RESEARCH ARTICLE

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE TOWARDS SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG ADOLESCENT SCHOOL CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Substance abuse is one of its complicated and multifactorial phenomenon with which many societies are suffering and prevalence of adolescent's substance abuse is a significant public health problem. The aim of this study is to assess the knowledge towards specific substance abuse among adolescent school children. Non experimental descriptive research design was adopted and stratified random sampling technique was used. 100 adolescent school children studying in 9th to 12th class of different schools were enrolled. Objective based tools i.e. demographic and assessment of knowledge towards substance abuse were used. Data analysis was done using STATA 11.1, with the level of significance at $p < 0.05$. It is found that adolescences had average knowledge towards caffeine abuse and had good knowledge towards alcohol and tobacco abuse. Adolescents who belonged to the age group of 16-18 years had highest knowledge, females had more knowledge than males, and students of class 11th had better knowledge. Furthermore, adolescents who acquired knowledge by newspaper & magazines had maximum mean knowledge score towards substance abuse.

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INTRODUCTION

Substance abuse became problem of society, family and individual. Research studies have shown that the initiation of substance abuse usually takes place in adolescence. A study conducted by United Nations Office of Drug and Crime (UNODC) in India reported that 40% of individuals start taking drugs and other substance between 15-20 years. (www.pakmed.net/substances.htm) It has been found in studies from different countries that geographical distribution of drug abuse co-related well with the availability of drugs (Gossop and Grant, 1990). (Townsend, 2005) The geographical location of India between the Golden Triangle (Burma, Laos & Thailand) and Golden Crescent (Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan) makes it a transit point for the trade of various substances (Chhabra and Puri, 1989). In India, the prevalence of drug abuse which is generally low in early adolescence aged 12 -13, rise steeply in the late teenage & is highest during the early 20's. (Saini and Thakur, 2007) It is estimated that there are over 260 million tobacco users in country today and estimated 65% of all men and 33% of all women use some form of tobacco. A 2001 Survey of adolescents (aged 12-18) in

Alberta found that 65% of them had consumed alcohol at least once in the preceding 30 days. (Rajnikanta, 2007) Moreover sensation seeking (26.5%), individual interest (24.8%), & peer pressure (22%) were main reasons for initiating drug abuse.[6] In India, the different drug abuse surveys have shown the prevalence of drug abuse is 5-20%. It is more common in males. It shows increase in prevalence with the age.[7] There is need to assess the knowledge towards substance abuse among adolescents so that some prolonged intervention may be planned for maintaining and improving the quality of their life & also improving their knowledge.

Objectives: 1) To assess the knowledge towards specific substance abuse among adolescent school children and to find out the relationship of the knowledge of substance abuse among adolescents school children with selected variables.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Design and setting

Non experimental descriptive research design was adopted. Stratified random sampling technique was used and 100 adolescent school children studying in 9th to 12th class of Shri

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Guru Harkrishan Public School, Pandori Khajoor, Hoshiarpur, Punjab were enrolled. Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from institute Ethics Committee.

Participant's eligibility criteria

The adolescents who were studying in 9th to 12th class and willing to participate in the study after stratification were included and students with physical disability were excluded from the study.

Procedure for data collection

Formal permission was obtained from concern authorities of the schools. Stratified Random Sampling (Lottery without Replacement) was used to collect sample of 100 students. For the purpose of sampling whole population of students studying in 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th class were divided into three strata according to their class and 25 students from 9th Class, 25 students from 11th class, 50 students from 10th and 10+2 class were enrolled. A letter explaining the purpose of the study was given to the subjects. Signed informed consent was taken from the subjects and students were given instructions regarding filling of the tools.

Measures

Multiple choice question key conducted tool was used. It has two parts.

Part- I *Sample characteristics*: This part consist of ten items for obtaining personal information related to age, gender, class, father's education, mother's education, family income, religion, type of family, birth order, mass media exposure.

