

PREVALENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AMONG FAMILIES OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DRUG ADDICTION

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ABSTRACT

This current study was carried out to screen out the symptoms of drug addiction and the related severity of psychological distress in their family members. In this study two scales were administered among the sample of (N=264) participants who completed the Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10) and Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K-10) belonging from different families living in Bahawalpur City. Out of which (n=110) meet the inclusion criteria. The collected data was analyzed by using SPSS. The results from the collected data reported a higher level of drug addiction among the male adults as compared with female. Similarly, a higher level of psychological distress was revealed among all the family members of the addicts. Furthermore, the comparison of psychological distress level among the father, mother and siblings of the drug addicts revealed that the level of severity of psychological distress was higher among fathers and sisters of the drug addicts as compared with mothers and brother. Hence, the study recommended to starting intervention related awareness programs to control the increasing rate of addiction in Bahawalpur City and also provide counseling to the mentally disturbed family members of the addicts.

Keywords: Addiction, Screening, Psychological Distress.

INTRODUCTION

Addiction refers to an urge to use something which is out of control of the individual or hard to stop. Addiction involves frequent use of cigarettes, cocaine or many other drugs. Addiction has become as a serious familial and socio-cultural concern in all over the world. Increasing cases of addiction such as use of alcohol, opioids and heroin has become a major public health issue or a challenge for psychologists and psychiatrists. On the other hand, substance used disorders (SUDs) has also become a noticeable burden of disease at worldwide (Whiteford et al., 2013). From 2010 to up till now the rate of addiction has been increased by 22% and these addicts were also suffering from other mental disorders such as stress, mood disorder and anxiety. The most common psychopathology reported among drug addicts is depression and few of them are seeking intervention (abuse, 2013). Addiction, has become a social problem in all over the world. Hence, there is a need to discuss the issues and problems prevailing among the families of the drug addicts.

Addiction as a Social or Familial Issue

As a matter of fact addiction is a social problem and this problem affects the entire family members. The most commonly reported disturbance is the poor relation with the family members such as father, mother and siblings. The core cause of such poor relationship is the trust breaking attitude of the addicts. Trust is known as a key factor or foundation of good relationship among family members. The mistrust of addict significantly damages the social relationship (Pantony, 2015). Therefore, it has been noticed that having addict in a family usually affects the whole family members particularly the father

figure, mother figure and siblings. The addict seems as a mental torture for the family members which lead to the risk of mental disturbance to the entire family of the addict (Ray et al., 2009). A study conducted by Lipscomb et al. (2009) revealed a higher level of psychiatric illness among the family members of the addicts such as depression, anxiety, stress, low quality of sleep etc.

Addiction among Adults in Pakistan

The cases of addiction are increasing day by day. During the last few years a large number of new cases were screened out in all over the cities of Pakistan. It revealed that about 6.5 million adults screened as addicts of different illegal drugs. The most frequent used substance reported among adults in Pakistan is cannabis. The individuals having age of 16-65 years reported that they use cannabis and heroin that is 9% and 4% respectively. A survey conducted in 2014 and 2015 Pakistan stood as the world's heroin addict country. Malik et al (2017) conducted a survey to find out the prevalence of addiction in Faisalabad. The results of their study reported that majority of adults had heroin dependency. They reported that 75% adults were heroin dependent, 45% were cannabis dependent, 9% were opium dependent, 20% alcohol and 10% benzodiazepine dependent. Similarly, Park et al. (2014) reported higher rate of addiction among young and older adults.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It is a fact that there are negative effects of addition not only on the addict's personal life but also it is a log lasting source of mental torture for his family members. The world health organization conducted a census and reported a higher prevalence of depression among the families of addicts (Hurst, 2019). Hence, there is a need to describe the studies showing a higher prevalence of psychological distress among the family members of addicts. Such as, a study identified the psychological anomalies among the family members of the drug addicts. The results of the study reported many emotional and behavioral problems among the family members of the drug addicts

Kenneth et al.(2007). The family members of the drug addicts were suffering severe mental distress. The most common type of distress was stress, anxiety and depression related problems among the father, mother and the siblings due to the addictive behavior of the members of their family (Olafsdottir & Hrafnisdottir, 2011). Similarly, researches also stated the family members of the addicts reported a gap in communication, lower level of intimacy, mood disorder and stress (Lander et al. 2013). A worse state of mental health was reported among the families of drug addicts. The most common issues were anxiety, stress and significant cognitive disturbance (Dawson et al., 2007). A higher level of mental distress or emotional disturbance was reported among the spouse of the individuals with drug addiction (Rognmo et al., 2013).

