



## Personality Correlates of Drug Abusers

Dr. Priyanka Neeta Masih<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, St. John's College, Agra.

### Abstract

The drug abuse refers to improper use of drugs or it refers to person's illicit use of substance. The objective of this article is to study the personality traits of drug abusers and non-drug abusers. The sample comprised 200 adolescent boys ranging between the age or 17 to 21 years of Agra region. Dimensional Personality Inventory (DPI) has been used and Duncan Multiple Range Test was applied for analysis of data. Results indicate that drug abusers differ significantly than non drug abusers, i.e., drug abusers were found to be passive, suspicious, depressive and emotionally unstable in comparison to non drug abusers as they were more active, trusting, non-depressive and emotionally stable in their personality traits.

### Introduction

Drug abuse refers to improper use of drugs. The connotation is that of excessive, irresponsible and self-damaging use of psycho-active or addictive drugs. In other words, drug abuse, refers to the person's illicit use of a substance. The term is indicating of social disapproval about the use of a drug. But the social connotation of the term varies from culture to culture, time to time and from one situation to another within the same culture. For instance in the United States such substances are (i) legal, although controlled or taxed by the government (e.g., alcohol, tobacco), (ii) legal and prescribed by physicians (e.g., diazepam, barbiturates) and (iii) illegal (e.g., marijuana, heroin). Some drugs may be prescribed in certain states only on special governmental forms (e.g., state triplicate prescriptions for amphetamines). All psycho-active substances are subject to abuse.

In India, chronic intoxication with alcohol is regarded drug abuse, but on specific occasions such as marriage parties to take alcohol is not drug abuse. The use of barbiturates, if perscribed medically, to induce sleep is permissible, but the self administration of the same drugs with the same dosages, for the relief of tension is regarded abuse. The non-medical drug use encircles a variety of behaviours which range from the occasional use of alcohol to compulsive use of opioids, and include behaviours that may or may not be associated with any adverse effects. For example, it may involve experimental use of a drug on one or a few occasions because of curiosity about its effects or in order to conform to the expectations of friends and other peer groups. It may also involve the recreational use of modest amount of drug because of its pleasant

effects of helpful in particular situations such as the use of amphetamine by students or truck drivers to alleviate fatigue. These various forms of non- medical drug use may lead to more intensive patterns of use in terms of dosage and frequency. According to WHO drug abuse is defined as "persistent or sporadic excessive use inconsistent with or unrelated to acceptable medical practice."

Arneja and Sen (1988) had concluded that abuse of drugs has deleterious effect upon the behaviour and personality of the abuser. Reviewing the studies related to personality factor which underlie the preferential abuse of central stimulants versus narcotics, it can be postulated that the amphetamine abuser utilizes the stimulant as one of a variety of compensatory maneuvers to maintain a posture of active confrontation with the environment.

There is no widely acceptable theoretical explanation of drug abuse. But a few attempts have been made to depict that addicting is deeply influenced by psychological, socio-cultural and personality factors and the available of the drugs. Josephson and Carroll (1974), Luckoff (1980) stressed the role of social and demographic variables for drug addiction. Khantzian (1980), Spotts and Schontz (1984) pointed out the psychological variables mainly personality traits were predisposing factors for drug addiction. Arneja and Sen (1992) has separated that personality factors of drug abuses differed significantly from non drug abuses.

Drug addiction may lead to various behavioural, personality, motivational, temperamental changes among individual as well as society. The present study was undertaken with the objective "to study the personality traits of drug abusers and non drug abusers.

## **Method**

### **Sample**

The sample comprised 200 adolescent boys ranging between the age of 17 to 21 years, educated upto minimum high school and having from middle socio-economic status families of Agra region. The technique of sample was purposive

### **Tools**

Dimensional Personality Inventory (DPI) was used. This inventory was developed by Mahesh Bhagava. It consists 60 statements in simple (easy to understand even by low literates), Hindi It measures six important personality dimensions (1) Activity-Passivity, (ii) Enthusiastic- non-enthusiastic, (iii) Assertive-Submissive, (iv) Suspicious Trusting, (v) Depressive-Non-Depressive, and (vi) Emotional Instability and Emotional Stability. Each Personality trait is measured by 10 items through there response alternatives-Yes, Undecided, and No. The 'yes' is to be scored as 2, 'undecided' is to be scored as 1, whereas 'no' is equal to zero. The total time required for administration is 15 minutes

### **Procedure**

After selecting the appropriate tools, the data were collected on the drug abusers and non-drug abusers who were included in the sample. The data were collected by the help of Dimensional

Personality Inventory (DPI). The data from non- drug abusers were also collected in the same way. The scoring of the response sheets was done in accordance with the instructions given in the manual.

## Result and Discussion

The personality traits of all the groups of drug abusers and non-drug abusers were examined. Table 1, shows means of six personality traits of drug abusers and non-drug abusers, and their significance of Means in the form of Duncan Multiple Range Test.

Drug Abusers and Non Drug Abusers	Dimensions of Personality					
	Activity Passivity	Enthusistic Non Enthusiatic	Assertive Submissive	Suspicious Trusting	Depressive Non- Depressive	Emotional Stability Emotional Instability
Sedative Drug Abusers (SDA)	12.50	13.20	12.88	11.32	12.74	12.94
Cannabis Drug Abusers (CDA)	13.16	12.06	11.86	11.76	12.10	11.86
Opioid Drug Abusers (ODA)	13.76	12.66	12.42	12.26	11.86	12.24
Non-Drug Abusers (NDA)	13.92	12.28	11.66	9.14	9.84	10.04

The results indicate that:

1. Non-drug abusers significantly differ from sedative drug abusers on activity-passivity dimension of personality.
2. Opioid drug abusers significantly differ from sedative drug abusers on activity-passivity dimension of personality.
3. Non-drug abusers significantly differ from cannabis, opioid and sedative drug abusers on suspicious-trusting dimension of personality.
4. Non-drug abusers significant differ from cannabis, opioid and sedative drug abusers in depressive and non-depressive dimension of personality.
5. Non-drug abusers significantly differ from sedative drug abusers on emotional stability and emotional-instability dimension of personality.

