



Usages of drugs among youth

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the drug usage of drugs among the youth. Drug usage has become a major issue in the world as well as in Pakistan and needs to be controlled. Its consumption has become a trend among the youth, which is now more so than before. A systematic study was conducted, in which questions were devised according to the research project title. The results of this survey elaborate the effects of drugs on the youth, specifically in Pakistan. These questions are very integrated in support of each other. Every question opens a new window of findings to the research. All questions have been analyzed separately and in relation to one another in order to give a complete view of the data collected.

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Introduction

A drug is known to be a substance that alters the functions of the body when put into it. The two main broad categories of drugs are soft and hard drugs. A "soft" drug is less addictive and considered less harmful to the body and to society as a whole while a "hard" drug is harshly addictive and considered much more harmful to the body and society in general. Some drugs are considered legal, which can be obtained either by prescription or over the counter and used in the prescribed and appropriate method. While others are considered illegal that are not approved by law for use in a country. Illegal use includes using a drug for an improper purpose (example: sleeping pills to get high or pain pills for relaxation or sleep) and using a product or substance that is not actually a drug but is used to make one feel in a drug-like state (example: glues, petrol). There are three main types of drugs that are classified by their effects on the central nervous system. These include Depressants Stimulants and Hallucinogens.

Depressants slow down mental activity and physical functions, such as the heart rate and breathing. They produce feelings of warmth and relaxation. Depressant drugs include: Opiates and opioids (including heroin, morphine, etc.), cannabis (including marijuana, hashish and hash oil) and some solvents and inhalants (including vapors from petrol, glue, chrome paint and lighter fluid). Depressants make you feel relaxed when taken in moderate doses. Some depressants cause euphoria, a state in which a person experiences intense feelings of well-being, happiness, excitement and joy. Depressants may be used to reduce anxiety, stress or inhibition. Depressants make driving and operating machinery hazardous as they slow you down and affect coordination, concentration and judgment. If taken in larger doses, depressants can cause unconsciousness by reducing breathing and heart rate. In extreme cases, Depressants may cause death.

Stimulant drugs speed up the functions of the central nervous system and makes one feel more awake alert or confident. Stimulants increase heart rate, body temperature and blood pressure and reduce appetite. Examples include: caffeine (coffee, tea etc.), nicotine (present in tobacco), ephedrine: (used

in medicines), amphetamines and methamphetamines, cocaine, slimming tablets dexamphetamine. Higher doses of stimulants cause anxiety, panic, seizures, headaches, stomach cramps, aggression and paranoia.

Hallucinogenic drugs distort the user's perceptions of reality. These drugs include: LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) and magic mushrooms. Hallucinogenic drugs causes physical effects that are dilation of pupils, loss of appetite, increased activity, talking or laughing, jaw clenching, sweating and sometimes stomach cramps or nausea. The effects of hallucinogens are not easy to predict and the person may behave in ways that appear irrational or bizarre. Other effects of hallucinogens can include panic, paranoia etc. Driving while under the influence of hallucinogens is extremely hazardous.

The amount of drugs taken determines their effect on the user. A small amount speeds up while a greater amount slows down. Drugs are essentially poisons, and if taken in large amounts, can kill a person. Drugs block off all sensations, the desirable ones, as well as the unwanted ones. While drugs might be of short-term value in the handling of pain, they wipe out ability, alertness, and muddle one's thinking. Drugs generally work by interacting with receptors on the surface of cells or enzymes (which regulate the rate of chemical reactions) within cells. Examples of drugs that target enzymes are: aspirin, cox-2 inhibitors and HIV protease inhibitors.

