

## Drugs abuse, health hazards and antisocial activities among University Students of Lahore, Pakistan

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**Objective:** To examine the frequencies and percentages of drugs abuse and to assess its relationship with health hazards and antisocial activities among university students. Also, to study gender and birth order differences accordingly.

**Methodology:** Adopting descriptive correlational research strategy, a purposive sample of 300 undergraduate students (men=150, women=150), with an average age of 20.4 years, was taken. Following all ethical procedures, data was collected from Government College University (n=150) and University of Management and Technology (n=150) of Lahore, Pakistan from April 2018 to June 2018. Data was collected through a Pre-Designed Questionnaire and analyzed by SPSS version 23.

**Results:** Outcomes indicated that out of 300

students, 16(5.3%) were consuming alcohol, 49(16.3%) taking marijuana while 65(21.6%) were relaxation drugs users and 81(27.0%) smokers. Consequently, results showed that there was a significant positive association between drug abuse, health hazards, and antisocial behaviors among students. Moreover, gender and birth order were important factors for students who indulged in drug abuse.

**Conclusion:** In short, drug abuse among youth has become a serious issue in Pakistan. Government and university administration should introduce constructive laws to protect the students from such damaging activities. (Rawal Med J 202;45:694-697).

**Keywords:** Drugs abuse, antisocial activities, health hazards.

### INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse is defined as a use of illegal drug in quantities which are harmful to the individual's physical, psychological and social health.<sup>1</sup> According to a news paper report, one out of every ten university students uses any form of illegal drug, mostly alcohol and marijuana and 71.5% drug abusers are less than 35 years of age.<sup>2</sup> Reports from Lahore, Rawalpindi, Karachi and in other cities of Pakistan have shown that university and college students are inhaling shisha, tobacco, marijuana and recreational drugs, leading to lung, oral or blood cancer and heart diseases.<sup>3-5</sup> Jokhio et al found that drug addiction caused not only self-destructive but also antisocial behaviors among adolescents.<sup>6</sup> Drug abuse among University students results in altered state of mind and thus, leading to health hazards, violent crimes and poor academic performance.<sup>7-10</sup> While looking at the contributing factors in drug abuse, gender plays an important role in Pakistani society as men have more access to such places where they can take drugs easily. Another reason is,

men are more pressurized to earn at younger age for the family while a few other causes are peer pressure, experimentation and to alleviate one's anxiety and depression.<sup>3,11,12</sup> Further, another vital factor for inculcating such habits in adults can be parent's negligence.<sup>13</sup>

Cigarette smoking is the most used drug which gradually motivate students to take other harmful drugs.<sup>14</sup> So, there is a dire need to spread awareness among parents and to educate the youth about negative consequences of drugs abuse.<sup>15</sup> This study aimed to assess the frequencies of drugs abuse and to examine association between drugs abuse, health hazards, and antisocial activities among students.

### METHODOLOGY

In this descriptive correlational study the sample size was determined by G power with  $\alpha$  error (.05), and actual power (.95), estimated an average range of 200-300 participants. We used purposive sample of 300 students (men=150, women=150), aged between 19 and 25 years, enrolled in Government

College University and University of Management and Technology, Lahore. We excluded the physically disabled, employed, and single parent students. The study was conducted from June to April, 2018. All participants were having an equal representation regarding their birth order in the sample (first: n=100, middle: n=100, last born: n=100). Moreover, students of BS (hons), studying social science subjects, were taken. Approval was taken from higher authorities of universities and an Informed consent was taken from all from students. Students were requested to fill out a Pre-Designed Questionnaire (a self-report survey), with score format 0 (Never), 1 (rarely), 2 (sometimes), 3 (often), always (4). They were asked to report their usage of drugs, health problems, antisocial activities, and birth order related issues. For drugs abuse, 4 questions were developed like I smoke, I take alcohol, I take relaxing drugs (i.e., sleeping pills, antidepressants) etc. For health hazards, the scale comprised of 12 items measuring headaches (2 items), sleep disturbances (2 items), gastro (4 items) and respiratory illness (4 items).

To measure antisocial behaviors, 3 items were developed, for instance, I hit people physically etc. For birth order related problems like allocation of responsibilities by parents to first born, 3 questions were included such as I am given more responsibilities compared to my siblings etc. Further,

for squeezed status of middle born, researchers asked 2 questions like my parents pay less attention to me compared to my siblings etc. To measure parents' pampered behaviors for last child, 4 items were made like my parents fulfill my desires soon etc.

**Statistical Analysis:** Using SPSS version 23, the frequencies and percentages were calculated through descriptive analysis while associations among variables were examined through Pearson correlation. Further, t test analysis for gender differences and ANOVA for birth order differences was applied.

