

# A Review of Constituents Factors of Substance Abuse among Youth

<sup>1</sup>Amna Abdulaziz Haider, <sup>2</sup>Yousaf Jamal

**Abstract--***The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between substance abuse and youth especially in the transitional period from high school to college by using many articles from old to modern empirical researchers and experimental researchers in the literature review. This research has noted that youth substance abuse is associated with child abuse, neglect, rape, bad parenting skills, ethnicity, gender, and by the influence of friends who abuses a substance. Also, it's been noted to be associated with school dropout, failure, and low GPA because of being intoxicated all the time and might affect developing a mental disorder. Interventions are the best solution to treating substance abuse in youngster as there are some well-developed interventions to eliminate risk factors leading to substance abuse which able young individuals to improve their lives and live happily by promoting positive aspects of emotional development not only by focusing on treating the substance abuse disorder but on the mental health of the adolescents afterwards and on preventing a relapse from happening.*

**Keywords--***Substance Abuse; Youth; Adolescents*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Substance abuse is a long-term use of alcohol or drugs identified by daily intoxication, inability to reduce consumption, and failure in social functioning [1]. For over decades teenagers had been abusing drugs, alcohol and other substances way before they enter college. Common in youth in the transaction period between childhood to adulthood it consists of people aged between 15 and 24 years old. It' becoming very alarming that this situation is increasing and there is very little research has been conducted regarding this increase and its causes in the Middle East.

Many researchers has examined the relationship between many forms of parental influences, where are older adolescents especially college students. The research center of interest has been on same aged peer influences [2, 3]. Yet many researchers agreed that peers influence effects teenagers more than parents in abusing a substance. As parents have more influence on other major factors such as values, college selection, and decision making influences [4].

According to developmental theory, late adolescence is characterized by an independent sense of identity and the evolving conceptualization of role in relationships that is a normal aspect of the socialization process. In childhood and early adolescence, many of the individual's socialization skills occur within the context of the family environment. At each developmental stage, youths are confronted with a set of new roles and freedoms [5]. This urge of being independent and free is what makes teenagers drift away from their parent's influence and try new things with the influence of their peers, with this increase of peer influence teenagers starts to try new behaviours

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<sup>1</sup>College of Humanities, Effat University, An Nazlah Al Yamaniyyah, Jeddah 22332, Saudi Arabia. E-mail: ahaider@effatuniversity.edu.sa

<sup>2</sup>College of Humanities, Effat University, An Nazlah Al Yamaniyyah, Jeddah 22332, Saudi Arabia. E-mail: yojamal@effatuniversity.edu.sa

such as partying all night, substance abuse and insurgency. Other research suggests that family's influences may increase and play a huge salient protective role during late adolescence; which mean teenagers who have parents who abuse substance are more likely to copy their parent's behaviours[6].

This topic had become the focus attention of many researchers throughout the years all around the world. But unfortunately, very few researchers have been made in the Middle East. The aim of this study is to investigating and explores the relationship between substance abuse and youth especially in the transition period from high school to college. The more research on substance abuse will provide the ways to prevent addiction and reduce the effects substance have on individuals, families and the whole communities from intoxication, overdose, and withdrawal symptoms. Also, this may prevent some common psychological disorders that can be associated with substance abuse including psychotic disorders, mood disorders, anxiety disorder, and personality disorder [7].

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Substance Abuse**

The availability of substance is dependent on the laws and norms of society. Nevertheless, availability is a separable factor. Whether the particular substances are legal or not, their availability may vary and is associated with use. Research has proved that when alcohol is available, the extensiveness drinking is, as the amount of alcohol consumed, and the heavy use of alcohol dramatically increase [8]. About the illegal substance, Newcomb et al. [9] have found in an adolescent research sample that two measures of substance availability were related to using cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, and other illegal drugs, even after controlling the amount of money available to adolescents. Dembo et al. [10] reported that the availability of substance affected the abuse of substance indirectly among high school students. Gottfredson [11] finds that substance availability is different according to schools and that substance availability is the main influence in using the substance as it's beyond the influence of individual's characteristics.

Despite all the prevention technique being used over the decade's adolescence and early adulthood remains to abuse alcohol and other substances and completely ignoring all the risk factors [12]. As alcohol and drugs abuse lower the motivation, interferes with cognitive processes, lead to developing mood disorders, and increases the risk of accidents, injury or death. Adolescent substance abuse affects a high cost of health care, educational failure or drop out, mental health disorders, drug and alcohol rehabilitation treatment, and time in juvenile for crimes. Not forgetting that some adolescence continues their addiction to adult life effecting one third to one half of lung cancer, coronary heart disease and AIDS [13]. Violent crimes, child abuse, neglect, rape, and unemployment are all associated with substance abuse and addiction that's why many researchers and dedication have been made to find an effective way to increase the productiveness of treatment and to prevent relapse by maintaining sober for a lifetime. But the failure of early prevention interventions is by providing information for programs that did not address known risk factors for drug abuse [14].

