 31, 2020	
Keywords: Drug Abuse, University Students, Causes	
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Introduction

Community Drug is a chemical substance that has the ability to alter the way people normally behave. When drugs are used for nonmedical purposes, these alter one's consciousness that may be defined as drug abuse and it is also considered illegal drug (Haveles, 2014). It is considered to be the material that can

change the emotional or physical state of someone. It leads to abnormality if it is used repeatedly. Medical drugs can also be abused when we use them without the prescription of a doctor (Nessa, Latif, Siddiqui, Hussain & Hossain, 2008; Possi, 2018). Abuse of drugs is one of the critical issues currently faced by Pakistan. It is quite worrisome that the ratio of the drug abusers is increasing day by day despite all the remedial efforts made by government to get rid of this problem. This problem is badly affecting the life of common people, and on the other side it is becoming a big hurdle in the socio economic development of the country.

In Pakistan there are nine million people who are not just taking drugs but have become addicts, in which about two million range between the age of 15 to 25 years. The increasing number of such people especially, young people who are college and university has resulted in serious social and health implications (Khan, 2016). The drugs with the potential for dependence, that change neurons of brain which manipulate happiness or reward. Along with these tobacco is frequently used by both girls and boys throughout the world (NIH, 2018). The most common and well known drugs include tobacco, alcohol, opium, cannabis, hallucinogens, stimulants, sedatives, Amphetamines and Cocaine. Tobacco is the most common drug used worldwide by both genders all over the world (Hindocha, Freeman, Ferris, Lynskey, & Winstock, 2016). Media has enhanced the use of cocaine among girls and its use is increasing day by day now (Gilmore, et al., 2004).

Pakistan is also suffering the drug problem despite its orthodox and conservative people. Since its emergence Pakistan is having very liberal laws about drugs. Its main cities were having the vogue of drinking alcohol till the mid of 1970's but the Bhutto regime prohibited its use for the Muslim citizens. From then to onwards the Muslims drug users were unable to acquire alcohol lawfully. And publicity for unlawful beverages has been banned. Muslims in Pakistan are 97% and only remaining three percent mostly Christians can buy illicit it with legal permit. Non-Muslims have limit to buy 100 bottles of beer or five bottle of liquor per month. But these limits were not implemented by letter and spirit. Non-Muslims foreigners can place order for alcohol in hotels which have licenses and they also can demand a legal permit (Carreiro, 2011).

In Pakistan, 500,000 people use heroin and 125,000 people take drug through injection. 40,000 street children are drug abusers in just four major cities of Pakistan (Chaudhry, 2013). There are 7.6 million people who are drug addicts in Pakistan, in which 78% are male and 22% are female, this number increases by 40,000 per year (Shadman, 2017).

International report on tobacco use among adults showed that the rate of tobacco abuse has increased from 2.1 to 7.1 (Palen & Coatsworth, 2007). Shisha has got a great fashion in youth which is a sort of tobacco smoking. Some people think it is not as harmful as cigarette are. But it is used in more carbon mono oxide than those of cigarette. It's clear that water pipe has great health hazards which are not likely to be fruitful alternative to tobacco use. Drug abuse in youth is a serious

issue, the students frequently resort towards drug abuse. The biggest problem of this period is to locate growth and peer compatibility (Adlaf, Gliksman, Demers, & Newton-Taylor, 2001). To fulfil the demands of higher education, coping academic stresses, meeting the wishes of families and society, beginning informal relationships and commitments, the students are prone to develop different psychological problems (Eisenberg, Gollust, Golberstein, & Hefner., 2007; Benton, Robertson, Tseng, Newton, & Benton, 2003; Stanley & Manthorpe, 2001; Erickson Cornish, Riva, Henderson, Kominars, & McIntosh, 2000; Adelekan, 1996). One male student out of 10 at college or university level is a drug addict. In Pakistan five per cent of adults are drug abusers and their increasing rate is seven percent per year (Khan, 2016).

A golden period starts when a young student enters into university life which has a complete liberty from parents' supervision and be a part of new groups. This period lets him to enjoy formally prohibited things and start adventures. The factors that compel him to abuse drugs are curiosity, fellows and social influence. The major reasons for drug abuse are due to pressure caused by their peer (96%), educational stress (90%) and inquisitiveness (88%). According to a study, tobacco was used in various ways in India, such as overall tobacco users (28.8%), 87.5% were smokers, chewers 37.5%. the results are reflected that boarders were more users than those of non- boarders (Puthia, Yadav & Kotwal, 2017). The peer influence played a key role in tobacco smoking. The fellows imitated in the use of alcohol and tobacco.

