

Comparison of Self Esteem among Persons with and without Substance Abuse in Kashmir

Abstract

Background: Substance dependence is a big issue in our society and associated with domestic violence, which in turn aggravates the physical and emotional distress of the family. Those who have low self-esteem struggle to find success and happiness, mostly because they do not feel themselves worthy of enjoying such things. Their lack of self-worth will affect every area of their life, especially their relationships with other people. Many of those who are dealing with low self-esteem will turn to substance abuse because it offers a temporary solution to their problems. **Aim:** The aim of the study is to compare marital adjustment between the spouses of individuals with alcohol dependence syndrome and spouses of normal population. **Methods:** It was cross sectional study conducted at DDC SMHS Srinagar and outside the said institute. A total of 60 samples were taken and these 60 were divided further with 30 samples of persons with substance abuse and 30 samples of persons who do not abuse any substance, purposive sampling was used. The scales which were used are W.H.O G.H.Q. and Rosenberg's self-esteem Scale. **Results:** Finding indicates that persons who do not abuse any substance showed higher self-esteem as compared to persons who have abuse substance. **Conclusions:** Substance abuse and self-esteem mutually impact one another. Substance abuse use can temporarily raise or lower self-esteem, but it typically creates lower self-esteem in the long-term.

Keywords: Substance, Mental Health, Self-esteem.

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Introduction:

The purpose of the study is to compare the self-esteem between the individuals who abuse substance and those individuals who do not consume any substance. Self-esteem reflects an individual's overall subjective emotional evaluation of his or her own worth. It is the decision made by an individual as an attitude towards the self. Self-esteem encompasses beliefs about oneself, (for example, "I am competent", "I am worthy"), as well as emotional states, such as triumph, despair, pride, and

shame. According to Smith and Mackie (2007) "The self-concept is what we think about the self; self-esteem, is the positive or negative evaluations of the self, as in how we feel about it". Self-esteem is attractive as a social psychological construct because researchers have conceptualized it as an influential predictor of certain outcomes, such as academic achievement, happiness, satisfaction in marriage and relationships, and criminal behavior. Self-esteem can apply specifically to a particular dimension (for example, "I believe I am a good

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writer and feel happy about that") or a global extent (for example, "I believe I am a bad person, and feel bad about myself in general"). Psychologists usually regard self-esteem as an enduring personality characteristic ("trait" self-esteem), though normal, short-term variations ("state" self-esteem) also exist. Synonyms or near-synonyms of self-esteem include many things: self-worth, self-regard, self-respect, and self-integrity.

Causes of low self-esteem: If people have suffered from any type of child abuse, then this can severely affect the way they view themselves. Children lack the knowledge and insight to understand the situation, and so they end up blaming themselves for the abuse. This feeling of somehow being wrong stays with them into adulthood. Physical, mental, or sexual abuse can all have lasting consequences on a child's sense of self-worth, Harter, S. (1993). If parents fail to make their child feel valued and important, then this can later lead to poor self-esteem. Often, it is not what the parents have said that is the problem, but what they have not said. Children are highly sensitive to their environment, and they need to be nurtured. If young people feel that they have failed to live up to their parent's standards, it can mean they find it difficult to value themselves. Receiving too much criticism when growing up can leave behind mental scars. People who are always being told that they are a failure will start to believe this. The way people are treated by their peers is also important for self-esteem. One of the most compelling functions of a peer group is feedback on behavior (Karbasi, M., & Vakilian, M. (1998). Consistent negative feedback can have a profound effect on a person. Being the victim of racism or prejudice will usually change the way people view themselves. Those individuals who have issues around their physical appearance can easily develop feelings of low self-worth. In the modern world, there is too much emphasis placed on physical beauty. The media is largely responsible for this obsession. Feelings of being unattractive will lead to low self-esteem. When people feel that they do not really fit in anywhere it will change the way they

view themselves. This lack of connectedness with other people is common among people who are dealing with esteem issues.

Drug addiction and self-esteem:

The way that people view themselves will have an impact on how they experience their life. Those who have low self-esteem struggle to find success and happiness, mostly because they do not feel themselves worthy of enjoying such things Harter, S. (1993). Their lack of self-worth will affect every area of their life, especially their relationships with other people. Many of those who are dealing with low self-esteem will turn to substance abuse because it offers a temporary solution to their problems. Using alcohol and drugs to escape their feelings of low self-worth only leads to further misery and addiction. Hamid Reza Aalavi (2011) studied the role of self-esteem in tendency towards drugs, theft and prostitution. His study aimed to investigate the role of self-esteem in the individual's tendency to drug addiction, theft and prostitution in Kerman city Iran. The statistical population of this study was those who had a record of addiction, theft and prostitution in the central prison of Kerman city and the ordinary individuals. The research sample consisted of 300 individuals, 200 of whom were those with the record of addiction, theft and prostitution in the central prison of Kerman city and 100 ordinary people. Because some research questionnaires were not returned only 283 samples were analyzed. The instrument for determining the respondent's self-esteem was Eysenck Self-esteem Inventory. Results concluded that those who are involved in addiction, theft and prostitution have a lower self-esteem compared with the ordinary person. Thus, it is necessary to increase an individual's self-esteem in order to decrease their tendency to addiction, theft and prostitution. Low self-esteem plays a crucial role in the development of substance use disorders, especially in women. "Low self-esteem is a strong predictor of alcohol use and abuse in young women," reports The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University in *Women Under the Influence*.