Most drugs bind to the target receptor site, and either block the physiological function of the protein, or mimic its effect. If a drug causes the protein receptor to respond in the same way as the naturally occurring substance, then the drug is referred to as an agonist. Examples of agonists are morphine, nicotine etc. Antagonists are drugs that interact selectively with receptors but do not lead to an observed effect. Instead they reduce the action of an agonist as the receptor site involved. Examples of antagonist drugs are: beta-blockers, such as propranolol. Generally following illegal drugs are being used by addicted people:

- Cannabis
- Cocaine
- Amphetamine

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- Nitrites, poppers
- Cocaine
- Ecstasy
- LSD
- Magic mushrooms
- Solvents (aerosols, gases and glues)
- Heroin
- Crack cocaine

Background

Pakistan is among the top producers of poppy and opium in the world, as well one of the largest importer and exporter of drugs. It serves as a major channel for the distribution of drugs throughout the world. Drug usage and distribution changed drastically in the country after 1971, and since then, drug trafficking is commonly associated with Pakistan. Pakistan's geographic location has much to do with its part in the drug trade. It shares much of its border with Afghanistan, the largest producer of illicit opium in the world. This connection to Afghanistan makes Pakistan very vulnerable to issues such as drug trafficking and drug abuse.

Not many people delve deeper into history to find out what Pakistan's state, in terms of drugs, was before 1971. An issue of the monthly Herald in 1974 stated that heroin was a foreign drug in Pakistan at the time – the most common drug of choice during the 60s and 70s for Cannabis (Hashish). Unlike other drugs, like Cocaine and Heroin, Hashish is not considered addictive; it is said to be a habitual drug. Bhang was also a very common drug among the youth at that time. It is a traditional sub-continental hallucinogenic drink which has strong affects after consumption, but is not believed to be addictive either.

Heroin usage in the country rose at an alarming late in the 1980s. The 1979 Afghan Civil War caused a major influx of refugees from across the border and into Pakistan. With them, the refugees brought the knowledge and tradition of producing opium. These refugees, with no other way of earning a living, relied on the production of drugs to support themselves and their families. Drug consumption, as a result, increased at shocking rates and by 1985, Pakistan was one of the largest populations of Heroin addicts in the world. Changes in the economic, social or political aspects of a country affect the pattern of illicit drug production, distribution and usage. The refugee influx resulted in many displacements in the country, especially in the northern regions. This resulted in instability and lawlessness in society, which are strongly linked to – as factors and results – drug trafficking and addiction.

There was a significant decline in the production of poppy in Pakistan in the 90s, specifically from 1992 to 2001. Around this time, the corrupt board and staff of Pakistan Narcotics Control Board was replaced by people willing to work justly against drug abuse and production, in order to solve this issue, as it was becoming a major problem for the state. Their work was very commendable, up until 2003 when there was a reemergence of the poppy cultivation culture. Around the same time, production of poppy in Afghanistan was banned, followed by a rise in the price of opium – this could be the reason for the rise of poppy production in Pakistan again, including Balochistan. Concentrated efforts were made again to solve the illicit drug production problem in Pakistan, and by 2007, there was a significant decline in the total area cultivated for drug production. However, the law enforcement and judicial structures responsible for the control of drug abuse, production and distribution is severely under-financed, lacks cooperation and is often plagued by corruption.

The Drugs Act of 1976 outlines clearly the usage, import and export of drugs in Pakistan. It states who can import/export drugs, the conditions and approvals required for doing so. This pertains not only to illicit drugs but also pharmaceutical drugs – laws regarding medical drugs are particularly strict. The Act also explains the penalties if someone does not keep accordance with the conditions stated – this includes imprisonment from a term of less than three years to a term extending 10 years, depending on the extent of the offense. There is also a monetary penalty, which can be paid, either, instead of imprisonment or in addition to it.

In 1957, Pakistan set up the Pakistan Narcotics Board (PNB). It is the central place for all drug control activities in the country. Its basic goal is to achieve a drug-free Pakistan. This is done through supervisory, coordinating and advisory functions in the given field. The organization works with all the provinces and the other countries in order to effectively measure and control drug trafficking and abuse.