Literature Review

Drugs are substances due to their chemical influences alter the natural working of biological functioning of human body (Hamid, 2002). Drug refers to a substance that is deliberately taken in order to obtain some desirable effects. Some of the drugs are medical drugs that are used to treat illness whereas some of them are taken because of their pleasurable effects (Iversen, 2016). The drugs may prove beneficial in case of medicines which may be prescribed by the doctor. Some non-medical drugs are producing harmful effects (Patrecia, 2014).

Symptoms of Drug Addict

Parents should notice and identify changes they feel taking place in their children behaviors by paying attention to these symptoms: extreme weight loss in few days, feeling no hunger, having some difficulty in breathing and becoming tired soon, liking of remaining outside the home, demanding money frequently, feeling happy in loneliness, sleeping long time, remaining lazy, face becoming pale, tremors in fingers, having stomach issue especially constipation, work and studies also disturbed or even feel irregularity, take less interest in the task of everyday life, eyes remain red, unclear speech and dark circles under the eyes (Qasim, 2015).

Causes of Drug Abuse

There are many reasons that can lead to illegal use of drugs (Glantz & Hartel, 1999), which may be some sort of tension that may be associated with any field of life; unhappiness or depression either due to personal or professional reasons, company of such friends who use drugs; the effort to adopt modern life style: having no job: lack of parental attention, feeling some sort of boredom: sense of curiosity to try new things and having leisure, cheap and easy access to drugs (Qasim, 2015; Zaman, et al., 2015; Masood & Sahar, 2014). The major reason behind the alarming increase of drug users in Pakistan is that they are completely supported by the people who have authority, wealth and power. And the other reason is its cheap and easy availability in our country. Pakistan is become exporters as well importer of drugs. In Pakistan, almost 25% to 44% of students are involved in illegal drug (Khattak, N., Khattak, & Ullah, 2012).

Drug Abuse among Students by their Gender

Various literatures show that there is a great difference among girls and boys about the drug abuse, female students use less drugs as compared to males (Lemelin, Lussier, Sabourin, Brassard and Naud, 2014; Webster, Chaiton and Kirst, 2014; Becker, Perry & Westenbroek 2012). Maier, Liechti, Herzig and Schaub (2013) also showed about Switzerland male students who use methylphenidate (3.1%) and female (1.5%) students. (Salameh, Jomaa, Issa, Farhat, Zeghondi, Gerges, Sabbagh, Chaaya, Barbour, Waked, Salame, Saadallah- Zeidan and Baldi 2014; Goreishi and Shajari 2013) carried out a study on students of Iranian university, whose results were 40.3% drug abusers among them, 56% were men whereas 44% were women students. In their cluster analysis on American students, Primack, Kim, Shensa, Sidani, Barnett and Switzer (2012) found that smoking cigarette was higher (61%) in clusters with the highest number of males than in clusters with the highest number of females (28%). In this analysis, compared to females, males had an odds ratio of 4.19 (95% CI 3.37-4.43) to be smokers (Primack, et.al., 2012).

A study conducted on Rwandan youths regarding substance abuse also showed that substance abuse among males (67.03%) was more than that of females (36.92%) (Kanyoni, Gishoma & Ndahindwa, 2015). Reza Hosseini, Omid, Roohbakhsh, Tavakolian, and Assar (2014) carried a study aimed at determining how frequently drug is abused by university students in Iran. A sample of 1,260 students was taken; mean age of those students was 21.35 years. According to the results of that study, 94 students that were 7.4% used Benzodiazepines, 159 students used cigarettes that were 12.6%, 60 students used tobacco alcoholic drinks that were 4.7%, opiates was used by 42 students that were 3.3%, Forty three students means 3.4% students used methylphenidate in the last 6 months.

Zaman, et. al., (2015) took sample of 50 students to find out at which ratio university students abused drugs. According to the results, there are huge numbers of students who are abusing drugs. Behind this there were many different factors i.e., hopelessness, nervousness, pressure of peer, or any psychological

chaos. Frequent drugs are marijuana, hashish, heroin, opium, alcohol and cocaine. Males are more inclined to abusing drugs as compared to females. Private sector students abused more drugs as compared to Government sector. Usman, et al. (2017), described in their study that 90.6% of the male university students already had awareness about drugs through their friends while the female students came to know by internet media. Majority of the university students considered drug abuse is unlawful on religious base (Usman, et. al, 2017).

Drug Abuse among Students by Their Type

Kalsoom, Azeemi, and Farid, 2013 conducted a study in Peshawar by taking the sample size of 300 students who studied in three different universities by having medical screening test to identify types of drugs which they were using. After analyzing the data the results were showed that tobacco was at the top among both male and female students. Further we also came to know that the males were much more in number as compared to female who abused drugs. Furthermore, the hostelizers were greater in number as compared to non-hostelizers who were prone to drugs abuse.