Substance abuse plays a huge role in affecting adolescence with mental disorders as the prevalence rate of abusing substance is very high especially among high school students [15]. According to the national youth survey

that is founded by the U.S department of health and human services adolescents abusing substances might develop some mental disorders because of social isolation, loneliness, and other emotional problems.

### **Influence of Parents and Friends**

Also, the economic status has been shown to be associated with substance abuse. Coming from a poor home, increases the risk for children to suffer from conduct disorders and substance abuse disorder [16].

Addiction is believed to be genetically inherited and has been proven by children adoption studies in Denmark, Sweden, and the United States they provided a consistent evidence for genetic alcoholism in males, reporting the rates of alcoholism ranging from 18% to 27% for the adopted sons of alcoholics parents compared with only 5% to 6% for adopted males without an alcoholic parent [17]. There was no consistent evidence for genetic alcoholism in females that been reported [18]. It could be because females are more private than males or because they don't believe it's an addiction as some mothers call it mom juice or mom's way to relax. Other than genetic, living with an alcoholic parent will increase the risk factor for developing an addiction.

Especially when there are poor parenting practices, high levels of conflict in the family or divorce, and a low degree of bonding between children and parents proved to increase the risk factor for adolescent to abuse substance and generally develop a bad behaviour [19].

Families have a huge effect on both preventing and interference in substance abuse through inducing risk or encouraging, by providing protection and helping the child bounce back [20]. The quality of parenting help prevents substance abuse as it was found that; the closer parents and children relationship is the more discouraged the children will be to abuse substances and it will have an impact on choosing non-drug using friends [21]. As research studies showed inappropriate parenting and socialization within the family have an effect on the child developing antisocial behaviors which may lead to substance abuse later [22].

Many studies were conducted to measure the social context of drinking alcohol between adolescence that involves both motivational and situational aspects for drinking [23]. Adolescents like to drink at their homes where they feel safe or at their favourite place such as parties where they binge drink with friends [24]. Some suggest that adolescents feel freer drinking outside the house [25]. That's why parental supervision or monitoring of knowing where children are or what are they doing and with who have a positive effect on preventing youth from abusing substances and may reduce some serious risk factors [26].

Physical abuse, emotional abuse or sexual abuse during childhood has been found associated with substance abuse. As many studies have proved that substance abuse usually comes from abusive homes. Children who exposed to physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and parent who abuse substance; may experience feelings of hopelessness and might have issues with self-regulating affective statues. This is where substance abuse become away to escape or to disconnect from all feelings such as emotional pain and anger. Escaping all feeling causes other cognitive problems later on in life as the youngster learn to avoid every negative emotion or issue that they face which leads to not having the ability to cope or face negative situations [27]. Also, youngsters might develop psychological disorders such as post-traumatic disorder and major depressive disorder as

a result of the abuse and neglect that they faced during childhood accompanied with the escape method of abusing substances [28].

### **Parental involvement affects adolescences substance abuse across ages, gender, and ethnicities**

According to the study of Pilgrim et al [29], the first objective was to test the effect of parental involvement and the risk-taking on adolescent's substance abuse and how it's affected by school success and time spent out with peers. School success and time spent with peers are factors tested for indirect effect for risk-taking on adolescent's substance abuse. Where is parental involvement in substance abuse and risk-taking on adolescent's substance abuse is tested to have a direct impact on adolescent's, this study was conducted with a nationally representative sample of adolescents. The second objective was to test the relationship between gender, ethnicity and substance abuse. The sample contained adolescence who is African American, Hispanic American, and European American who are between 8th and 10th graders. The researchers used a huge sample that is a nationally representative sample of adolescents.

Both studies were conducted between 1994,1995 and 1996 on 8th and 10th graders; sample researched a total of 13,244 students. The study used the questionnaires by the University of Michigan interviewers in a scheduled class during regular school hours. Confidentiality was carefully explained at the beginning of the questionnaire to the participants [30]. The questionnaires measured three substance items smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol and using marijuana all in the last 30 days and measured four items for parental involvement two questions were about parental involvement with home-works. Risk taking was measured in two items that were a strong predictor of substance abuse [31]. School success was measured using two items which are completing school assignment and the school average grades. Also, academic success and commitment to school was a good predictor of substance abuse and have been used in this study [32]. Time spend with peers was found to be a good predictor of substance abuse and three items measured the time spent without with peers and if it's without parental or guardians supervision [33]. To measure ethnicity students were asked how you describe yourself. And a couple of categories were also available to choose from. Students were asked to choose their own parents educational level to measure the parental education and how it differs between different ethnic groups. The result of this study was parental involvement effects adolescences substance abuse across all ages, gender, and ethnicities. Similarly, risk-taking behaviours were predictive to adolescent substance abuse of all ages, gender, ethnicities and both results are mediated by school success and time spent with peers. The studies showed a lot of similarities between different ethnic groups rather than differences.

