

Role of family in prevention and treatment of Drug Abuse and Alcoholism

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ABSTRACT

The family plays a significant role in preventing and treating drug abuse and alcoholism. We know that the initial socialization of an individual occurs within the family. If inappropriate socialization occurs within the family, it will develop a range of delinquent behaviors. The early delinquent behaviors can give rise to abuse of drugs and alcohol. In the treatment process, it is essential that the clinician involves and maintains the presence of the family. Involvement of family in the treatment process is important for resolving conflicts, which can be the cause of drug abuse and alcoholism. The family can help a drug abuser or alcoholic by developing new ways to live without using drug or alcohol. It can provide guidance and clear rules about not using drugs or alcohol. The family can guide their children about the detrimental consequences of drug abuse and alcoholism. Therefore, family plays a key role in prevention and treatment of Drug abuse and alcoholism.

Key words; Alcoholism, Drug abuse, Family, Prevention, Treatment.

INTRODUCTION

In India, drug users and alcoholics are found throughout the society irrespective of caste, creed, social and economic levels. Traditionally, opium and cannabis derivatives, mandrax, LSD, cocaine and barbiturates etc. have been used by drug addicts. But recently 'synthetics' that contain stimulants like methaqualone, acetic anhydride, eperidine etc. conquered the market. Heroin is the most commonly used drug in India. But in rural areas opium emerged as the most commonly used drug. Drug and alcohol addiction among youth is increasing in large cities. The use and misuse of drugs and alcohol can result in harm not only to individual but also other family members. It is essential to prevent the child from drug abuse and alcoholism. Drug abusers and alcoholics should be given proper treatment for recovery. The family is an important unit present in any society. It can help in prevention and treatment of drug abuse and alcoholism. It is principally considered as one of the most important agent in the process of socialization of individual. It influences its members and especially children. One of the essential functions of family is to provide education and transmit values to the offspring. It is also a privileged learning place. The bases of education and personality development arise within the family. As it is in the family that an individual acquires and develops attitudes, values, beliefs, life styles and behaviors, the family context should be considered as a basic area of preventive prevention. In the last few years we found changes in the structure and functions of family. We started having nuclear families, i.e., formed by the couple and their children and stopped having big families. As a result of these changes, there is a subsequent effect in

the development of personality of an individual. The idea of family implies an enduring involvement on an emotional level. Family members may spread around the world, but still be connected emotionally and able to contribute to the dynamics of family functioning. Several sources have recommended family involvement as important for the success of alcohol prevention strategies (Drug Strategies 1996; Dusenbury and Falco 1995; National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA] 1997). Family factors, such as parent-child relationships, discipline methods, communication, monitoring and supervision, and parental involvement, can significantly influence alcohol use among youth (Bry et al. 1998). Abuse of alcohol and substance becomes a significant part of the family sensitivity. Clinicians should take into consideration the lifestyles that give rise to treatments, alcohol and or drug abuse, or symptoms of completely new familial pathology. Families have needs that often go unidentified. They need emotional support, remain under stress and may themselves need perhaps even treatment. They may be blamed for their loved one's mental illness or addiction. Their loved one's illness can lead to substantial financial burden, their careers can be disrupted and social networks may abandon them due to stigma and discrimination. The use and misuse of alcohol and drugs is widespread amongst young people. Drug or alcohol use by these young people, or by anyone else in the family, can result in harm to the individual and the wider community, as well as having a seriously negative impact on other family members.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF FAMILY IN THE PREVENTION OF DRUG ABUSE OR ALCOHOLISM

Preventing alcohol and drug abuse begins at home. Family plays a great role in prevention of alcohol and drug abuse. Early drug abuse prevention is one of the best ways to lower the risk for addiction, and this prevention starts at home with families. They can teach children early about the effects of alcohol and drug abuse, to prevent addiction later in life. No family want to see their child suffer from the negative effects of alcohol and drug addiction, yet many mistakenly believe there is nothing they can do to stop their kids from experimenting with drugs and alcohol. Family is the greatest factor which influence a child's or teens choice note to use drugs or alcohol. Following steps will help family to prevent drug abuse or alcoholism;

III. TO KNOW CHILDREN'S FRIENDS

Family can help to prevent drug abuse or alcoholism by being active in child's life. It can meet child's friends and their parents. It can ask questions about where they are going and what they are doing with their friends. Secretive behaviour and having new friends that family never meet are signs of drug abuse in teens. The family can talk about how to be a good friend. And real friends would never reject someone who does not want to do things that are unsafe. Family can involve children in activities such as scouting, sports, or other afterschool clubs they are interested in where they can easily make friends while learning new skills and developing healthy habits.

