



Foundation Certificate in Higher Education

Module: DOC 311 - Academic Skills for Higher Education

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I. Executive Summary

Numerous factors contribute to the usage of Drugs by teens often starting with easily accessible substances like cigarette and alcohol and addiction of dangerous drugs which have been identified as Narcotics, Depressants, Stimulants, Hallucinogens and Cannabis in various countries has been a recent trend on both developed and developing countries specially among the teens. although some form of stimulants in the form of alcohol and drugs were being used by the people throughout the history, in the recent past introduction of narcotics has brought suffering for many individuals and families. Teens who experiment and are addicted to stimulants may feel indestructible and might not ponder over the consequences pushing themselves to extremes that may pose a high risk. In recent years there had been many initiatives to prevent drug use by teens by education and rehabilitation.

II. Acknowledgements

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1. Introduction

Adolescence is a crucial developmental stage that involves important behavioural, emotional, social, and cognitive changes. Teenagers may be predisposed to the use of stimulants, developing disorders, and experiencing potentially substantial and permanent stimulant-related negative outcomes due to the neurobiological changes underlying these intricate developmental processes. Research has increasingly focused on defining adolescent stimulant use disorders, with a focus on optimizing and disseminating evidence-based prevention, assessment, and treatment interventions. This is due to the high prevalence of stimulant users in this age range as well as the distinct biopsychosocial context. The current study's goal was to summarize recent developments in the field that are therapeutically significant.

1.1 Use of Stimulants by Teenagers in Sri Lanka

Substance use is a critical dilemma and 16% of Sri Lankan adolescents had used at least 1 illegal substance during their life and lifetime prevalence of cigarette, alcohol, marijuana, and other drug use were: 6.1%, 13.6%, 2%, and 1%, respectively. The western literature revealed that the social burden of SUD is massive associated with, health issues, impairment of education, an increasing tendency towards crime and unemployment which is similar to the Sri Lankan context. In 2020, the total number of individuals arrested due to possession,

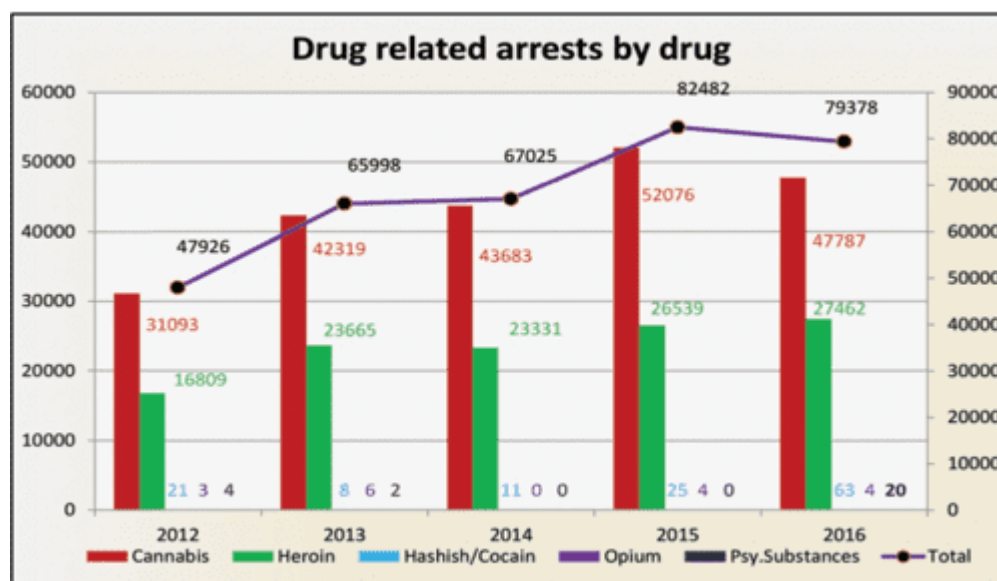


Figure 1 Drug Related Arrests

selling, or cultivation of illegal substances was 97 416 and of them, 23.2% were from Colombo district followed by 13.3% from

Gampaha district.

