



AWARENESS ON PREDISPOSING FACTORS REGARDING DRUG ABUSE AMONG ADOLESCENT BOYS

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Drug abuse, the habitual use of addictive or illicit substances, poses a serious threat to individuals, families, and society. Adolescents especially boys are particularly vulnerable to biological, psychological, familial, and social risk factors, including impulsivity, peer pressure, poor parental supervision, and socio-economic challenges. Raising awareness of these predisposing factors is vital for effective prevention and early intervention. **Aim:** The present study was conducted with a view to assess the awareness on predisposing factors regarding drug abuse among adolescent boys in an engineering college at Kanyakumari district. **Materials and Methods:** A quantitative descriptive study was conducted among 60 first-year engineering adolescent boys selected through non-probability convenient sampling technique. After obtaining ethical clearance, institutional permission, and informed written consent, data about awareness on predisposing factors regarding drug abuse were collected using a structured questionnaire. **Findings:** The findings revealed that 56% had moderate awareness, 32% adequate awareness and 12% inadequate awareness on predisposing factors regarding drug abuse. No significant association was found between demographic variables and their awareness. **Conclusion:** The study concluded that most adolescent boys had only moderate awareness on predisposing factors regarding drug abuse, with no significant link to demographic variables, highlighting the need for targeted interventional programs.

Keywords: Awareness, Adolescent boys, Drug abuse, Predisposing factors

INTRODUCTION

Adolescent is the middle stage of growth and development between childhood and adulthood. The World Health Organization defines an adolescent as any person between the age of 10 to 19 years. Adolescence is a turbulent and exciting time in a person's life. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to drug abuse due to factors like peer pressure, curiosity, family issues, and the desire to cope with stress or emotional pain. During this stage, the brain is still developing, especially areas responsible for decision-making and impulse control, making teens more likely to take risks without fully understanding the consequences. Social media, easy access to substances, and lack of proper guidance also contribute to early experimentation. **(WHO, 2022)**

Drug abuse among adolescents remains a significant public health concern worldwide, reflecting complex interactions among individual, social, and environmental factors. Adolescence is a critical developmental period characterized by heightened vulnerability to risky behaviours, including drug use. Approximately 10–20% of adolescents globally have experimented with or currently engage in substance use, with some regions reporting even higher prevalence rates. This trend underscores the importance of understanding the predisposing factors contributing to adolescent drug abuse in order to inform targeted prevention strategies. **(WHO, 2020)**

Around 1.58 crore children between the ages of 10 and 17 in India are addicted to substances. Nearly 13% of those involved in drug and substance abuse are below the age of 20, underscoring the urgent need to strengthen community interventions and preventive mechanisms aimed at adolescents. **(The Hindu, 2022)**

Telangana has witnessed a record rise in de-addiction enrolments as substance abuse and suicides surge across the state. In 2024–25, 12,032 people were enrolled and discharged from government de-addiction centres-nearly double the 6,995 recorded the previous year. The numbers, which had remained relatively stable over the preceding three years with only slight annual increases, spiked sharply in the latest period, reflecting both growing awareness and an alarming increase in substance abuse. Officials have urged greater focus on demand-side interventions amid the rise in addiction-linked suicides. **(Indian Express, 2025).**

Venkatesh et al. (2024) conducted a multicentric cross-sectional study on the determinants of substance use among young people attending primary health centres in India. The study, carried out across 15 states, included 1,630 participants aged 10–24 years. The prevalence of substance use was 32.8%, with a median age of initiation at 18 years, and 75.5% of users starting before completing adolescence. The most commonly used substances were tobacco (26.4%), alcohol (26.1%), and cannabis (9.5%). More than 80% of users reported moderate to high involvement. The high prevalence of substance use among young people in Indian healthcare settings highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions, while insights into these determinants can inform effective prevention strategies for this complex public health challenge.

Several predisposing factors have been identified as key contributors to drug abuse among adolescents. These include individual-level factors such as psychological issues, personality traits, and peer influence, as well as family dynamics and broader socio-economic conditions **(Lee and Kim 2022)**. Low self-esteem, poor academic performance, and mental health disorders like depression and anxiety are significant individual predictors of drug use among adolescents. Peer pressure and the desire for social acceptance also play critical

roles, as adolescents often experiment with drugs to fit in or gain approval from their social circle (**Martinez et al., 2020**).

