

Research Article

The Trends of Recreational Drugs among Young Adults of Islamabad

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This research was aimed at the determination of the reasons and practice of the consumption of the recreational drugs in the students of Rawalpindi and Islamabad Universities.

Study Design: The design of the research was descriptive cross-sectional.

Place and Duration: Research was completed in the period of six months starting from March to August, 2015 in the universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

Methodology: Research included five hundred students from various universities including both the genders that is male and female through random selection method. We employed a questionnaire with close-ended questions and checked the knowledge of the students about the use of recreational drugs, reasons, harmfulness and effects. Chi-Square and SPSS were employed for the data analysis through various variables.

Results: Maximum number of the participants (90.6%) were already aware of the use of drugs through any source such as friends and media and almost 92% of the males and 93% of the females were aware of the recreational drug (RDs) use is forbidden in the preaching of the religion. Most common RDs were Shisha and Cigarette and males were dominant over females in the use of RDs. A common reason of the involvement was the pressure of the peer group with a significant p-value of 0.051. The age group involved in the use of these drugs was 16 – 20 years with a significant p-value of 0.003. Friends were the main hindrance in the quitting of the drugs and students (63%) knew that oral and lung cancer was characterized because of the use of recreational drug.

Conclusion: RDs use in the males and females is increasing day by day in any society because of the negligence of the parents and pressure of the friends are the major factors involved behind the use of the RDs, it also promotes this wicked exercise.

Keywords: Cigarette, Recreational drugs (RDs), College students, University students and Shisha.

INTRODUCTION

The practice of drugs is connected to human from many years ago. Unfortunately, today's era is the major victim of this malpractice. Recreational drug (RD) can be referred to an illegal or legal psycho-active substance that satisfies an individual. Society is well involved in this practice. Over the world the use of recreational drugs has become so common and Pakistan is no exception to that specially the universities students [1].

It is estimated that 183,000 deaths are attributed to the use of these drugs in 2012. The major cause was smoking that caused global mortality and

morbidity. Six million died just because of the tobacco smoking in the year of 2014 and 100,000 died in Pakistan related to the diseases attributed because of smoking. Students are using water pipe smoking as a culture and commit this in groups and inhale toxic material that causes cancer, this toxic is known as carcinogenic. Almost 40 and 20 percent male and female students have already become an addict of the Shisha[2].

Amphetamines, Cocaine, Cannabis, Magic Mushrooms, Heroin, Nitrates and Ecstasy fall in the common category of the recreational drugs and their use is at rise day after day. Most common

age group involved in the use of these drugs is in the age of 18 – 25 years. Amphetamines falls in the category of study drug that is consumed by the majority of the students [3]. Cigarette has become the culture and fashion because of the easy availability in the vicinity if the students in comparison to the other drugs. Most common reasons of the use of these drugs includes studies, peer pressure, stress, social class, style and curiosity. Students feel uncomfortable in quitting these drugs due to multiple reasons, which causes premature deaths and non-communicable diseases over the globe [4].

In Pakistan, it is estimated that the prevalence of tobacco smoking is 36% for males and 9% for females. Among young adults especially the university students in Pakistan, the prevalence of smoking is 15% with the majority being male smokers^{11,12}. In addition, there is an increase trend in the use of recreational drugs among students despite knowing this fact that it is religiously and culturally unacceptable. For the last few decades increase in the consumption of heroin and ecstasy has complicated the situation of drug abuse in our country [5]. The objective of this study was to determine the practices and reasons of usage of recreational drugs among college and university students of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

METHODOLOGY

This research was aimed at the determination of the reasons and practice of the consumption of the recreational drugs in the students of Rawalpindi and Islamabad Universities. The design of the research was descriptive cross-sectional. Research

was completed in the period of six months starting from March to August, 2015 in the universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Research included five hundred students from various universities including both the genders that is male and female through random selection method. We employed a questionnaire with close-ended questions and checked the knowledge of the students about the use of recreational drugs, reasons, harmfulness and effects. Size of the sample was calculated according to the calculator of WHO, in a sample of 275 participants 50% were aware of the use of recreational drugs. SPSS-22 and Chi-Square was used for the data entry and analysis with a significant p-value of (< 0.05). Before the commencement of the research informed written consent and permission of the ethical committee was taken from the officials of the various medical, business and engineering universities, confidentiality was assured and maintained throughout the research process.