(Sage Journals, 2022)

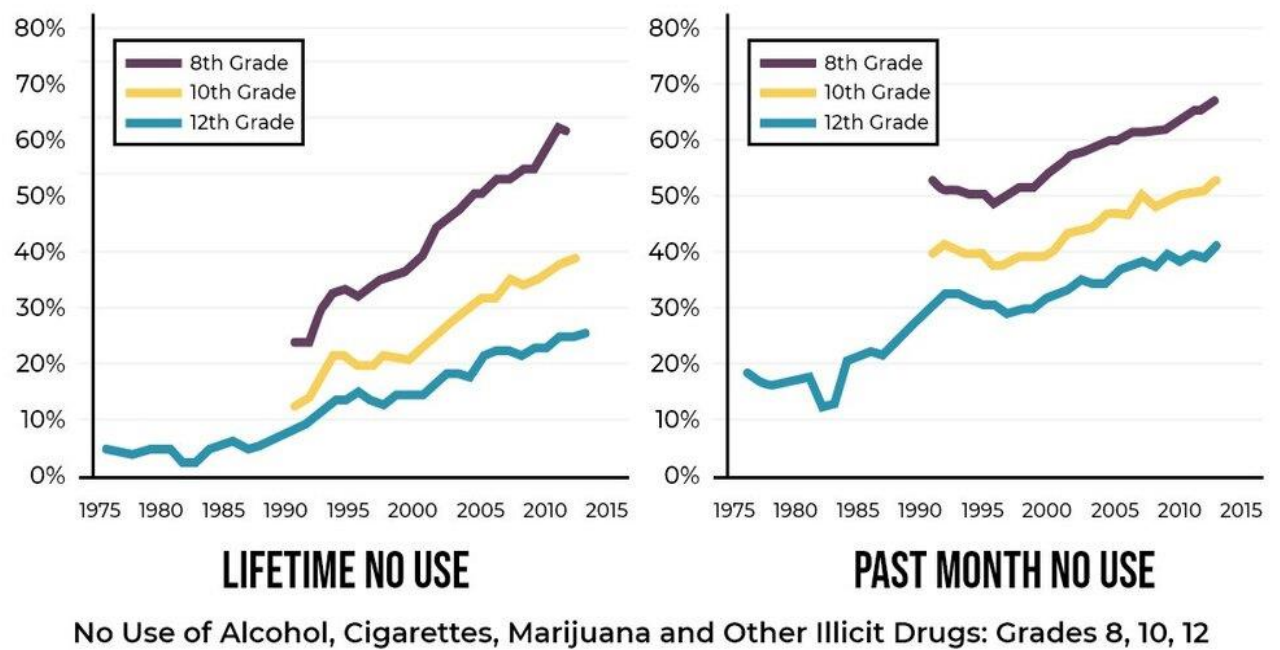


Figure 2 teenagers that never used stimulants

2. How Teenagers are influenced on the use of stimulants

- **Other people**

Teenagers are exposed to people consuming various substances they would see their parents and other adults around them drinking, smoking and even at times taking in stimulants. And, at times they are also provoked by friends who might see the usage of drugs as part of teenage experience. (Partnership to End Addiction, 2017)

- **Popular Media**

At present, the kinds of music and movies that are produced give out the idea that using stimulants is the normal way of life (Partnership to End Addiction, 2017)

- **Instant Gratification.**

As The initial effects that stimulants and alcohol give out are to be felt good teenagers turn to the usage of drugs as they view it as a short-term gateway to happiness. (Partnership to End Addiction, 2017)

- **Lack of Confidence**

Teenagers who lack confidence and are shy look up to alcohol or drugs to do things under the influence of stimulants which they might not do otherwise. (Partnership to End Addiction, 2017)

- **Misinformation**

Teenagers are not educated enough on the field of drugs which makes them vulnerable and easy to be manipulated by negative influencers. (Partnership to End Addiction, 2017)

2.1 Adverse effects of drugs

Drug use can result in drug addiction, serious impairment, illness and death. Health risks of commonly used drugs include the following:

- **Cocaine** — Risk of heart attack, stroke and seizures
- **Ecstasy** — Risk of liver failure and heart failure

- **Inhalants** — Risk of damage to heart, lungs, liver and kidneys from long-term use
- **Marijuana** — Risk of impairment in memory, learning, problem solving and concentration; risk of psychosis — such as schizophrenia, hallucination or paranoia — later in life associated with early and frequent use
- **Methamphetamine** — Risk of psychotic behaviors from long-term use or high doses
- **Opioids** — Risk of respiratory distress or death from overdose
- **Electronic cigarettes (vaping)** — Exposure to harmful substances similar to exposure from cigarette smoking; risk of nicotine dependence

(Mayo Clinic, 2022)

