

## Drug Abuse In Minorities

How does drug abuse affect minorities? At first, I wasn't sure what I wanted to research; I had many questions about almost everything going on around the world today. After thinking, I looked around my surroundings and figured it out; I wanted to learn how drug abuse affects minorities and its consequences. Coming from a low-income community filled with minorities, including myself, I could relate to this. In other words, I'm not only researching how drug abuse could affect the individual but the community as a whole. Living in this type of environment, I never thought about the cause and effect it would have on me. What exactly is drug abuse? Drug abuse is illegal drugs, whether they are prescribed, over the counter, and are used in excessive amounts.

What I expect when researching this topic is a couple of things. I hope to learn whether there is one specific drug that has a more significant impact than others. I want to understand what goes through one's mind that makes them abuse drugs or even take them. With every problem comes a solution; I want to explore the many ways one could receive help and prevent them from hitting rock bottom. Although not every issue has an easy answer, when I am researching the solutions while spreading awareness, I hope that all the gathered information encourages others to do the same and seek help.

According to News, Medical Life Sciences, over 190 million drug users worldwide, and the numbers keep increasing at alarmingly high rates. The majority of these numbers are from young adults under 30. (Dr. Ananya, 2020.) According to Dr. Ananya, who studies minors for drug abuse, many of the causes were common among the users. Some of these causes include but are not limited to curiosity, peer pressure, and recreational purposes. One can see that peer pressure is a vast common factor, especially when these young users are still in school. Some

examples of drugs that these users abuse include alcohol, tobacco, cocaine, opium, marijuana, and heroin. One has to understand that these drugs of abuse fall under three categories; depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogens. Cannabis and marijuana are the most widely abused drugs in the world. Around 141 million people worldwide consume cannabis. Abuse of heroin and other opioids is less common than with other medications. It is taken up by approximately 8 million people worldwide, mainly in South-East and South-West Asia and Europe.

In the United States, ethnic minorities have experienced the overall negative impact of drug abuse much more severely than the general population. The effect of drug prohibition in the United States has not been to eliminate or minimize the use of illicit drugs. The use of some illegal substances, such as cocaine, has increased among our population, while illicit substances like alcohol have decreased among specific groups. Unfortunately, drug prohibition and related policies have contributed to the differential impact of the negative consequences of drug abuse on ethnic and racial minorities. We can see that the use of illicit drugs over time worsens with the type being consumed. All of this will have consequences for the individual and the community.

According to the National Library of Medicine, social problems associated with the abuse of drugs include housing instability, homelessness, criminal behaviors (victim or perpetrator), and incarceration. Another problem caused by the misuse of drugs is the transmission of HIV due to IV drug use or high-risk sexual behaviors and unemployment or dependence on welfare. All of these factors are harming the user and other people because we are those criminals' victims when they are under the influence. Living in an environment where you grow up to see all this is not safe and very dangerous. People under these drugs lose their sense of mind and don't remember where they are or even their names. It is unfortunate to see a young child or even an adult be in this state. The costs associated with these social problems are astounding. creating an

economic burden for governments or payors who spend considerable amounts of money on treatments for addiction, medical or psychiatric disorders, and other related problems associated with welfare dependence, unemployment, or involvement in the criminal justice or social service systems. ( C. Dennis, 2013) These are also problems that can be avoided if we all as a community help one another.

One way to help the user abusing drugs is through the family. There are many programs for the user or family programs that can benefit the user's recovery when they are getting support from loved ones. Family interventions can help the family influence or pressure the member with the drug abuse to enter treatment and get help. It can address the impact of the abuse of drugs and how it affects the family system and members and helps the family support the member with the illness. Couples or family sessions can help families address their questions and concerns, change how they interact within the family system, and improve communication. Families can also benefit from managing their emotional burden and behaviors that can interfere with the recovery of the member with the SUD (substance use disorder.) Treatment can be provided in sessions with the individual family or in multiple family groups, which provide a supportive environment for families to share their everyday experiences and concerns. Families can form bonds and learn what has worked for others. (Daley, D.c, 2014)

There is no single solution to end-users from abusing drugs. We need more policies and programs that increase access to proven treatment procedures. We need to invest more in expanding the scientific evidence for prevention, treatment, and recovery. We also need a cultural shift in how we think about addiction. For far too long, too many people in the United States and I imagine in other states have viewed addiction as a moral failing. This unfortunate slur has created an added burden of shame that has made people with substance use disorders

less likely to come forward and seek help. They are scared they will just be talked about and judged without any help waiting for them. It has also made it more challenging to arrange the necessary investments in prevention and treatment. We must help everyone see that addiction is not a character flaw but a chronic illness that we must approach with the same skill and compassion as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