Additionally, family environment factors such as parental supervision, family history of substance use, and familial conflict have been associated with increased risk of adolescent drug abuse. Understanding these predisposing factors is essential for developing awareness programs that can effectively address and mitigate these risks. Education campaigns that enhance awareness about these predisposing factors are vital to fostering resilience among adolescents. Raising awareness among adolescents, parents, teachers, and community leaders about the various risk factors can empower stakeholders to implement preventive measures effectively (**Zhang et al., 2023**).

The growing prevalence of drug abuse among adolescents underscores the urgent need for increased awareness regarding the predisposing factors involved. Establishing comprehensive awareness programs that educate adolescents and their communities about these risk factors can facilitate early intervention and reduce the incidence of substance abuse. As the landscape of adolescent behaviour continues to evolve, ongoing research and tailored awareness initiatives remain essential components of effective prevention strategies to safeguard the health and future of young populations globally.

Need and significance of the study

The Global Burden of Disease identifies drug abuse as one of the top three leading causes of death worldwide. Addressing this issue requires context-specific information on its underlying factors in order to develop effective interventions. Adolescence, the phase of life between childhood and adulthood 10 to 19 years, is marked by rapid physical, cognitive, and psychological growth. Substance abuse refers to the consumption of substances in excessive amounts or in ways that are harmful to the individual or others. This highlights the importance of raising awareness regarding substance abuse among adolescents in secondary schools (**Tsvetkova & Antonova, 2022**).

(**Biswal et al., 2024**) conducted a qualitative explanatory study on illicit drug use among Indian adolescents undergoing treatment, focusing on the key predisposing factors such as peer influence, curiosity, psychosocial stress, family conditions, and socio-economic instability. The study was carried out across three treatment centres in India and involved in-depth interviews with 23 adolescents and 25 healthcare providers. Findings revealed that initial drug experimentation was most often driven by curiosity (48.1%) and peer pressure (68.2%), while continued use was reinforced by stress, family dysfunction, and easy accessibility through peers and pharmacies. The researchers concluded that awareness programs must specifically address these risk factors to strengthen both preventive interventions and clinical approaches to treatment.

Chithra C. (2023) conducted a study to assess the level of knowledge regarding drug abuse among adolescents in selected schools in Kanyakumari District. The sample consisted of 100 adolescent boys. A self-developed knowledge questionnaire and a self-developed 5-point Likert scale were used. The results showed that 73% of the participants had average knowledge, 22% had poor knowledge, and only 5% demonstrated good knowledge regarding drug addiction. In terms of attitude, 59% displayed a neutral attitude while 41% had a negative attitude towards drug addiction. The researcher concluded that adolescents' knowledge of drug abuse needs to be improved in order to promote their health and prevent the adverse consequences associated with substance use.

The investigator, during her professional experience, had identified that the adolescents had poor awareness regarding drug abuse. In view of the increasing incidence of drug abuse and its impact on adolescents there is an urgent need to strengthen preventive efforts through awareness campaigns. Assessing the awareness on predisposing factors regarding drug abuse provides valuable insight in to existing knowledge gaps, misconception and risk perceptions.

Overviewing the current issue, the investigator decided to assess the awareness on predisposing factors regarding drug abuse among adolescents. Early and consistent awareness is a proven prevention strategy that can significantly reduce the burden of drug abuse in society.

Statement of the problem

A descriptive study to assess the awareness on predisposing factors regarding drug abuse among adolescent boys in a college at Kanyakumari district.

Objectives

1. To assess the awareness on predisposing factors regarding drug abuse among adolescent boys.
2. To find out the association between selected demographic variables among adolescent boys and their awareness on predisposing factors regarding drug abuse.

Research Methodology

The conceptual framework for this study was based on the Health Belief Model. A quantitative research approach with a descriptive research design was adopted to assess the awareness on predisposing factors regarding drug abuse among adolescent boys. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics committee of St. Xaviers Catholic College of Nursing Research and Development Committee-Institutional review board. The study was conducted at St. Xavier's Catholic College of Engineering, Chunkankadai, Kanyakumari District, targeting first-year adolescent boys as the study population.

A total of 60 participants were selected using a non-probability convenient sampling technique. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants, and informed written consent was obtained to ensure voluntary participation. Data were collected using a structured awareness questionnaire, which included demographic variables and 30 self-administered questions covering subtopics such as general awareness, health effects, social and legal consequences, prevention and treatment, and myths and facts to assess the awareness on predisposing factors regarding drug abuse. The data collection process-maintained confidentiality and the participants were allowed the right to withdraw at any stage.