A study reported a higher level of emotional and behavioral issues among the siblings of the drug addicts. The siblings also reported that the addict family member is a source of mental distress for them (Mchale et al., 2012). Another study reported that the children of the addicts are at greater risk for mental health problems such as stress, anxiety and depression (Johnson & Stone, 2009). A higher level of social anxiety was revealed among the children whose parents were drug addicts. The level of their stress and anxiety were differing as per the relationship of the family member as per the age, education level or according to their socio-economic status (Oriasniemi & Kurvinen, 2017). The individuals with addiction are socially isolated and tend to perceive poor parental relationship with their families. The relatives of the addicts report higher psychological distress lower level of self worth and higher level of mental conflicts (Hesselbrock, 2001).

Rationale of the Study

Addiction is known as a societal issue that is rapidly growing in different cultures of Pakistan. The addicts destroy not only his personality but also whole the family and community as well. Therefore, a disrupted family behavior has been reported by the clinicians, psychiatrists and counseling psychologists. The addict perceives by his family as a social taboo or a mistrust family individual. Therefore, the whole family including father, mother, siblings or spouse of the addict suffers from mental distress. In this context, a very little has been studied. To fill the gap in existing literature this research has been carried out to address the prevalence of psychological distress among the family members of the drug addicts that is being ignored in our society. Addressing the psychological problems

of the families with drug addicts is a hot issue of this century. This study is a step to aware the authorities to address the increasing mental distress of the families in order to produce a healthy community or stress free Pakistan.

Objectives of the Study

1. To check and compare the level of drug addiction among male and female adults.
2. To check and compare the level of psychological distress among male and female drug addicts.
3. To check and compare the level of psychological distress among father and mother of addicts.
4. To check and compare the level of psychological distress among brother and sister of the addicts.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. The level of drug addiction would be higher among male adults as compared with female adults.
2. Level of psychological distress would be higher among male drug addicts as compared with female drug addicts.
3. Level of psychological distress would be higher among father as compare to mothers of the drug addicts.
4. The severity of psychological distress would be higher among sisters of drug addicts as compare to brother of drug addicts.

METHODS OF THE STUDY

The method of the study includes the following steps taken during the research process.

Problems Statement of the Study

Addiction is increasing day by day in Pakistan. A rich literature is available that shows the prevalence of addictive behavior among the adults and adolescence. But a very scanty researches are available that address mental distress among their families. To address this ignored issue, this research was carried out to screen out the individual with addict behavior and the related psychological distress among their family members such as father, mother and siblings.

Research Design of the Study

In this research the participants belonging from different socio-economic group, education or living style were included. Therefore, a cross-sectional research design was used to address the problem statement of the study and to carry out the research. This was a quantitative research and the sample was selected by snowball sampling technique.

Sample Size

Total (N=264) individuals were screened out from different families living in Bahawalpur. Out of which only (n=110) meet the inclusion criteria. The final sample included were (N=110) individuals with addiction as calculated by using G. Power online sample calculator.

Inclusion Criteria

All the male and female adults of age range of 20 years to 70 years with the symptoms of drug addiction were included in this research.

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

In this study the addicts belonging to different socio-economic background or families were participated in this study. Out of which 69% were male, 34% were female, 42% were rural, 68% were urban and 38% employed or 72% were un-employed.

Assessment Measures

In this study two scales were utilized to collect the responses from the participants. The detail is as under:

Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10)

This screening test was originally developed by Skinner (1982) at the addiction research foundation. This test consists on 10 items. This is a reliable measure to screen out the individuals with addition symptoms. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the originally developed scale is 0.93 that indicate excellent internal consistency of reliability.