This organization has an Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) that works with the military, police, civilian government and the citizens of Pakistan in order to prosecute those who have defied the law and committed illegal activities, as are outline in The Drugs Act of 1976. ANF works alongside the entire border of Pakistan and on all ports to keep a check on the imports and exports, in order to catch as many illicit drugs as possible and apprehend the offenders. A proper look-out is also kept for street-peddlers so that the trend of drug usage in rural and urban areas, especially among the youth, can be eradicated. The basic ANF strategy is three-fold: it means to reduce the supply of drugs in Pakistan, reduce the demand of drugs in Pakistan as well as co-ordinate at national and international levels to achieve a drug-free country. A reduction in demand is as important as a control of supply and it can be achieved through awareness programs. People tend to get addicted to illicit drugs at a young age, and as they grow older, it becomes increasingly difficult to let go of the addiction. Therefore, awareness programs are organized by the ANF, targeting the youth, so that they may fully comprehend what they really get involved in once they make the decision of using drugs.

Despite of all efforts by Government use of drugs among youth is ever increasing. Drugs are taken by people in order to feel good as most of the drugs when used lead to an intense feeling of pleasure. For example, with stimulants such as cocaine, the "high" is followed by feelings of power, self-confidence, and increased energy. Some people who suffer from social anxiety, stress-related disorders, and depression begin using drugs in an attempt to lessen feelings of distress. Stress can play a major role in beginning drug use, continuing drug abuse, or relapse in patients recovering from addiction. Also the increasing pressure that some individuals feel to chemically enhance or improve their athletic performance can play a role in initial experimentation and continued drug abuse. In the beginning people may believe that drug use has a positive effect and may think that they would be able to control its use; however, drugs can quickly take over lives. Over time, if drug use continues, pleasurable activities become less pleasurable, and drug abuse becomes necessary for abusers to simply feel "normal." Drug abusers reach a point where they seek and take drugs, despite the tremendous problems caused for themselves and their families. Some individuals may start to feel the need to take higher or more frequent doses, even in the early stages of their drug use. Most of them are tempted by the excitement or escape they tend to offer.

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. These drugs tend to induce physical dependency and the need to use them time and time again. The increased use of these drugs has led to an increase in crime rate as in order to buy these drugs young people may resort to theft and murders, so in order to get money, and under the influence of these drugs, a person may get involved in various illegal activities. Although these drugs are only used by a small proportion of the population, more of these people experience mental illnesses. Mental health problems and drug use can make each other worse and have negative effects on many areas of life including work, relationships, health and safety. While the immediate effect of drugs may give relief from some symptoms of mental illness (such as paranoia or hearing voices), when you stop taking the drug, the symptoms actually get worse. Studies from drug-addicted individuals show physical changes in areas of the brain that are critical to judgment, decision making, learning and memory, and behavior control. Scientists believe that these changes alter the way the brain works, and may help explain the compulsive and destructive behaviors of addiction.

When drug use is an ongoing problem, conflict between friends and partners and family can become more common. Studies may also be seriously affected due to its continued use as keeping up with the rest of the class may become a problem; also one might not be able to concentrate, grades may decline and an increase in absenteeism may result. The after effects of using drugs can reduce the ability to work in a job; drug usage often places people in danger of hurting themselves or others at work, and can reduce job prospects, hence leading to a financial crisis which would increase dependency on others. Using drugs regularly can become extremely expensive and once one becomes highly addicted, funding their cravings will be their top priority, which could lead to crime, or risking everything on gambling, only to end up losing. Some drugs, like amphetamines, can increase the likelihood of acting in a violent way, or being the victim of violence. When under the influence of drugs, a person might do things that he/she would not normally do, which can increase chances of getting hurt or having an accident. Heavy use of some drugs can damage the liver, brain, lungs, throat and stomach. Sharing needles is a major risk for getting diseases like Hepatitis B or C, or HIV, which are all spread through blood-to-blood transmission. Many young people have been a victim of drug overdose and lost their lives due to it. Continued use of drugs may also lead to a lot of stress, depression and heightened emotions and may drive people to commit suicide if the problems become unbearable to deal with.

