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Drugs and its harmful effects

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the rising use of addictive drugs has become one of the biggest social problems menacing certain countries. The illicit use of a variety of drugs appears to be increasing. Generally, a drug can be a substance, other than those required for the maintenance of normal health, which by its chemical nature alters the structure or function of a living organism. Drugs can be classified into Legal and illegal drugs. A drug is any substance, solid, liquid or gas, that brings about physical and/or psychological changes. The drugs of most concern in the community are those that affect the central nervous system. They act on the brain and can change the way a person thinks, feels or behaves. These drugs are known as "psychoactive drugs". It is widely believed that taking drugs can lead to harmful consequences on the individual and society. Therefore, this paper is concentrated on explaining the physical and psychological effects on individuals.

Keywords: Apathy, Panic and psychosis

1. INTRODUCTION

A drug may be helpful or harmful. The effects of drugs can vary depending upon the kind of drug taken, how much is taken, how often it is used, how quickly it gets to the brain, and what other drugs, food, or substances are taken at the same time. Effects can also vary based on the differences in body size, shape, and chemistry (National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2002). And just as there are many kinds of drugs available, there are as many reasons for trying them or starting to use them regularly. People take drugs just for the pleasure they believe they can bring. Often it's because someone tried to convince them that drugs would make them feel good or that they'd have a better time if they took them. Some teens believe drugs will help them think better, be more popular, stay more active, or become better athletes. Others are simply curious and figure one try won't hurt. Others want to fit in and take drugs due to peer pressure. A few use drugs to gain attention from their parents. Many teens use drugs

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because they're depressed or think drugs will help them escape their problems. The truth is, drugs don't solve problems — they simply hide feelings and problems. When a drug wears off, the feelings and problems remain, or become worse. Drugs can ruin every aspect of a person's life. Although substances can feel good at first, they can ultimately do a lot of harm to the body and brain. Drinking alcohol, smoking tobacco, taking illegal drugs, and sniffing glue can all cause serious damage to the human body. Some drugs severely impair a person's ability to make healthy choices and decisions. Teens who drink, for example, are more likely to get involved in dangerous situations, such as driving under the influence.

2. CLASSIFICATION

Drugs are commonly classified according to their legal status or their effects on the central nervous system.

Legal and illegal drugs

Laws and regulations control the availability, quality and price of the "legal" drugs. For example, tobacco may not be sold to persons under the age of 18.

Illegal drugs

Because they are illegal, there are no price or quality controls on the illicit drugs such as heroin and ecstasy. This means that a user can never be sure that the drug they are taking is in fact what they think it is; for example, PMA (paramethoxyamphetamine), a toxic form of amphetamine, has been sold as ecstasy. The user also cannot be sure of a drug's strength or purity. Various batches of an illegally manufactured drug may have different mixtures of the drug and additives such as poisons, caffeine or even talcum powder.

3. HARMFUL EFFECT

Drugs are essentially poisons. The amount taken determines the effect. A small amount acts as a stimulant (speeds you up). A greater amount acts as a sedative (slows you down). An even larger amount poisons and can kill. This is true of any drug. Only the amount needed to achieve the effect differs. But many drugs have another liability: they directly affect the mind. They can distort the user's perception of what is happening around him or her. As a result, the person's actions may be odd, irrational, inappropriate and even destructive. Drugs block off all sensations, the desirable ones with the unwanted. So, while providing short-term help in the relief of pain, they also wipe out ability and alertness and muddy one's thinking.

4. MARIJUANA

Marijuana is the most commonly used illegal drug in the world. A survey conducted in 2007 found that 14.4 million individuals in the US alone had smoked marijuana at least once during the previous month. Marijuana is usually smoked as a cigarette (joint), but may also be smoked in a pipe. Less often, it is mixed with food and eaten or brewed as tea. Sometimes users open up cigars and remove the tobacco, replacing it with pot—called a "blunt." Joints and blunts are sometimes laced with other, more powerful drugs, such as crack cocaine or PCP (phencyclidine, a powerful hallucinogen). When a person smokes a joint, he usually feels its effect within minutes (Brook et al., 2001).

