Alcohol/ Drug Addiction

- When a person uses alcohol/ drug repeatedly, he becomes addicted.
- Addiction refers to psychological attachment to certain effects such as euphoria and temporary feeling of well-being associated with use of alcohol or drugs.
- In addiction, tolerance level of receptors present in our body increases towards the drug.
- This drives the person to use them even when they are not required or when they tend to harm his health / family life.
- Subsequently, the user runs into a vicious circle of addiction and subsequent dependence.
- Dependence leads to manifestation of withdrawal syndrome on discontinuation of use.
- Withdrawal syndrome – Anxiety, nausea, sweating, shakiness, and sometimes may be lethal

Effects of Alcohol/ Drug Abuse

- Immediate effect – Vandalism, violence, and reckless behaviour
- Drop in academic performance, lack of interest in personal hygiene, rebellious behaviour, and change in eating and sleeping patterns, weight and appetite fluctuations
- Mental, psychological, and financial loss not only to the user, but also to his family
- Those who take drugs intravenously have a high risk of acquiring deadly diseases such as AIDS and hepatitis B.
- Damage to nervous system and liver (cirrhosis)
- Use of anabolic steroids by sportsperson have adverse effects:
    - In females – Increase of masculinity, aggressiveness, depression, abnormal menstrual cycle, facial hair growth, enlargement of clitoris, and deepening of voice

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    - In males – Acne, aggressiveness, depression, reduction in size of testicles, decreased sperm production, enlargement of prostate gland, breast enlargement, premature baldness
- Ultimately, prolonged use of alcohol/drugs leads to coma and death.

Preventing Alcohol/ Drug Abuse

- It is better to prevent the inclination of an individual towards alcohol/ drugs right from adolescence. Some of the ways of prevention are:
    - Avoid peer pressure – Understand the unique personality and capabilities of a child
    - Education and counselling – A child must be taught to accept success and failure equally. Especially during adolescence, he must be inclined towards constructive activities such as music, yoga, sports, reading based on his interest.
    - Help from parents and peers – This includes proper guidance, advice, and trust to overcome problems such as stress and guilt.
    - Identifying danger signals – If any sign of symptom of alcohol / drug abuse is seen in the adolescent by family or friends, then it should not be ignored because prevention is better than cure.
- Seeking medical help – Psychologists and rehabilitation programs surely help an addict. Medical help should be sought to prevent further damage.

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