The Role Of Family In Drug Addiction

Abstract

The prevalence of addictive behaviors is higher in some families as compared to others. Poor parental skills, family structure, relationship issues, and socioeconomic issues are critical factors in drug addiction. Understanding the role of these factors is essential in dealing with addictive behaviors.

Introduction

Family plays a vital role in human socialization. Through family, one can learn, perceive, and place value in the morals of society. For instance, one learns how to respond to a situation and coping techniques from family settings. One's decision to use substances may be in one way or another influenced by family. For instance, some families consider sue of substance appropriate, while in others, it is inappropriate. An individual may learn substance use as a result of a family pattern or as a response to various circumstances in the family environment. In this study, the contribution of family dynamics to drug addiction among young people in Ireland is covered.

Background

Theories of addiction

Various theories explain the concept of addictive behaviors and drug-using. For instance, the biological model argues that addiction is due to the biological and genetic vulnerability of an individual to the substance (West, Marsden, and Hastings, 2019). Another model is the evolution model, which argues that there is a tendency of humans to act on pleasurable desires. Therefore, humans tend to repeat activities that give them pleasure, whether it is healthy or unhealthy. As a result of this, addiction is a result of self-control for humans who develop a desire for drugs.

In learning theory, addiction is described as learned habits that become an issue to control. Based on this theory, the family and social settings play a vital role in the development of addiction to a substance (West, Marsden, and Hastings, 2019). Concerning learning theory, the cognitive theory explains how various cues are developed in a person leading to addictive behaviors. The affected individuals believe that substance use may help them deal with the life issues that they encounter. The ego deficits result in a lack of control over impulses.

Data and Statistics

Drug Addiction Problem among the Youths in Ireland

There is a rise in the use of cocaine nationally, with the number of addicts increasing by 32 percent between 2016 and 2017 (Fátharta, 2019). According to the report published by the

health research board (HRB), cocaine is the third most common drug. Its use raises year by year, except for the period between 2011 and 2013. The most significant national cocaine abuse was reported in the period between 2016 and 2017 (Fátharta, 2019). The value rose from 12.3 percent in 2016 to 16.8 percent in 2017. This was a 32 percent increase, the most massive jump in one year period. One thousand five hundred cases were treated in 2017, almost double the number of cases treated in 2011, 770. Among these cases, 748 were new.

Men account for almost 80 percent of the addiction cases reported. Alcohol and cannabis were also among the leading drugs in addiction. A total number of cases reported for treatment regarding drug use was 63, 303 (Fátharta, 2019). In the year 2017, heroin was the most common reported case in treatment. The use of heroin has, however, fallen in recent years. In the same year, it was reported that cannabis, cocaine, and benzodiazepines were in the second, third, and fourth most reported cases, respectively, after the heroine. Cannabis is reported to present the highest number of new cases annually. Four in every ten new reports are associated with cannabis.

Most of the individuals reporting addiction issues are young people. The average age of new cannabis use is 21 years. Opiates addiction average age stands at 32 years while cocaine is at 28 years old. Among the causes of addiction is a high level of unemployment. For instance, 64 percent of young people addicted to sited problems associated with unemployment (Fátharta, 2019). Those in paid employment accounted for 24 percent of the reported cases in 2017.

The report indicated that the use of drugs continued to impact negatively on the lives of the youth across Irish society. This claim is backed up by the treatment data published as well as drug-related deaths across the country. The data collected and reported by the HRB is useful in coming up with treatment measures.

Challenges Facing Young People from Privileged and Underprivileged Background Ireland

Studies show that the Ireland children who come from a disadvantaged background are more likely to experience problems in their health, education, and emotional wellbeing (Williams, Murray, and Whelan, 2013). Those who come from a privileged background, on the other hand, have a higher probability of enjoying the said factors.

This report was based on a study conducted to determine the challenges experienced by 13-year-olds in Ireland. The study involved interviewing 7 400 young people and their families. The differences in childhood experiences, as determined by the family backgrounds, were considered. Thirty-three percent of parents whose backgrounds were disadvantaged reported that their children experienced health problems (Williams, Murray and Whelan, 2013). Only 22 percent of the highest social class reported health issues. Obesity was reported across all the social classes. Twenty percent of the children who participated were overweight, with 6 percent obese.

The probability of girls being obese was higher compared to boys. Thirty percent of the girls were overweight, while only 24 percent of the boys reported obesity (Williams, Murray and Whelan, 2013). It was also reported that girls were less likely to engage in physical activity as compared to boys. The level of childhood obesity in the highest social class was 21 percent as compared to 2 percent of the lowest social class (Williams, Murray and Whelan, 2013). The report indicated that children from the lowest social class were less likely to engage in organized

sports as compared to their peers from privileged backgrounds.