### **Influence of Social, Ethnic and Culture**

In addition, when social controls are weak, individuals are more likely to pull away from appropriate behaviour for social norms, by abusing substance [34]. Also, individuals are more likely to show poor commitment to normal social norms, social groups and school is one example of such a social group. There is research evidence that adolescent substance abuse is correlated with delinquency, teenage pregnancy, and school misbehaviour and

drop out [35, 36]. There are some risk factors that are roughly divided into two categories. First category is broad societal and cultural factors, which provide legal and normative expectations of behaviour being a certain way. The second category includes factors within the individuals and their interpersonal environments. The personal environment of children's lives is their families, school classrooms, and friends.

Ethnicity and gender are also factors of substance abuse as some ethnic groups tend to abuse substance more than others as the concepts of collectivism and individualism, which have been always studied in the cross-cultural field, recently started to appear in substance abuse literature [37]. Collectivism culture is built on sharing experiences, supporting and emphasize interdependent aspects of the self, it means that the whole in-group evaluates the individual's actions [38]. Where is individualism cultures tend to emphasize independent aspects of the self, it means that the individual evaluates his or her own actions by themselves without the interference of the in-group [39].

Social media and advertisement are also factors that could influence substance abuse that we can't ignore. Such as T.V ads showing people partying on the beach binge drinking [40].

### **Depression and Emotional Problems**

Some reported that these emotional problems are caused by a combination of parents and friends pressure. Unfortunately, these feelings and behaviours lead to antisocial or conduct disorder with abusing substance [41]. There is a possible relationship between abusing cannabis and psychosis (schizophrenia) [42]. As many drugs addicted has developed psychosis after abusing cannabis for a period of time. A cross-sectional national survey has been distrusted on the USA, Australia and The Netherlands found out that rates of cannabis use are twice as high among people suffering from schizophrenia than people from the general population [43, 44]. During a clinical study examining 232 patients diagnosed with schizophrenia. The data showed that one-third of the sample has abused cannabis at least one year before the schizophrenia onset started, another one third has abused other drugs then developed schizophrenia and the last one third has abused cannabis after getting schizophrenia symptoms [45]. People who have abused cannabis more than 50 times were six times more likely to develop schizophrenia than people who haven't abused cannabis before [46].

Where depression among adolescents is very common to coexist with substance abuse and will probably resolve itself after treating the substance abuse disorder. Depression with substance abuse increases the risk of suicide and death from overdoses. In addition, adolescents who attempt suicide have psychological stressors, anxiety, and substance abuse issues [15]. Transitional Period from High School to College.

The transition period from high school into college is one of the most critical times in the adolescent's life, because of all the changes that happen from the social environment, and responsibilities [9]. In this transition period, it is significantly correlated with the increase of abusing substance such as heavy drinking and abusing marijuana [47]. According to Arnett [47], these behaviours of increased substance abuse are because in the transition period to adulthood it provides an increase in freedom and less social control than high school. However, according to White

[48], the increase of substance abuse such as heavy drinking, abusing marijuana, cocaine and smoking cigarettes happens regardless of the individual attending college or not. Also, the change in the environmental situation like living with friends, and roommates vs. parents could be a factor in substance abuse.

Children learn social behaviours from interacting with family, friends, and school [49]. Where a special bond is created between socializing and the individual, then the individual starts to adjust certain beliefs according to the socializing unit to fit in [50]. Low college attendance can be related to an increase in substance abuse of all kinds especially binge drinking and the more the individual engage with peers to abuse substance the more likely he or she would get involved.

To measure the relationship between transition periods from high school to college a survey was developed. It will only include students who are currently in 12th grade and living with their parents. The sample size was 319 students including both genders. The first time it will be given to 12th grade students in the spring semester between March and May 2004. Then it will be retested in the fall semester between October and December 2004 for most students but a small number of students were tested in January 2005 [51]. The reports of both surveys were found reliable for substance abuse behaviours [30]. The students are reported to abuse alcohol, marijuana, and episodic drinking on a scale from 0 to 40 or more times. The result showed a positive correlation between alcohol use increasing after graduating 12th grade, going to college and leaving home.