Part - II *Tool for assessment of knowledge towards substance abuse among adolescent school children*: A self structured tool consisting of 50 items was prepared. Multiple choice questions were used, one mark was given to every right answer, Zero mark was given for wrong answer. Tool was given to experts of different specialties for validity.

Reliability evaluated as 0.75. Criterion measure for assessment of knowledge were excellent if knowledge score more than 81%, Good 61-80%, Average 41-60% and Below Average 40%.

RESULTS

Demographic characteristics

Maximum 50% of adolescents were in the age group of 13-15 years, 58% of adolescent were male and 42% were female, 38% of adolescent were studying in class 10th and 35% of adolescent's parents were educated up to senior secondary education. Moreover, maximum (72%) of adolescents acquired knowledge through television, by internet (13%) and by newspaper and magazines (12%).

Assess the knowledge towards specific substance abuse among adolescent school children:

Figure 1 depicts the knowledge towards caffeine abuse among adolescent school children. It was found that maximum of adolescents had average knowledge with highest mean score of 5.34 ± 0.643 followed by below average knowledge mean score of 3.07 ± 0.893. Figure 2 shows that maximum of adolescents had good knowledge with maximum mean score of 13.72 ± 1.032 followed by average knowledge mean score of 10.57 ± 0.987 and lowest adolescent had below average knowledge with mean score of 6.27 ± 0.734 towards alcohol abuse. As shown in figure 3, maximum of adolescents had good knowledge with highest mean score 16.25 ± 2.78 followed by good knowledge mean score of 13.33 ± 2.023 and then by average knowledge mean score of 9.75 ± 1.876. On the basis of mean scores it can be concluded that maximum number of adolescences had average knowledge towards caffeine abuse and had good knowledge towards alcohol and tobacco abuse.
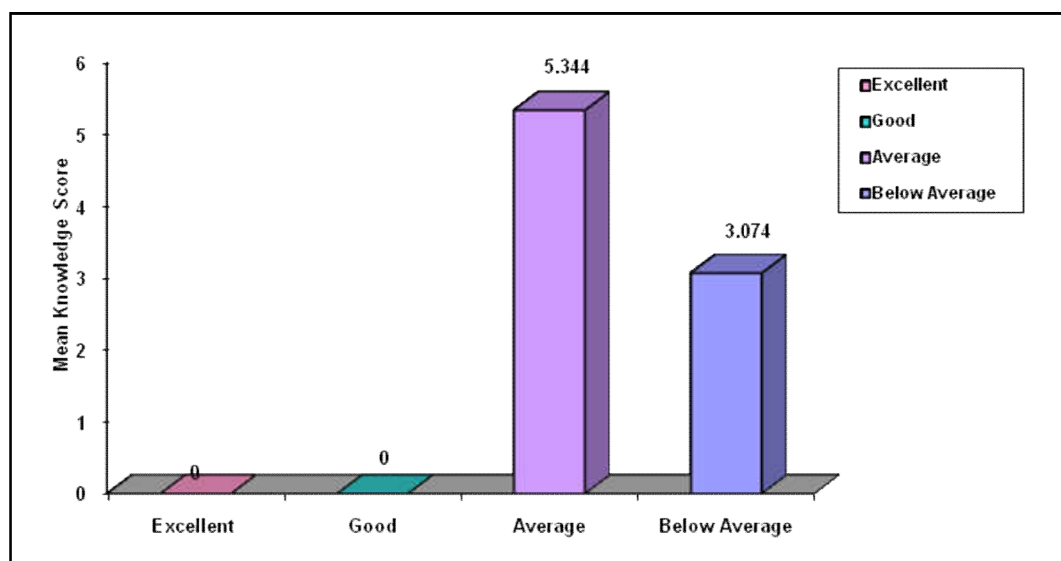