Research Problem

Even though some drugs have helped in decreasing health problems, but there is always a presence of negative or harmful effects as a use in excess may lead to other health problems, or worse they may become addicted. Young people may continue using these medications even when they no longer serve the purpose and hence serious health issues would arise. The use of these illegal drugs has led to many deaths and other illnesses among young people lowering the amount of working age population and increased dependency. This increase in dependency causes financial constraints and other social problems. The use of illegal drugs should be banned and people already addicted to them should be helped and proper rehabilitation facilities should be provided as in order to help

people to avoid ruining their lives and future. Government should introduce proper laws against drugs and ensure that they are obeyed, this way the use would be limited and the harm that they cause to the society and economy would be limited.

The increased use of drugs has affected the relations of addicts with their families, friends and has also adversely affected the economy of Pakistan. The after effects of using drugs may reduce the ability of a person to work in a job and hence may get fired which would lead to dependency upon others. Continued use of these drugs may lead to stress, depression, heightened emotions and may drive them to commit suicide; increased use of these may lead to other health problems and may further lead to addiction. The use of illegal drugs may cause deaths, severe mental issues, and other illnesses hence increasing dependency upon others, financial issues and also a lack of availability of young work force hence negatively affecting the economy of Pakistan.

Methodology

Research design

The main crux of this research lies within the survey that was carried out. The survey focused on the drug usage of the youth and their views about it. To achieve that, the survey had four distinct sections to help analyze the result.

1. Bio data
2. Drug usage & extent of harmful implications
3. How drug users are viewed by others
4. Reasons for usage

1. Bio Data

The bio data divides the respondents according to the age groups and gender – this helps determine which age group is more susceptible to drug usage and abuse and whether age acts as a factor to the extent of drug use.

2. Drug usage and the extent of harmful implications

The second category divides respondents into regular users and those who have tried any kind of drug at some point in their lives. Of all the drugs being used we are trying to figure out whether the drugs being used most commonly are harmful or not, and if they are harmful what effects they are having on the lives of people.

3. How drug users are viewed by others

This gives insight into the minds of the youth as it asks how they view someone who does drugs, and whether it would affect their relations with that person. The responses can be compared to the social mores that prevail and highlight the widening gap between the society's expectations and the actions of that society's youth. This category also gives insight into how many people think them strong enough to stand up against their friends, peer pressure or whether they will just turn a blind eye towards what is happening and chooses to ignore it.

4. Reasons for usage

This report focuses on the usage and abuse of drugs by the youth, therefore the last category defines the youth's perspective on the reasons behind someone's indulging in the consumption of drugs, despite the fact that most are aware of the adverse effects of drug usage. The research also includes journals and article from the previous year, against which our current findings can be compared. This will enable us to make better judgments about drug abuse among youth in Pakistan and the rest of the world, as well as a composition in accordance with age groups. Any trends that are prevailing in the rest of the world and impacting the Pakistani youth can, in such a way, be discerned. Furthermore, such articles also cover the reactions of the rest of the community or society regarding drugs production

and abuse, while also relating what officials' measures are being taken to eliminate all illegal drugs.

Population

The population chosen for this research is the youth in Pakistan, as this is the main focus of the research report. The youth is defined as people in the age group of 18 – 25 years.

SAMPLE

The sample selected for this particular research is of 30 students, all of whom study in NUST. They are all between the ages of 18 – 25 years, irrespective of their department or campus.

Research Tool

The main research tool for this study was the questionnaire that was carried out. It consisted of four categories, focusing on the age group, the drug usage, views regarding people who indulge in drugs and the reasons behind the indulgence. Each category of the survey had a different number of questions. The categories allowed for different aspects of the research topic to be tackled.