RESULTS

Outcomes of the research reflect that in the total sample of 500 participants the mean age was 22.35 (± 2.47) with a majority of medical students 392 (78%). Around 90.6% participants (n=453), males were 230 (92.0%) and females were 223 (89.2%) having awareness about the use of recreational drugs, the responded source of the awareness of the RDs in the students was their class-mates and friends and other resources included media and internet as shown in the Figure-I.

Table-I: SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE OF RECREATIONAL DRUGS IN EACH GENDER (N=500)

Knowledge Source	Male	Female
Friends/Room and Class Mates	44	28
Media/Internet	33	46
Relatives/Cousins	5	4
Others	10	12
Do not know	8	10

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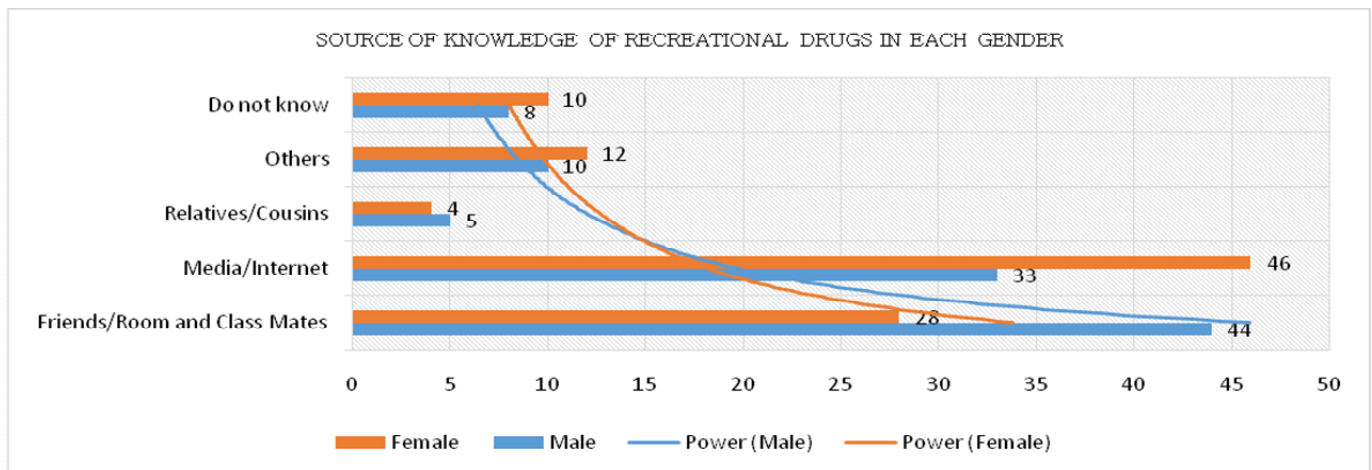


Table-II: KNOWLEDGE OF HEALTH HAZARDS CAUSED BY RECREATIONAL DRUGS IN EACH GENDER (N=500)

Health Hazard Knowledge	Male	Female
Lung Cancer	51	52
Oral Cancer	11	13
Blood Disorders / Cancer	6	6
Heart Diseases	19	10
Bone Disorders	3	2
Others	5	10
None	5	7

