

A Study on Substance Abuse among Male Construction Workers in Tamil Nadu, India

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Abstract

Introduction: Due to substance abuse, there is a serious inflation rate on health burden which have a tendency to cause acute intoxication, harmful behavior, injury and violence. The consequences of abnormal substance abuse associated with tobacco and chronic alcohol may end with numerous psychiatric disorders and other medical conditions.

Objectives: The objective of the present study is to explore the type of substance abuse followed by the reason and frequency of the abuse.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 50 constructional workers in sub-urban region of Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. Purposive sampling technique was used; the interview was conducted based on a pre-tested questionnaire to collect the data regarding the type of substance abuse, pattern of substance abuse, frequency of substance abuse.

Results: The current study reveals that consumption of alcohol and snuff is to a greater extent among the construction workers. About 30 per cent of them were consuming only alcohol followed by 26 per cent of them were alcoholics and smokers, 22 per cent of the study participants were using only snuff, followed by 18 per cent of them were taking alcohol and snuff. The study also highlights that 85 per cent of the total population started substance abuse at the young adult period itself. More specifically, the study identified that 84 per cent of consumers were getting influenced by their friends. To a greater extent, the study also determines the male at adolescent age group addicted for the substance abuse such as cocaine, cannabis and others substances which predominantly creates an impact on health.

Conclusion: Substance abuse, a serious problem in the society which is comparatively high in the adolescence age period and henceforth required a prompt attention and intervention for creating an awareness to the effective groups in the society. Even though there are various treatments to handle the substance abuse cases, action must be taken to stop or prevent substances abuse which is injuries to health. Further, there is a need to eliminate the stigma and discrimination of persons with substance abuse.

Keywords: *Addiction, Construction Workers, Pattern of Substance Abuse, Purposive sampling*

Introduction

According to the report of *World Health Organization's (2005)*, there are nearly 200 million

opium addicts in the world and 81,802 treatment seekers in India during the year of 2004-2005. Almost, 61.3 per cent reported use of opioids, followed by cannabis 15.5 per cent, 4.1 per cent sedatives, 1.5 per cent cocaine, least is 0.9 per cent solvents, and 0.2 per cent amphetamines¹. Often, the first experience of substance abuse starts in the adolescence periods and many studies have shown that substance abuse is primarily related to

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alcohol consumption and cigarette, an initial exploration of substance abuse prevalence, alcohol consumption seems to be the first step in preventing and controlling drug consumption¹. Drug and alcohol abuse are significant public health problem in recent times that has a significant negative effects on every community and family in some way². According to the *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2013)*, one in four deaths in the United States is due to substance abuse such as alcohol, tobacco, and/or illicit drugs¹. Drug/ Substance abuse plays a key role in numerous social problems, such as drugged driving, violence, stress, and child abuse. Drug abuse can lead to crime, homelessness, and missed work or problems with the job. Substance and drug abuse harms unborn babies and destroys families². More than a decade, ample sources have reliably shown that working adults are using illicit drugs and drinking heavily, many of them are not substance abusers in the adolescent period². Without addressing the substance abuse and substance abuse disorders with the scientific rigor, compassion, physical and mental health problems, the public health goal of decreasing the world's drug issues cannot be achieved. Substance abuse disorders are common psychiatric disorders². Substance Abuse is the use of the drug or other substances with aim of producing some type of mind-altering effect on the user, this includes both the use of medical substances and non-medical drugs; like alcohol, snuff etc. Morbidity and mortality rate is increased due to substance abuse.

Rationale

Share of the health burden due to substance use is increased and substance abuse can lead to acute intoxication, harmful behavior, injury and violence due to substance abuse, and the consequences of numerous psychiatric disorders associated with tobacco, chronic alcohol and other drug use, and medical conditions⁴. There is numerous evidence that substance abuse among workers is associated with a variety of harmful outcomes, including absenteeism, accidents, and other sources of productivity and performance losses⁶.

Operational Definition

“Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. The use of

psychoactive substances causes significant health and social problems for the people who use them, and also for others in their families and communities. Substances of abuse include alcohol, opiates, cocaine, amphetamines, hallucinogens, prescription medicine and over-the-counter drug abuse. (Psychoactive substances are substances that, when taken in or administered into one's system, affect mental processes)¹.”

