

# Social Exclusion and Drug Abuse: Causes and Consequences

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## ABSTRACT

Social exclusion and drug abuse are interlinked phenomena with significant societal and individual implications. This abstract explores the causes and consequences of social exclusion about drug abuse. Social exclusion, characterized by limited access to social, economic, and political resources, often leads to feelings of marginalization and isolation. Individuals facing such exclusion may turn to drug use as a coping mechanism to alleviate stress, loneliness, and a lack of belonging. Contributing factors to this cycle include poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and weak social networks. The consequences of drug abuse, in turn, exacerbate social exclusion by impairing mental and physical health, reducing employability, and increasing the likelihood of engaging in criminal activities. This creates a vicious cycle, where drug abuse leads to further social exclusion, perpetuating a detrimental impact on the individual and society. Addressing this issue requires comprehensive interventions that target both the root causes of social exclusion and provide effective support and rehabilitation for those struggling with drug abuse.

**Keywords:** Abuse, Marginalized, Susceptible, Population, Mental health

## Introduction

Social exclusion and drug abuse are two interconnected issues that pose significant challenges to individuals and societies worldwide. Social exclusion refers to the process by which individuals or groups are systematically marginalized from participating fully in social, economic, and political life. This marginalization often results in limited access to resources, opportunities, and support systems, leading to feelings of isolation, powerlessness, and low self-worth. Drug abuse, on the other hand, involves the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs, which can lead to addiction and various negative health and social outcomes.

The relationship between social exclusion and drug abuse is complex and bidirectional. Individuals who experience social exclusion are at a higher risk of turning to drug use as a means of coping with their adverse circumstances. Factors such as poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and weak social networks contribute to this risk. Substance abuse may provide temporary relief from the stress, loneliness, and lack of belonging associated with social exclusion but often results in further negative consequences that deepen the individual's marginalization. Conversely, drug abuse can exacerbate social exclusion by impairing physical and mental health, reducing employability, and increasing the likelihood of involvement in criminal activities. These consequences not only affect the individual's ability to reintegrate into society but also strain social services and public health systems. The cyclical nature of social exclusion and drug abuse underscores the importance of addressing these issues in tandem. This introduction sets the stage for a deeper exploration of the causes and consequences of social exclusion about drug abuse. Understanding the intricate links between these phenomena is crucial for developing

effective interventions that can break the cycle of marginalization and substance dependence. By examining the underlying factors and the multifaceted impacts, we can better inform policies and practices aimed at fostering social inclusion and supporting individuals on the path to recovery.

## Consequences of abusive drugs

Abusable drugs divided into six categories include alcohol, narcotics, hallucinogens, stimulants, sedatives, and nicotine are drugs that are used in large quantities and they have both negative and positive consequences for the individual as well as society. The merits and demerits of these drugs are given below:

- Alcohol enables an individual to relieve himself from pain and lessens aggressive inhibitions but at the same time it creates confusion and impairs the level of judgment in an individual.
- Sedatives or depressants that include tranquilizers and barbiturates help an individual to induce sleep relax the central nervous system and give a calming effect. Taking in large amounts impairs thinking, concentration, and emotional control in an individual.
- Narcotics like opium, marijuana, heroin, morphine, cocaine, and cannabis produce feelings of suggestibility, strength, and pleasure, and at the same time create weakness, muscle pain, nervousness, and insomnia in an individual.
- Nicotine including bidi, cigars, cigarettes, tobacco, and snuff leads to relaxation and removes boredom but frequent use of these nicotines leads to bronchitis, lung cancer, and heart attack.
- Hallucinogens like LSD produce pain, depression, distortions of perception, and dream images.

## Other Consequences include

- Health and Safety:** both health and behavioral problems arise as these drugs act directly on the central nervous system of an addict.

Diseases, physical disabilities, and injuries due to car accidents are the effects of possible overdoses among substance abusers. People making high use of alcohol have an increased risk of death through homicide, accident, suicide, and illness. Sexual contact with an infected person or sharing of unsterile drug injection equipment leads to transmission of HIV/ AIDS. Another type of transmission is from mothers to infants during pregnancy or the birth process. Besides this, loss of future productivity and additional healthcare costs place a burden on the community (Crowe and Bilchik, 1998).

**2. Mental Health:** Drug users are at higher risk than non-users for mental health problems that include depression, withdrawal, developmental lags, personality disorder, suicidal thoughts, and attempting suicide as this is the second leading cause of death among drug addicts (Sahu & Sahu, 2011).

**3. Peers:** people making the highest use of drugs often exclude the individual from peers, school, and community activities.

**4. Families:** the overdose of drugs not only affects personally but it leads to family crises and disorganization (Nowinski, 1990). Emotional and family financial resources are at risk due to substance abuse (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1992).

### Measures to combat Drug Abuse

**a.** Imparting education about drugs: people making use of drugs should be given awareness about the positive and negative effects of overuse of drugs through education.

**b.** Changing physician's attitude: doctors can help in preventing drug abuse by changing their attitude toward prescribing too many drugs to patients

**c.** Giving punishment to policemen and other law enforcers found working in collaboration with drug peddlers.

**d.** Parents need to take care of their children by providing a good and harmonious familial environment and maintaining good relations with them.

**e.** The teachers too can help much in preventing drug abuse by involving themselves in student activities and discussing with them the dangers of drug abuse (Ahuja, 2007).

### Conclusion

Drug abuse is a growing threat to humanity as day by day it is increasing at an alarming rate and it affects every corner of society so dedicated and cooperative efforts should be taken to bring it down. Thus social exclusion is also a result due to overdose of drugs as these drug users come from poor and socially excluded communities.

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