

Knowledge of substance abuse among students studying in a selected higher secondary school in Biratnagar city

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Abstract

This was a cross sectional study carried out to among 115 students aged between 15-20 years of grade 12. The objective of the study was to assess the knowledge of substance abuse among students studying in selected higher secondary school of biratnagar. Students were selected by purposive sampling technique. A pretested semi structured questionnaire related to demographic and knowledge was administered and data were collected by self-administered method. The data was analyzed and interpreted by using simple descriptive and inferential statistics. Among the respondents 53% were male and 47% of them were female with the mean age of 18 years. Although, majority of respondents (51.3%) answered correctly regarding the meaning of substance, only 19.1% knew the actual meaning of substance abuse. Among them, 87.88% had good knowledge, 11.12% had average knowledge and only 2.6% had poor knowledge on over all substance abuse. The main source of information as perceived by students was peer group and media. Many of the students agreed as peer pressure (53.9%) one of the main cause for substance abuse. None of the respondents had ever taken any kinds of drugs or any other substances.

Key words: Drug, abuse, students

Introduction

The use of drug including alcohol began as a part of tribal ritual. Today, people use drugs to overcome tension (Tsering *et al.*, 2010), relieve pain (Trumbull Country Report) and to attain of pleasure (Webb *et al.*, 1996). Substance abuse among adolescents and young adults are increasing like an epidemic. Many have experimented various drug. Problem started or began to arise when this experimental use became abuse, effecting individual health, family and society and creating criminal and legal problems, leading to national productivity and economy (Kumar, 2008). Those abusive problems usually begin in adolescence, the time for discovery and challenge and experimentation. Adolescents are poly substance abuser; “gateway” drugs like tobacco, alcohol and marijuana, nicotine leads to “open the gates” to further heavier drug for teens. To the young persons, choice of drug is often related to “drug fashion”.

In Nepal is not an indigenous problem. It was brought here by the “Hippies” during the early 1970s. Gradually, the problem began to spread and now is estimated 50,000 people in Nepal are drug addicts and most of them are between 15-30 years of age. In a survey conducted by Narcotic Drug Control Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the problem of HIV positive is very common among drug abusers and almost 40 percent abusers are infected. In Nepal, the majority of drug users start 40,000 to 50,000 with Marijuana and Phensidyl from the age of 15 to 16 years. Especially, young Nepalese addicts come from different strata of society. Research findings show they come from upper income group (UNAIDS, 2001).

Materials and Methods

This small scale, cross sectional survey was on 12th grade students from selected higher secondary school of Biratnagar. One hundred and fifteen students participated in this survey. Consent was taken from both school authority and the students. A pretested semi structured questionnaire related to demographic and knowledge related to substance abuse was administered and data were collected by self-administered method. The questionnaire was personally administered during scheduled lecture hours and almost all the students participated. Data was analyzed by computer program SPSS. The data was analyzed and interpreted by using simple descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results and Discussion

The characteristics of the demographic variables as shown in table 1 in terms of their frequency and percentage distribution which showed that students age ranges from 15 to 20 years with the mean age of adolescents is 18 years. 61 (53%) were male students. Most of them (55.7%) are permanent residents of Biratnagar. 72.2% belonged to nuclear family and 56.5% comes from low class family (income up to Rs 10,000 per month); this finding is similar to earlier report (Rather *et al.*, 2013).

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents demographic variables. (N=115)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age (in years)		
15	2	1.7
16	16	13.9
17	41	35.7
18	43	37.4
19	9	7.6
20	4	3.5
Gender		
Male	61	53
Female	54	47
Residence		
Permanent	64	55.7
Temporary	51	44.3
Family type		
Nuclear	83	72.2
Joint	28	24.3
Extended	4	3.5

Among the students of class 12, 98% had knowledge regarding substance abuse where 87.82% had good knowledge, 11.17% had average knowledge and only 2.6% had poor knowledge as shown in Figure 1. This rate varies widely with the other study findings (Arasumani, 2013). When the knowledge compared with gender, it was found to be equal this result is in parallel with the results of some similar studies done in college at Eldoret (Atwoli *et al.*, 2011) at a college in Jordan (Haddad *et al.*, 2010) but different from the results of some other studies done in Bangladeshi students (Masibo *et al.*, 2013) and a study by Sharma (2001) which shows higher knowledge in female than male students.

Sources of information regarding substance abuse was from media (Tsering *et al.*, 2010), friends, school and internet was 58.4%, 67%, 44.3%, and 34.8%, respectively.

Although, majority of respondents (51.3%) answered correctly regarding the meaning of substance, only 19.1% knew the actual meaning of substance abuse as maladaptive pattern of substance use.

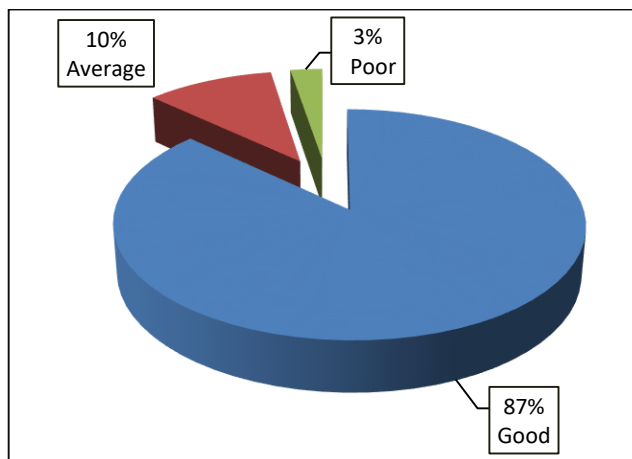


Figure 1. Percentage distribution of knowledge level regarding substance abuse.

The majority of participants have more than one cause of substance abuse and the major cause is peer pressure (53.5%) which is similar to the study of Zaman *et al.* (2013) and Gupta *et al.* (2013).

It may be concluded that the most of the students have good knowledge about the substance abuse. Despite the findings, adolescence is the period of transition, facing challenges and adjustment to different changes, there are chances that they might with one or some other reason can indulge to substance use. As suggested by the respondents in this study, education and awareness (53%) and support and guidance (37%) can prove to be panacea.

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