The boarder students are usually associated with personality traits such as punctual, amiable, truthful, liable and compatible etc. while living in hostels they learn to reconcile their activities with different individuals which increases their tolerance level. Their stay in boarding prepares them to face the various challenges of life. Different genre of students are living hostels who impel their fellows to abuse drugs. The results of the study are very fruitful to improve the services of hostels in Pakistan (Iftikhar & Ajmal, 2015).

Substance use is being more common during college days, due to educational stress, influence of friends, curiosity, popularity and easy availability of certain drugs. Men are more likely to engage in substance abuse. This was supposed to be more common in hostels. A study was carried out on the professional male students who were living in boarding places to assess the extent and harmful effects of drugs that they used by comparing the results of males and females. Study carried out by Sarkar, Roy and Singh, (2018) found that the most commonly abused substances in government engineering college students were cannabis and tobacco. High level of substance abuse was found to be present among male engineering students staying at hostels (Sarkar, Roy, & Singh, 2018).

Methodology

The paradigm of the study was interpretive, qualitative approach was used. The design of the study was phenomenology. The general population of interest to the study includes all drug abusing university students of Pakistan. Purposive snowball sampling technique was used, through which the researcher interviewed the specific people with personal experiences on the subject matter. The data collection procedure was consisted of exploratory data collection in the form of

semi-structured interviews with the eight drug abusing male and female university students. Interviews were conducted during the months of April to June 2019 at homes, universities, hostels, cafes, natural settings and recorded as well. All interviews were conducted by the researcher in English, however, respondents were given the chance to express themselves in their local language if they wanted.

Findings and Discussion

Data was collected through the interviews were transcribed followed by thematic analysis by the researcher. Description of the thematic analysis is described as under:

Theme 1: Intrapersonal factors

Among the respondents some of the view that the personal traits contributed much more to determine drug abuse than those of external factors. The individualized decision whether he or she plays key role to be involved in drug abuse. Curiosity persuaded them to use drugs. Two of the female students who lived at hostels said that they started using drugs in the form of cigarette, shisha and sedatives by following their friends to pretend as modern. Afterwards they continue towards consuming different types of drugs like cannabis, cocaine, alcohol. Female day scholars are also drug abusers but the ratio is found less as compare to hostelized female students. The day scholars revealed that they have noticed that their parents have check on them which resist them to abuse drug. On the other hand male students revealed that they frequently used drugs either they live in hotel or not to pretend themselves modern and mature. Five of the students explained that they try to escape from stressful situations like under pressure in studies, unemployment and broken family situation.

Findings of Glozah et. al, (2015) strengthen the results of current study, who claimed self-reliance is significant factor in personal interest that involves whether one should engage or not in dangerous activities even in drug abuse (Bannink et. al, 2015).

Theme 2: Interpersonal Factors

Relationship with others such as family and fellows influence determine a factor to abuse drug among university students appeared as second theme. The respondents think that family background of students plays a significant role to drug abuse. Parents can use their influence to preclude their children from drug abusing (Matejovicova, Trandzik, Schlarmanova, Boledovicova, &Veleminsky, 2015). According to the respondent there exists a lot of fellow influences among students of university that compel them to abuse drug. Few of them imitate their fellows to reconcile with them who used different types of drugs like sedatives, ecstasy pills, shisha, cannabis (Charas), injected drug, cocaine and alcohol (Murree Brewery, whisky, vodka). Students responded that they usually copied their family members in drug abuse. Similar results were presented in the studies of Jurcik, et.

al., in 2013 and Kassa, et. al., in 2014, students whose families were involved in drug abuse were inclined to do the same. The results of this research are incompatible with former researches concerning with the effect of social influence of drug abuse. Literatures show social amiability enhances the possibility of drug abuse (Alsanosy et al 2013; Lemelin et al 2014; Gebreslassie et al 2013; Birhanu et al 2014).

Theme 3: The institution

The university environment promotes drug abuse (Mennis, Stahler, & Mason, 2016). The respondents of this research have indicated various factors related to institutions. Three of respondents explained that a number of university teachers abuse drugs. One of the participants said that he noticed his university teachers' and students both buy drugs from the same seller. This encourages them to continue drugs abuse. The result of this study is consistent with the results of previously conducted studies by Kassa and Deyno (2014) and Asgedom (2017) explained that students may adopt drug abuse by following their university teachers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Results of this research showed that hazardous drugs such as heroin and cocaine are less abused among university students. Whereas sedatives, ecstasy pills, shisha, cannabis (Charas), injected drug and alcohol (Murree Brewery, whisky, vodka) are commonly abused drugs by university students of division Lahore. Besides results of this study show that the ratio of drug abuse is high in male and hostelized students in comparison to female and non-boarder students.

There is a need to pay attention from government and administration of universities to reduce the abuse drugs among their students. To aware the students about the severe consequences of drug abuse, a curriculum should be designed. Students should know their worth and family reputation and avoid to involve in such obnoxious activities.

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