



Original Research Article

Students' Knowledge and Attitude about Factors, Treatment, and Prevention of Addiction in Higher Education Environments

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

Addiction,
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Increase awareness of the phenomenon of addiction is one of the most important ways to prevention of drug abuse. The present study aimed to evaluate the level of Knowledge and attitude of students about factors, treatment, and prevention of addiction in higher education environments. This study was a cross-sectional research. The participators included 90 students who were majoring in 5 fields of medical sciences. A questionnaire was used for measuring the level of Knowledge and attitude of student's about drug abuse and addiction. Most of the students had good knowledge and attitude about drug addiction. Educational seminars and interviews with intellectuals were cited as the best strategies for preventing addiction in higher education environments. Awareness rising persons about the dangers and harms of drug and improve their attitude is the most important strategies to prevent drug addiction.

Introduction

Drug addiction is one of the major problems in today's society. In order to plan effective strategies for preventing addiction, first, the causes and factors effective for the beginning of drug consumption and addiction among teenagers and youngsters must be identified (Wong et al., 2003). Genetic, personality, psychopathological, pharmacological, family, environmental, and social factors are all effective in drug misuse and addiction etiology. Also, many factors may lead to misuse and then addiction (Alimohamadzadeh 2005).

To properly choose and adopt strategies for overcoming this problem, it is necessary to know about social needs, problems, potentials, and capabilities (Almedia and Araujo 2003). Implementing each prevention program depends on the careful recognition of the region, complete study of hygienic and psychological conditions, and epidemiological studies by which the effective factors for drug use are identified (Sadock and Sadock 2007). Studies have shown that it is not possible to select a single method as the best one for all

individuals and groups. Using different strategies is necessary for investigating the factors effective in the outbreak of addiction, because different factors influence the formation of addiction (McCann and Ricaurte 2009). Legal, educational, and therapeutic strategies can be mentioned to control addiction (Botvin 2000). Educational strategies are now highly popular and the best place for conducting such programs is educational centers (Naderifar et al., 2011). Thus, the present research is aimed to evaluate the level of Knowledge and attitude of students of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences about factors, treatment, and prevention of addiction in higher education environments.

Method

The present study was a descriptive and cross-sectional research. The participants included students of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Iran, who were majoring in 5 fields of midwifery, nursing, operating room technician, and medical emergencies. There were 90 samples which were selected by simple convenient sampling method. The data collection method was the questionnaire designed based on the study's objectives. The first part of the questionnaire contained some questions about demographic details, while the second part included some questions on Knowledge and attitude about addiction, its formation factors and treatment, as well as addiction-prevention strategies, especially in educational environments, which were filled out by the subjects. To analyze the data, descriptive-inferential statistics and SPSS software were used.

Ethical consideration

Helsinki ethical principles, privacy, and anonymity of the subjects were observed in

this study. Therefore, name and identity information of the students were not mentioned for the purpose of anonymity and observing the medical ethics.

Results and Discussion

The present study was carried out on 90 students of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. Results of the study showed that the average age of the subjects was 20.81 years, with the minimum and maximum ages of 18 and 25, respectively. Regarding the gender, most of the subjects were female (55 students) (Table1). Also, most of them were majoring in midwifery (37 students) (Table2).

The students had received most of their knowledge about addiction via the mass media (89%). Regarding the subjects' level of awareness about biological phenomena resulting from addiction in the bodies of addicts, most of the subjects (91.1%) had a good level of awareness. The subjects had an average level of information about formation factors (66.7%) and addiction treatment (65.6%) (Table3). About the reasons of tendency toward drug abuse in educational environments, most of the subjects (37.8%) considered the involvement of environmental and social factors in this regard.

To prevent addiction via educational strategies, 40% of the subjects considered the process of providing information about drug effects as well as body, mental, and social threats for different people in the society as the most important educational strategy. Also, they maintained that educational seminars and interviews with intellectuals were the best strategies for preventing addiction in higher education environments (Table4).

Table.1 Gender of students

Gender	frequency	percent
male	55	61.1
female	35	38.9
total	90	100

Table.2 Majors of students

Majors	frequency	percent
midwifery	37	41.1
nursing	27	30
Surgical technology	2	2.2
Medical emergencies	24	26.7
total	90	100

Table.3 Students' knowledge about drug addiction

	Poor Knowledge (percent)	Moderate knowledge (percent)	Good knowledge (percent)
Physical changes due to addiction	1.9	7	91.1
Causes of Tendency to drugs	10.1	66.7	23.2
Treatment for addiction	13.4	65.6	21

Table.4 Students' attitude about drug addiction

	Poor Attitude (percent)	Moderate Attitude (percent)	Good Attitude (percent)
Causes of Tendency to drugs	30	32	37.8
Prevention of addiction	17.4	42.6	40

This study aimed to evaluate the students' Knowledge and attitude about addiction and investigate its prevention in educational environments. Results of the research

showed that most of the subjects generally had the average level of Knowledge and attitude. A study entitled "Investigating students' level of Knowledge and attitude

about ecstasy pills" was carried out at Birjand University, Iran, by Mo'asheri et al. in 2004-2005, the results of which showed that 63.6% of the students had low level, 29.4% had average level, and only 7% had high level of awareness (Moasheri et al., 2007). Results of this study were in agreement with the findings of the present work. According to the level of awareness about addiction phenomena and considering the deep cultural transformations and changes in life styles, most people do not have the necessary and basic capabilities for dealing with problems in their daily life, which is one of the reasons for their vulnerability to problems (Kalke and Raschke 2004). The most important strategies for preventing addiction, which are used in the world, include providing information for individuals about dangers and harms of using drugs (Harris et al., 2013). Increasing or correcting knowledge leads to a positive viewpoint in individuals and the attitude can be transformed into a behavior and performance that could help improve health among individuals in the society. Therefore, insufficiency or lack of awareness, besides a false attitude, would cause behavioral problems among teenagers. Improving life skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, as well as social communication, promoting alternative activities for drugs in order to provide social and psychological needs of teenagers and youth (McCrary and Epstein 2013), providing advice and intervention in critical conditions throughout life (Loffredo et al., 2015), making religious and cultural improvement, providing stricter regulations and disciplines to fight against drug use, and treating addicts to prevent addiction outbreak (Benningfield et al., 2015) are among the strategies for solving addiction. Clearly, in these cases, efforts must start from schools, because schools play important roles in transferring values,

preparing standards, and providing information to children and teenagers (Leatherdale and Burkhalter 2012).

The mentioned strategies are discussed as the following activities: activities focused on person, activities focused on education and informing parents, activities focused on teachers and school, activities focused on preventive activities using the media, preventive activities via workplaces and gathering places, and preventive activities using primary health-care network (McCrary and Epstein 2013; Leatherdale and Burkhalter 2012).

Legislation and implementation of rules and disciplines during recent years have been focused on paying attention to addiction prevention via recognizing its formation factors and using scientific methods. Researchers have considered this method to be more effective than generic programs for implementing educational plans at universities. But, in order to carry out such programs, it is better to study approaches, behaviors, and conceptions of students about drug use, and plan accordingly.

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