IV. COMMUNICATION

Drug abuse prevention starts with communication. Family can establish good communication habits early that will make having difficult conversations about drug abuse or alcoholism easier. It can talk to children daily and

ask open ended questions that require more than a yes or no answer such as “What was your favourite part about today? etc. Communication is a two way process that involves both talking and listening. When children know that their family will listen to them they will be more likely to come to it when concerns about drug or alcohol use come up later. The earlier the family start talking to their kids about the dangers of drug abuse or alcohol the better, but it is sometimes difficult to start these conversations. Family can use movies and television shows to start conversations about irresponsible behaviour. It can educate itself about the effects of drug abuse or alcoholism so it can relay factual information to children. Family must be sure to ask about their thoughts on drug use and expel any myths they might believe. Common myths among youth are that everyone drinks and marijuana is not harmful. This is not true, and they should know this. Family can make frequent conversations about drug abuse or alcoholism which is better than giving a one-time lecture.

V.FAMILY CAN BE THE ROLE MODEL

The best thing parents can help prevent children and teens from abusing substances is to be good role models. Family members not using alcoholic drugs can be good role models. If family show restraint when it comes to alcohol or drugs, then chances are that child will follow the same. Family can demonstrate how to have fun, manage stress, and solve problems without drugs or alcohol. It can include child in family discussions and give her input into family discussions, rules and expectations. If there are problems in family, a young child is affected. He or she can use alcohol or drugs due to this family disturbance. So, we can say family conflict is worse which can lead to drug or alcohol addiction of children. Family members can show respect and kindness towards each other and can create a favourable atmosphere. This type of environment can prevent child from drug or alcohol addiction.

VI.MAKE CLEAR RULES AND CONSEQUENCES

Family should have clear rules regarding alcohol and drug abuse. It should discuss its rules, expectations and consequences in advance. It should involve child in the process of determining what a drug or alcohol is, and what the consequences of drug abuse or alcohol will be. The family should let their children know that they are not okay with them experimenting with drugs and alcohol and that they would be very disappointed in them if this occurred. Therefore, by making clear rules and consequences, family can prevent individual from drug abuse or alcoholism. Reviews of family skills training indicate that enhancement of the following parenting skills is important for the prevention of alcohol use (Ashery et al. 1998; NIDA 1997);

Improving parent-child relations by using positive reinforcement, listening and communication skills, and problem solving.

- Providing consistent discipline and rulemaking

- Monitoring children's activities during adolescence

- Strengthening family bonding

Various studies have identified several components that contribute to the success of family based prevention interventions. One major component is a focus on skill development rather than on simple education about appropriate parenting practices (Etz et al. 1998). Another important component is the involvement of both parents and children in individual and group training sessions (Etz et al. 1998). Several studies have found that

parent and family training programs both improve parenting skills and reduce problem behaviors among children (Ashery et al. 1998; NIDA 1997).

