

## Perception and Practice of Substance Abuse among the College: Students in an urban area of South India

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### Background

Among younger generation the problem of substance has increased by alarming rate in India. Leading causes for this increase has been changing cultural values increasing economic stress and dwindling supporting bonds.

### Objectives

To study the perceptions concerning substance abuse among college going students, to assess the attitude and practices related to substance abuse among the subjects and study the socio-demographic factors influencing substance abuse.

### Materials and methods

A cross sectional study was conducted in March 2011, among 850 students of selected degree colleges of Mangalore city in Karnataka State. Data was collected using pretested semi structured questionnaire and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Chi square test was used to compare the proportion across the groups and  $p < 0.05$  was taken as significant.

### Results

93.1% of the subjects fall in the age group of 18-20 years, out of which 53% were males, 85.9% resided at house, 74.3% were Hindu by religion. Overall, 88% of the students were aware of the fact that the substance abuse was a major problem; while 11.7% were unaware of it, 57% considered tobacco to be the most common substance of abuse, 48.7% believed it to be alcohol, 31% cannabis and 39.2% other drugs. Out of 832 subjects, 96.4% were aware that health hazards occur due to substance abuse. Also, 45.9% opined stress as the reason for indulging in substance abuse, 28.8% of them considered peer pressure as the factor while only 7.8% considered it to be due to lack of awareness.

### Conclusions

There was high level of awareness among students about drug abuse. Most commonly perceived substance of abuse was tobacco. Stress and peer pressure were the most common factors leading to substance abuse.

Keywords: Perception, Practice, Substance abuse, students, South India.