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ARTICLE

Title: Drug abuse and drug dependence with its relation to homoeopathy

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ABSTRACT

The term 'drug abuse', means an illegal/ legal usage of any drug substance. There is another term 'Drug dependence' which refers to physical and mental dependence on any drug substance. This article also shows some commonly used drug substances and well indicated homoeopathic medicines for their treatment.

Keywords: *Drug (substance) abuse, Drug dependence, Homoeopathy.*

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DRUG ABUSE V/S DRUG DEPENDENCE

‘Drug (substance) abuse’, is medically termed as a disorder of brain. This refers to the abuse of those substances which are not legally used such as, marijuana, heroin, cocaine, or methamphetamine. Although there may also be abuse of any legal substance, such as alcohol, or prescription based medicines.^[1] Substance abuse may cause many problems like social, physical, emotional, or any other job-related problems.^[2] Alcohol is most commonly used legal drug of abuse.^[1] Another term is ‘drug dependence’. This refers to overall i.e., physical & psychic state of the person and also characterized by some behavioural responses, which ultimately results in compulsion to take that particular drug substance, on a long and a continued basis so as to experience the effects produced by it and also to avoid the discomfort, which is felt in its absence.^[3]

However, both of terms ‘substance abuse’ and ‘drug dependence’ are sometimes used as if they are same, but in reality there is a difference in between the two.

‘Dependence’ is a physical as well as mental reliance on any particular drug substance. People who suffer with substance dependence are not able to stop its usage, despite all the negative effects, which they face. They also experience cravings and withdrawal symptoms when they don’t consume it.

In many conditions, a continuous substance abuse may lead to drug dependency. The more there is an abuse of that substance, the more the person will need to consume it, so as to achieve

the same effects.

This leads to the creation of a tolerance level for the drug substance. As this tolerance level increases, the chemistry of your brain will eventually adapt it in such a way that you no longer just want that substance – ‘you actually need it’ and when you don’t get that drug substance, you go in a state of withdrawal, where there are a lot many sign and symptoms ranging from mild anxiety to tremors. Also sometimes, this condition of withdrawal can become a life-threatening condition.^[4] Even some organisations use the term drug addiction and drug dependence interchangeably as drug addiction is shown by a certain behavioural change after a continued abuse of the drug substance, for long and substance abuse becomes the main priority of the addict, in spite of all the problems it produces. Addiction also encloses both physical & mental reliance on a drug substance. In 1964, WHO wanted to replace the medical term “addiction” with the word “dependence”.^[5]

In India, the most commonly used drugs are cannabis, heroin and opium. But recently, an increase in the prevalence of methamphetamine is also seen. As per the National Survey on Extent and Pattern of Substance Use in India (2019) approximately, 2.1% of India’s population is in a habit to take opioids, which includes opium, heroin, and also certain pharmaceutical opioids.

A national survey of 2019 shows that approximately 2.8% of Indians aged 10-75 years were actually using cannabis as ganja, bhang and/or charas.^[7]