Kessler Psychological Distress Scale K-10

This scale was originally developed by Kessler et al. (2002). This scale consists on 10 items that measures the symptoms of anxiety and depression. This is a valid and reliable measure to check the symptoms of psychological distress.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The results from the collected data are discussed as under:

Table 1 Comparison of Drug Addiction level between males and females using T-test

| Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | T-Test Comparison | |
|--------|----|------|----------------|-------------------|---------|
| | | | | T-Score | P-value |
| Male | 76 | 6.93 | 2.59 | 4.438** | 0.000 |
| Female | 34 | 4.50 | 2.81 | | |

*, $p < 0.05$ and **, $p < 0.01$

Note: The comparison shows that male respondents having higher level of drug addiction as compared to female respondents. T-test is used to check the significance of difference and t-score is 4.438 with p-value is 0.000 showing the test is highly significant at 1% level of significance.

Table 2 Showing the comparison of psychological distress between males and females drug addicts by using T-test

| Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | T-Test Comparison | |
|--------|----|-------|----------------|-------------------|---------|
| | | | | T-Score | P-value |
| Male | 76 | 37.16 | 8.84 | 4.069** | 0.000 |
| Female | 34 | 28.62 | 10.90 | | |

*, $p < 0.05$ and **, $p < 0.01$

Note: The comparison shows that male respondents having higher level of psychological distress as compared to female respondents. T-test is used to check the significance of difference and t-score is 4.069 with p-value is 0.000 showing the test is significant at 5% level of significance.

Table 3 Showing the comparison of Psychological Distress in case of Parents and Siblings

| Siblings and Parents | N | Mean | S.D | 95% CI | |
|----------------------|----|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| | | | | LL | UL |
| Father | 32 | 46.19 | 2.023 | 45.46 | 46.92 |
| Mother | 26 | 39.15 | 3.695 | 37.66 | 40.65 |
| Brother | 31 | 20.84 | 5.646 | 18.77 | 22.91 |
| Sister | 21 | 31.19 | 5.076 | 28.88 | 33.50 |

Table 4 ANOVA showing significance regarding Siblings and Parents

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | d.f | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------|
| Between Groups | 10949.772 | 3 | 3649.924 | 199.461 | 0.000 |
| Within Groups | 1939.691 | 106 | 18.299 | | |
| Total | 12889.464 | 109 | | | |

Note: The comparison shows that fathers have higher level of psychological distress as compared to all other. ANOVA test is used to discuss the significance and of test and F-score value is 199.461 with p-value 0.000 showing the test is highly significant at 1% level of significance

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted with the goal to find out the level of addiction among adults and to highlight the related stress among their family members. It is a fact that the addiction is a bad phenomenon and the parents and siblings of the addict affected by this curse. It has been seen that the families of the addicts suffer from various types of psychological and behavioral issues. In recent scenario addiction is prevailing among both genders. This study revealed a higher level of addiction among male adults as compared with females. Due to this higher level of addiction a higher level of Psychological distress also noticed in among drug addicts and their family members. The current study revealed a higher level of psychological distress among male addicts. Similarly, a higher level of distress is also reported among the father figure and sisters of the addicts. On the basis of the results of this study it concluded that the addiction and distress among the family members is associated. The results of this study also in accordance with the previous researches such as the findings of Hasien et al. (2002), Flavio et al. (2005), Harrel and Karim (2008), Blume and Marlatt (2000), Gorman (1988), Compton et al. (2005) and Swendsen and Merikangas (2000) reported a higher level of psychological distress among the addicts including male and female. They also compare the distress level with normal population that was lower as compared with the drug addicts. On the other hand, a study conducted by Hurst (2019) reported a higher stress and depression among the families of the drug addicts. Lander et al (2013) reported a higher prevalence of stress or mental disturbance.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the findings from the study it concluded that the prevalence of mental distress among the families of the addicts is actually associated with the addict living in the family. Addict is known as a trigger and leads the family members to the vicious cycle of stress, depression and anxiety. Hence, there is a dire need to address the psychological problems not only of the addict but also of his family members. The authorities are suggested to start psycho-education programs to address the psychological problems of addict's family.

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