Injuruty: Interdiciplinary Journal and Humanity
Volume 4, Number 8, August 2025
e-ISSN: 2963-4113 and p-ISSN: 2963-3397

The Relationship between Drug Addiction with Age, Life Difficulties, and Level of Knowledge

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Abstract
This study investigates the relationship between Drug addiction and factors such as adolescence, knowledge level, and life difficulties among teenagers in District 12 of Kabul city. The primary objective is to clarify how drug addiction among adolescents is associated with their age, awareness level, and life-related pressures. A sample of 140 adolescents from District 12 was selected for the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of 10 questions divided into two sections. The questionnaire's reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82, and its validity was endorsed by 8 senior academic experts. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 21. The findings indicate that drug addiction among adolescents in this district does not have a strong correlation with age. However, there is a significant association between drug addiction and life stressors. Additionally, the level of knowledge showed a moderate relationship with drug addiction. The study concludes that other contributing factors should also be considered in understanding the causes of drug addiction among adolescents. The results may serve as a valuable resource for families and relevant institutions to develop strategies aimed at preventing drug usage among youth.

Keywords: Adolescents, Solutions, Kabul City, Causes, Drug

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical stage in human development, marking the transition from childhood dependency to adult independence (Kaliwal, 2017). This period is characterized by rapid physical, emotional, and social changes that can significantly influence life trajectories. While adolescence offers opportunities for personal growth and skill development, it is also a time of heightened vulnerability. Among the many challenges adolescents face, drug use and addiction have emerged as pressing public health concerns globally. Recent reports indicate a rising trend in narcotic use among teenagers, with long-term implications not only for individual health but also for families and communities (Roushan, 2014; Mirzai, 2011; Shabani, 2016). The urgency of addressing adolescent drug use is underscored by its potential to derail educational attainment, social development, and future employment opportunities, making early intervention strategies critical.

Previous research has highlighted multiple factors contributing to adolescent drug use. Physiological changes during puberty, heightened emotional sensitivity, peer pressure, and limited life experience create a context in which adolescents are particularly susceptible to experimenting with substances (Mirzad & Habibi, 2018; King et al., 2020). Studies have also shown that peer influence plays a decisive role; if one adolescent engages in drug use, there is a strong likelihood that others in the same social group will follow suit (Wang et al., 2021). Emotional instability, mental health issues, and risk-taking behavior further exacerbate vulnerability to substance use (Pape et al., 2018; Patrick & Schulenberg, 2021). While these studies provide important insights, most focus on isolated factors, such as peer influence or emotional instability, without considering the complex interaction of multiple psychosocial determinants (Pardo et al., 2020). Moreover, existing research often emphasizes urban populations, leaving gaps in understanding the experiences of adolescents in rural or socioeconomically diverse settings (Duan et al., 2022; Khatib et al., 2022).

Addressing these gaps is essential for developing more effective prevention and intervention programs, as integrated approaches that combine psychological, social, and environmental factors have proven more effective than single-factor models (Dick et al., 2019). There is a need for research that holistically examines adolescent substance use through a bioecological or multilevel framework, which recognizes the interplay of family, school, and community environments (Shih et al., 2021). Furthermore, longitudinal studies are limited, despite evidence showing that long-term tracking provides critical insights into trajectories of substance use and recovery (Kuntsche et al., 2017; Maggs et al., 2020). Most research does not yet explore the nuances of how different peer dynamics and emotional states interact to influence behavior, even though studies suggest that peer networks significantly shape patterns of initiation and persistence (Henneberger et al., 2019). Examining these interrelated factors allows researchers to bridge the gap between theory and practice, generating actionable insights that can inform educational strategies, policy design, and health interventions tailored for diverse adolescent populations (Trucco, 2020; Conway et al., 2023).

This research introduces a novel approach by combining the study of emotional, social, and environmental influences on adolescent drug use into a single analytical framework. Unlike previous studies that often treat these variables independently, this study aims to understand their interaction and cumulative impact. Such an integrated perspective is expected to shed new light on the pathways leading adolescents toward or away from drug use, contributing to both scientific literature and practical interventions.

The objectives of this study are twofold. First, it seeks to identify the key psychosocial factors that influence adolescent drug use. Second, it aims to explore how these factors interact within peer groups and broader social environments. By achieving these objectives, the research will provide evidence-based recommendations for preventive strategies, targeted educational programs, and community interventions that are tailored to the unique needs of adolescents in diverse contexts.

The benefits of this research extend beyond academic contributions. Understanding the multifaceted influences on adolescent drug use can help reduce the prevalence of substance abuse, improve adolescent well-being, and foster healthier communities. Early identification of risk factors and effective intervention strategies have the potential to safeguard the future of adolescents, ensuring they can navigate this critical stage of life successfully and make positive contributions to society.

METHOD

This study examines the relationship between age and drug addiction among adolescents in *District 12TH* of *Kabul City*. This is a descriptive-applied study conducted in the *12th district* of *Kabul City*. Data were collected from 140 adults using a random sampling method. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 21 to answer the research questions.