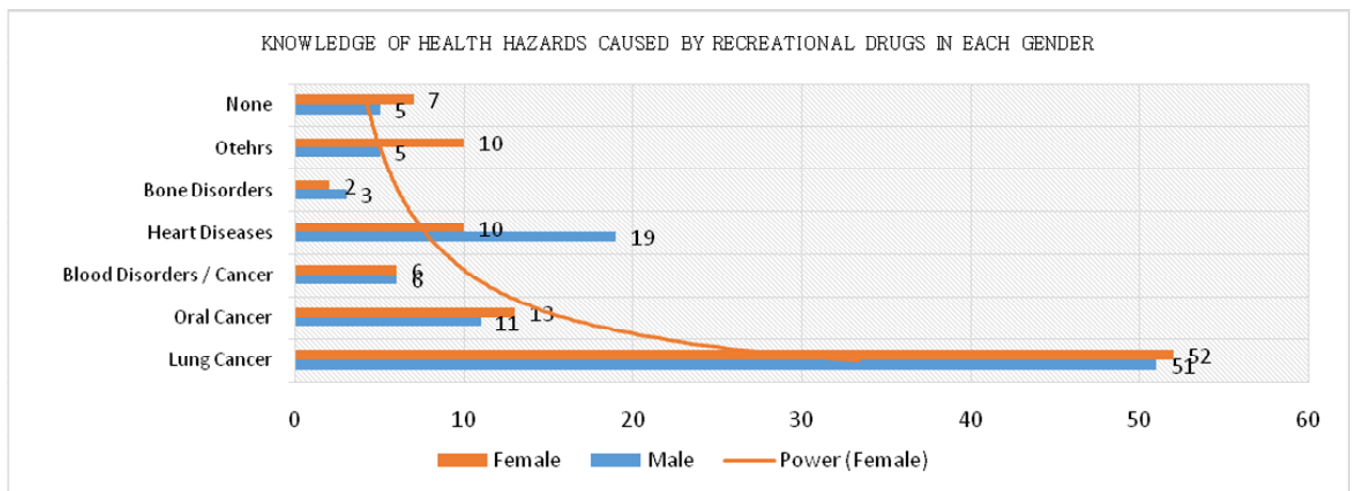


Table-III: KNOWLEDGE ABOUT RECREATIONAL DRUGS AND PREVALENCE OF SMOKING AND RECREATIONAL DRUGS. (N=500)

Variables	Males (n=250)		Females (n=250)		P-Value	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage		
Awareness of recreational drugs	Yes	230	92	223	0.283	
	No	20	8	27		11
Sources of knowledge	Friends/Room and Class Mates	111	44	70	28	0.001
	Media/Internet	82	33	116	46	

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	Relatives/Cousins	13	5	8	3	
	Others	24	10	30	12	
	Do not know	20	8	26	11	
Religion and use of the Recreational Drugs	Allowed	6	2	5	2	0.917
	Not Allowed	230	92	233	93	
	Do not know	14	6	12	5	
Legal disposal of the use of drug	Yes	23	9	15	6	0.38
	No	205	82	210	84	
	Do not know	22	9	25	10	
Reason behind the start of the drugs	Company/Friends	18	41	7	35	0.051
	Curiosity	11	25	4	20	
	Stress/Anxiety	8	18	4	20	
	Low self-esteem/Depression	5	11	3	15	
	Style/Celebrity Influence/Fashion	2	5	2	10	
Starting age of the students	< 15 years	5	11	3	15	0.003
	16 - 20 years	26	59	11	55	
	21 - 25 years	13	30	6	30	
Method of administration	Oral	20	46	9	45	0.017
	Intravenous	4	9	1	5	
	Snuff/Powder	4	9	2	10	
	Filled Cigarettes	16	36	8	40	
First offered by	Friends	25	57	10	50	0.015
	Cousins	6	14	4	20	
	Class Fellows	11	25	2	10	
	Room mates	2	5	4	20	
When do you use these drugs	Occasional (2 - 3 times a week)	14	32	9	45	0.032
	Daily/Regular	18	41	6	30	

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	Once in a week	3	7	3	15	
	Once in a month	3	7	0	0	
	In the parties and gatherings	6	14	2	10	
Preferred place of the use of the drugs	Friend's home/Home	14	32	11	55	0.017
	Hostel	17	39	6	30	
	Restaurant/Cafe	3	7	0	0	
	University/College	6	14	1	5	
	During travelling (bus/car)	4	9	2	10	
Do your guardians and parents know	Yes	6	14	3	15	0.002
	No	38	86	17	85	
Feeling about the use of drugs (guilty/bad)	Yes	15	34	5	25	0.001
	No	29	66	15	75	
Do you recommend the use of drugs to others	Yes	20	45	10	50	0.06
	No	24	54	10	50	
Quitting hurdle	Drugs crave	14	32	6	30	0.003
	Palpitations/Tremors/Sweating	2	5	1	5	
	Friends influence	24	54	10	50	
	Others	4	9	3	15	
Habit satisfaction	Yes	31	70	16	80	0.005
	No	13	30	4	20	
Drugs availability	Easy	37	84	15	75	0.004
	Difficult	7	16	5	25	
Means (Illegal)	Stealing from other places/homes	6	14	3	15	0

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	Lone	8	18	3	15	
	No	30	68	14	70	
Smoking prevalence	Yes	60	24	35	14	0.004
	No	190	76	215	86	
Shisha	Yes	52	21	33	13	0.024
	No	198	79	217	87	
Prevalence of recreational drugs	Yes	44	18	20	8	0.021
	No	206	82	230	92	

It was also observed in the research results that the major group involved in the use of these drugs was in the age of 16 -20 years and majority of the parents were unaware of the drug abuse by their children.

