

Impact of Substance Abuse on Mental Health and Stress Levels

Parmida Pirgourabi*

Department of Physics, University of Tabriz, Boulevard, Iran

DESCRIPTION

Substance abuse, defined as the excessive use of psychoactive substances, such as alcohol and illicit drugs, is a global health concern. It is often associated with numerous mental health problems, including stress, anxiety, depression, and more severe psychiatric disorders. This connection stems from the complex interaction of physical, psychological, and social factors. The relationship between substance abuse and stress starts at a biological level. Psychoactive substances alter brain chemistry by interacting with neurotransmitters, which are the brain's chemical messengers. Chronic substance abuse can lead to long-lasting changes in the neural circuitry that controls stress responses.

Many substances of abuse increase the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter linked to pleasure and reward. Over time, the brain adapts to these high dopamine levels, reducing its production and response. This can lead to decreased ability to experience pleasure (anhedonia), one of the factors that can increase perceived stress levels. Simultaneously, substance abuse can disrupt the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis, the body's primary stress response system. These disruptions can lead to an exaggerated stress response, contributing to increased stress and anxiety levels, which may further drive substance use.

The psychological impact of substance abuse can exacerbate stress levels. Individuals who abuse substances often struggle with guilt, shame, and low self-esteem, which can lead to a cycle of increased stress and further substance use. Substance abuse can also impair cognitive functions, making it harder for individuals to cope with stressful situations. Further, substance abuse often co-occurs with mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression. This can create a 'vicious cycle' where substance use leads to increased mental health symptoms, which in turn can increase stress levels and encourage further substance use.

Substance abuse can also lead to a variety of social problems that increase stress. Relationships may be strained due to the person's substance use, leading to feelings of isolation and loneliness. Work and financial problems, including job loss or legal issues, can further increase stress levels. Moreover, stigma associated

with substance abuse can contribute to stress, making individuals less likely to seek help. This can exacerbate their mental health issues and further entrench patterns of substance use.

Recognizing the impact of substance abuse on mental health and stress levels has critical implications for treatment. Comprehensive treatment approaches are needed that address both substance use and co-occurring mental health problems. Cognitive-behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, and stress management techniques have all shown efficacy in this regard. Medications may also be used as part of a comprehensive treatment plan. Certain medications can help manage withdrawal symptoms, reduce cravings, and restore normal brain function, while others can address co-occurring mental health problems.

Finally, social support is vital in managing stress and improving outcomes. Supportive relationships can help individuals manage stress, build resilience, and maintain changes in substance use behaviors. Substance abuse can have a significant impact on mental health, and in many cases, the two issues are closely intertwined. Here are some key causes that link substance abuse to mental health problems. Often, individuals with untreated mental health disorders, such as depression, anxiety, or bipolar disorder, may turn to drugs or alcohol as a form of self-medication. They may use these substances to alleviate their symptoms or escape from their problems. However, while these substances may provide temporary relief, they often exacerbate the underlying mental health issues over time.

Psychoactive substances can significantly alter the brain's chemistry and functioning. For example, they can disrupt the balance of neurotransmitters, such as dopamine and serotonin, which play crucial roles in mood regulation. Over time, these changes can lead to mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and psychosis. Chronic substance abuse can lead to heightened levels of stress and can even induce trauma. The repeated cycle of intoxication and withdrawal can be stressful for the body and mind. Additionally, substance abuse often leads to traumatic experiences, such as accidents or violent incidents, which can result in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or other mental health problems. This refers to the co-occurrence of a substance

Correspondence to: Parmida Pirgourabi, Department of Physics, University of Tabriz, Boulevard, Iran, E-mail: parmidapirgourabi@yahoo.com

Received: 26-Jun-2023, Manuscript No. JER-23-25849; **Editor assigned:** 30-Jun-2023, Pre QC No. JER-23-25849 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 14-Jul-2023, QC No. JER-23-25849; **Revised:** 21-Jul-2023, Manuscript No. JER-23-25849 (R); **Published:** 31-Jul-2023, DOI: 10.35248/2165-7556.23.13.361

Citation: Pirgourabi P (2023) Impact of Substance Abuse on Mental Health and Stress Levels. 13:361.

Copyright: © 2023 Pirgourabi P. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

use disorder and a mental health disorder. The two conditions may influence each other, with each exacerbating the severity of the other. For instance, substance abuse can intensify the symptoms of a mental health disorder, and vice versa. Substance abuse often leads to social isolation as relationships with family and friends deteriorate. This isolation can contribute to or worsen mental health problems like depression and anxiety. Some individuals may have a genetic predisposition to both substance abuse and certain mental health disorders. In such cases, the use of substances might trigger the onset of mental health issues that the person is genetically predisposed to.

CONCLUSION

Substance abuse has a profound impact on mental health and stress levels. The relationship is complex and multidimensional, involving biological, psychological, and social factors. However, with appropriate treatment and support, individuals can overcome substance abuse, manage stress, and improve their mental health. The key lies in integrated and comprehensive treatment approaches that address the multifaceted nature of substance abuse and its impacts.