Long-term Health Effects of Prolonged Drug & Alcohol Use

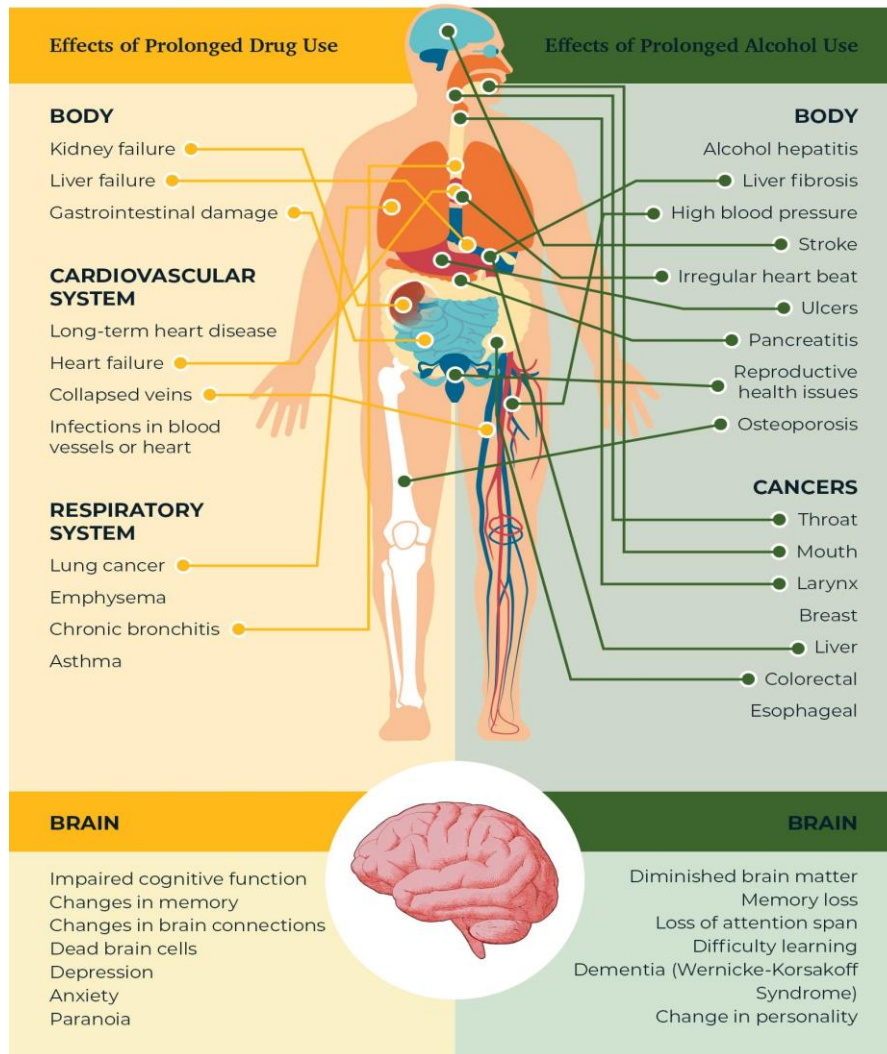


Figure 3 Health Effects of Prolonged Drug Use

2.2 Consequences of Teenage drug use.

- **Drug dependence.** Teenagers who misuse drugs are at increased risk of serious drug use later in life.
- **Poor judgment.** Teenage drug use is associated with poor judgment in social and personal interactions.
- **Sexual activity.** Drug use is associated with high-risk sexual activity, unsafe sex and unplanned pregnancy.

- **Mental health disorders.** Drug use can complicate or increase the risk of mental health disorders, such as depression and anxiety.
- **Impaired driving.** Driving under the influence of any drug can impair a driver's motor skills, putting the driver, passengers and others on the road at risk.
- **Changes in school performance.** The use of stimulants can result decline in academic performance.

(Mayo Clinic, 2022)

2.3 Treatments for Teenage drug Addiction

There have been many successful methods in treating drug addiction. including:

- Behavioural counselling
- medication
- medical devices and applications used to treat withdrawal symptoms or deliver skills training
- evaluation and treatment for co-occurring mental health issues such as depression and anxiety
- long-term follow-up to prevent relapse

care with tailored treatment and follow up sessions can be successful. Treatments should be provided by both means mentally and physically and follow up sessions may include community based or family based support.

(National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2019)



Figure 4 Treatments for Drug Addiction

3. Conclusion

Adolescence or teenage being a crucial developmental stage that involves important behavioural, emotional, social, and cognitive changes. Teenagers might be predisposed to stimulants developing disorders, experiencing substantial or permanent stimulant-related negative outcomes due to changes underlying these development processes. There had been focused research to define teenage stimulant-related disorders due to the high prevalence of stimulant users within this age range. In Sri Lanka use of stimulant is considered a critical dilemma as 16% of adolescents had atleast used 1 illegal substance during their lifetime. This brings out a question of how are the teenagers influenced and manipulated on using stimulants people around them and the media play an important role on teenagers by making the use of stimulants look “COOL”. Use of stimulants may result in drug addiction, serious impairments, illness and even death. The teenagers who are addicted to stimulants may face consequences such as mental disorders, drug dependence and also may face poor judgments. Although treatments such as counselling, medication can be successful a follow up session is also needed to prevent the addicted personnel relapsing into their past habitual behaviours.

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