Analysis on Current Status and Influencing Factors of Drug Abuse among Teenagers

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Abstract. In recent years, drug abuse shows an obvious tendency of diversification and becoming younger, and teenagers’ drug abuse has become one of the serious public health problems in the world. In this paper, the situation and influencing factors of teenagers’ drug abuse were summarized according to the existing research. It is of significant importance to the teenagers’ drug abuse prevention and correction, and also to provide evidence for preventive policy.

In recent years, diversity of drug abuse tends to be more diverse and younger, and drug abuse among young people has become one of the serious public health problems in the world. It is due to the fact that teenagers’ physiology and psychology are on the developing stage and they are affected easily by various factors, adolescence is a crucial period for a person’s growth. Teenagers' drug abuse will cause serious bodily damage, psychological problems such as depression and suicide, or even produce all kinds of criminal acts, and lead to huge social problems. Therefore, understanding the status quo and influencing factors of drug abuse among adolescents could provide scientific basis for government making the relative policy.

The Status Quo of Drug Abuse among Teenagers

Drug abuse shows a low aging tendency in recent years, and drug abuse among adolescents has become a global problem. The data of drug abuse collected by Chinese National adverse drug reaction monitoring center in 2014 concluded that new drug abusers aged under 20 years old was 10.6% and the statistics of new drug abusers at the age of 21~30 years old was 49.4%, which indicated that drug abuse present an apparent trend of becoming younger in average age and drug abusers are primarily unemployed, less educated and unmarried males [1]. The result of recently foreign research also shows that drug abusers mostly are adolescent [2].

Researches [3-11] show that the utilization rate of drug abuse among adolescents besides smoking and drinking alcohol was 1.85% to 40.9%. Students who used Opioid medicines and Depressant and Stimulants Drugs for non-medicinal purposes among students aged from 12 to 19 in Kwangtung province were 7.5% and 4.8% respectively[7].In certain southwestern province in China, 13.5% of students had the behavior of taking drugs, 40.9% of reform school students and 2.5% of students in ordinary middle school took drugs[8]. The data collected by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2014 showed that 23.4% of students in
grades 9~12 took illegal drugs [6]. The data of National survey on drug use and health in the United States (NSDUH) displayed that 15.1% of teenagers aged from 12 to 17 had the behavior of opioid drug abuse and dependence [11]. The incidence of the behavior of using prescription and non-the-counter drugs is 6.2%~20.0% among foreign adolescents[12-14], and the phenomenon of using psychoactive drugs such as "cough medicine" and compound liquorice tablets without medical purposes among adolescents is appearing in China[15, 16].

Synthetic drugs are enjoyed and chosen by more and more drug abusers due to its special functions for instance stimulating and hallucinogenic effect, while the situation of synthetic drug abuse among teenagers is increasingly serious [17]. The data of drug abuse collected by Chinese National adverse drug reaction monitoring center in 2014 showed that the rate of synthetic drug abuse was 45.2%, and 46.1% of synthetic drug abusers were under the age of 25[1]. Synthetic drugs caused irreversible damage to the brain neurons and lead to lots of problems such as violent crimes, self-injury and suicide, which will seriously affect the physical and mental health of teenagers.

Analysis of Influencing Factors

Adolescence is a crucial period in a person’s lifetime, so exploring the influencing factors of drug abuse among teenagers has important significance for prevention and correction of drug abuse. There are five factors influencing teenagers' drug abuse.

Psychological Factors

Researches [5, 18] show that the reasons of drug abuse among teenagers include curiosity, the pursuit of euphoria and excitement, etc. Teenagers who have the personality of self-centered, loneliness, depression, hostility and impulsivity are more likely to abuse drug [19-20]. Because the physical and mental development of adolescents who are lacking the ability to analyze questions and self-control are immature, they are prone to take place drug abuse because of curiosity, the pursuit of fashion, satisfying the vanity or blind conformity. Pressure caused by study, unemployment and strained relations in family, between teachers and students, and among classmates will launch a lot of teenagers who are lack of psychological endurance try to using addictive substances in order to numb themselves and relieve stress[5,21-22].

The Level of Recognition and Attitude

Study[23] found that 34.33% of middle school students think it will not endanger health or be unclear about whether using prescription or non-the-counter drugs without medicinal purposes will endanger health, and students who think using drugs without medicinal purposes is harmless are more likely to have the behavior (OR=1.24, 95% CI=1.24~1.50). Thus it can be seen that the lacking of recognition about the dangers of the depended drug is an important risk factor for taking drugs without medicinal purposes. Teenagers’ awareness of drug prevention and anti-drugs is weak. Teenagers don’t realize deep and thoroughly the danger of drug abuse, and some of them even regard drug abuse as a sign of fashion, or think drug abuse has effects of slimming and the improvement of sexuality. Meanwhile they are over-confident of their self-control ability and believe that they can fight against drug addiction. In conclusion, these make teenagers take drugs blindly and become addicted to drugs [20, 24].
The Outside Social Factors Such as School and Peer Factors and So On

A bad social environment, poor school ethos and the drug abuse behavior of peers, is a risk factor for teenagers' drug abuse [8, 21, 25-28]. The increasing number of entertain venues, including the cyber bar, KTV and bars, provides a source and space for teenagers’ drug abuse. Teenagers’ strong conformity makes them easily influenced by classmates and peers. Once drug abuse appears among classmates or peers, it will spread rapidly among teenagers.

