

Prevalence of substance abuse and associated factors on substance abuse among G.C.E Advanced Level students in the Nallur Educational Division

Kamaladshan S¹, Thusiya A¹, Sivakanthan S², Surenthirakumaran R³

¹ Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna

² Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna

³ Department of Community and Family Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna

Background: Substance use and abuse is a critical problem among school students in most of the countries including Sri Lanka. In recent past, an increasing trend in substance use and abuse was observed in the Jaffna district. With this background this study was designed to find out the prevalence of substance abuse and the influence of personal and environmental factors on increasing substance abuse among the G.C.E A/L students in the Nallur educational division.

Methods: This is a descriptive cross sectional school base study conducted among GCE A/L students in selected schools in the Nallur Educational division. Seven hundred and seventy students were selected by cluster sampling method to participate in the study. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire, after obtaining informed written consent. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 2.1.

Results: Among the 770 students, 60.6% were males and 39.4% were females and 35.2% were at the age of 18 years and 64.8% were 19 years old. Among the 770 students 9.6% having the habit of using substances. Students with inadequate knowledge (12.5%) are using substances more than that of the students with adequate knowledge (3.6%). Sleep disturbances (14.4%), getting frequent irritation (13.4%), love failures (22.8%), late night study (6.4%) were the identified factors on substance usage. Further, using substances for prestige (22.7%) or pleasure (75.0%) or curiosity (40.9%) or decrease shyness (27.0%) had significant influence on substance usage. Moreover, caretakers, mother's occupation had the influence on substance usage. Social medias contributed the most (whatsapp ≤ 15%, viber ≤ 12.9%, face book ≤ 15%) in the usage of substances. Further, substance usage by friends (20.2%), induced by friends (31.8%) and usage of substances in cultural events (19.8%) significantly lead to the substance habit.

Conclusion: Substance usage among the G.C.E A/L students in the Nallur educational division was identified. Personal, environmental, family related factors influence the above. Therefore, an immediate intervention is inevitable.