“Drug addiction as a complex multifactorial health disorder characterized by chronic and relapsing nature”

Materials and Methods

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 50 constructional workers in sub-urban region of Chennai, Tamil Nadu, and India. Purposive sampling technique was used; the interview was conducted based on a pre-tested questionnaire to collect the data regarding substance abuse. A total of 50 participants were selected from the Chennai district of Tamil Nadu. Subjects have been interviewed by the principal investigator and the data collectors. The data regarding their socio-demographic profile, type of substance abuse, frequency of substance abuse were collected. The questionnaire was translated into local languages (Tamil language). Inclusion criteria include Substance abusing male construction workers, who are aged 18 years and above (A study conducted by *Arjaria et al* states that more number of male participants (14.5 per cent) was found to have higher probabilities for substance disorders as compared to female participants)². Exclusion criteria of this study includes Female construction workers & Non abusing male workers and study participant who is not willing to participate in this even after explaining the purpose of the study.

Statistical analysis: Analysis of the data was done using the SPSS 20.0 trial version for Windows. A descriptive analysis was performed.

Results and Discussion

A Community based cross-sectional study was done to find out the type of substance abuse and the frequency of substance abuse. As a total 50 nos. of construction workers have participated. Among 50 participants 48 per cent of them belong to young adults, followed by middle aged adult 40 per cent and 12 per cent of them

were an older adult.

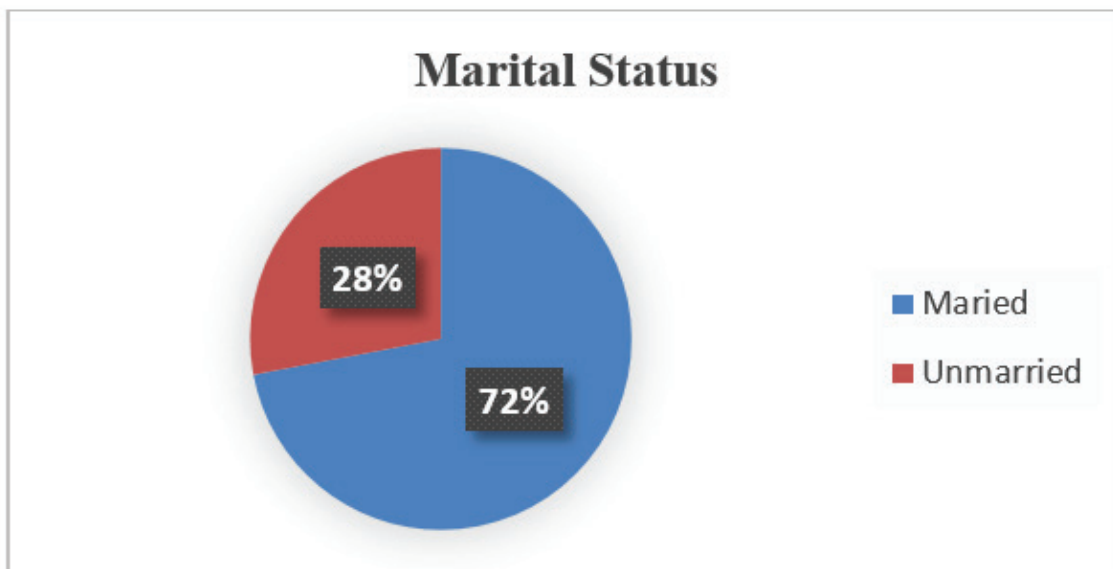


Figure 1: Marital Status

The Figure 1 portrays that out of 50 respondents 36 (72 per cent) of them got married and 14 (28 per cent) of the participants were unmarried.