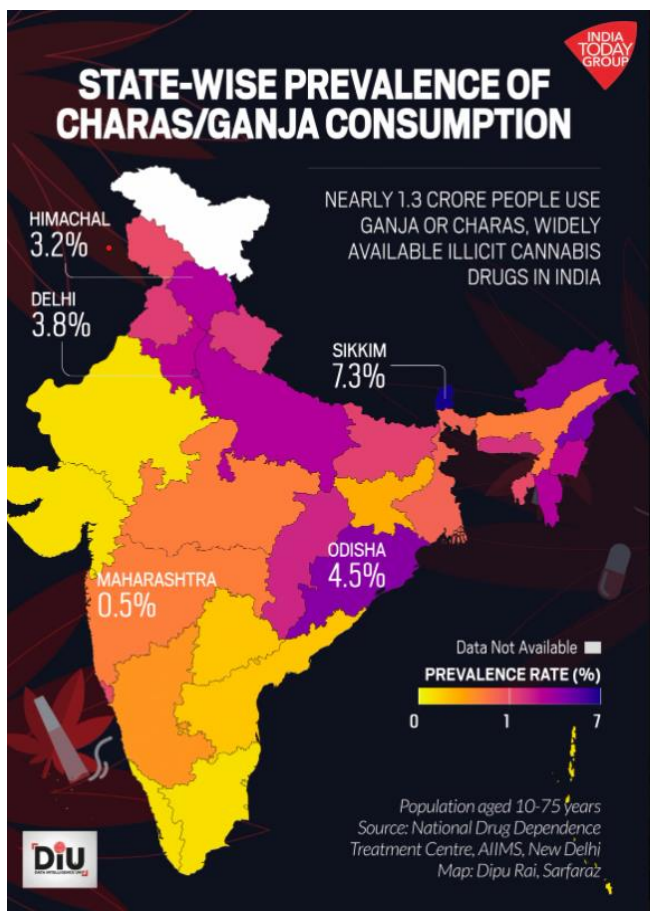


Figure 1: A state wise prevalence of charas/ganja consumption in India.^[6]

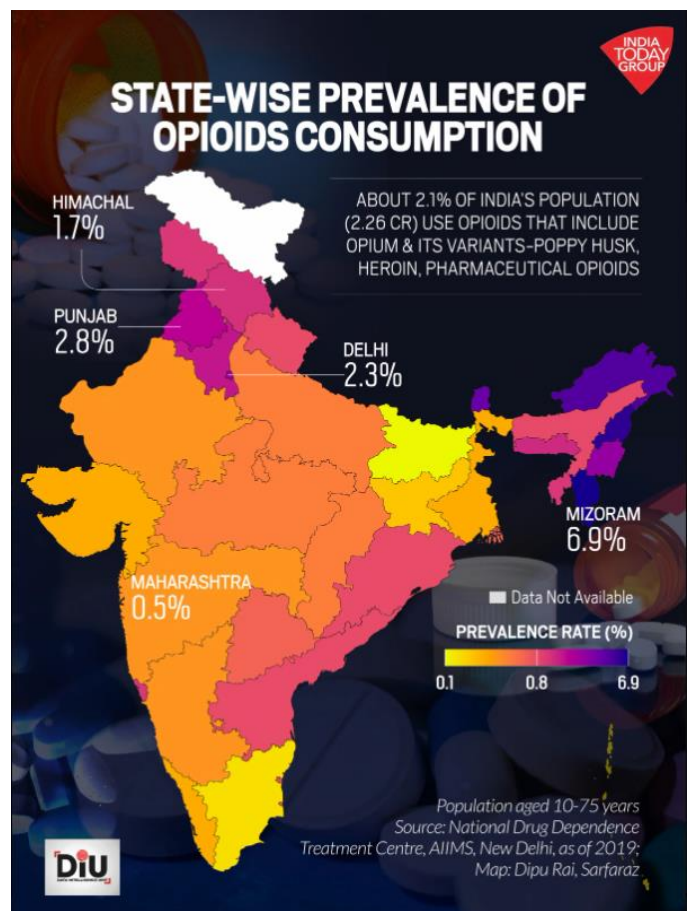


Figure 2: A state wise prevalence of opioids consumption in India.^[6]

DIAGNOSIS

The new DSM criteria helps in the diagnosis by describing a problematic pattern of use of any intoxicating substance which is shown by a 10/11 diagnostic criteria (depending on the drug substance) occurring during a period of 12 months. As per this, people having 2 or 3 criteria are considered as a 'mild' disorder, with 4 or with 5 are considered as 'moderate', and those with 6 or more symptoms as 'severe' disorder. This criteria is as follows:

1. Particular drug substance is often taken in larger amounts or for a time period which is longer than was intended to be taken.
2. A continuous desire or unsuccessful effort either to cut down or to control the abuse of that particular drug substance.

3. Too much time is spent in activities done, to obtain that particular drug substance, to use the substance, or to recover from its effects.
4. Craving/ a strong urge for abuse of that particular substance, is present.
5. Recurrent abuse resulting in a failure to do the major roles at work, or school or at home.
6. A continuous abuse of the substance, even after suffering from any persistent/ recurrent social/ interpersonal problems, caused or aggravated by the ill effects of its use.
7. Important social, occupational, or other activities are cut off or decreased because of the use of that drug substance.
8. Abuse of the drug is actually recurrent even after suffering from physical symptoms.