In this study, primary data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire divided into two sections with a total of ten questions. To determine the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, it was first shared with eight senior professors. After making the necessary adjustments, it was distributed to 30 adolescents; through this method, a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82 was obtained using the SPSS program. The study’s background and conceptual explanations were supported by published scientific articles and books. Moreover, the collected data were analyzed using SPSS 21 statistical software. Simple linear regression was used to determine the effects of independent variables on dependent variables, and the relevant coefficients were extracted as needed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this study, correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between age and drug use among adolescents in District 12th of Kabul city. The correlation coefficients relevant to this research were extracted and analyzed. The collected data have been organized and presented in a table.

Table 1. Participants' Age Distribution

Age Range (Years)	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
14–16	40	28.6%
16–18	65	46.4%
18–20	35	25.0%
Total	140	100%

Table 1 presents the distribution of participants according to their age. Among the total 140 participants, 40 individuals (28.6%) were between 14 and 16 years old, 65 participants (46.4%) were aged 16 to 18 and 35 participants (25.0%) fell within the 18 to 20 age group. This distribution indicates that the majority of the participants were between 16 and 18 years old.

Table 2. Engagement Status of Participants

Engagement Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
School students	80	57.2%
Working alongside school	45	32.1%
Not attending school	15	10.7%
Total	**140**	**100%**

From the above table, it is evident that out of the total 140 participants, 80 are school students who focus solely on their education, 45 are individuals who both attend school and work alongside their studies, and 15 are participants who do not attend school at all. This distribution sheds light on the different forms of engagement among youth in terms of education and employment—showing that the majority are committed only to schooling, a considerable number is handling dual responsibilities, and a small segment has separated from formal education.

Table 3. This table illustrates the relationship between age and other variables with drug use among adolescents in District 12th of Kabul city.

Significance Level (sig)	Rate of Change (T)	Standardized Coefficient (Beta)	Standard Error (SE)	Variables
0.002	-3.470	0.808	1.393	Effects of Lack of
0.000	2.249		0.106	Information
0.84	-1.362	0.618	0.912	Effects of Life
0.000	4.154		0.065	difficulties
0.001	3.730	-0.211	1.041	Effects of Adolescent
0.264	-1.041		0.074	Age

Table 3 indicates that among adolescents, the most influential factor contributing to drug use is the lack of information about drugs and their harmful effects. As shown in the table, the variable "lack of information" has a high rate of change (T) and standardized coefficient (Beta), while its significance level (Sig.) has dropped to 0.000, indicating a strong and statistically significant impact of this independent variable on the dependent variable. The second most influential factor is the presence of life difficulties. This variable also shows a high Rate of change (T) and Beta coefficient along with a low significance level, meaning that life difficulties among adolescents can significantly explain their tendency toward drug use. Looking at the table, it appears that age does not have a significant relationship with drug use

among adolescents, as its significance level is higher than 0.05. This suggests that age alone is not a strong predictor of drug use in this study.

The findings of this study are supported by the research of Javanmard (2014), who found that adolescents exposed to violence are more likely to use drugs. Similarly, this study demonstrated that the presence of life difficulties is a strong contributing factor to drug use among adolescents. The present research shows that adolescence itself is not a direct cause of drug use; rather, lack of awareness and life difficulties are the main driving factors. Our findings do not align with those of Mozaffar and friends. (2009), who found that reduced family conflict is associated with decreased drug use among adolescents. In contrast, some findings of this study indicate that there is no significant relationship between family problems and drug use, which supports the research of Shabani (2017), who also found no positive correlation between family intimacy and levels of drug use. However, these results are not in agreement with the findings of Haji Poor et al. (2024), who emphasized the important role of the family in adolescents' tendency toward drug use.

The findings of the present study are supported by Mirzai and Neyli (2011), who show that education about addiction plays an important role in the prevention of drug use. This study reached similar conclusions. The findings of Niazi and Arani (2018) also closely align with those of this research, as both studies indicate that life difficulties can lead adolescents to drug abuse, and if these difficulties are reduced or eliminated, the rate of drug use can decrease.

If we want to protect adolescents from drug use, this must be done through a collective effort. Sediqi (2019) suggests that multi-faceted approaches should be employed for drug prevention, and the findings of this study partially confirm this view. This research also recognizes the important role of psychological, social, and educational factors in preventing drug use.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that adolescent age itself does not play a significant role in the substance use of adolescents. Although adolescence is a period in which young people are like *clay*—malleable and easily influenced in any direction—and is also a stage marked by heightened emotions and impulsiveness, these characteristics alone do not contribute directly to drug use. It appears that a lack of knowledge about drugs and various life difficulties experienced by adolescents are the main factors leading them toward drug use. Adolescence is inherently a stage full of pressures. As adolescents reach puberty and undergo physical changes, they may be driven toward risky behaviors, especially if they lack sufficient information and awareness about these changes. Since adolescents at this stage have limited experience, if they do not possess adequate knowledge about drugs, there is a higher likelihood that they might turn to drug use because they are very sensitive at this age. The more adolescents are protected from different pressures and receive adequate attention, the more confident they feel, which helps reduce their inclination toward drug use.

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