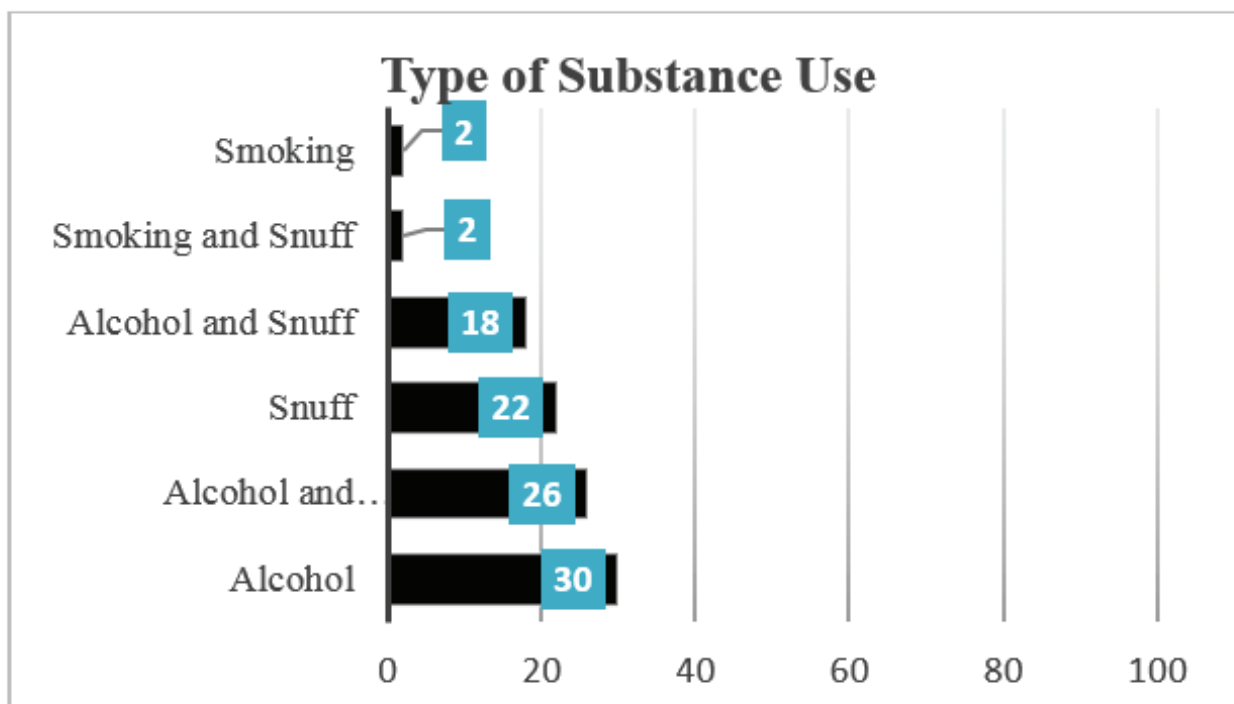


Figure 2: Type of Substance abuse

An in-depth investigation with a respondents, it has been observed that 30 per cent of total population were consuming only alcohol followed by 26 per cent of them were smoking and consuming alcohol, 22 per cent of the study participants were using only snuff, followed by 18

per cent of them were taking alcohol and snuff and least of them were having smoking and snuff (2 per cent) and Smoking alone (2 per cent). Almost 85 per cent of them were started to use substance more at the young adult period itself.

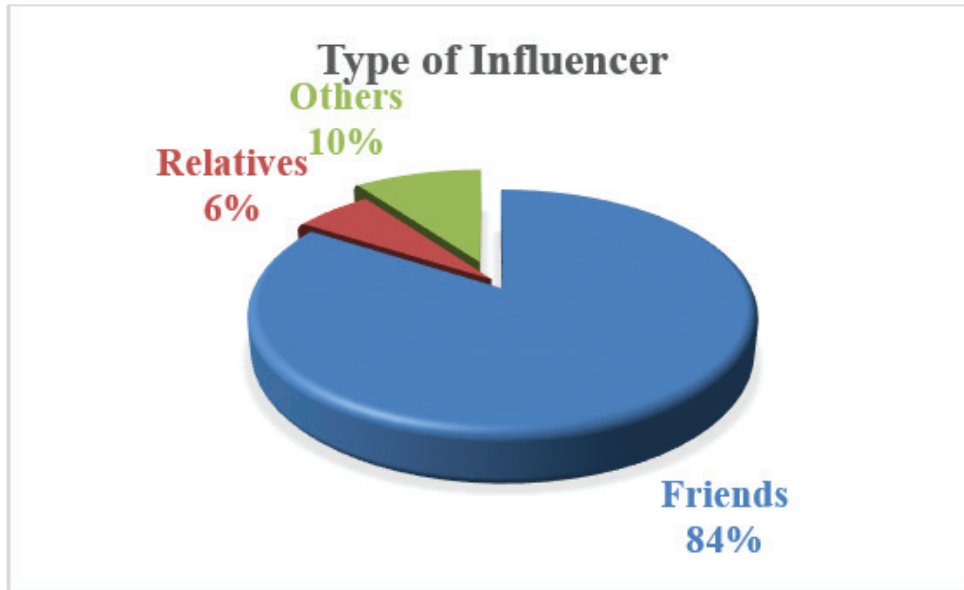


Figure 3: Type of influencer

Above figure 3 depicts that 84 per cent of them were getting influenced by friends and 10 per cent of them were influenced by others and only 6 per cent of them were getting influenced by relatives. Hence, it is clear that the friends are having a higher level of influential capacity in substance abuse and substance abuse.