Three of the questions in the survey were Yes/No questions, which allowed respondents to give simple answers, with no explanations required. It gives a very clear picture of the views of the respondents and allows for a comparatively definite analysis, as compared to a question that is left open-ended for the respondents.

There were two open-ended questions for the respondents. These asked for the types of drugs the subjects had tried and how they stereotyped people who used drugs. These were made open-ended because people usually have greatly varying answers to these questions, often contradicting and reaching extremes. Restricting the respondents in such questions would not give a very accurate image of the inner workings of their minds.

The remaining two questions of the survey were multiple choice questions. They do not completely restrict the answers of the subject, nor give a completely free reign in the answers. The choices given in these questions partly form the boundaries of the research study, limiting what aspects are to be covered in this research report. A minor and informal research tool was the casual interview taken by people who, either refused to fill the questionnaire, or were giving unique answers. These small interviews gave the respondents a chance to justify or explain their answers, while engaging in a little healthy debate with their fellow peers.

Procedure

The questionnaire was created while keeping several objectives and goals in mind. The research was meant to find out how many people were regular users of drugs and how many of them had at least tried it. Other objectives included what sorts of drugs are most common; why the youth gets involved in drugs and how do they perceive people or friends who use drugs. The survey was carried out manually; no questionnaire was made or distributed online. The researchers went up to different people in university to ask them to fill out the survey; they were asked to fill them right away as to make efficient use of time and not have to waste any surveys on people unwilling to fill them.

The survey was carried out in one day as to have a limited time span. Furthermore, the survey was given to different groups of people. This was done because, in a group of friends, people tend to share similar views; the research would become redundant with uniform answers and required some diversity in its responses. While the survey was being carried out, people who refused to fill the survey were asked why they were unwilling to fill it. Everyone had a different answer to give, with

their own justifications and explanations. For those who did fill the questionnaires, some of them were further asked to elaborate on their views or explain their answers orally, for the sake of extra argument and evidence for the research. This was made easier by the fact that a small sample from the population was selected, which made interaction with the subjects a simple task. Given the restrictions in sample, these casual interviews gave extra insight into the minds of the respondents.

The results were then collected and analyzed with the help of SPSS and Excel. The data acquired was studied in great detail and with great scrutiny, in order that it may be analyzed in the best possible way. These results were, then, compared to the research results of other research studies, to judge how different or similar the results were and in what ways. With the help of these results, a conclusion to the research and recommendations for the hypothesis were made.

Results

A systematic study was conducted, in which questions were devised according to the research project title. The results of this survey elaborate the effects of drugs on the youth, specifically in Pakistan. These questions are very integrated in support of each other. Every question opens a new window of findings to the research. All questions have been analyzed separately and in relation to one another in order to give a complete view of the data collected.

Gender Difference

Our survey sample included both Males and Females. The total sample size was 31 out of which 21 were filled by Males and 10 by Females. We went to each person personally to ask them to fill out the surveys and many of them refused to do so because it involved questions about drugs and its usage especially the female population.

Q1. Have you ever tried drugs?

From the results of the survey, 61% said no while the rest of the 39% said yes. Such results were expected as our cultural norms and values don't allow masses to indulge in drugs. Whereas few people did say yes, these were those people who deviated from the cultural norms and values due to peer and societal pressures surrounding them. They do not openly use the drugs instead they do drugs in an isolated environment because such activities are unacceptable in the society. They find usage of such drugs as a free way from their anxieties.

Q2. If yes, are you a regular user?

The second question is more intrinsic, it investigates whether the users who previously answered yes continued to use drugs. According to this survey, 23% said yes to being regular users of drug and 77% said no. The latter group includes those who said no in the previous question as well as those might be using but not on a regular basis. This question highlights that there is a very small number of people who are habitual users of drugs.

Q3. What sorts of drugs have you tried?

