

Drug Addiction as a Disease

EVGENII PLOTNIKOV¹, ELENA KOROTKOVA²

¹ Faculty of Pharmacy, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, ² Department of Pharmaceutics, Faculty of Pharmacy, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran

Email-id: plotnikov.e@mail.ru

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ABSTRACT

Drug addiction is a major problem in this society and is alarmingly increasing now days. It leads to much social violence and also affects the people round it. It is now becoming a dreadful disease. This paper discuss the effects of drug addiction and also the way to prevent it .

KEYWORDS: Drug addiction, prevention.

INTRODUCTION

Drug addiction forms one of the most common issues facing the current world. A subject is yet to receive in-depth analysis is whether drug addiction is a choice or a disease. Similar to heart disease, cancer, and diabetes, Healey (2013) observed that addiction arises from combinations of biological, environmental, and behavioral factors. For about 50 percent of the likelihood of drug addiction, most of the current literature contends that genetic risk factors form the leading causative agent (May, Baete& Russo et al., 2014). Imperative to highlight is that addiction alters the functioning of the body and brain. According to Healey (2013), the alterations may pre-exist or arise from risky substance abuse. If untreated, addiction has been observed to lead to consequences such as mental and physical health disorders; which call for medical attention. If untreated for a significant period, drug addiction has also been documented to account for more life-threatening, disabling and severe consequences (Moyer, 2013). Whereas some studies document that drug addiction exhibits features associated with disease and that it is a disease, others contend that addiction is a choice. This paper debates the two sides of the subject and seeks to shed light on whether drug addiction should be treated as a disease or a choice.

Addiction as a Disease

For some studies, drug addiction reflects a chronic disease. According to Healey (2013), a chronic disease is long-lasting. Moyer (2013) observed that chronic disease could not be cured, but it can be controlled. As observed by the May, Baete and Russo et al. (2014), drug addiction satisfies these conditions and, thus, qualifies to be a disease (because it is long-lasting and also hard to cure, but

can be controlled). Healey (2013) observed further that about 25 percent to 50 percent of individuals experiencing substance use tend to have chronic and severe disorders. For these individuals, Moyer (2013) documented that addiction comes in the form of relapsing and progressive disease. This "disease," as avowed by Healey (2013), requires intensive treatment, as well as continuing aftercare. For proponents of the position that drug addiction is a disease, the majority hold that individuals who experience addiction should not be blamed because they cannot choose the manner in which their bodies and brains respond to alcohol and drugs (Moyer, 2013). These proponents assert further that drug addiction is a disease and that some can control the use of drugs while others cannot.

Mental illness has also been examined in relation to the debate of whether drug addiction comes out of choice or emerges as a disease. According to Healey (2013), a significant number of individuals experiencing mental illness are likely to resort to drugs due to hopelessness; with this path emerging as a coping mechanism that seeks to shield one from the world's realities. Moyer(2013) observed that the situation tends to be exacerbated by socio-economic disadvantages such as historical injustices and poverty. Notably, historical injustices such as racial discrimination tend to isolate individuals such as those from ethnic minority communities from mainstream society, a situation that attracts drug use and addiction as an alternative coping mechanism. In relation to these socio-economic problems, whether the causes of addiction (such as poverty and historical injustices), which are associated with drug addiction, are out of choice or not poses a dilemma. The role of biological factors

and the environment has also been examined relative to the question of whether drug addiction is a choice or a disease. As documented by Healey (2013), biology holds that certain genes are likely to combine with environmental factors and cause drug addiction. Specifically, Moyer(2013) avowed that this combination accounts for almost 50 percent of population vulnerability to addiction. This evidence has been confirmed in studies that document that when one has a mental illness, is African American, or is male, they are likely to be addicted to drugs or exhibit a higher risk of progressing to addiction. However, this assertion could be criticized in such a way that it fails to clarify whether the being African America (or male or having a mental illness) comes out of one's choice, hence addiction.

Conclusion

In summary, drug addiction is increasing, but whether or not it is a disease or a choice remains debatable. For proponents of addiction as a disease, drug addiction is long-lasting and can be likened to a chronic disease that is unlikely to be cured. Addiction is also a relapsing and progressive condition, which justifies the assertion that it is a disease. However, those in favor of the assertion that drug addiction is a choice contend that the behavior arises from issues such as peer pressure or bad company, risky sexual behavior, and financial problems or poverty. However, this stance is worth criticizing because homelessness could result from a natural disaster; which also holds for the case of poverty that arises from socio-economic and cultural disadvantages associated with historical injustices

(that cause stress, hence drug addiction). Given that the latter examples suggest social stress accruing from external causes, the extent to which the assertion that drug addiction is a choice (and not a disease) remains debatable. Similarly, the assertion that drug addiction is a disease is debatable because some individuals could resort to the use of (and become addicted to) drugs due to a cause such as peer pressure, which makes it questionable on whether or not the behavior qualifies to be a disease. Overall, whether drug addiction is a disease or a choice should be explained from the perspective of the causes. If the cause is natural – such as the case of the role of genes or biology, it can be inferred that drug addiction is a disease. However, if the cause emerges out of one's failure to control their values, feelings, and attitudes, it is worth contending that in such a scenario, drug addiction is a choice. Overall, it is worth inferring that drug addiction can be a disease or a choice and that the cause of addiction plays a moderating role and should be used for purposes of distinction.

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