TABLE II: RECREATIONAL DRUG PRACTICES (N=64)

It is alarming to know that 45% males (n=20) and 50% females (n=10) users of the drugs also suggested the use of the drugs to the others users recommend others (p=0.060). Company of the friends was the major hindrance in the quitting of the drugs (p= 0.003). Males with a number of 31 (70%) and females with a number of 16(80%) with a significant p-value of 0.005 were satisfied with the use of the drugs (Table - II).

Drug abuse was observed in the 8.6% participants, females were involved more than males in the use of drugs when depressed respectively 10.8% and (6.4%). Availability of the recreational drugs was very common and easy (p =0.004). Stealing was observed about the drugs in the nine cases and forty-four cases were managing it through legal resources with respective proportions of 15 and 70 percent. Almost 1000 – 5000 rupees were spent by the users of the drugs through their pocket every month. Medical students were dominant in the use of drugs and correct responses were observed in the sixty-four percent of the participants. It was also known to the students that the use of drugs causes oral and lung cancer in the students and also causes diseases of the heart.

DISCUSSION

Research found that most common age group was 20 – 25 years and from the medical students. Initial stage of smoking cigarettes developed in the habit of the drug abuse. They were also unaware of the mental and physical damage being caused by the smoking [6]. It was alarming to know that majority of the participants enjoyed this experience. Boys were more aware of the side-effects than girls; whereas, an Iranian research produced contrary results [7]. Global researches in this aspects quote the same factors of drugs indulgence. Very meager students abused the drugs those were provided for the stress, anxiety and depression. Due to the non-availability of the medicines participants relied on the drugs [8]. Another vulnerable age group was in the age of 16 – 20 years used RDs because of the addiction, under confidence, escape,boredom,self-medication and such related reasons. Main sources were media, internet, friends and negligence of the parents. Same results were observed by Sadiq and his colleagues in their research of the same nature. Parents offered drugs to their children in very few research studies.

Pakistani addict students mostly take refuge in the use of cannabis, opioids (painkillers), sedatives, opiates and tranquilizers [9]. The common utilized drugs are heroin, hashish, bhang, chars, opium, psychotropic drugs and alcohol. Other research works of Pakistan, Washington and New Zealand shared the same outcomes. Our religion forbids the use of any kind of drugs and students were well-aware of this fact. Students violated religious bond just because of curiosity or their friends in Pakistan and other Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran [10]. These drugs were accessible easily and students also approached them through unfair means. In the current research it was observed that smoking is common but latest trends are the smoking of Shisha in gathering and groups. A research conducted in the city of Peshawar also denotes the same findings. Male were dominant in the Shisha smoking habit as the ratio of female to male was 2:3, which is same in Iran [11]. Other common issues like the expenditure in the buying of these drugs was 1000 – 5000 PKR which equals 10 – 47 US \$, participants preferred the use of drugs at the hostel or at the house of a friend. In the limitations of the research participants were reluctant about the disclosure of their private act and females also refused to collaborate about the abuse of the recreational drugs.

CONCLUSION

Maximum number of the participants (90.6%) were already aware of the use of drugs through any source such as friends and media and almost 92% of the males and 93% of the females were aware of the recreational drug (RDs) use is forbidden in the preaching of the religion. Most common RDs were Shisha and Cigarette and males were dominant over females in the sue of RDs. A common reason of the involvement was the pressure of the peer group with a significant p-value of 0.051. The age group involved in the use of these drugs was 16 – 20 years with a significant p-value of 0.003. Friends were the

main hindrance in the quitting of the drugs and students (63%) knew that oral and lung cancer was characterized because of the use of recreational drug. RDs use in the males and females is increasing day by day in any society because of the negligence of the parents and pressure of the friends are the major factors involved behind the use of the RDs, it also promotes this wicked exercise.

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