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Perilous Substances: The alarming trend of Youth succumbing to Dangerous Drugs among Tertiary students in Mauritius

Sanjayduth Bhundhoo

University of Technology, Mauritius

Abstract

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 3 emphasises on good health and wellbeing. In addition, SDG Target 3.5 is about Substance abuse: "Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol". Government and stakeholders are doing lots of efforts in enforcing prevention and sensitisation programme against drugs. However, statistics demonstrates that substance abuse has become an epidemic worldwide and sadly young people represent the largest proportions of the substance abusers. Unfortunately, Mauritius has not been spared from this social evil as statistics 2021 reported that there are around 55000 people age 18-59 who are consumers of illicit drug. Substance addiction by youngsters is one of the biggest issues that the world is now experiencing. The study was carried out in four Tertiary Institutions and two private Universities in Mauritius and the target group were mainly Tertiary students of age 18-26 years. The methodology applied was mostly quantitative and the data collected through the use of a questionnaire. The study revealed that youngsters are well aware that drugs are dangerous for their health. Drug misuse is caused by a combination of environmental, familial, social and individual factors. However, peer group pressure was identified as the primary factor pushing youngster's towards substance use. This study emphasizes the painful nature of substance abuse among youngsters, yet at the same time it succeeds in highlighting the strategies that can be employed to address substance abuse among youngsters in Mauritius. In addition, this study recommends a concerted effort by all the stakeholders in addressing the substance abuse problem.

Keywords: Drug misuse, Mauritius, Substance Abuse, Substance addiction, Youngsters