



Prevalence of substance abuse among students of SMS Medical College Jaipur, Rajasthan

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Abstract

Background: Globally, there are 2 billion alcohol users, 1.3 billion smokers and 185 million are drug users. These are accounting for 12.4% of all deaths worldwide. The doctors are vulnerable to substance abuse due to their ready accessibility to the substance of abuse. Medical training is identified as full of stress and it is also observed that students undergo tremendous stress during various years of medical training and post graduation.. Repeated use of alcohol and tobacco can effect judgment of actions. This could be disastrous if substance abusers are medical professionals who have direct dealing with human lives.

Methods: A cross sectional study was conducted at SMS medical college in Jaipur city, capital of Rajasthan. A pre designed structured questionnaire was used to interview 809 medical students who were willing to participate.

Results: Prevalence of smoking in MBBS students was found to be 15.2%. The prevalence of alcohol consumption was found to be 20.3% .It was observed that smoking and alcohol intake was more common in post graduate students (28.6% & 48.1% respectively) followed by interns .

Conclusions: Prevalence of substance abuse among medical college students was high. Students preferred alcohol products and tobacco most. Hosteller students are more likely to be exposed to substance abuse.

Keywords: Medical students, Prevalence, Substance abuse.

Introduction

Globally, there are 2 billion alcohol users, 1.3 billion smokers and 185 million are drug users. These are accounting for 12.4% of all deaths worldwide.⁽¹⁾ The doctors are vulnerable to substance abuse due to their ready accessibility to the substance of abuse.⁽²⁾ Medical students not only represent a young and responsible population in the society, but are the pillars of health. Medical training is identified as full of stress and it is also observed that students undergo tremendous stress during various years of medical training.⁽³⁾ Medical professionals are in fact more

prone to be affected as they faced with patients suffering and deaths on a regular basis and academic pressure, workload, sleep deprivation, student abuse, lack of social activities may further contribute to this decline in students' mental health.⁽⁴⁻⁶⁾ Hence, identifying the rates and risks of substance use and the social patterns that promote or inhibit use during medical education is an increasingly important task. Hence the present study is carried out to assess the prevalence of alcohol and substance abuse among medical students.

Methodology

A cross-sectional study was conducted on the medical students of SMS Medical College, Jaipur for a period of six months from July 2017 to January 2018 using pre designed structured questionnaire. The aim was to collect data regarding their demographic profile and their smoking and drinking habits if any. Permission of the Principal of the institute was obtained and an informed verbal consent was also obtained from the students. The study tool was distributed to the students at the end of their respective classes, for which permission was also taken from the concerned subject's teacher taking the lecture. The students were asked to complete the questionnaire within twenty minutes and return them in the same session. Likewise Interns and postgraduate students were approached in OPD's and wards and their respective sheets were collected the next day. In this manner 926 students out of 1047 were available at the time of data collection. Out of that 874 responded and 809 completely filled sheets were available for data compilation including 502 undergraduate students, 112 interns 195 postgraduate students.

Inclusion Criteria: All the students who were present in the class on the day of data collection and gave the consent were included in the study

Exclusion Criteria

- Students who refused to participate.
- Students who were unavailable/absent at the time of data collection.
- Students who submitted incomplete or blank sheets were excluded from the study.

Results

Table 1 Socio demographic variables of students

Variable	Frequency(n=809)	Percentage(%)
Religion		
Hindu	770	95.8
Muslim	32	3.9
Christian	7	0.8
Type of Family		
Nuclear Family	594	73.4
Joint Family	187	23.1
Broken	28	3.5
Gender		
Male	401	49.6
Female	408	50.5

Class		
Under Graduates	502	62.1
Interns	112	13.8
Post Graduates	195	24.1
Residence		
Hosteller	627	77.5
Non Hosteller	182	22.5

As shown in table 1 Majority of the participants were Hindu (95.8%) and 73.4% belonged to nuclear family. There was almost equal representation of study participants in gender perception with males and females as 49.6% and 50.5% respectively. 62.1% subjects were studying in MBBS, followed by Post graduates (24.1%) and Interns (13.8%). Considering current residential details; subjects residing in hostel were present in greater number (77.5%)

Table 2 Categories of the students

Students	Alcohol Consumption	Smoking
MBBS	102(20.3)	76(15.2)
Interns	36(32.1)	27(24.6)
Post Graduates	94(48.1)	56(28.6)
Total	232	159

Prevalence of smoking in MBBS students was found to be 15.2%. The prevalence of alcohol consumption was found to be 20.3% (17.6% occasional and 2.4% daily drinkers). On comparing the substance abuse habit between the different categories of students, it was observed that smoking and alcohol intake was more common in post graduate students (28.6% & 48.1% respectively) followed by interns (24.6% & 32.1%) and less among undergraduates (15.2% & 20.4%)

Discussion

Substance abuse (tobacco, alcohol, and various other drugs) have been recognized as an area of concern among medical students. In the present study majority of the participants were Hindu (95.8%) and 73.4% belonged to nuclear family. There were 49.6% males and 50.5% females. 62.1% subjects were undergraduates, followed by Post graduates (24.1%) and Interns (13.8%). Considering current residential details; subjects residing in hostel were present in greater number (77.5%) This was similar to the study done by

Baba T et al⁽⁷⁾ where majority of substance abusers lived in hostels (37%). This can be explained by the reason where majority of them got access to substances through friends which they meet in hostels.

In the present study the prevalence of smoking in MBBS students is found to be 15.2% which is similar to the with the smoking prevalence (15%) of the general population of India.⁽⁸⁾ The prevalence of alcohol consumption was found to be 20.3% (17.6% occasional and 2.4% daily drinkers) which is supported by the study done by Apoorva et al⁽⁹⁾ on college students too reported a prevalence of 26.4% alcohol consumption. On comparing the substance abuse habit between the different categories of students, it was observed that smoking and alcohol intake was more common in post graduate students (28.6% & 48.1% respectively) followed by interns (24.6% & 32.9%) and less among undergraduates (15.2% & 20.4%). Similarly, study conducted by Majra JP⁽¹⁰⁾ in a pilot study on two medical colleges also observed an increase in the smoking and alcohol consumption prevalence in the fourth year medical students 26.2% and 43.8% respectively.

Conclusion

Majority of the students were non-smokers and about one fourth were consuming alcohol. Drug dependence is significantly higher in post graduate students as compared to under graduates. The roots of this problem runs deep into our society and may contribute to other factors like depression, communicable diseases and social evils. The problem of substance abuse among the medical students should be taken more seriously as their own attitudes towards substances may have impact on their profession.

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