Figure 1. Mean knowledge score towards caffeine abuse among adolescent school children
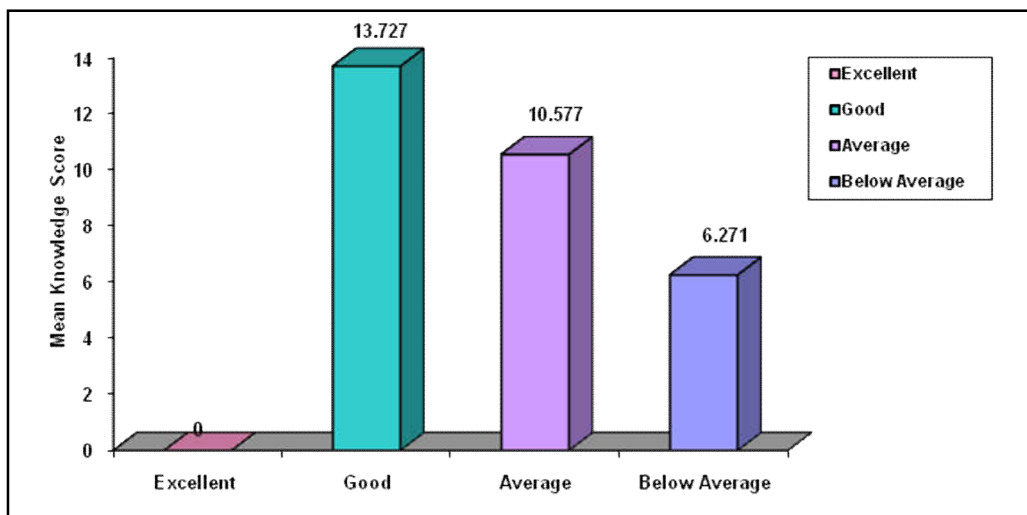
Figure 2. Mean knowledge score towards alcohol abuse among adolescent school children
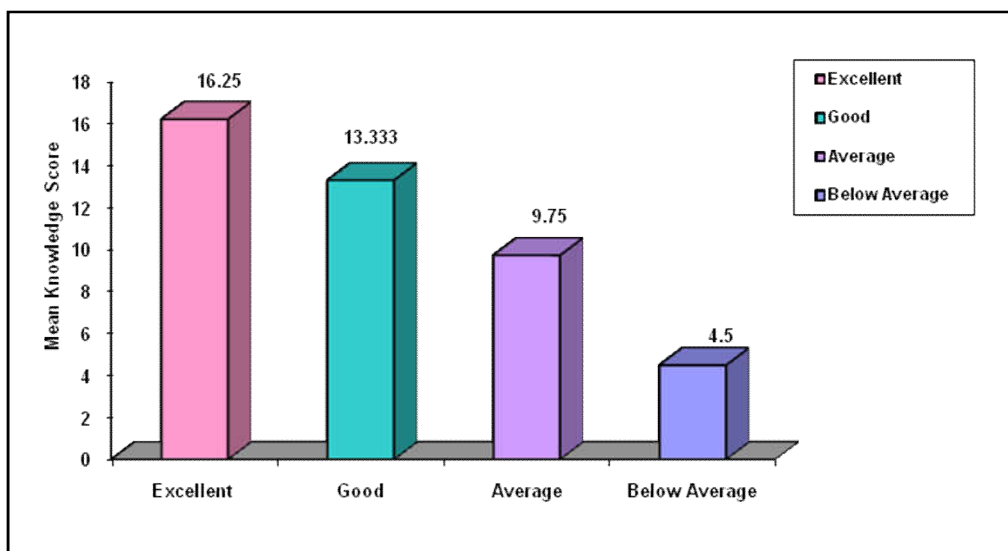

Figure 3. Mean knowledge score towards tobacco abuse among adolescent school children

It was found that highest mean knowledge score was 24.86 among age group 16-18 years followed by age group 13-15 years (23.634) & 19-21 years (20.111). Moreover, female adolescents showed the higher mean knowledge score (26.286) than the male adolescents (22.224). The mean knowledge score 26.6 was highest among 11th class students followed by 9th class (23.8) and 10th class (22.79) students. 12th class students had lowest mean knowledge score of 22.167. Highest mean knowledge score 25.417 was found among adolescents who acquired knowledge by newspaper & magazines followed by those adolescents who acquired knowledge through television 24.208 and then by internet 22.385. It can be concluded that adolescents who belonged to the age group of 16-18 years had highest knowledge, females had more knowledge than males, and students of class 11th had better knowledge.