This question looks into the types of drugs people mainly use, whether in order to get rid of the pressures created in their minds or just for their own pleasure. According to the questionnaire, Weed had the largest percentage, that is, 42% followed by Marijuana at 10%, Cocaine 7% and Hash 6%. The usage of these drugs depends upon how expensive a drug is and its availability. This survey clearly shows that Weed has the highest percentage, meaning that it is quite possibly cheap and readily available as compared to other drugs like Cocaine and Marijuana. Another factor that decides their usage percentage is the satisfaction level achieved by the drug and their bearing capacity. That means that Weed has the highest bearing capacity

followed by Marijuana, Cocaine and Hash which are slightly unbearable.

Q 4) How do you stereotype a person who takes drugs?

This was an open-ended question which allowed people to answer in whatever way suited them best. While some people chose to give one word responses, others gave complete justifications for their answers. There was a wide array of responses as everyone has their own standards to judge people against. While 15% of the respondents claimed that they would not stereotype, or do not stereotype, others had more vivid answers. Another 15% said that they thought most drug users were loners or socially awkward. 12% stereotyped drug users as Charsi, while another 12% stereotyped them as people with no future whatsoever, and basically having wasted their lives and all their potential. Only 11% of the totals were given a positive stereotype, while the rest were all given negative stereotypes.

Q5) would you stop being friends with someone who takes drugs?

One of the questions asked for opinions of people on whether they would continue being friends with people, knowing that they use drugs, 8 out of 31 said yes while the remaining said no. Out of the people who are willing to leave their friends if they use drugs, on being asked specifically as to why they would do so replied that friends are a major influence and the sort of company that one has impacts a person's behavior. Hence bad influences may lead to them getting addicted to drugs as well and hence they would avoid being friends with such people. While others believed that they would not want to be judged by other people as being drug addicts too, as by hanging out with addicts they may be branded as one too.

The others who are willing to continue their friendship even if their friends become addicted are willing to do so mostly because they believe that they are the same people like before and won't change, while others believe they may be able to talk some sense into them and help them overcome this problem. Many said that they would continue their friendship till the point that the addicted person is harmless to people around him, but a point may come when this addiction would lead them to act differently and change completely then they may be forced to leave their friends. Even though it was a close ended question but since we went personally to people we were able to ask them about their personal opinions on these questions.

Q6) What will you do if your close friends are doing drugs?

The next focused on what a person would do if he found out that his close friend was doing drugs. The options included the following: they could choose to stop them, decide to tell their parents, get them professional help or join them. 11 of them chose to stop them, 7 would be willing to get them professional help, 10 chose to ignore the problem and 3 chose the option to join them, while everybody avoided the option of telling the parents about this problem. Out of the ones willing to stop them explained that they would not want to leave their friends just because they have started using drugs and so they would try helping them and stopping them from ruining their future. Most of the population was willing to stop their friends from drug usage and addiction, many would be willing to get them proper professional help, so that they are able to stop using them permanently and avoid starting over again as professional help can be much more effective. Many even chose to ignore the problem, hence not even considering it to be an issue important enough to be addressed. While some due to increased peer pressure may be willing to give in and start using drugs themselves. However none of them was willing to inform the parents about this problem.

Q 7) why do you think the youth gets involved in drugs?

The next question asked about the opinions of people on what do they think are the reasons that youth gets involved in drugs. The options included: for fun, peer pressure and others. 14 chose the first option, 15 chose peer pressure as the main reason while 2 chose to write other reasons. Most of them believed that drugs give an intense feeling of pleasure, self-confidence, and increased energy and tend to offer escape. Most of them are willing to try just because the rest of their friends are willing to do so too. While many believed peer pressure to be the main reason as they would not want to be termed as coward etc. and hence would give in to the pressure and take the drugs. Many also believed that they need to be taken because they boost self-confidence and intelligence.