Most of the children had a positive attitude towards school and teachers. Girls liked school more than boys. Thirty-four percent of the kids whose caregiver had acquired a bachelor's degree liked school, while only 24 percent of those whose caregivers had lower qualification liked school (Williams, Murray and Whelan, 2013). Those from high-class families performed better in school tests as compared to those who came from a disadvantaged background. In this case, the social class of the families was determined by the total family income and the level of education of the mother.

Those children who live in single-parent families had higher chances of engaging in socio-emotional problems. The children who came from a lower social class were reported to engage in smoking, drinking, and other drug-taking. In general, the report indicated differences between the children who come from disadvantaged families as compared to those who came from advantaged families in all aspects that were tested.

Discussion

Family Dynamics Associated With Addiction

Genetic vulnerability

The role of the the family in the development of addictive behavior cannot be underestimated. Young people coming from families where members are using substances are highly likely to use drugs (Matthew, Regmi & Lama, 2018). As proposed by the biological model, the genetics of the person may play an important role in addiction. The genetic vulnerability of the young person increases their chances of being initiated into substance use. This is evident in the high prevalence of substance use among members of certain families. If there is a first degree relative who is an addict, there is a likelihood that the young person may as well become an addict.

Social and Peer Influence

Young members of a given family may also develop addiction due to the influence of the older family members. As explained in the social learning theory, when children are consistently exposed to situations where older family members are taking substances, they are likely to develop the same habit (Matthew, Regmi & Lama, 2018). Some families associate drugs with joy and may, at times, attach very high importance to drugs on special occasions. The children may thus associate drugs with happiness. With time, they may start mimicking the behavior of the adults like the use of the substance.

The influence may also stem from the reasons given by the adults for using drugs. For instance, some claim that they use drugs when anxious, tensed, sleepless, or when they lack confidence. When these people grow up, they are likely to use drugs when they find themselves in the same situations.

Parental Control

Both very rigid and very permissive parenting may expose children to drugs. The family should be capable of monitoring the behavior of youngsters and determine any misbehaviors. The parents should use both the positive and negative reinforcements in enforcing the characters of the children. If the family fails to identify negative behaviors and correct them at an early stage, they may develop into an addiction. Research indicates that there is a likelihood that young people may engage in substance abuse when they know that they are not being monitored (Matthew, Regmi & Lama, 2018). Others may also engage in drug use as a coping mechanism to the strict measured imposed by the family.

Family Structure and Relationship

The structure of the family structure, as well as the relationship between members, also play part in the development of addictiveness (Matthew, Regmi & Lama, 2018). The concept of relationship deals with family cohesion, warmth, and communication. Structure deals with the composition of the family, such as nuclear, single parent, or size of the family. A positive relationship among family members allows them to share their issues hence lower chances of substance abuse. On the other hand, a negative association is a significant contributor to substance abuse. A concrete family structure may also reduce the chances of substance abuse. The children who are raised in a family where there is a failed parental responsibility are likely to abuse substance.

Social Support

Connectedness and social support from the family is likely to reduce the possibility of young people getting engaged in substance abuse. Many young people abuse drugs as a mechanism to cope with negative emotions resulting from their developing social networks. Therefore, the social support and guidance provided to young people in difficult times prevent them from using drugs as a stress management mechanism (Matthew, Regmi & Lama, 2018). Studies indicate that children who receive social support have better coping mechanisms than those ignored. Addictive behaviors are associated with a lack of support and pro-social networks.

Sociocultural influence

In some societies, some drugs are sanctioned. Drugs such as cannabis are used in some societies for cultural and religious purposes. Families may also develop a habit of using drugs such as alcohol for partying. As such, they are considered a symbol of joy, affiliation, and social status (Matthew, Regmi & Lama, 2018). Alcohol is also used in some communities as a source of courage among warriors. At such times, it is served to all members of the community without restrictions. Such events present the opportunity for young people to experiment with the drugs and may later lead to addiction.

Socioeconomic Status

Studies show that the socioeconomic status of a family plays a vital role in the use of the substance. For instance, working-class parents do not have enough time with their families. The isolation that comes along with work creates psychological challenges among young people leading to addictive behaviors. Low-income families may resort to the using of drugs as a coping mechanism to deal with the stress associated with low income (Matthew, Regmi & Lama, 2018). Such families have less access to alternative recreation activities, they experience

unemployment stress, and there may be poor parenting and socialization, among other issues.

Conclusion

From the study above, it can be concluded that families play a vital role in the development of drug addiction. Many factors of the family, such as socioeconomic status, cultural beliefs, and the relationship among family members, are the greatest players in addiction. A privileged background may offer the youth alternative recreation activities hence reducing the probability of abusing drugs. Families with a healthy closer relationship also provide young people with support during hard times, reducing the likelihood of switching to substance use as a coping mechanism. With all the above considerations, families can be used as a vital tool in fighting addiction in Ireland.