Episodic drinking was found negatively correlated with school bonding which means the behaviours 12th-grade students have towards substance abuse of all kind has nothing to do with leaving school. Some researchers argued that the college environment encourage students to party and abuse substances [52].

Other research has reported that students who moved away from home after high school reported higher levels of substance abuse regardless of going to college or not, because of feeling free. Students who are still living with their parents were found to less abuse substance [52, 53]. Some suggest that it is possible that all the changes in the behaviour and the substance abuse happens in the summer before going college as students tend to party a lot and travel with friends celebrating their accomplishment of graduating high school, getting accepted into college and celebrate the transition from adolescents to adulthood [53].

After graduating high school, the normal thing to do is apply to college. Over the years the college has become known to be the time where adolescents become young adults and experiment new things in life such as joining a sorority or social groups. Research has found that sorority or social group members consume more alcohol than individuals who do not belong to a sorority or a social group [54-56]. It has become all about being accepted by others of a specific group who are behaving in certain ways that are considered cool and popular [57].

In other situations, adolescent decides to drop out of school; that's why a lot of effort was put on researching and understanding the relationship between substance abuse and dropping out of school as some students don't continue their education because of abusing a substance and being intoxicated all the time. Similarly, studies examined the relationship between marijuana and alcohol abuse with school dropout. Studies have shown that only about one out of ten studies were able to tie the confounding effects of age, gender, family involvement

and other school related factors with the relationship between cigarettes, marijuana, and alcohol with school dropout [58]. According to the longitudinal studies, substance abuse and school dropout are caused by decreased motivation and cognitive impairment. But these symptoms don't apply to the relationship between cigarettes use and school dropout [59]. In another study, it was found that low GPA positively correlated with substance abuse there for academic ability is affected which lead students to drop out of school [60].

### **Early Interventions**

Studies suggest that early interventions can reduce many of the serious adolescent's problems or even eliminate it by using interventions to help improve parenting and family systems dynamics [61]. There are programs available for parents with children of a high risk of developing a substance abuse addiction that starts from birth to age 5 years these programs help improve the cognitive and the behavioural abilities of children [62]. Programs such as early elementary school parent training or family skills training have been found very significantly effective in eliminating aggressive behaviours, conduct disorders, oppositional defiant disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity [63, 64]. Also, prevent child abuse and substance abuse. These programs enhance parental supervision; improve communication and values family time spent together. Also, it reduces the negative influence friends affected on adolescents.

The younger individuals start drinking, the more likely they will have serious alcohol dependence as adults [65]. The good news is there are some well-developed interventions to eliminate risk factors leading to substance abuse which able young individuals to improve their lives and live happily by promoting positive aspects of emotional development. Interventions can be from parents educating their children, school, professional psychologist, group therapy, antidrug advertising campaigns and a healthcare facility. A good treatment facility not only focuses on treating the substance abuse disorder but on the mental health of the adolescents afterward and on preventing a relapse from happening [66].

Schools play a huge role in preventing substance abuse among school aged students by engaging them in activities, assignment, and research and in school antidrug campaigns. As students engage together in these types of activities might help make them communicate and advise each other to not abuse substances [67]. The youngster needs to have a sufficient dosage of expose to the intervention program for it to make a difference. The dosage can be measured by the session length, the number of sessions, the spacing of sessions and the duration of the program as a whole. Also, they need to have followed up booster sessions after the main treatment session ends to help in the long-term effect of preventing are lapse [68]. As booster sessions been proved to help teach youngster new skills to keep them sober and teach them new developmental approaches to maintain the positive outcomes. Also, there are some practices that reduce craving substances and promote emotional regulation, such as yoga, meditation, exercise and social support they can help as well with the early life stressors youngsters' face [69, 70].

### III. CONCLUSION

Many studies agreed on similar things when it comes to adolescent's substance abuse as they agreed that the main influence is parents and peers. Closer parents and children relationship is the more discouraged the children will be to abuse substances. And lack of supervision not knowing where the child is or who been hanging out with also, encourage the child to experiment and try different types of substance especially when interacting with friends who are abusing drugs or alcohol. Because adolescents are trying so hard to fit in, be cool and popular. Substance abuse may lead to suicide attempts and overdoes. The transition period from high school into college is one of the most critical times in the adolescent's life because of increase in freedom and less social control than high school. School dropout is caused by substance abuse that leads to decreased motivation and cognitive impairment and in another study. Besides the roles of parents, schools play a huge role in preventing substance abuse among school aged students by engaging them in activities, assignment, and in school antidrug campaigns. Other studies agreed that early interventions are the best solution to treating substance abuse in youngster but it's also never too late to intervene. The youngster needs to have a sufficient dosage of exposure to the intervention program for it to make a difference.

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