

DRUGS- ILL EFFECTS-I

For Class –XI

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO). A healthy person is an asset to society. He or she can serve a nation better. Healthy people are more productive, they can contribute in the progress of the country.

A healthy mind resides in a healthy body. Poor physical health can affect self-esteem and ability to meet goals which leads to unhappiness and depression. Mental health also gets affected by the use of some kind of drug/ alcohol. Addiction of the drug/ alcohol leads to physical and mental illness. Poor physical/ mental health of a person affects the society in many ways. At lower level it causes suffering for the individual, his family and immediate social circle. At higher level it causes much loss to society in terms of wasted man power and productivity which in turn threatens to distort or destabilize the social and economical structure of entire nation as whole.

An addiction can be classified as a mental illness. Like other mental illnesses drug addiction affects people from all ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. An alarming increase of drug abuse has been reported in recent years. According to the different reports of electronic and print media, the increasing number of youngsters being held for taking drugs aged between 17-19, is a matter of concern.

World Health Organization defines substance abuse as "Persistent or sporadic drug use inconsistent with or unrelated to acceptable medical practice"

The term 'Drug' used originally means 'medicine' but now a days it is used not only for medicine, but also for the narcotics like cocaine, heroin, brown sugar etc.

The habit of becoming dependent on Drugs is known as Drug Addiction and a person who has become a dependent on the drug, is called a drug addict. The addict uses it having full knowledge of its adverse effects.

When people cross the the line from occasional to frequent, it becomes abuse. The drugs of abuse excite the parts of the brain that make a person feel good. But, after they take a drug for a while, the feel-good parts of their brain gets used to it. The brain wants them to repeat things that we need or enjoy.

Drug addiction is a problem prevalent among teenagers as well as adults. Some of factors responsible for this can be:

- Use of drugs by friends and family members increases the risk of drug addiction.
- Sometimes failures at work can also be a reason.
- Disturbed family life can get a person into this trouble.
- Persons having problems relating to mental health such as attention deficit, depression or anxiety may use drugs to feel better.
- Use of drugs for fun by youngsters can increase their chances of becoming addicts.
- Sometimes parental burden to excel in exams also creates an unnecessary pressure on the child and the inability to cope up with this pressure, makes them resort to drugs.

Common symptoms of the drug addicts:

- Loosing temper easily
- Getting into fights and other illegal activities more often.
- Neglecting responsibilities at home and workplace.
- Experiencing weight loss, lack of sleep and appetite.
- Deteriorating physical appearance.

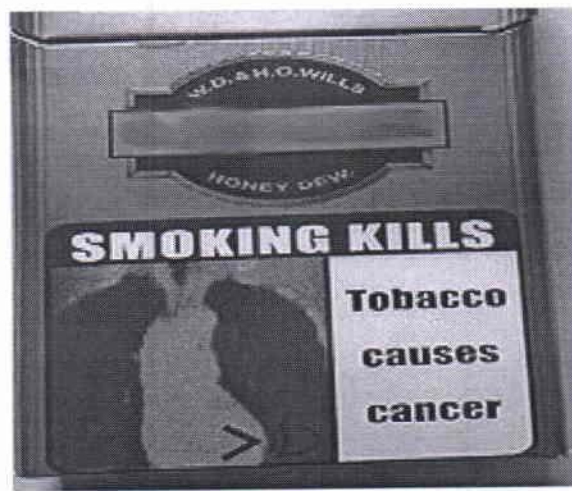
The initial decision to take drugs is voluntary for many but the continuous use of drugs make them addicts. An addict uses drugs, despite having knowledge of its bad effects on physical and mental health as he/ she becomes a drug-dependent.

Drugs affect not only the addict but also his/her family, friends and society as a whole. A drug addict becomes selfish, self-centered and insensitive to others. Drugs can lead to financial hardships and distress, negative effect on family life, education, mental and physical well-being.

Important days relating to drug awareness

May 31: Anti-tobacco Day

June 26: International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking



Pictorial Anti-Tobacco Warning on a cigarette pack

Some common categories of 'Drugs of Abuse are enlisted below'.

1. Alcohol
2. Opioids
3. Cannabis
4. Sedative hypnotics
5. Cocaine
6. Hallucinogens
7. Tobacco
8. Volatile solvents

Prevention

The youth must be taught about the harmful consequences of drugs to prevent the drug addiction among them. The awareness programmes at school and college level can become a tool to reduce the problem of drug addiction among youth.

1. The best tool against developing an addiction is to avoid drugs.
2. Be strong to say 'No'. Avoid negative peer pressure.
3. Avoid people who insist you to use alcohol or drugs.
4. Make new friends who practice healthier habits. Do well in school. Stay motivated at work.
5. Make plans for your future, set goals for your life and work hard to achieve them
6. Be a role model and set a positive example.
7. Discuss openly about drugs with your parents and teachers. Don't rely on misconceptions.

8. If you feel depressed, anxious or have some other mental health problem, look for a reliable and healthy source of support. Discuss with your parents, teachers or approach a counselor if needed.
9. Speak out, If you or your friend is suffering due to drugs, don't hesitate to seek help.
10. Adopt a healthier lifestyle by eating well and exercising.
11. Never try to self-medicate your physical or mental discomfort.

When someone stops using the drug, he/she might feel very sick for some time and feel a very strong need to take the drug. So, quitting from drugs seems very difficult, that's why people don't try. They are afraid of what will happen if they don't take drugs.

With the help of family members and friends, doctors or counselors and the people who had stopped taking drugs, one can quit drug abuse. Parents must motivate their children as they are the closest source to them. They should always be there for their children because youngsters are highly susceptible to the drug abuse.

Initiatives by Government

The Government has taken various initiatives through the Department of Health and Family Welfare for spreading awareness and educating people about ill effects of drug use through various preventive health education efforts:

A holistic approach is followed dealing with the addicts which includes counseling, treatment, follow up and social reintegration of recovered addicts. Display of "Tobacco Free School/ Tobacco Free Institution" boards at prominent places.

Ban on sale of any kind of drugs within 100 yards of school premises.

Ban on the sale of tobacco or other such products to the individuals below the age of 18 years.

Exercise

1. What are behavioral changes that occur in drug abuse?
2. Which day is observed as 'Anti Tobacco Day'?
3. What are drugs of abuse?
4. What is health?
5. How can we say that drug addiction is personal as well as a social loss?
6. What are factors responsible for making a person drug addict?
7. List the common symptoms of a drug addict?
8. What are the preventive measures to escape from drugs?
9. What are the initiative of governments in relation to drug abuse?