## RESULTS

Out of 300 participants, 16 (5.3%) were consuming alcohol, 49 (16.3%) using marijuana, 65 (21.6%) taking relaxing drugs while 81 (27.0%) were smokers (Table 1). Increased use of alcohol was significantly positively associated with physical problems i.e., headaches,  $r=.55$ ,  $p<.01$ ; gastro  $r=.47$ ,  $p<.01$ ; respiratory illness  $r=.40$ ,  $p<.01$ , and sleep disturbances,  $r=.37$ ,  $p<.01$ . (Table 2)

**Table 1. Frequencies and Percentages of Drugs Abuse.**

Variables	Number	%
Alcohol	16	5.3
Marijuana	49	16.3
Relaxation drugs	65	21.6
Smoking	81	27.0

**Table 2. Pearson Correlation between drugs abuse, health hazards and antisocial activities.**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.A	—	.59**	.49**	.67**	.55**	.47**	.40**	.37**	.44*	.56*	.52**
2.M		—	.44**	.57**	.43**	.49*	.33**	.36**	.26**	.25**	.29**
3.RD			—	.34**	.26**	.20**	.19**	.30**	.22**	.19**	.25**
4.S				—	.31**	.42**	.55**	.21**	.13*	.17**	.24**
5.H					—	.24*	.78*	.14*	.23*	.20*	.32**
6.G						—	.33**	.49**	.13*	.16**	.26**
7.RI							—	.46**	.14*	.22**	.29**
8.SD								—	.43**	.50**	.57**
9. T									—	.54*	.63**
10. H										—	.70**
11. RB											—
M	1.33	1.39	2.24	3.11	5.66	9.33	10.52	6.22	1.26	1.34	1.45
SD	.82	.79	.11	.17	1.20	2.92	3.00	.31	.07	.08	.10

Note. A= Alcohol; M=Marijuana; RD=Relaxation Drugs; S=Smoking; H=Headaches; G=Gastro; RI=Respiratory Illness; SD= Sleep Disturbances; T=Threatening; H= Hitting; RB= Risky Behaviors; M=means; SD=Standard Deviations. \* $p<.05$ , \*\* $p<.01$

**Table 3. T. test Illustrating gender differences.**

Variable	Men M(SD)	Women M(SD)	T	p
Drugs abuse	9.8(2.34)	6.30(.06)	-2.26	.00*
Antisocial activities	7.5(2.00)	3.21(.91)	-1.15	.01*

Note. \*p<.05

**Table 4. ANOVA with Tukey HSD for Birth Order Differences.**

Variable	F	p	First born M(SD)	Middle born M(SD)	Last born M(SD)
Over-burdened	3.42	.00	7.10(1.17)	2.41(.00)	2.00(.00)
Squeezed	1.16	.02	2.53(.04)	6.11(1.20)	2.10(.01)
Pampered	4.01	.00	2.00	1.82	6.61
Drugs abuse	3.30	.00	4.51	2.81	5.00

Note. F= ANOVA \*p<.05

Means scores for drugs abuse and antisocial activities were higher for men than women and significant at  $p<0.05$  (Table 3). ANOVA with HSD comparison indicated the challenges faced by students according to their chronological birth order like first born over-burdened the most ( $p<0.05$ ) (Table 4).

## DISCUSSION

There were 27.0% smokers and 21.6% of the participants used to take relaxing drugs. These findings are pointing out the dilemma of gradual changes in Pakistani culture and norms. Usually, the journey starts from first puff to enjoying smoking and then finally smoking becomes part of daily life. Unfortunately, Pakistan is among the top 15 countries for tobacco related mortalities and morbidities.<sup>16,17</sup>

Similarly, the trends of taking relaxing drugs (usually available in the form of sleeping pills, antidepressants) is increasing to meet the demands of daily hassles. So, young adults gradually develop habits to get temporary relief by relying on these drugs.<sup>18</sup> As far as alcohol (5.3%) and marijuana abuse (16.3%) is concerned, the percentages are quite awful. Friends circle promote the use of such drugs for recreation purposes which ultimately ruins one's entire career.<sup>19,20</sup>

We found that drugs abuse was significantly associated with headaches, gastro, respiratory illnesses, and sleep disturbances. The correlation

alcohol, marijuana and smoking for health hazards were high compared to relaxation drugs. There were also evidences regarding antisocial behaviors with drugs abuse. Similar findings have been reported by various studies that drug abuse is exploiting the lives of university students.<sup>3-8</sup>

The current research also showed that men were more likely to take drugs and involved in antisocial behaviors. Findings are culturally embedded as men have more liberty and freedom, so, they can easily buy drugs than women. Parental expectations also divert their attention towards antisocial behaviors because they take short cuts to fulfill the financial pressures.<sup>21,22</sup>

We found birth order as an important component in making adults drug abusers. Parental favoritism for last born children continues even when they reach adulthood while first born are over-burdened. However, middle born were less found to be drug abusers because they usually try to develop sociable personality to overcome their difficulties. Thus, such chronological birth order positions create differences in brought up of children.<sup>23</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Drugs abuse results in various physical hazards and antisocial behaviors among university students. Gender discrimination and lack of parenting skills are exaggerating such problems.

The study suggests that the emerging trends of drugs abuse among students can be devastating for the future of Pakistan. Government and educational institutes need reasonable policies to save the society from this evil.

### Author Contributions:

Conception and design: Hina Sultan  
Collection and assembly of data: Hina Sultan  
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Drafting of the article: Hina Sultan  
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