Family-related Factor

Family factors including the undesirable effects of family, family relationship, family structure, and educational level of parents and parenting style are important to teenagers’ healthy growth.

The Undesirable Effects of Family. Studies [21, 24, 27, 29] have shown that drug abuse behavior of family members is a high-risk factors for teenagers’ drug abuse. The tolerance and acceptability of families with a history of drug abuse for drug abuse is higher than families with no drug abuse behavior. When their families especially their parents appear drug abuse, the incidence of teenagers’ drug abuse will increase.

Family Relationship. The study [23] found that taking drugs without medicinal purposes in these families with a contradictory family relationship is 2.48 times greater compared to these families with a harmonious family relationship. When the relationship between teenagers and their parents is not harmonious, or there is lack of communication between adolescents and parents, teenagers often try to taking addictive substances to avoid and relieve pressure caused by family environment[18, 30]. Nonetheless, a good family relationship will reduce teenagers’ drug abuse rate [5, 20, 31].

Family Structure. Studies [3, 32-33] have shown that teenagers of single parent family and divorced family are more likely to appear drug abuse than adolescents lived in two-parent families. Dysfunctional family relationships caused by the broken family structure of single parent family and divorced family significantly affected teenagers’ life. Dysfunctional family relationships will make them unable to enjoy the warmth and caring from family, make them unable to get a normal education, produce numerous mental stress and pain, thus make them easier to indulge in the addictive substances, or ask students and peers for supporting, and lead to the occurrence of drug abuse due to incaution in making friend.

Educational Level of Parents. The rate of drug abuse among teenagers whose father’s education levels are junior high school or below is 15.2%, and the rate of drug abuse among teenagers whose mother’s education levels are junior high school or below is 8.8% [18]. The higher parents’ educational levels, the lower ratio of drug abuse among adolescents [3]. Thus, it can be regarded that low education levels of parents is a risky factor in adolescents’ drug abuse.

Parenting Style. Researches [34-35] have shown that most of parenting style for teenagers with drug abuse is excessive fondness, over-protection, over-interference or severe punishment, and these teenagers seldom communicate with their parents. Opportunities to suffer moderate setbacks in the process of teenagers’ growing will be deprived by excessive fondness, over-protection and over-interference. Moreover, excessive fondness, over-protection and over-interference will make teenagers weaken psychological endurance, and easy to generate mental problems such as frailty, depression or reverse psychology when they are facing difficulties. Although some extent punishment can correct adolescents’ bad behavior, the excessive punishment will lead to a series of psychological problems including depression, hostility, solitary
and so on. Studies [36-37] suggest that teenagers who without parental supervision are more likely to have risky behaviors than teenagers who are under the supervision of parents. Therefore, the scientific education methods are protective factors for adolescents’ drug abuse.

**Smoking and Drinking**

Smoking and drinking not only have a serious effect on adolescents’ health, but also easy to cause other bad behaviors. Studies have found that teenagers who are smoking and drinking, or have a history of smoking and drinking are more likely to abuse drugs [21, 27].

**The Prevention and Suggestion about Teenagers’ Drug Abuse**

In this paper, the present situation and influenced factors of drug abuse among adolescents are set forth, and the following suggestions are put forward for teenagers’ drug abuse. The government, the school and parents should pay considerable attention to the present situation of adolescents’ drug abuse, strengthen teenagers’ knowledge about drug abuse, and let them fully realize the harm of drug abuse. (1) The government should severely strike drugs, and strengthen the management of drugs, and strengthen publicity and education through the media. (2) As the main venue for adolescents’ study and life, Schools should carry out actively promotion campaigns about teenagers’ drug abuse, pay close attention to the mental health of adolescents, and make they learn to correctly face the difficulty and relieve pressure. (3) Family environment also play an important role in the process of adolescents’ cultivating behavior habits. Parents should fully realize the harm of drug abuse, set themselves an example to their kids, create a good environment, and use a right education method. (4) Peer influence is great for teenagers, So parents, teachers and teenager themselves should pay attention to adolescents’ making friends. Parents and teachers should pay close attention to adolescents’ friendships, provide opinions and suggestions in time, and make teenagers learn how to carefully make friends. Teenagers ought to refuse high dangerous factors to induce drug abuse such as smoking and drinking, and try to avoid making friends with people who have drug abuse behavior.

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**References**