Discussion

The survey showed that 39% of the respondents have tried drugs, however, when asked how many of them regular users were; the percentage dropped significantly. This showed that many of those who had tried drugs did not carry on with their use. It can be inferred that many of the young people in the given sample saw the harm that regular use of these drugs inflict, and made the wise decision of abstaining from drug abuse. This sample only consisted of youngsters from educated and privileged backgrounds, hence, we can deduce that they are well aware of the consequences and long-term effects. Whether this pattern would be the same had our sample included young people from unprivileged and uneducated backgrounds cannot be said for sure.

Previous research (Herald, 1974) showed that Hashish was the most common drug used in Pakistan however; the survey showed that Weed was the most common drug among youth in the country. This change could be due to the availability and prices of the drugs at the time. It is also affected by the economic and social conditions prevailing in the country at that time. Furthermore, this also shows that this drug is most popular among the youth but not necessarily among the population in general.

The youth has very diverging points of view regarding people who do drugs. Some consider them extremely 'cool' as drug usage brings them to a part of the status quo that they could not reach before. This deluded impression is what induces many of the young people to get involved in drugs. Some groups make outsiders feel that only having drug usage in common can allow a person to become a member of that particular group, therefore drug users are commonly stereotyped as 'cool' or as 'friends.'

However, a polar opposite of this view is also present. Many respondents said that people who use drugs have 'no future,' are 'loners' and are 'charsi.' This showed that such people would not look upon drug users as friends or even as being worthy of acknowledgement. It shows how abominable they find the use and abuse of drugs.

Majority of the respondents claimed to not stereotype a person who does drugs, however this cannot be true. Whether a person wants to or not, he/she is always judging others against their own morals or yardstick. This is because it is instilled in the human nature to judge others constantly on their actions, appearance and life choices. Furthermore, this judgment is fueled by how society looks upon that certain act, in this case the act of drug usage. No matter what the person's own actions may be, he/she will always judge others according to the social norms and values prevailing in society.

8% of the respondents said that a person's drug usage is his/her own personal business. Whatever life decisions they make, it does not affect others and nor should it; they said that

people who get involved in such activities are responsible for their own actions and whatever the consequences may be. These same people, who claimed to be indifferent, also said that if it came to their knowledge that a close friend of theirs was doing drugs, they would not take any action or notice regarding it, they will simply turn a blind eye to it.

While many believe it is admirable to leave a person to his/her own decisions, at some point, the decision of drug abuse will start becoming a problem for the people around. In such a case, the consequences of the drug abuse will not be that person's own but also his /her families and friend's. Furthermore, it can be argued that it is a friend's responsibility to help another friend in their time of need, regardless of whether they say they need it or not.

Most people answered that they would keep on being friends with a person involved in drugs, however this does not necessarily mean that they find the actions acceptable or even commendable. Many may choose to continue their friendship in the hopes of being a good influence on their friend and helping them get back on track with their life and getting over their addiction of substance abuse. For others, however, getting involved in drug consumption is much too risky for them so they choose to live vicariously through friends who choose to do drugs. Hence, many feel that by just being friends with a drug addict, their 'cool' factor might be improved.

Others, who said that they would end their friendship with a drug user, might do so, not out of their belief how drug use as being absolutely abhorrent, but because they might be afraid of their own reputation and image, as shown to the rest of society. Having links or friendships with drug addicts would prove to be detrimental to their good image, especially considering that we live in quite a conservative society – a society which prizes reputation over much.

The researchers asked respondents how long they would continue their friendship with a drug addict and got quite uniform answers. People, in general, said that their friendship would only extend insofar as they feel they can help their friend and not be affected by their actions. However, once the drug abuse gets out of control and the friend starts acting like a completely different person as the addiction takes over, they would end that friendship. This is also because that friend's addiction becomes a danger to the people around him/her. For many, the road to addiction starts from an innocent attention-seeking stunt as early adulthood is a very sensitive age. People who may be feeling ignored, left out and unloved sometimes resort to desperate measures like drug use, in the feeble hopes that someone would come to their side and help. In many cases, this does not happen, and the drug use turns into drug abuse – with no one to support or guide them, this drug abuse can become fatal.