Major Findings

The findings of the study were presented based on the objectives.

Demographic Variables

The frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables revealed that the majority, 42 (70%), belonged to the age group of 18 years; 36 (60%) were Christians; and 47 (78%) were from nuclear families. About 39 (65%) of the adolescents resided in rural areas. Regarding parental education, 34 (57%) of the mothers and 34 (57%) of the fathers had completed school education. In terms of occupation, 15 (25%) of fathers were coolie workers, while 37% of mothers were housewives. A total of 14 (23%) of the families reported a monthly income between ₹ 20,000 and ₹ 30,000. Almost all participants, 59 (98%), reported no family history of drug abuse, and 59 (98%) also stated that none of their friends had a drug abuse habit. Television was cited as the main source of awareness by 39 (65%) of the adolescent boys.

The first objective of the study was to assess the awareness on predisposing factors regarding drug abuse among adolescent boys.

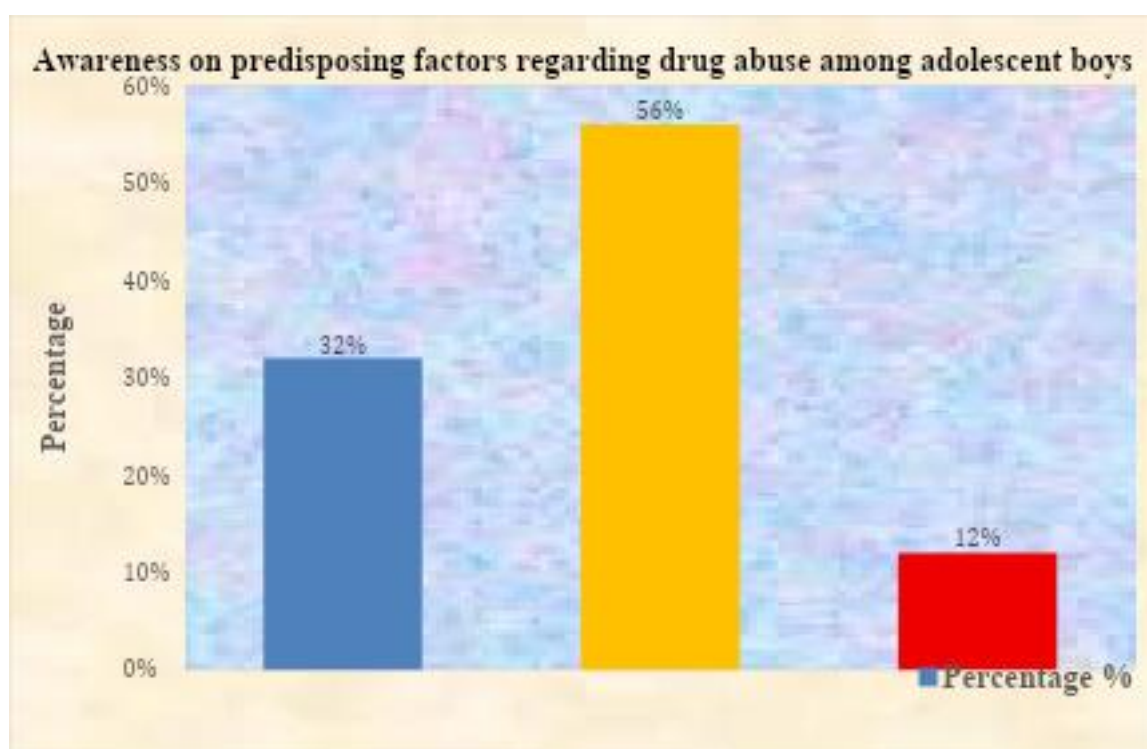


Fig 1: Percentage distribution of awareness on predisposing factors regarding drug abuse among adolescent boys

With respect to the first objective, the study findings indicated that the majority, 34 (56%), had moderately adequate awareness, 19(32%), had adequate awareness, and 7(12%), had inadequate awareness regarding predisposing factors of drug abuse.

These findings were consistent with a descriptive study conducted by (Kaur Jasdeep and Kaur Kiranjit, 2025) on knowledge regarding drug abuse among adolescents in Punjab, reported that 57% of the participants had adequate knowledge, whereas 43% were inadequately aware of substance abuse. Thus, it can be concluded that although a considerable proportion of adolescents have moderate to adequate awareness, a significant gap still exists. Therefore, structured awareness programs and campaigns shall be implemented to prevent this serious, yet preventable condition.