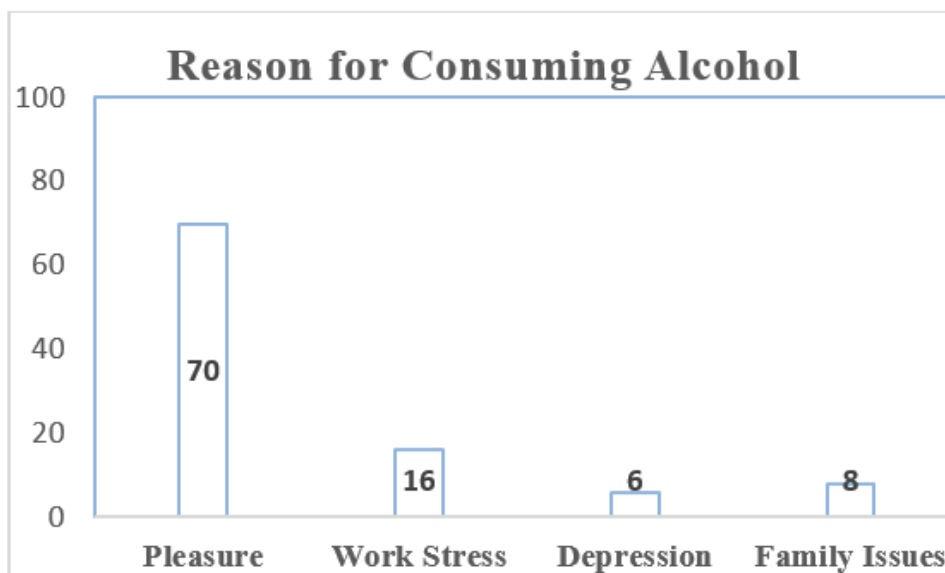


Figure 4: Reason for Consuming Alcohol

Out of 50 construction workers, 70 per cent of them started abusing out of own interest for the sake of enjoyment, followed by 16 per cent of them are abusing due to their work stress and 8 per cent of them due to family issue and only 6 per cent of them are due to depression.

Discussion

The current study reveals that consumption of alcohol and snuff is to a greater extent among the construction workers. A study conducted by Cook, *et al* (2004) for prevention program for substance abuse by providing the social-cognitive principles and cast in a health promotion framework and this was tested on 374 construction workers from 05 different sites. Further, the author in the study highlighted that a program of this type may help construction workers to reduce their licit substance use, but not in illicit drug use⁶. According to the report of the *Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Government of India, National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC) and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi*, the subsequent consumption of Cannabis and Opioids are next commonly used substance in India beyond alcohol. About 2.8 per cent of the country population (3.1 crore individuals) reported that they have consumed cannabis product without understanding the itinerary of the health impact. The present study illustrates that alcohol and snuff abuse are most commonly abused substances among the construction workers¹⁰. In accordance to the *National Family Health Survey (NFHS, 2014)*, the tobacco and alcohol consumption in India is increasing gradually and more consistently among the male population. The current study reveals that nearly 30 per cent of the study participants were consuming any types of alcohol¹¹. A population based study conducted by Dutta, *et al* (2014) in Tamil Nadu shows that the mean age was 37.20 years and the prevalence of alcohol consumption among the respondent was 35.7 per cent and this study shows 30 per cent of them were having alcoholism².

Conclusion

Substance abuse, a serious problem in the society which is comparatively high in the adolescence age period and henceforth required a prompt attention and intervention for creating an awareness to the effective groups in the society. Even though there are various

treatments to handle the substance abuse cases, action must be taken to stop or prevent taking a substances which is injuries to health. Further, there is a need to eliminate the stigma and discrimination of persons with substance abuse. This can be achieved by increasing knowledge and public awareness about addiction and dependence. The author also highlights that there should be a national policies which exclusively addresses the substance abuse disorders. More specifically on providing an evidence based prevention, treatment and recovery option to drug users.

Recommendation

The social-cognitive model can be developed with substance abuse prevention messages about the hazardous nature of substance abuse. Followed by the information to motivate participants and the way to avoid substance abuse, and real-world instructions on reducing or eliminating substance abuse².

Screening and brief intervention for hazardous substance abuse in diverse medical and community-based settings.

A study can be done to find out the relationship between trauma exposure and substance abuse among construction workers.⁴

Replication of a similar study can be done with a large number of samples.

Limitation: This cannot be generalized

There is a chance of information bias from the respondents.

Ethical statement: Approval and agreement was obtained from the Institutional ethical committee of Saveetha Medical College, Tamil Nadu.

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Conflict of Interest: None.

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