VII. UNDERSTANDING THE FAMILY ROLE IN THE TREATMENT OF DRUG ABUSE AND ALCOHOLISM

The family has a great role to play in the treatment of any health problems, including drug abuse and alcoholism. Family roles in the treatment of drug abuse and alcoholism can be one of the strongest supports of recovery. When actions and interactions within the family are healthy and positive, recovery can take place to a greater extent. Families can play an important role in substance abuse treatment. They can be a source of help to the treatment process. They must manage the consequences of the patient's addictive behavior. Individual family members have their own goals and issues but they are well concerned about the patient's substance abuse. The joint effort of family members can help to treat drug abusers and alcoholics. Treatment can be improved by providing services to the whole family. To meet this challenge of working together, mutual understanding, flexibility and adjustments among the substance abuse treatment provider, family therapist, and family are required. This shift will require a stronger focus on the systemic interactions of families. A family often needs as much treatment as the family member who is the abuser of alcohol or a substance. In this regard, participation of the family in the treatment process as group members and by assuming a supportive role are assets in terms of preventing relapse, and extending clean time, and also very important for solving conflicts that give rise to abuse of alcohol or substances. Accordingly, it is important to know the family structure and its role in the treatment process. Substance abuse and alcoholism are regarded as symptoms of a dysfunctional family system because an addicted individual reveals the familial identity of the system. According to National Institute of Health, stress is considered an essential factor in both the beginning of drug and alcohol abuse as well in regard to relapse. Therefore, it is important for family to understand that the drug abuser or alcoholic may be more susceptible to stress in his or her recovery. To understand this connection, it is necessary to understand several stress factors that increase the risk of drug abuser or alcoholic. These factors include health issues, work or school, relationships with friends and family, financial problems, exposure to environment or situations that involve drug or alcohol use. Family can guide the drug abuser or alcoholic towards healthy coping mechanisms such as exercising, journaling, meditating or even talking with a therapist.

Involvement of the whole family is a necessary step in the process of treatment of drug abuse and alcoholism. It is important for the family to learn about the treatment and recovery process of their drug abuser or alcoholic. The family needs to participate in getting the identified drug abuser or alcoholic into a rehabilitation program and treatment planning. It has to attend therapy or group sessions as requested. It needs to encourage the drug abusers or alcoholics overcoming the addiction to continue their work without judgement. Family is an important part of the diagnosis and treatment chain of alcohol and substance abuse. Abuse of alcohol and substance is a response to fluctuations in the family system. In consideration of interactions within the system, it seems an important requirement that the clinician involves, and maintains the presence of, the family in its entirety in the treatment process. The support of family often plays a great role in addiction recovery. As addiction recovery is a long journey and it requires a lifelong commitment, drug abuser or

alcoholic is not just coming to home from an addiction rehab facility cured from addiction. He or she will take sobriety day by day and will need to turn his or her focus towards long term recovery. Therefore, the supporting role of each and every family member can be crucial to helping the drug abuser or alcoholic.

Family members must be supportive, loving and caring but firm during intervention process. They should tell the drug abuser or alcoholic that how more they want him or her back without drugs or alcohol. They must make aware him or her about consequences for not seeking treatment. Family members don't know how to do this on their own, so the interventionist specialist coaches them on how to deal with the drug abuser or alcoholic's denial and encourage him or her to get into treatment. A great part of any effective drug or alcohol abuse treatment program is counseling family members and significant others on the particular needs of drug abuser or alcoholic. When one member of family is drug abuser or alcoholic, the healthy family dynamic is disrupted. The role of family in treatment of drug abuse and alcoholism can make a big difference. Participation of family members in family treatment programs has a tremendous impact on the individual undergoing treatment. Often this support and participation of family motivates the drug abuser or alcoholic to enter treatment for drug or alcohol addiction. Drug abusers or alcoholics know the support of the family is and will be there on an ongoing basis, so they are motivated to enter the treatment. In the end, the role of family is essential for the successful treatment of the dependent drug or alcoholic addict's recovery.

VIII.CONCLUSION

Drug Abuse and alcoholism is a global phenomenon. Their consequences may remain the same everywhere and vary little in the magnitude according to local situation. In India, drug users and alcoholics are found throughout the society irrespective of caste, creed, social and economic levels. In our country, the number of drug addicts and alcoholics are increasing day by day. India has a huge at-risk young population of drug addicts and alcoholics with approx.40% being below the age of 18 years. One million heroin addicts are registered in India, and unofficially there are as many as five million. Cannabis, heroin, and Indian-produced pharmaceutical drugs are the most frequently abused drugs in India. As it is clear that initial socialization of an individual occurs within the family, it becomes a responsibility of family to try to prevent child from drug abuse and alcoholism from the very beginning. It is family which plays a crucial role in treatment of drug abuse and alcoholism if their loved one is addicted to these drugs or alcohol. They can be a source of help to the treatment process. They must manage the consequences of the patient's addictive behavior. The family can guide their children about the detrimental consequences of drug abuse and alcoholism. Therefore, family plays a key role in prevention and treatment of Drug abuse and alcoholism.

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