The second objective of the study was to find out the association between selected demographic variables among adolescent boys and their awareness on predisposing factors regarding drug abuse.

The association between selected demographic variables and drug abuse was examined using the chi-square test of independence. Results revealed that there was no statistically significant association was found between drug abuse and age in years ($\chi^2 = 0.12$, $df=4$, $p>0.05$), religion ($\chi^2 = 1.22$, $df=5$, $p>0.05$), type of family ($\chi^2 = 0.04$, $df=4$, $p>0.05$), area of residence ($\chi^2 = 0.45$, $df=3$, $p>0.05$), education of mother ($\chi^2 = 0.17$, $df=4$, $p>0.05$), education of father ($\chi^2 = 0.98$, $df=4$, $p>0.05$), occupation of father ($\chi^2 = 0.04$, $df=5$, $p>0.05$), occupation of mother ($\chi^2 = 0.08$, $df=8$, $p>0.05$), and family monthly income ($\chi^2 = 0.31$, $df=8$, $p>0.05$). Similarly, habit of drug abuse among friends did not show a significant association ($\chi^2 = 1.22$, $df=1$, $p>0.05$).

However, a notable finding was observed for family history of drug abuse, which showed a statistically significant association ($\chi^2 = 7.02$, $df=5$, $p<0.05$), indicating that individuals with a family history of drug abuse were more likely to report drug abuse themselves. In addition, the variable source of knowledge approached statistical significance ($\chi^2 = 3.88$, $df=3$, $p<0.05$), suggesting a possible influence of information sources on awareness and behaviour related to drug abuse.

The findings are congruent with **Acharya and Dhakal (2024)** conducted a study on awareness regarding substance abuse among 81 adolescents in a secondary school in Kathmandu Nepal. The findings revealed that 86.4% of respondents were aware of substance abuse. About 97.5% had received information with 67.9% reported mass media as their main source to receive information. About 80.2% of respondents reported class dropouts and conflicts with friends as educational impacts of substance abuse. A total of 22.2% demonstrated a high level of awareness. None of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents were associated with their level of awareness. The study concluded that the majority of adolescents had a moderate level of awareness regarding substance abuse. Therefore, awareness programs shall be conducted for all adolescents, with particular emphasis on the consequences of substance use, strategies for resisting peer pressure, and preventive measures of substances.

Nursing Implications

Nursing Practice

- Use of audiovisual aids such as videos and interactive sessions shall create awareness sessions more effective.
- Nurses shall extend their role to the community by organizing awareness programs and health talks at the community level.

Nursing Education

- Nursing curricula shall integrate adolescent health issues, particularly substance abuse, to prepare future nurses for its prevention and control.
- Nursing students shall be encouraged to participate in awareness campaigns and community health programs.

- Educational strategies shall emphasize prevention, counselling, and peer education approaches to strengthen adolescent health.

Nursing Administration

- Administrators shall facilitate policies and programs that promote drug abuse prevention among adolescents.
- Continuing nursing education programs, workshops, and in-service training shall be organized to update staff nurses' knowledge and skills.
- Administrators shall collaborate with schools, colleges, and community organizations to implement large-scale awareness campaigns.

Nursing Research

- Further studies shall be conducted to identify factors influencing drug abuse among adolescents.
- Research shall focus on evaluating the effectiveness of structured awareness programs and prevention strategies.
- Evidence from research can help in designing innovative and evidence-based nursing interventions for prevention and early detection of drug abuse.

Recommendations

- ❖ A similar study can be undertaken with a large sample for better generalization of findings.
- ❖ The qualitative approach is recommended for future studies to obtain deeper exploration and information.
- ❖ Mixed method approach is recommended for future studies in addition to qualitative approach.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that while a majority of adolescent boys possessed moderate awareness on predisposing factors regarding drug abuse, a considerable proportion still had inadequate awareness. No significant association was found between demographic variables and their awareness, indicating that knowledge gaps exist across all groups irrespective of background. These findings emphasize the need for structured awareness programs, health education, and preventive campaigns to strengthen knowledge and promote healthier lifestyles among adolescents, thereby reducing the risk of drug abuse.

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Conflict of interest statement

The author/ researcher declares that there are no conflicts of interest concerning this research work or its publication.

Ethical statement

The study was conducted after obtaining ethical approval from the Ethics committee of St. Xavier's Catholic College of Nursing Research and Development Committee-Institutional review board.

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