



# DRUG ABUSE IN CHILDREN-PREDICTION, SAFEGUARD AND PREVENTION

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## ABSTRACT:

This paper is an effort to evaluate the 'Drug Abuse in Children- Prediction, Safeguard and Prevention'. To risk and protective factors for the development of substance abuse and the effectiveness of prevention interventions for the pediatric population. Factors that contribute to the emergence of substance abuse in the pediatric population are multifactorial. Behavioral, emotional, and environmental factors that place children at risk for the development of substance abuse may be remediated through prevention and intervention programs that use research-based, comprehensive, culturally relevant, social resistance skills training and normative education in an active school-based learning format.

The direct and indirect effects of alcohol and other drugs on children lead to many adverse health and safety risks for the child, family, and community. Understanding risk and protective factors that may affect the development of substance abuse is a first step in ameliorating the problem of drug use in the pediatric population. This article reviews the literature on the prediction, protection, and prevention of substance abuse in the pediatric population, including a list of available prevention programs for children across the age continuum.

The younger a child initiates alcohol and other drug use, the higher the risk for serious health consequences and adult substance abuse. Fatalities, accidental and intentional, that are associated with drug and alcohol use in the adolescent population represent one of the leading preventable causes of death for the 15- to 24-year-old population. Alcohol and other drug use in the adolescent population carries a higher risk for school underachievement, delinquency, teenage pregnancy, and depression. Inadvertent passive drug exposure in infants and toddlers has resulted in multiple medical complications including respiratory illnesses, seizures, altered mental status, and death.

Key Words: Durgabuse, complications, delinquency, Depression

## INTRODUCTION

### What is drug use?

Drug use, or misuse, includes

- Using illegal substances, such as
  - Anabolic steroids
  - Club drugs
  - Cocaine
  - Heroin
  - Inhalants
  - Marijuana
  - Methamphetamines
- Misusing prescription medicines, including opioids. This means taking the medicines in a different way than the health care provider prescribed. This includes
  - Taking a medicine that was prescribed for someone else
  - Taking a larger dose than you are supposed to
  - Using the medicine in a different way than you are supposed to. For example, instead of swallowing your tablets, you might crush and then snort or inject them.
  - Using the medicine for another purpose, such as getting high
- Misusing over-the-counter medicines, including using them for another purpose and using them in a different way than you are supposed to.

Illicit drug use is associated with an increased risk of contracting human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The sharp rise in pediatric HIV infection from 1985 to 1990 paralleled the occurrence of the crack cocaine epidemic. In 1990, 68% of perinatally acquired HIV infection was attributable to intravenous drug abuse in one or both of the child's parents. Even without a history of intravenous drug use, an alcohol- and drug-abusing lifestyle places the abuser, partners, and unborn children at risk for HIV infection due to impaired judgment, reduction of inhibitions, and sex-for-drugs

#### ➤ Why are drugs especially dangerous for young people?

Young people's brains are growing and developing until they are their mid-20. This is especially true of the prefrontal cortex, which is used to make decisions. Taking drugs when young can interfere with developmental processes occurring in the brain. It can also affect their decision-making. They may be more likely to do risky things, such as unsafe sex and dangerous driving.

The earlier young people start using drugs, the greater their chances of continuing to use them and become addicted later in life. Taking drugs when you are young can contribute to the development of adult health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and sleep disorders.

### ➤ Which drugs most commonly used by young people?

The drugs that are most commonly used by young people are alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana. Recently, more young people have started vamping tobacco and marijuana. There is still a lot we don't know about the dangers of vamping. Some people have unexpectedly gotten very ill or have even died after vamping. Because of this, young people should stay away from vamping.

### ➤ Why do young people take drugs?

There are many different reasons why a young person may take drugs, including

- **To fit in.** Young people may do drugs because they want to be accepted by friends or peers who are doing drugs.
- **To feel good.** Abused drugs can produce feelings of pleasure.
- **To feel better.** Some young people suffer from depression, anxiety, stress-related disorders, and physical pain. They may do drugs to try to get some relief.
- **To do better in academics or sports.** Some young people may take stimulants for studying or anabolic steroids to improve their athletic performance.
- **To experiment.** Young people often want to try new experiences; especially ones that they think are thrilling or daring.

### How to Spot Drug Use in Kids? (PREDICTION)

Most adolescents who use drugs do not become drug abusers or drug addicts in adulthood. But drug use in adolescence can put their mental, emotional, and physical health at risk. And it can put a few vulnerable kids at risk for ongoing drug abuse and addiction problems into their future.