Furthermore, adolescents who acquired knowledge by newspaper & magazines had maximum mean knowledge score towards substance abuse.

DISCUSSION

The result of this study shows that maximum number of adolescences had average knowledge towards caffeine abuse and had good knowledge towards alcohol and tobacco abuse. This findings also supported Kelkar conducted a study on tobacco consumption in school going boys in the slums area of Pune city. The study showed that the prevalence of tobacco use in school going children is high & it starts at an early age.[8] Yadav *et al.* conducted a study on tobacco abuse and revealed that awareness levels regarding the harmful effects of tobacco consumption were substantially low among children & youth. (Yadav, 2003) This study results found that adolescents who belonged to the age group of 16-18 years had highest knowledge, females had more knowledge than males, and students of class 11th had better knowledge. Furthermore, adolescents who acquired knowledge by newspaper & magazines had maximum mean knowledge score towards substance abuse. This study results also supported by Yadav

et al. Conducted a study on tobacco consumption among adolescents in the age group of 10-19 yrs. The results showed that 94% of adolescents used same form of tobacco chewing was the prominent form (93%). Some of them smoked (17%). Different forms of tobacco 59%, pan masala (16%), mava (6%). About 38% started using tobacco before the age of 10 years. (Yadav, 2003) Denise found that senior males report more illicit drug use of other types in the previous thirty days than females, but there is little gender difference in tenth or eighth grade. Males also tend to use alcohol more than females, which became more apparent by twelfth grade. Across all grades, males and females seem to have almost equal rates of daily cigarette smoking. (Denise and Laura, 2000) Benegal V. Kulbhushan, Sechadri S, Karott M conducted a study on drug abuse among street children in Banglore and found that the smoking rate was higher among boys (35.4%) than girls (8.5%). O Malley, Bachman and Cramd found that at least 30% of secondary school students drink alcohol regularly, with 10% drinking more than moderately. 10-20% of students smoke cigarettes regularly, 70% have tried at least one illicit drug, with 2.5% using an illicit drug at least weekly, when only a single month is looked at 33% of 12th graders and 9% of 8th graders reported being drunk at least one time in past month in study conducted by Johnston. (Lloyd *et al.*, 1999) Nicole A Blair So Kuen Yue conducted a numerous studies and found that alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use is frequently depicted in the popular media, including movies, daytime and prime time scripted television and music videos. Research also suggests that viewing such images in the media can affect the beliefs and behaviours of viewers regarding substance abuse and that young people are particularly susceptible to these mess ages. Recent studies of young people in United States, for example found a direct relation between increased exposure to smoking in movies and having tried smoking and initiating smoking in the future. (Blair *et al.*, 2006)

Study limitations

The study is limited to adolescents studying in 9th to 12th class selected school. Assessment of knowledge on substance abuse is based on responses to self structured tool.

Future recommendations

The study can be replicated on a large sample to a large population, to strengthen the findings. A comparative study can be carried out between urban and rural area's adolescents.

A comparative study can be carried out between boys & girls. The similar study can be done to assess the level of knowledge and frequency of substance abuse among adolescents school children.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study is concluded that adolescences had average knowledge towards caffeine abuse and had good knowledge towards alcohol and tobacco abuse. adolescents who belonged to the age group of 16-18 years had highest knowledge, females had more knowledge than males, and students of class 11th had better knowledge. Furthermore, adolescents who acquired knowledge by newspaper & magazines had maximum mean knowledge score towards substance abuse.

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