Lesser, B., 2021. *Related Tie Between Economic Status and Substance Abuse*. [online] Dual Diagnosis.org. Available at: <<https://dualdiagnosis.org/drug-addiction/economic-status/>> [Accessed 8 April 2022]. Starting with Ben Lesser, Ben goes over the many possibilities that can create such drug abusers in his articles, such as neglect and abuse. The misuse of drugs has a significant impact on childhood violence and neglect. Ben Lesser agrees when he writes, "About 70 percent of recorded cases of neglect and childhood violence over ten years included alcohol or drug abuse. The adult drug offenders are 2.7 times more likely to misuse and 4.2 times much more likely to neglect their children." In other words, Ben Lesser proves that a parent mistreats and neglects a child when under the influence of drugs, which Ben Lesser saw more within low-income communities.

Close, Laura. "Addiction among Different Races: Alcohol & Drug Use in America." *Sunrise House*, Ryan Kelley, NREMT, 10 Mar. 2022, <https://sunrisehouse.com/addiction-demographics/different-races/>. In this blog written by Laura Close, we get a clear breakdown and comparison of all the different races within the minority group. We see comparisons between Whites, Hispanics, Black or African Americans, Asian Americans, and others. Laura has documented a vast increase in Drug abuse among these minorities over the past few years. She notices that a more significant percentage of Latinos are more likely to abuse such substances. Laura states, "There has

been a significant increase in marijuana use among Hispanic Americans aged 26 and up. This could be due to the legalization of marijuana at a state level among some states."

Laura is trying to argue that the legalization of drugs among certain states is why we notice a considerable percentage rise in drug abusers within the minority group.

Burlew, K., McCuiston, C. & Szapocznik, J. Racial/ethnic equity in substance use treatment research: the way forward. *Addict Sci Clin Pract* **16**, 50 (2021).

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13722-021-00256-4>. In this report, Burlew, K., McCuiston, C. & Szapocznik, J strongly argue that the main cause of drug abuse is the lack of supervision and proper treatment provided to the individuals. They go on to claim, "Although the opioid epidemic was initially most visible among non-Hispanic Whites, opioid use and overdose rates among other racial/ethnic groups (such as Blacks and Hispanics) have risen in recent years [1, 2]. The author argues that these individuals' lack of treatment leads to a higher increase. It's like a chain effect, which means If we don't provide the right treatment, more and more minorities will fall into that category, which is also the best solution we should take. We will start seeing results once provided with that treatment, and fewer victims will be affected. Treatments are as simple as someone to talk to can help. Most of the time, people who abuse drugs need someone they can talk to speak with them about what's causing them to take such actions and possibly figure out something that could help them out.

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<https://drugabuse.com/addiction/drug-prevention/>. Lastly, we discussed the effects and possibilities of drug abuse among minorities. It's time we look at the solutions and ways

we can help prevent and treat those who have become victims of drug abuse. This organization talks about the many keys to helping prevent and reduce drug abuse; they claim that the first step to prevention is understanding the issue. According to American Addiction Centers, "Drug abuse prevention begins with education, spreading the word regarding the dangers of drugs to oneself and the community." Meaning the first step of many we should take towards reducing the number of drug abuse is educating, showing the effects, the consequences, and the overall impact it would bring to their future.

Teaching this importance to the youth will help them see what results will come; the younger we teach them, we will see a change in the statistical numbers of minorities who are abusing drugs decrease tremendously.

In conclusion, drug abuse among minorities is mainly a cause of improper treatment and neglect. As a solution, we must provide them with proper treatment to reduce the number of abusers. Legalizing drugs across many states also plays a massive role in increasing drug abuse. Overall, drug abuse affects one's state of mind causing many bursts of emotions in the human brain leading to other actions such as depression, violence, and many other harmful activities, which come with consequences. A step toward helping, as mentioned before, is the proper treatment, for example, counseling or rehab. We must also educate ourselves with the appropriate information we need to create a solution. It can affect the user without knowing anything about drug abuse, but it could also impact you. Drug abuse is a vital situation that we must truly take the time and effort to handle to create that revolution. A revolution is what we need to reduce its impact on everyone affected.