“One study found that girls, who at age 12 were low in self-esteem, were nearly two and a half times likelier to engage in heavy alcohol use at the age of 15 than those higher in self-esteem.

Effects of low self-esteem:

Those who are dealing with low self-esteem may experience many of the following problems: Failure to value one-self leads to a failure to take care of oneself. The person may not see the point of putting much effort into their bodies and minds. This means that they will be far more likely to suffer from poor physical and mental health. Low self-esteem can lead to premature death. Not believing in oneself will limit one's potential. A person may not be willing to put in the necessary effort to achieve their dreams, because they not believe it will bring results. Such people may be convinced that mediocrity is all they deserve. Individuals with low self-esteem are far more likely to turn to alcohol or drugs as a means of escaping their problems. People with low self-esteem often end up in abusive relationships. This is because they can inwardly feel like such relationships are all they deserve. When people do not value themselves highly they are more likely to bow to peer pressure. Many individuals who end up in dangerous cults suffer from low self-esteem. It can be hard for such individuals to trust other people. They may believe that anyone who is trying to help them has a hidden agenda. They can also go to the other extreme where they trust unworthy individuals too much. These individuals will be highly insecure in relationships. If they do not value themselves, then they will find it hard to believe that other people can value them.

Symptoms of low self-esteem:When people suffer from low self-esteem it will usually be obvious in the way they behave. These are some of the symptoms of low self-esteem. Such individuals live in fear of change and uncertainty. They are unwilling to take the risks that are necessary to find success in life. They will tend to assume that other people think badly of them. There is often no evidence for this assumption. People with low self-esteem tend to see

everything in black and white. Things are either right or wrong. This type of thinking is problematic, because there are so many grey areas in life. Such a rigid way of thinking leads to ignorance, intolerance and feelings of unhappiness. Such individuals are always putting themselves down. A bit of humorous self-deprecation can be charming, but some people never have anything good to say about themselves. When people have low self-esteem, they will tend to always be suspicious of other people's motives. High expectations of other people followed by disappointment when these individuals seem to let them down. It may often appear that people with self-esteem expect too much of others while expecting too little from themselves. Low self-esteem leads to jealousy in relationships. People in this category may achieve something, but will still not feel satisfied. They find it hard to deal with compliments and will doubt the sincerity of those who offer them. These individuals will often also be too needy, and this can put too much pressure on their relationships. They will also tend to choose partners who are unsuitable.

Objectives:

To assess and compare self-esteem between persons with substance abuse and the persons without substance abuse.

Material and Methods

Sample size: The samples were selected by using purposive sampling technique and a total of 60 samples which were further divided into 30 patients suffering from substance abuse and 30 persons who are not taking any substance.

Research design: The present study was a hospital based cross sectional comparative study between persons with substance abuse and persons without substance abuse.

Sampling: Samples were taken by using purposive sampling method from drug de addiction centre

SMHS Srinagar.

Inclusion criteria for patients: Patients attending DDC SMHS Srinagar, who are diagnosed with any substance abuse at dependence level according ICD-10 (D.C.R), patients with substance abuse dependence of age between 16 to 60 years, patients who are not having any co morbid psychiatric illness, patients who are having illness of duration not less than 1 year, patients who are educated up to minimum of 10th standard.

Exclusion criteria for patient: Patients who are less than age of 16 years and more than the age of 60 years, patients who have duration of illness less than 1 year, patients who are having some other severe physical or mental illness, patients who are illiterate or having education below 10th standard.

Inclusion criteria for persons without substance abuse or dependence: persons who are not taking any psycho active substance, persons within the age group of 16 to 60 years, persons who are not having any psychiatric illness, persons who are educated up to minimum of 10th standard.

Exclusion criteria for persons without substance abuse or dependence: persons who are taking any psycho active substance, persons who are not within the age group of 16 to 60 years, persons who are having any psychiatric illness, persons who are not educated up to minimum of 10th standard.

Tools: The following tools were used in the study

- (i) Socio demo graphic data sheet: It is a semi structured, self-prepared Performa especially created for the study. It contains

information about the socio demographic variables like age, sex, religion, education, marital status, occupation and domicile.

- (ii) General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) is a self-administered screening questionnaire, designed for use in consulting settings aimed at detecting individuals with a diagnosable psychiatric disorder (Goldberg & Hillier, 1979).
- (iii) Rosenberg's self-esteem scale(1965): The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, a widely used self-report instrument for evaluating individual self-esteem, was investigated using item response theory.