Almost half the respondents believe that young people get involved in drugs due to peer pressure. This may well be true for those who choose to remain friends with a drug addict and fail to help them. On the contrary, they end up joining in this drug use because they see no other way out and would rather keep their friendship.

Conclusions

Drugs are very harmful. Even the ones used for curing diseases have negative/side effects. Many people tend to continue the use of drugs even after they are no longer required just because they are addicted, hence this habit could lead to an increased drug use and prove to be a threat to their lives.

Youth is at great risks both in long term and short term from the use of drugs as this negatively influences all aspects of their

lives. A continued drug use leads to violent mood swings, lagging behind in studies, failure to meet job requirements and complete appointed tasks as well as constantly feeling lazy and drowsy. All these combined with a continued need to purchase more drugs may even lead to increased financial issues and dependency on others; one may lose his/her job family, friends and even, home.

Our survey mainly targeted the educated urban youth; however our focus didn't include the rural population. According to the reports and surveys already carried out states that there is a very high rate of substance consumption a main reason being the easy access due to the cultivation in rural areas. Contrary to the popular belief among people that provision of proper guidance and rehabilitation facilities would reduce the use of drugs, however this is not always true as once addicted it becomes really difficult to let go of the habit and even the slightest temptation could detract the person hence leading to a continued use of drugs. Also there are not many rehab Centres in Pakistan that can give quality and professional assistance to addicts.

Recommendations

Young people get most of their drug supply from street-peddlers in the city, who hand around the shady corners. In order to control the drug use of the youth, these street peddlers should be apprehended and prosecuted. Their usual hang-outs of the street-peddlers should have regular security checks in order to limit the amount of supply they manage to deliver to the addicts. Once this action is taken, the availability and easy access to drugs will be reduced, consequently, reducing drug consumption.

The Drug Act of 1976 outlines the laws regarding illegal import/export of drugs, sales of drugs and usage; it even outlines the severe penalties, if these conditions are violated. However, in order to control the drug problem in Pakistan, these laws need to be enforced and implemented. If the public is made aware that proper action is being taken against violators, the drug problem will be solved to a significant degree.

To reach maximum audience and relay to them information regarding drug abuse, its consequences and problems that drug addicts face, regular awareness programs should be held. This does not just include seminars or speeches, but also viewer-friendly movies that focus on the issue of drugs among the youth. These types of movies and documentaries prove to be more effective, as is seen by previous documentaries such as 'Saving Face' and 'Super-Size Me.'

Furthermore, there should be regular drug tests in schools and universities – even work places. This would allow administration to recognize who is involved in drugs and take appropriate and strict action. Penalties should include exclusion from extra-curricular activities, suspension, expulsion or being let go in case of jobs.

Drug production and sale should have a higher tax levied on them so that drugs become more expensive for producers and consumers. The higher cost will reduce the number of people willing and able to produce and consume those drugs. This will help improve the drug problem in Pakistan.

There should be a provision of proper rehabilitation centers for those people who are addicted to drug use but are actively seeking help. This would encourage more drug users to seek help, once they see how advantageous it is for them, and much better than the life style of drugs. Many people, at the moment, are still fighting the addiction problem just because they have been unable to receive the sort of help that they need to combat this issue.

The use of these should be reduced to a minimum and severe punishments should be introduced in case of breaking the law. Proper rehabilitation centers should be introduced and proper awareness should be provided. Through these measures a lot of drug problems of our country may be solved.

Many start using drugs as a diversion from the boring and mundane lives they lead. In order to give them more purpose, better education and employment opportunities should be provided so that people do not stray and turn to drugs.

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