



PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH ADOLESCENTS' SUBSTANCE USE (WITH REFERENCE TO NEGOMBO COSTAL AREA)

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence stage is characterized by mischievous curiosity, this curiosity leads to the experimentation of these adolescents on various substances. According to many researchers, drug use is largely initiated during early adolescence. Then continued to chronicity and to the development of drug dependents. The number of illegal adolescent drug users in Sri Lanka has been growing over the last few years. Substance use is recognized as one of the main health and social problems in Sri Lankan society. Mostly, adolescents are found to be amongst the high risk groups. Therefore the aim of this research was to find out the psychosocial factors (PSFs) that affect the substance use of adolescents in Sri Lanka. Selected sample size was 40 males. The ages of the respondents in between 15-18 years. Research was conducted in Negombo costal area. A questionnaire and a structured interview schedule were used as data gathering instruments. Data were analyzed by using simple statistical methods such as percentages. The results showed that, as social factors such as the family and peers are perceived as having the strongest influence. Poor family relationships, poor communication between parents and their adolescent children, poor family management skills such as lack of child supervision, lack of parenting skills contribute towards adolescent drug behaviour. Peer pressure resulting from association with drug taking friends often lead adolescents to experiment with drugs and also having money on their hands play a role in this. As psychological factors lack of self-esteem, self-satisfaction, without having any specific aim for their lives hence lead to using drugs. To reduce this behavior of adolescents' parents should try to create a positive atmosphere in the home, encourage to communicate openly. Adolescents should be guided in their selection of friends and should be encouraged to take part in recreational activities.

Keywords: Substance use, drug behavior, adolescence, psychological factors, Social factors