9. Even after having a proper knowledge that, this drug is causing or aggravating the persistent or recurrent physical or psychological state, its abuse is continued.

10. Tolerance, can be defined by either of the following:

a. A continuous demand for markedly increased amounts of that particular drug substance in order to achieve the intoxication effects and / or the desired effect.

b. There is a markedly diminished effect produced even after a continued abuse of the same amount of that particular drug.

11. Withdrawal, as manifested by either of the following:

a. Characteristic withdrawal syndrome for the particular drug substance is seen.

b. Abuse of that drug (or another closely related drug) in order to relieve or to avoid the occurrence of withdrawal symptoms.^[8,9,10]

Some common drug substances and their homoeopathic medicines are as follows:

Alcoholism- Ana., *ant t.*, apm., ars., asr., avn., bry., chi., ch. M., fl.x., hdr., lach., lo i., *nux.*, qer., ran b., rap., sang., sel., *strp.*, syph., *zin.*

Hereditary craving for alcohol- Syph.^[11]

Alcoholic drinks, desire for- Acon., aloe., amm. c., ant t., arn., **ars.**, *ars. i.*, **asar.**, aster., *aur.*, bov., bry., calc. c., *calc ar.*, cal s., **caps.**, carb asn., chin., cic., **crot h.**, cub., cupr., fluor ac., hell., hepar., *iod.*, *kreos.*, lac c., **lach.**, *led.*, *med.*, merc., *mur ac.*, naja., nat p., **nux v.**, *op.*, *phos.*, plumb., *psor.*, *puls.*, *selen.*, *sepia.*, *spig.*, *staph.*, **sulph.**, *sulph ac.*, *syph.*, tab., ther., *tub.*^[12]

BEER- Beer desire for- Acon., agar., aloe., ars., asar., *bell.*, *bry.*, calc c., camph., *caust.*, chel., chin., *cocc.*, *coloc.*, cupr., *graph.*, *kali bi.*, *lach.*, merc., mosch., *nat c.*, *nat m.*, *nat s.*, **nux v.**, *op.*, *petr.*, *phel.*, phos ac., phos., *psor.*, *puls.*, *rhus t.*, *sabad.*, *sepia.*, *spig.*, *spong.*, *staph.*, *stram.*, *stront.*, **sulph.**, tell., zinc.

Brandy, desire for- Acon., ail., arg n., ars., aster., bov., bry., bufo., calc. c., chin., cic., coca., cub., ferr p., *hepar.*, lach., mosch., mur

ac., **nux v.**, olnd., **op.**, *petr.*, *phos.*, *puls.*, *selen.*, *sepia.*, *spig.*, *staph.*, *stram.*, *stront.*, *sulph.*, *sulph ac.*, ther.^[13]

Wine, desire for- Acon., *aeth.*, arg m., *ars.*, asaf., bov., *bry.*, *calc c.*, chel., chin., *cic.*, colch., cub., fluor ac., *hepar.*, hyper., kali bi., kali i., *lach.*, *lec.*, merc., *mezer.*, nat m., **phos.**, *puls.*, *selen.*, *sepia.*, *spig.*, *staph.*, **sulph.**, *sumb.*, ther.

Whiskey, desire for- Acon., *arn.*, *ars.*, calc c., *carb ac.*, *carb an.*, chin., fluor ac., *hepar.*, **lac c.**, *lach.*, merc., *nux v.*, *op.*, *phos.*, *puls.*, *selen.*, *spig.*, *staph.*, **sulph.**, ther.^[14]

Tobacco HABIT- *Ars.*, *ca. p.*, *cam.*, *chi.*, *nux.*, *phos.*, plnt., *pb.*, *spi.*^[15]

Tobacco, desire for- Bell., carb an., daph., kreos., manc., nat. c., *nux v.*, oxal ac., plat., plumb., *staph.*, **tab.**, ther., *thuja.*^[16]

Opium Habit- Apm., avn., ipc.^[17]

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