

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

The findings of this study highlighted a few issues that should be attended to in order to address substance abuse among adolescents. In this chapter, the conclusion, limitation and recommendations of this study are presented. Furthermore, my personal reflections on this study are alluded to in this section.

CONCLUSION

Adolescents are in a very important developmental stage of their lives. They are faced with physiological development as well as pressures from their families and their social environment. They are also vulnerable to environmental pressures from their peers, role model, and the media. If they are not prepared for these developmental changes and challenges of adolescence, they may end up being frustrated, confused and helpless when confronted by them. In trying to cope with such challenges, adolescents may end up indulging in a variety of substances that endanger their own lives as well as the lives of other people. The voices of adolescents in this study are clearly saying that we are abusing substances due to various reasons and we need help to stop the behavior. Parents, educators, health professionals, social workers and the community at large must be at the fore front in the fight against substance abuse by adolescents. The substance abuse problem affects everybody. Thus, in order to be addressed, it requires the effort of all the stakeholders including the adolescents themselves. It is indeed upsetting, discouraging and sad to note and see male adolescents being under their influence, and dependent so badly into these substances. As future leaders of our country, they should be loved, guided and supported so that they are able to deal with their substance abuse behavior and refrain from further abuse of substances as it impacts negatively on their lives as discussed under the effects of substances. However, the challenge may be that some of adolescents may take time to acknowledge their substance abuse problem and because of fear of being labelled as substance dependents, they may refuse to participate in such a structure. In such instances, there is a need to

obtain assistance from other adolescents who were once hooked in substances, and are no longer using substances, to take a lead in encouraging adolescents to participate in such structures. In addition, topics that are handled during such sessions should not only cover substance abuse topics, but may include other health and wellness topics affecting male adolescents. This study managed to achieve its goals of investigating how it came about that adolescents abuse substances, investigating the complexities of substance abuse among a small, group of adolescents in DMS Bhopal. finding out their knowledge of substances and the effects thereof, identify the family structure and the social environment where the adolescents are living, and identifying strategies to prevent substance abuse amongst male adolescents. However, there are limitations to this study. The next section discusses these limitations.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

The study was conducted in DMS Bhopal only. A larger randomly selected sample from more than one school with similar situations might have improved the generalizability of the findings. Even though I tried to make the participants feel free throughout the interview sessions, they were not free. I observed that they had reservations. This had a limiting effect on the participants' interaction with me. This study was only conducted by me, thus the findings might not have been objectively analyzed. This study did not address the support structures that can be developed to assist adolescents during this challenging stage of their lives. This study also did not take into consideration the educational qualifications of parents. Furthermore, this study only focused on the adolescents attending schools in rural areas. Adolescents who do not attend school were not included in this study. That also limited the findings of this study. This study employed a qualitative methodology. Limitations in terms of measuring the magnitude of substance abuse among adolescents in the DMS Bhopal. Furthermore, interviews were used as the main tool for acquiring information from participants. Despite its limitations, the study has assisted in identifying the reasons for substance abuse among adolescents, which may assist policy makers in developing effective evidence-based intervention strategies that are relevant to

the needs of rural adolescents. Furthermore, this study afforded disadvantaged adolescents the opportunity to express their views about the challenges that they are facing. The open-ended nature of this study enabled me to gather data that is illustrative and rich. The next section, provides recommendations of this study as well as topics for future research.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Future research

It is recommended that a larger sample, covering a wider geographical area be drawn in future investigations, in order to improve the generalizability of the findings. In addition, adolescents who do not attend schools should also be part of the study. Information about the educational level of the parents can be acquired during meetings. Requesting permission to conduct the study with parents can also be further explored. Alternatively, parents can also be involved as important stakeholders who can either be interviewed or asked to complete questionnaires in order to get a broader picture of substance abuse among adolescents. Information can also be obtained from other important stakeholders involved in programmes that address substance abuse among adolescents in rural as well as urban areas. This study recommends further research undertaking regarding parental support during adolescence. Furthermore, more than one researcher could collect data in order to ensure objectivity during data analysis. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches can be used to gather information about substance abuse among adolescents. By combining both approaches, I could have maximized the strength and minimized the weaknesses of each approach. This may have strengthened the results and contributed to theory and knowledge. In addition, since multiple and diverse observations could be used, the study could have enriched the understanding of the substance abuse problem among adolescents. However, the volume of data produced, would have been immense and an extremely broad knowledge base was required to analyze it. The investigator would then have had to contract other researchers to work on the different parts of the analysis.

Adolescent stage

Adolescence as a stage, can pose serious challenges to our teenagers. They need care and support from parents, educators and other members of the community. It was really sad to realise that sometimes as parents or elders in the community, we become risk factors for substance abuse among adolescents through the way we treat these young adults. Our male adolescents are hurting because of the way they are treated at their homes. The only way they use to overcome such challenges is to abuse substances.

Peer group pressure

Peer group pressure plays an important role in the lives of the adolescents. They serve as reference for the teenagers. They do provide emotional, social as well as financial support. At some points they become dangerous to their peers and they are left helpless and having to succumb to pressure because they do not want to be rejected.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the conclusion, limitations of this study, recommendations and researchers' personal reflections were highlighted. Furthermore, this section highlighted the strategies that can be used to address substance abuse among adolescents in rural areas as well as urban areas. This then calls for recognition that our adolescents are indeed in a difficult development stage, faced with so many challenges and need to be given all the necessary support they deserve as human beings. This study supported the notion that substance abuse is a problem which requires a concerted effort by all the stakeholders involved in youth development so that this problem can be fully addressed.