Procedure: Initially permission was taken from the director and the head of the department of the psychiatry of the institute for conducting the present study "*comparative study of self esteem between persons who abuse substance and persons who do not abuse any substance in Kashmir*" after screening according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, samples were selected for the current study from the inpatient department of DDC SMHS Srinagar and outside the said institute. The objectives of the study were explained to the participants. After establishing the rapport and explaining the purpose of the study the details of the socio-demographic data and various scales like General health Questionnaire, Rosenberg's self-esteem scale was administered.

Results

For the statistical analysis SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) 16.0 version was used. *t* test was used for the statistical analysis.

Table 1 shows the comparison of social demographic details of participants

Variables		Group			
		Normal Control		Substance	
		N =30		N =30	
		N	%	N	%
Religion	Hindu	1	3.30	2	6.70
	Islam	27	27	28	93.30
	Sikh	2	6.70	0	0
Education	Metric	5	16.70	9	30
	Intermediate	7	23.30	5	16.70
	Graduation	11	36.70	9	30
	Post Graduation	5	16.70	7	23.30
	Other Higher Education	2	6.70	0	0
Domicile	Urban	14	46.70	19	63.33
	Rural	16	53.30	11	36.66
Marital Status	Married	17	56.70	20	66.33
	Unmarried	13	43.30	10	33.33
Occupation	Unemployed	2	6.66	1	3.33
	Business	6	20	11	36.66
	Professional	10	33.33	8	26.66
	Government Service	5	16.66	8	26.66
	Unskilled Labor	7	23.33	2	6.66
Socio-economic Status	Low	3	10	2	6.66
	Middle	24	80	27	90
	High	3	10	1	3.33

Table 2:Shows the comparison of self-esteem between persons with substance abuse and persons without substance abuse.

Self esteem	GROUP		
	Persons with substance abuse M±SD	Persons without substance abuse M±SD	t
Total Self esteem	14.4± 3.83	20.8 ±3.82	6.46**

**= Significant at 0.01 level.

Result and Discussion

In socio demographic details, no significant difference was found. The average score of mean and standard deviation of total self-esteem among persons with substance abuse is 14.4 ± 3.83 and average score of mean and standard deviation of self-esteem of persons without self-esteem is 20.8 ± 3.82 which is higher than the persons with substance abuse indicating that persons without substance abuse have higher self-esteem than that of persons with substance abuse. Some studies that are related to my results of the studies are: Kounenouin (2011) found that increased self-esteem is the predictor of avoidance of drugs and narcotics. Furthermore, Kahn reported that lack of self-esteem can be correlated with increase in likelihood of some crimes and drug abuse. Wheeler found that increased self-esteem in girls can reduce the probability of drug abuse and desire for premarital sexual intercourses. Guglielmo et al., (2011) reported that low self-esteem is correlated with drug use. Feltis (1991) also reported that there was a very strong negative correlation between trend of drug use and amount of self-esteem in adolescents, and children. Those, whose self-esteem did not grow well, are more probable to consume drugs. Smart and Ogborne (1977) reported that youths under treatment for drug abuse had lower self-esteem. Emery et al. found that student's self-esteem (at home or at school) is reversely correlated with drug use (illegal substances and drugs), tobacco and alcohol. McMurran (2007) quoted that some criminals have low self-esteem. Perhaps, one of the major known causes of crime of offenders is that they have low self-esteem. McMurran (2007) showed that low self-esteem is strongly correlated with alcohol consumption; and found that mild cannabis consumers, in comparison with non-users of cannabis have lower sense of self-worth and are more sinful. Offenders know themselves as lazier, more sad and less smart than non-offenders; they believe they are undesirable, they do not love themselves, and have no value and respect for themselves. Emery

et al 1983 experience that clinical experience is that whatever the precipitating factors remained for example experiment, positive reinforcement (pleasure seeking), negative reinforcement (withdrawal symptoms) or coping, gives them the picture that addiction in long-term causes low self-esteem and also sometimes those persons who have poor coping styles accompanied with low self-esteem sometimes get engaged in substance abuse in order to have better coping and boost self-esteem which approach is also counter productive. Abouserie, R. (1994) conducted study and find out that a significant negative correlation between self-esteem and both academic and life stress emerged, indicating that students with high self-esteem are less stressed than are those with low. Substance abuse and self-esteem mutually impact one another. Substance abuse use can temporarily raise or lower self-esteem, but it typically creates lower self-esteem in the long-term.

Conclusion

It can be said that persons with substance abuse have lower self-esteem than that of persons without substance abuse. Low or high self-esteem can be a contributing factor to substance abuse and dependence, but an appropriate level of self-esteem is a powerful tool in the battle against Substance abuse (Crocker & Park 2004, Damon & Hart 1982). The self-esteem built up by self-verification buffers the negative emotions that occur when self-verification is problematic, thus allowing continued interaction and continuity in structural arrangements during periods of disruption and change (Cast & Burke, 2002).

Limitations: Being time bound study sample size was small and hence the results could not be generalized. Comparison with some other disorder could have been done. The study needed to be carried out on a large sample with comparable representations of the both groups.

Future directions: The future study must be attempted to include some other psycho-social aspect of the spouses of persons with substance abuse which are being experienced by them.

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