4.1. Short-term effects

- Sensory distortion
- Panic
- Anxiety
- Poor coordination of movement
- Lowered reaction time
- After an initial "up," the user feels sleepy or depressed
- Increased heartbeat (and risk of heart attack)

4.2. Long-term effects

- Reduced resistance to common illnesses (colds, bronchitis, etc.)
- Suppression of the immune system
- Growth disorders
- Increase of abnormally structured cells in the body
- Reduction of male sex hormones
- Rapid destruction of lung fibers and lesions (injuries) to the brain could be permanent
- Reduced sexual capacity

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- Study difficulties: reduced ability to learn and retain information
- Apathy, drowsiness, lack of motivation
- Personality and mood changes
- Inability to understand things clearly

5. COCAINE

It is one of the most dangerous drugs known to man. Once a person begins taking this drug, it has proven almost impossible to become free of its grip physically and mentally. Physically it stimulates key receptors (nerve endings that sense changes in the body) within the brain that, in turn, creates a euphoria to which users quickly develop a tolerance. Only higher dosages and more frequent use can bring about the same effect. Today, cocaine is a worldwide, multibillion-dollar enterprise. Users encompass all ages, occupations and economic levels, even schoolchildren as young as eight years old. Cocaine use can lead to death from respiratory (breathing) failure, stroke, cerebral hemorrhage (bleeding in the brain) or heart attack. Children of cocaine-addicted mothers come into the world as addicts themselves. Many suffer birth defects and many other problems. Despite its dangers, cocaine use continues to increase—likely because users find it so difficult to escape from the first steps taken down the long dark road that leads to addiction.

5.1. Short-term effects

- Loss of appetite
- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature
- Contracted blood vessels
- Increased rate of breathing
- Dilated pupils
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Nausea
- Hyperstimulation
- Bizarre, erratic, sometimes violent behavior
- Hallucinations, hyperexcitability, irritability
- Tactile hallucination that creates the illusion of bugs burrowing under the skin
- Intense euphoria
- Anxiety and paranoia
- Depression
- Intense drug craving
- Panic and psychosis
- Convulsions, seizures and sudden death from high doses (even one time)

5.2. Long-term effects

- Permanent damage to blood vessels of heart and brain
- High blood pressure, leading to heart attacks, strokes, and death
- Liver, kidney and lung damage
- Destruction of tissues in nose if sniffed
- Respiratory failure if smoked
- Infectious diseases and abscesses if injected
- Malnutrition, weight loss
- Severe tooth decay
- Auditory and tactile hallucinations
- Sexual problems, reproductive damage and infertility (for both men and women)
- Disorientation, apathy, confused exhaustion
- Irritability and mood disturbances
- Increased frequency of risky behavior
- Delirium or psychosis
- Severe depression
- Tolerance and addiction (even after just one use)

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6. METHAMPHETAMINE

It is an illegal drug in the same class as cocaine and other powerful street drugs. Crystal meth is used by individuals of all ages, but is most commonly used as a "club drug," taken while partying in night clubs or at rave parties. It is a dangerous and potent chemical and, as with all drugs, a poison that first acts as a stimulant but then begins to systematically destroy the body. Thus it is associated with serious health conditions, including memory loss, aggression, psychotic behavior and potential heart and brain damage. Highly addictive, meth burns up the body's resources, creating a devastating dependence that can only be relieved by taking more of the drug (Mullany et al. 2006) Crystal meth's effect is highly concentrated, and many users report getting hooked from the first time they use it.

