Substance Abuse

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the complex problem posed by substance abuse, which is a growing economic and health burden. In this paper, five peer-reviewed journals and websites will be reviewed purposely to understand the complexities associated with substance abuse, such as risk factors, economic burden, and its subsequent effect in the society.


In their study, Esser et al. (2014) aimed to update earlier estimates of the prevalent numbers of alcohol dependence in the United States. Results and findings from the study revealed a positive correlation between alcohol dependence and binge drinking frequency incidences. As such, the study indicated that men aged between 18 and 24 years were the most affected population category. Based on the findings from the literature reviewed in the study, there was evidence that associated binge drinking with poor health outcomes and social problems, such as violence, HIV infections, and the problem of alcohol dependence. This study further revealed the impact of alcohol dependence particularly among working adults and how their work productivity could be compromised. In this regard, it is vital to note that despite the fact alcohol is acceptable socially, there are devastating implications evidenced among those who abuse and develop the dependency.
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For instance, Esser et al. (2014) evidenced in their study the detrimental problem of alcohol and its association with other social problems. Therefore, this study provides an understanding of how substance abuse commences and various ways of dealing with the problem. Lastly, there is the need to adopt and implement preventive services and strategies in order to reduce excessive drinking problems among men.


Allen et al. (2017) carried out a study to explore the trend caused by the opportunity to use sampled eight drugs among first-year college students. In their study, the researchers not only carried out research on the opportunity to use but the actual usage of up to eight drugs and three prescribed medications. The drugs that were tested in this study included; marijuana, hallucinogens, inhalants, ecstasy, cocaine, and heroin among others. Results derived from this study indicated that the research subjects had the greatest opportunity of using marijuana when compared to the other drugs explored in the study. This can be evidenced with the easy availability of the drug within higher learning institutions.

Evidence revealed in this study indicates that substance abuse is triggered and perpetuated with the availability of the drugs. The information identified in this study is credible as it demonstrates how numerous factors prompt the problem of substance abuse among the adolescent and adult populations.
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This can be evidenced with the increased number in the incidences of substance abuse because of the easy availability of illegal drugs at school, workplaces, and even neighborhoods.


The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is among the governmental organizations tasked with the responding, and providing preventive measures to address the problem of substance abuse. Accordingly, NIDA (2018) provides a comprehensive chart defining substances that are abused, such as alcohol, ayahuasca, cocaine, heroin, marijuana, salvia, tobacco, kratom, khat, and methamphetamine among others. Findings presented in the report point out the damage that these drugs can have on the health of an individual. In addition to impaired judgment, these drugs and substances are notable for leading to health risks, infectious diseases, and addiction. Whereas substance abuse can cause harm to the unborn child, there are other implications that involve road accidents, violence, and criminal activities. Despite the fact that some of the substances highlighted in the reported lack enough scientific evidence with their assumed negative implications, the list provides the reader with various ways of identifying the illegal drugs. This objective is achieved by revealing the street name of the drug and its compelling negative outcomes. More importantly, the role of the organization is evidenced through its efforts of advocating treatment options for respective drug addiction among the victims.

In their study, Somani and Meghani (2016) acknowledge that substance abuse is a growing public health problem. Accordingly, the authors point out an overwhelming 210,000 drug-related death incidences that were reported among the youth towards the end of 2011. Moreover, the researcher attributes the plight of those in developing countries due to the harsh and poor socioeconomic conditions that predispose them to the growing problem of substance abuse. Additional statistics reported in the study indicated that at least 78% of adolescents indulge in alcohol consumption with other devastating findings indicating rampant substance abuse among college and university students globally. Findings reported in this study are crucial as they highlight the determinants of substance abuse among the students, such as peer pressure, friends and family members, media, age, and gender. Moreover, these findings correlate with existing evidence from healthcare practitioners who reveal the negative outcomes of the problem, which tends to cause addiction and other variant health-related problems. The information presented in the study is not only valid and informative but also crucial in providing a platform that would enable key stakeholders to address the problem. Whereas substance abuse notably affects the family and society, these implications indicate the need to adopt strategies and appropriate interventions to address the problem.


According to Kasunic and Lee (2014), there is a significant societal burden resulting from substance abuse. Despite the role of the media in highlighting the negative implication of illegal drugs, the costs of treating the problems heighten the cost caused by lost productivity and crime-related incidences.
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In the study, the authors reveal the economic burden that substance abuse causes to their families and the healthcare system. Moreover, other challenges that heighten substance abuse as a growing health problem involves its association with mental conditions and the overt issue of addiction.

Evidence raised in the study is informative as it highlights the negative outcomes resulting from substance abuse. For instance, findings from reviewed literature in the study point out that over 100,000 people lose their lives yearly because of substance abuse. The main aim of the article revolves around the economic and societal burden realized from substance abuse. In this regard, the article revealed many people are hospitalized because of substance abuse with billions spent for their treatment.


In their study, Gebremariam, Mruts, and Neway (2018) raise a central argument of how unhealthy behavior among the youth exemplified with substance abuse leads them to activities that impact their health. The study that aimed to understand the prevalence and predictors of substance abuse were carried out among a group of participants recruited from the University of Debre Berhan. Findings from the study revealed how the environment of the students recruited from the University of Debre Berhan associated with substance use behaviors. Further findings from the study indicated the contexts, which
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constituted the university café, having higher monthly income, friends, and family members affected how they consumed and used shisha, khat, alcohol, and cigarettes. Nevertheless, the interpretation of the results and findings from the study indicated that the university recorded an extremely low incidence rate of prevalence of substances when compared to other similar universities in Ethiopia and the entire African continent.

This study is integral as it provides readers with an understanding of varied substances abused by students globally. Whereas the study needs to narrow down to a particular substance abused, there is the need to understand the implication caused on the students and subsequent measures adopted by the university. However, findings from this highlight the corresponding factors that not only elicits substance use but also how the predictors can help design effective intervention programs for those affected by the stipulated drugs.


Findings from a study carried out by the World Health Organization (2008) among 41 countries revealed devastating statics with 22% of the interviewed student reporting to have been drunk at least once. Further statistics indicated that 11% of the students had gotten excessively drunk at least twice. The interpretation of these statistics coupled with acceptable social norms of alcohol consumption poses a risky threat to these students’ indulgence in substance abuse.
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The debate on substance abuse has hit deadlines for wrong reasons with a discussion of implementing policies to legalize marijuana despite evidence attributing its association with substance abuse among many people globally.

Findings presented in this study are informative as they point out critical factors that affect the health and well-being of many young individuals located in different countries. The information revealed in the study is not only credible but also useful for different stakeholders and policymakers to design programs that will help address the problem posed by substance abuse. The report highlights other factors that implicate the health and well-being of the youth, such as bullying, obesity, and self-esteem that needs to be addressed.

Conclusion

Conclusively, findings from the literature reviewed has evidenced that substance abuse causes complex problems in society and the economy. In addition to the economic burden prompted by substance abuse on the healthcare system, there is evidence that highlights the association of the behavior to accidents, violence, and criminal activities. Further evidence from the study revealed how proximity and opportunity heighten incidences of substance abuse, particularly among university and college students. Nevertheless, the studies advocate for the adoption of intervention programs that needs to help reduce and eliminate incidences of substance abuse.


