

## Substance Abuse among the Medical Students

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The use of illegal drugs, excessive consumption of drugs with or without prescription, alcohol, and marijuana is known as substance abuse. There can be both physical or psychological dependence [2]. Substance abuse is one of the main problems among medical students. The reason behind substance abuse among medical students is the stress of the study, the curiosity of how it tastes, party and occasion celebrations. Medical students were getting those substances through their friends [9]. Risk factors for substance abuse disorder are family history of substance abuse, peer pressure, mental health disorder, use of abusive substances at an early age, and lack of support from the family. Different types of substance abuse disorders are Opioid Use Disorder, Marijuana Use Disorder, Alcohol Use Disorder, Sedative Use Disorder, Nicotine Use Disorder, Stimulant Use Disorder, Hallucinogen Use Disorder [2].

The signs and symptoms of substance abuse were dry eyes, dry mouth, irrelevant behaviors, elevated moods, anxiety, tremor, hallucinations, vomiting, confusion, increased heart rate and blood pressure, altered sense of visual auditory and taste perception, needle marks in case of intravenous drug abuse [10]. The Substance abuse disorder was diagnosed by using Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition (DSM-V) [3].

Different studies done in different parts of the world have shown the increasing prevalence of substance abuse among medical students. A study done in BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences in Nepal reported 59.6% use of alcohol, 28.2% use of tobacco, and 11.9% use of marijuana among the medical students. Male students 45.2% are more compared to females 16.3% in abusing substances. 68.9% of students were abusing just for fun sake or the party [1].

In a cross-sectional study done at Tehran university of medical sciences, there was a 26.3% prevalence of smoking, 19.9% of alcohol, 14.9% of hookah. 73.7% of the students never smoked a cigarette [4]. In another study done among Korean students, there was a prevalence of 75.9% heavy drinking and 56.0% binge drinking. Female medical students drink alcohol as much as male medical students [5]. In a cross-sectional study done in Karaj, smoking cigarette prevalence was 9.3% and smoking hookah prevalence was 9.3%. 9.5% of students had used alcohol and 7% of students had used illegal drugs. The reasons behind substance abuse were being male, living alone in the family without parents, having smoker friends, and the presence of smokers in the family [6].

In a cross-sectional survey among pharmacy, nursing and public health students at three universities in Nepal, the overall prevalence of substance abuse was 42.8%. 8.8% use marijuana which was the most commonly abused illegal drug, followed by minor opiates 8.8% like codeine cough syrups, the reason behind substance abuse was peer influence [7]. In another study done in India, the prevalence of substance abuse in medical students was found to be 20.43%. 91.7% of students using these substances were aware of their adverse effects. The reason behind substance abuse was to get relief from stress in 72.4% and for the celebration of the party in 72.4%. Out of them 59.6% made an attempt to quit in the past [8].

The complications of substance abuse include psychosis, seizure, and brain damage or death. Apart from it substance abuse also created problems in society like accidents, suicide, divorce, increased risk of communicable diseases like AIDS and STDs, problems at the workplace, problems in the study, financial problems, and other legal issues [10].

Psychosocial therapy like cognitive behavioral therapy, family-based therapy, social therapy can be done. Pharmacotherapy can be done according to the need [3]. Rehabilitation centers can also be used for drug abusers to get rid of drug abuse.

Substance abuse is an increasing problem among medical students. To get rid of stress one should be involved in recreation activities like yoga meditation and music rather than getting involved in substance abuse like alcohol, smoking, and using illegal drugs. Family support and care also reduce the incidence of these activities. One should be able to avoid peer pressure and make a circle of friends who do not abuse the drugs.

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