This finding reveals that due to use of drugs, the drug abusers became more passive, while non-drug abusers were comparatively more active. The narcotic drugs effect the arousal level of the

person as they affect the nervous system of the person directly. In the study of Sharma (1995) found that narcotics are the drugs that diminish sensibility, relieve pain and induce lethargy, drowsiness or sleep. Hence, the narcotic drug abusers taken in the present study were found to be passive in comparison to non-drug abusers. Drug abusers generally became personality trait by which a person shows dominance in his life.

Drug abusers were found to be significantly more suspicious in comparison to non-drug abusers which were more trusting in their personality traits. Drug abusers were found to be suspicious towards their family members, society, surroundings, friends etc. Due to their feelings of loneliness, they feel more suspicion towards others. It is also due to lack of self-control and poor ego strength. Talwar and Pal (1990) studied that dependent persons were inclined to be antagonistic, worried and suspicious. Similar findings were also reported by Salma and Khan (1994) studied that narcotic drug abusers significantly scored much higher on suspicious personality trait than non-drug abusers.

Depression-non depression was another personality trait on which drug abusers and non-drug abusers were found to be significantly different. Drug abusers were found to be more depressive in comparison to non-drug abusers. The reason may be that as the drugs affect the nervous system of the person and induce letharginess and drowsiness, which leads to depression and depression in turn again so that the person may take more drug. Rajendra (1996) indicated that depression is one of the primary symptoms found common in all the substance abusers. Mukopadhy et al (1996), studied three types of drug addicts viz., heroin, brown sugar and nargestic and found that all these three groups were equally highly depressed. Present finding is also consistent with this fact that the group of drug abusers suffered more from depression than non-drug abusers.

Drug abusers and non-drug abusers were also found to be significantly different on emotional stability personality dimension. Drug abusers were emotionally unstable, irritable, inconsistent, whereas non-drug abusers were calm and emotionally stable (Gunthey and Jain, 1997). These results are also supported by the study of Bhargava and Bhargava (1998) that drug abusers significantly scored much higher on emotional instability personality trait than non-drug abusers.

Drug abusers were found to be passive, suspicious, depressive and emotionally unstable in comparison to non-drug abusers as they were more active, trusting, non-depressive and emotionally stable in their personality traits.

## References

- Ameja, Indu and Sen, A.K. (1988). Personality Characteristics of drug abusers and non-abusers: A factor analytic study. *Disabilities and impairments*, 2(1), 9-22.
- Bhargava, M. (1994). *Dimensional Personality Inventory (DPI)*. Agra: Nandini Enterprises.
- Bhargava, M. and Bhargava, Rakhi (1998). Mood states of narcotic drug abusers. *Indian Journal of Clinical Psychology*. 25(2): 178-183.
- Gunthey, R. K. and Jain, Manisha (1997). Family environment and adjustment problems of drug users. *Praachi Journal of Psycho-Cultural Dimensions*, 13(2), 91-95.

- Josephson, E. and Carroll, E. (Eds.) (1974). Drug use: Epidemiological and Sociological Approaches. Washington, D.C. Hemisphere.
- Khantzian, E.J. (1980). An ego self theory of substance dependence: A contemporary psychoanalytic perspective. In D.J. Letteri, M. Sayers and H. W. Pearson (Eds.) Theories on Drug Abuse: Selected Contemporary perspectives, (NIDA) Research Monograph No. 30. Rockville, M. D. National Institute of Drug Abuse.
- Luckoff, I.F. (1980). Toward a sociology of Drug. In D.J. Letteri, M, Sayers, and H. W. Pearson (Eds.) Theories on Drug Abuse: Selected Contemporary Perspectives. (NIDA) Research Monograph No. 30), Rockville, MD: National Institute of Drug Abuse,
- Rajendran (1996). Levels of depression in hospitalized drug dependents. Souvenir Asian and 32 IAAP Conference of Emerging Horizons of Applied Psychology held on 27- 29 Feb., 1996 at A.M.U. Aligarh, p. 71.
- Salma and Khan, Waheeda (1994). Personality and Self-Concept in relation to religion and socio-economic status. A comparative study of drug addicts and normals. Paper presented in National seminar on Health Management- Physical, Psychological and Social Dimensions at National Museum Organized by AASTHA Foundation for Development and Welfare, Delhi on 11th and 13th Nov. 1994. p, 30-31.
- Sharma, M. (1995). Drug Abuse: Highlights on its pharmacological aspects. Indian Journal of Psychology, 70 (3 and 4), 109-113.
- Spotts, J.V. and Schontz, F.C. (1984). The phenomenological structure of Drug Induced States. II. Barbiturates and sedative hypnotics. International Journal of the Addictions, 19, 995-326.
- Talwar, V, and Pan, A.K. (1990). A study of drug addict process among university students. Disabilities and Impairment, 4(2), 147-155.
- World Health Organization (1973). Youth and Drugs, Technical Report No. 516. Geneva: WHO.