Drug abuse means that someone uses a drug for pleasure or to get high. Drug addiction means that a person has become dependent on the drug and has no control over whether, how, or when to use it, or how much to use. Drug addiction can be physical, psychological, or both.

For more rapidly addictive drugs, such as methamphetamine, heroin, crack, or even nicotine, some people report they felt addicted after using the drug only once or twice.

### **Signs of drug use**

Your child may be using alcohol or drugs if you notice a dramatic change in the teen's appearance, friends, or physical health.

These are other possible signs:

- Evidence of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia.
- Behavioral problems and poor grades in school.
- Emotional distancing, isolation, depression, or fatigue.
- Overly influenced by peers.
- Hostility, irritability, or change in level of cooperation around the house.
- Lying or increased evasiveness about after-school or weekend whereabouts.
- Decrease in interest in personal appearance.
- Physical changes, such as bloodshot eyes, runny nose, frequent sore throats, and rapid weight loss.
- Changes in mood, eating, or sleeping patterns.
- Dizziness and memory problems.
- Unusual odor on breath (alcohol, inhalants, marijuana).
- Widely dilated pupils even in bright light.
- Pinpoint pupils even in dim light.

### **CAUSES FOR THE USE OF DRUGS OF CHILDREN**

Drug use develops over time, and different pathways lead to drug problems. These are some of the general factors that may place a teen at risk:

- Too little parental supervision and monitoring
- Lack of communication and interaction between parents and children
- Poorly defined and poorly communicated family or home rules and expectations about drug use
- Inconsistent or excessively severe discipline
- Family conflict
- Parental permissiveness toward adolescent alcohol and drug use, and/or parental alcoholism or drug use
- Peers and peer pressure, especially if the teen hangs around with at-risk friends

In addition, a teen with the following mental or emotional tendencies may be at increased risk:

- Diagnosis of ADHD
- Medical history of an anxiety disorder or disruptive disorder
- Medical history of depression or bipolar disorder; this may appear after substance abuse begins
- Poor academic achievement
- Abnormal socialization between the ages of 7 and 9; abnormal socialization means having parents or peers who behave in ways not acceptable to most people; for instance, having parents who abuse drugs
- High need for sensation seeking or engaging in physically risky or dangerous behaviors
- Impulsiveness

- Psychological distress
- Difficulty maintaining emotional stability
- Perception that drug use is harmless
- Low family income, with little access to opportunity for success

### **HOW TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN AGAINST DRUGS**

- Parents can help protect kids against drug use by giving them the facts before they're in a risky situation. This can make them less likely to experiment with drugs or to rely on friends for answers.
- You're role models for your kids, and your views on alcohol, tobacco, and drugs can strongly affect how they think about them. So make talking about drugs a part of your general health and safety conversations.
- The earlier you seek help for a teen's alcohol or drug problem, the better. A qualified family therapist can evaluate and assess your child, then provide appropriate treatment. This may include outpatient therapy or therapy in a residential treatment facility.
- How successful treatment will be depends on your teen's temperament and willingness to change, as well as how long and how often the drug was used. It may take several times at trying to quit before your child is able to do so for the long term. Each attempt to quit brings the child closer to success.
- Where should you look for a counselor for your child? Talk with your child's health care provider, other parents whose children have been treated for drug abuse, a local hospital, school social worker, or county mental health society.
- Therapy focuses on the teen's life choices, in addition to his or her relationships with family members. It's essential you be involved in the treatment. Positive parent relationships are a critical ingredient in combating a teen's drug problems.

### **PREVENTION OF DRUG USAGE AMONG CHILDREN**

Drug use and addiction are preventable. Prevention programs involving families, schools, communities, and the media may prevent or reduce drug use and addiction. These programs include education and outreach to help people understand the risks of drug use.

You can help prevent your children from using drugs through

- Good communication with your children
- Encouragement, so your children can build confidence and a strong sense of self. It also helps parents promote cooperation and reduce conflict.
- Teaching your children problem-solving skills
- Setting limits, to teach your children self-control and responsibility, provide safe boundaries, and show them that you care

- Supervision, which helps parents recognize developing problems, promote safety, and stay involved
- Knowing your children's friends

## CONCLUSION

It is a matter of concern that the consumption of drugs is increasing among children. There are various forces both mental and physical that are luring children to these substances. Although parents and doctors are putting in efforts to keep their children away from these but they will gain an upper hand if they are supported by social workers. We all can come together into guiding children and find different and attractive modes of relaxation that children can rely on. We can try to create a better and a peaceful world for them so that they do not have to go to these substances giving them a momentary pleasure and costing them an entire lifetime.

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