

Understanding Psycho-Social Pathways to Substance Abuse in Second Decade of Life: A Qualitative Approach

Ishita Chauhan*and S.N. Ghosh*

Abstract

Substance abuse is a major hindrance in the development of adolescents. It is a topic of major interest for scientific researchers because majority of adolescent morbidity and mortality can be attributed to substance abuse that is preventable. Drug use begins to occur among young adolescents, increases during the teenage years, and declines into adulthood. Lethal injuries have been reported as the main consequences of substance abuse. Over the past few decades, substance abuse has not only risen among adolescent males but also among adolescent females. The aim of the present study is to identify qualitatively, significant themes and subthemes related to substance abuse among college adolescents. A qualitative method of Focus Group Discussion was used to collect data from 49 adolescents. Six focus group discussions were carried out with 6-8 students in each group. Eight emergent themes that came to light were: emotions, family environment, peers, academic stress, age and gender, self-belief and capabilities in health related issues, perceived satisfaction with one's life and preventive and intervention services. These themes occurring in the domain of personal, interpersonal, familial and social domain of life have serious public health ramifications.

Key words: Substance abuse, Psychosocial path ways, Qualitative approach

* Department of Psychology, H.P. University, Summer Hill, Shimla, (HP), Email sngphu@gmail.com