6.1. Short-term effects

- Loss of appetite
- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature
- Dilation of pupils
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Nausea
- Bizarre, erratic, sometimes violent behavior
- Hallucinations, hyperexcitability, irritability
- Panic and psychosis
- Convulsions, seizures and death from high doses

6.2. Long-term effects

- Permanent damage to blood vessels of heart and brain, high blood pressure leading to heart attacks, strokes and death
- Liver, kidney and lung damage
- Destruction of tissues in nose if sniffed
- Respiratory (breathing) problems if smoked
- Infectious diseases and abscesses if injected
- Malnutrition, weight loss
- Severe tooth decay
- Disorientation, apathy, confused exhaustion
- Strong psychological dependence
- Psychosis
- Depression
- Damage to the brain similar to Alzheimer's disease,3 stroke and epilepsy

7. HEROIN

It is a highly addictive, illegal drug. It is used by millions of addicts around the world who are unable to overcome the urge to continue taking this drug every day of their lives—knowing that if they stop, they will face the horror of withdrawal. Heroin (like opium and morphine) is made from the resin of poppy plants. Milky, sap-like opium is first removed from the pod of the poppy flower. This opium is refined to make morphine, then further refined into different forms of heroin (Shea et al. 2007). Most heroin is injected, creating additional risks for the user, who faces the danger of AIDS or other infection on top of the pain of addiction.

7.1. Short-term effects

- "Rush"
- Slowed breathing
- Clouded mental functioning
- Nausea and vomiting
- Sedation; drowsiness
- Hypothermia (body temperature lower than normal)
- Coma or death (due to overdose)

7.2. Long-Term Effects

- Bad teeth
- Inflammation of the gums

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- Constipation
- Cold sweats
- Itching
- Weakening of the immune system
- Coma
- Respiratory (breathing) illnesses
- Muscular weakness, partial paralysis
- Reduced sexual capacity and long-term impotence in men
- Menstrual disturbance in women
- Inability to achieve orgasm (women and men)
- Loss of memory and intellectual performance
- Introversion
- Depression
- Pustules on the face
- Loss of appetite
- Insomnia

8. CONCLUSION

Drugs have been part of our culture since the middle of the last century. Popularized in the 1960s by music and mass media, they invade all aspects of society. The most commonly used illegal drug is marijuana. According to the United Nations 2008 World Drug Report, about 3.9% of the world's population between the ages of 15 and 64 abuse marijuana. You probably know someone who has been affected by drugs, directly or indirectly. The most commonly used—and abused—drug in the US is alcohol. Alcohol-related motor accidents are the second leading cause of teen death in the United States. The most commonly used illegal drug is marijuana. According to the United Nations 2008 World Drug Report, about 3.9% of the world's population between the ages of 15 and 64 abuse marijuana. Someone who is sad might use drugs to get a feeling of happiness, but it does not work. Drugs can lift a person into a fake kind of cheerfulness, but when the drug wears off, he or she crashes even lower than before. And each time, the emotional plunge is lower and lower. Eventually, drugs will completely destroy all the creativity a person. Drugs are very dangerous to human being.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

While the effect of each group of drugs is different, all of them are harmful to your body. Drugs affect the way your body functions, but also, using drugs put you at risk of a fatal overdose. According to a report done in 2000, by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drugs kill more people than alcohol-even though seven times more people use alcohol than use drugs. Side effects of drugs vary depending on types. Someone taking stimulants may experience an increase in energy that is caused by drug speeding up the body's metabolism and heart rate. Since these drugs increases in energy that is caused by drugs speeding up the body's metabolism and heart rate. An increase in blood pressure can be a related side effect. Everyone is different so each person may not experience the same effect as other. It is also common for side effect to vary depending on age, weigh, gender and general health.

FUTURE ISSUES

Children and young people are a precious asset for human population and future human capital, we need to invest our intellect, social resources and a range of resources in nurturing them and protecting them against drugs. General awareness about drugs should be started from school level only so that we can protect our new generation from drug abuse.

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