



Opinion

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Recovery from Addiction and Prevention to Relapse: Key Role of Family and Community Intervention



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Abstract

Substance abuse is a major public health issue across the globe and has no cure till date. The limited medications available on the shelf are usually combined with the cognitive behavioral therapy. Growing evidence suggests the role of family and community support in prevention to abusing drugs. This article outlines the potential impact of integration of social support systems in prevention and recovery from addiction.

Keywords: Cognitive behavioral therapy; Family support; Community support; Addiction; Substance abuse

Opinion

Substance abuse and drug dependence is a major concern across the globe [1]. There is countless number of losses in work hours, drop outs from the school and in worst case breaking the law and order associated with the use of illicit substances [1,2]. The most common drugs which have been used for recreational purposes include cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, ecstasy, alcohol, marijuana, crack, crystal meth, prescription drugs, and steroids [3]. However, few individuals do relapse back and abuse them regularly leading to the development of addiction and drug dependence. There may be multitude of reasons why a person may decide to use the drugs of abuse. These may include peer pressure in school or colleges; to counter daily life stress, recreational use during parties and social gatherings [1]. Additionally, patients dragonized with other mental conditions such as depression, posttraumatic stress disorders, low self-esteem and borderline personality disorders have been considered as vulnerable group of individuals who may end up using the drugs of abuse [1,2]. The use of drugs can have deleterious effects on families, friends, and communities. An addict usually targets his close family and friends in order to obtain resources in order to procure the drugs which may result into the loss of trust, broken relationships, drug related violence which may prove fatal and also suicide due to overdose [1,3].

When either parent/s or a child is dependent on drugs of abuse, there is an increased possibility of chaotic environment which may lead to instability in the family. On the other hand,

a sound family setting may provide support which may prevent an individual from abusing these drugs at the first place. The importance of support from families and friends has been emphasized by the therapists in helping the addicts during their rehabilitation and recovery period. The strong support from family/friends/community may be helpful in:-

- Instilling a sense of belongingness to the individual.
- Helps the individual cope from being lonely.
- Significantly improves the self-esteem of the individual.
- Provides additional motivation to get back to normal life not only for them but also for their loved ones.

Moreover, the strong family support can not only be useful in an individual rehabilitation, it can reinforce strong ties of trust among different family members, create a positive and more nurturing environment and identifying members/friends who are vulnerable to abusing drugs. Collectively speaking, these factors do have potential in preventing the developing of addiction as well as in assisting an individual (and their families) to heal from the deleterious effects of addiction.

Although, providing the support from family has been emphasized as a helpline which can infuse a social antidote to the problem of addiction, it can also be attributed as a root cause which can potentially flare up the problem of addiction and drug dependence. Children who have witnessed firsthand addiction

with their family members are more likely to abuse drugs themselves. Moreover, these children are more prone towards crime and violence as they may have also witnessed domestic abuse, violence and sexual abuse. On the other hand a strong family/community system can inculcate a sense of belongingness among its members and can hence prevent adolescents to drift towards drugs of abuse.

Research across the world has provided valuable information on designing treatment strategies for addiction. Most of these strategies aims at preventing the patient from relapsing back to the use of these drugs by abstinence or (in most cases) replacing it with other agents such as methadone or naloxone which have

less abusive potential than the drugs being previously abused. This is accompanied by the cognitive behavioral therapy. Addition of the social support from family/communities can provide techniques in improving the approach of the patients towards giving up addiction and reverting back to their normal lives.

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