Research Proposal

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Drug abuse is the habitual ingestion or administration of illegal or addictive drugs. The drugs are often taken in large quantities thus tampering with the normal metabolism and workings of the body. This leads to partial dependency and after some time the drugs and substance abuse victims become overly dependent on the drug. Drug and substance abuse is a challenge that has bedeviled our society and the world at large for several decades now. It is particularly common among young people, especially those from dysfunctional backgrounds. It is like a cancer since young people easily influence each other and many individuals within these circles are likely to be lured or manipulated into joining this maze. Addiction robs persons of the control of their own thought processes. It also poses a health challenge as well as far reaching socio-economic repercussions. Since these individuals are at the mercy of the drugs, they will use all the resources at their disposal to get the drugs and will give up all meaningful relationships as well as income generating activities on the altar of quenching their thirst. Consequently they become completely unproductive members of the society

It is therefore mandatory that all members of the society work towards controlling and completely eradicating drugs and substance abuse. For this very reason this research paper studies the challenge of drug and substance abuse and particularly considers whether environment and age influence drug addiction. This paper will rely on experimental research that utilizes the manipulation of the predictor variable technique as well as non-experimental research. The former will be used to study whether teenagers that are exposed to “drug infested” environments on the streets or in private establishments are able to withstand the allure. Non-experimental research will also be used to show how the age and environment factors contribute to the overall spread of drug and substance abuse. In this paper the author will do a literature review as per the annotated bibliography as well as state the research hypothesis and question.

**Literature Review**

An article by Shi, Zhang, Wang, Foll, Zhang & Lu (2009) examines the issue of drug relapse among individuals undergoing rehabilitation when they are subjected to drug related cues. In the experimental research, these individuals are used as the predictor variable. The study purposes to find out whether drug cues manipulate decision making thus inducing cravings for heroine in the case of heroin addicts who are undergoing periods of abstinence (Shi et al., 2009). Seventy five male participants who are the predictor variable were exposed to five minutes with drug related cues while decision making performance, heart rate, blood pressure craving and emotional state pre- and post-exposure were assessed (Shi et al., 2009). According to the results of this experimental research, these drug related cues impacted directly on the decision making and cravings of these recuperating drug addicts. This is because during those five minutes they experienced increased heart rates, heightened blood pressure and an overall emotional change (Shi et al., 2009). This article is a very handy as it draws a clear link between the influence of the environment and individual decision making.

Campa, Martinez & Baum (2017) provide a general overview of the challenge of substance abuse in America. They emphasize that the far reaching effects cannot be underestimated. They deduce that drug addiction has affected populations adversely and that the youths are most vulnerable to falling prey to his menace. As per the statistics adduced by the Centre of disease control, 10.2% of the US population is involved in illegal drug use, while the ratio of youth involved is 22% (Campa et al., 2017). Consequently, the number of drug related deaths have increased. Further The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities have adduced that more than 2.8 million people suffer from drug abuse disorders and use the Obama care (Campa et al., 2017). The main drugs being used are opioid and heroine. Campa, Martinez and Baum further indicate that there have been concerns with regard to growing HIV transmissions in America as a result of exchange of needles among illicit drug users (Campa et al., 2017). It therefore highlights efforts made by various stakeholders towards the reduction and complete eradication of the drug and substance abuse menace.

Beynom (2009) addresses the correlation between ageing and drug use. According to this research, the number of older people above the age of fifty has increased in the continent and contrary to popular opinion; many in this population are using drugs (Beynom, 2009). This stems from the fact that many young people and adults in the country abuse drugs and they continue to do so as they age (Beynom, 2009). This factor makes it look like the older people are engaging in drug abuse now more than ever. Another reason for the increased number of people abusing drugs stems from the fact that the US is a first world country thus the population can access proper medical care. Over the past three decades there has been effective treatment and harm minimization and general advancements in medicine that has seen the life expectancy of drug abusers increase (Beynom, 2009). This research further recommended that age-appropriate screening and diagnostic tools ought to be developed and treatment programs accustomed to adequately meet the needs of the senior members of the society.

**Research Question/Hypothesis**

The hypothesis is that when a young person especially from a dysfunctional background is exposed to a drug zone he or she will be highly susceptible to the trap of drug abuse and subsequent drug addiction. The drug zone includes but is not limited to drug related cues as well as drug infested neighborhoods. Non-experimental observations from psychologists, experimental research as well as statistics continually draw a link between environment & age factors and drug abuse. It is therefore evident that the war against drug abuse can only be won when the initiation of fresh addicts into this maze is stopped.

**Methods: Sample, Procedure, Analysis**

The first sample isIan **James Eaccarino. Ian was a normal child living with his biological mother and his step father. His step father was a coach to him on many sports. His parents tried to give him the very best in life. What caused Ian to join the drug maze was the fact that he was young and could easily be influenced by some of his friends who took drugs. The first time he experimented on drugs was in the eighth grade. He was in denial about the problem and tried to minimize it (Katz, 2014). This challenge continued even in his high school years. He became an addict. At one time when he was drug tested in high school, he switched his urine sample with that of the friend’s baby brother in order to cover up (Katz, 2014). His drug use went a notch higher to the snorting of heroine. Two of his friends in his cue lured him to try it. Nine months later he died.**

**The second sample is celebrity Drew Barrymore.** She admitted that she had her first drink at nine, started smoking marijuana at ten and graduated to cocaine at twelve (Patterson, 2017). It is at this point that she began rehabilitative treatment. By the time she was thirteen, she had undergone extensive rehab treatment (Patterson, 2017). Although she was coming from a well of background in terms of financial prowess, she hailed from a dysfunctional family since herGrandfather John Barrymore, a celebrated movie actor of the 20’s and 30’s drank himself to death at age 60 whereas her father had a history of alcoholism and drug arrests (Patterson, 2017). Tragically her half-sister; Jessica Barrymore was also found dead due to drug overdose (Patterson, 2017). Her upbringing in this environment contributed significantly to her drug addiction. Drew Barrymore is however a surviving drug addict who has purposed to raise her children differently.

The third sample is **Amber Valletta. From the age of eight she did not understand the value of her life. She started using drugs then as she did not understand the full dangers of addiction. By the time she was 22, her modeling career was at its peak yet she was abusing cocaine and alcohol (Patterson, 2017). At one point she admitted that her career contributed significantly to her drug abuse since that was the norm there and the drugs would even be given to her. However at 25 she sought help and gradually she managed to stay clean and overcome the disease.**

**Ethical Considerations**

The characteristics of the samples are persons who have suffered from drug abuse at any given point in their lives. The sample size primarily focused on individuals who fell susceptible to the drug addiction allure when they were young. Another common factor in the sample is the fact that they were all exposed to drug related environments which includes being raised up by family members who abused drugs as well as being exposed to friends who did drugs. Additionally they all seek help for their problem, although some were unsuccessful in this endeavor.

Based on non-experimental as well as experimental research undertaken by various authors, there is a correlation between environment & age and drug and substance abuse.

**Conclusion**

The results of this study should suggest that a person’s social environment as well as age contribute significantly to whether or not the individual will be involved in drug abuse. During the pre-teen and teenage years, individuals can easily be lured or manipulated into experimenting on drugs. Although most are constantly reminded about the dangers of drug abuse, some cannot fully comprehend the full dangers of drug abuse and subsequent addiction. Further, young people from dysfunctional backgrounds are also highly likely to be lured into this maze and the drugs will act as an imaginary escape route from their troubles. The war against drug abuse can only be won when the continued initiation of fresh addicts is stopped.

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