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## **Drug Addiction: A Case Study of an Opium Addict**

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**Abstract:**

*This case report is an indepth study of an opium addict .It takes into considertion all the fundamental causes of a person becoming an addict .How youngsters these days are lured by various drugs and ruin their career and lives, even go to the extent of selling things. After proper guidance and counseling I have mande a sincere effort that he doesntot again become a victim of this deadly drug.*

### **1. Introduction and Review of Literature**

The phenomenon of drug addiction is not something new. Hippocrates dwelled upon the medicinal value of opium many centuries ago. In India most of the people know about 'Soma Rasa' & 'Sura' two potent liquors attributed to 'Sagar Manthan'. The use of 'Bhang', 'Dode' and 'Charas' are part of Indian culture and heritage and people have been taking them over the centuries. These days, modern youngsters take drugs in from of capsules, injections, cocaine, smack, opium, iodex, shoe polish etc. Rural simple rustics are addicted to opiates like 'bhuki', 'dode', 'dhatura' 'bhang' etc. Drug addiction is playing havoc with youth and is major health hazard that result in number of problems like school dropouts, delinquency, robbery, spread of HIV infection, frustration, depression, homicide and suicide. Drug addiction include-an overpowering desire or need to continue taking drug, a tendency to increase the dose, psychic & physical dependence on effect of drug, detrimental effects on individual & society. A professor of Neuro-pharmacology at Serrips Research Institute believes addiction reduces brain's ability to function normally. People who are addicted initially take the drug because it makes them feel good, but over time they take it just to return to the feeling 'normal'. Infact, an addict spends most of his/her time not trying to get some extra bliss but just trying to feel normal. But addiction is chronic & relapsing. The phenomena of craving can linger for months or even years after an addict quits using. Very small percentage of people are able to recover from addiction without help, majority of them need assistance.

#### *1.1. Symptoms*

Physical – irregular sleep, loss of appetite, lethargy and excessive fatigue, respiratory problems, drowsiness, sweating, redness in eyes, stomach ache, slurring of speech.

Psychological symptoms – Impaired memory, depression, anxiety, mood fluctuation, emotional, blunting, self centeredness, detachment, low self esteem, lack of performance, lack of insight, no shame & guilt feelings, inconsistent behavior.

Sharan et. al. (2004), have found that one of primary personality dimension or traits directly linked to substance abuse is impulsivity.

Read et.al.(2004) (Nov), they examined concurrent and prospective associations between substance use disorder and post traumatic stress disorder.

Long shore et. al. (2004) have found associations with substance use and peers as outcomes of low self control mediators of relations between low self control & drug.

Volkow (2004) found that co morbidity of drug abuse with depression is well established & has important therapeutic and prognostic implications.

Grella et. al (2005) had written an article in which substance abuse was related to childhood abuse, traumatic events, adolescent conduct problems and adult psychological stress and criminal behaviour in substance abusing offender.

#### *1.2. Causes*

There can be genetic causes that reveal that there is 54% concordance rate in group of identical twins whereas 28% in case of fraternal twins.

- a) Nerve cells in brain have specific opiate receptor to which opiates such as heroin and morphine attach themselves.
- b) Patients & whom drugs are prescribed for over a prolonged period of time e.g.-administered for pain, insomnia, neurotic anxiety etc, become addicted.
- c) According to psychodynamic theorists, people who abuse substance have powerful dependency needs that can be traced to their early years (Shelter,2000: Shedler and Block, 1990).
- d) Cognitive theorists argue that rewards eventually produce an expectancy that substances will be rewarding and this expectation is sufficient to motivate individuals to measure drug use at times of tension.
- e) Number of personality factors and defence mechanisms become important cause of drug dependence.

## 2. Objectives of Study

A detailed case study of an individual suffering from opium addiction will be done. The purpose of this study is to know the causes and consequences of addiction of opium. Case study method is used because it is very comprehensive method giving all details of drug addict. Through his family background, his mental makeup, circumstances and compulsions which are responsible for his becoming a victim will be known. This case study will throw light on other such case as it would be instrumental in knowing about all the persons who become addicts for they have more or less similar causes, consequences & mental states.

## 3. Case History Interview

### 3.1. Data Collection

Detailed information is taken from subject using Sundberg's case study method. Name of patient, family members, and place or birth and residence are kept confidential. All names of places and persons are factitious; so that identity of patient is not revealed.

1. Name	-	Mack (Factitious).
2. Age	-	20 years
3. Sex	-	Male
4. Date of Place of birth	-	1988, at village in Jal. Distt.
5. Religion	-	Hindu
6. Education qualification	-	XII <sup>th</sup>

### 3.2. Reason for Coming to Agency

Mack got conscious about his health, life and career and now wants to lead a normal life, go to abroad and earn money. After his own repeated efforts of leaving the drugs failed he came to de-addiction centre.

### 3.3. Present Situation

After his treatment at de-addiction centre, for one month, now he has give up drug totally and takes medicine regularly and comes for regular check up. He has gained weight and confidence and is soon going to shift abroad.

- Family constellation
- Mother – Illiterate house wife.
- Father – Travel agent (most of the time out of town) and has some agriculture business.
- Sister – 2 sisters younger to him. Both are doing graduation.
- Respondent's Role:-

Before taking to opium, he was happy, cheerful, good looking boy & was caring son. After becoming opium addict, he not only withdrew himself from family but also kept aloof. He became more and more alienated.

#### 3.3.1. Early Recollections.

He was a good player of kabbadi, liked to play other games as well and also loved listening to music and was very fond of horses. He was vey social and had a number of good friends and was fond of travelling.

#### 3.3.2. Birth and Development

Mack had a normal birth and his mother faced no problems during pregnancy and delivery. No injury was caused to him because of any instrument. He was a normal child who started walking at the age of 1 year and 3 months and talking at the age of 1 year and 7-8 months.

He was not the type who would fight with other children rather was a very cute, friendly child. He cherished his early childhood years. He was happy with his friends and often played in village farms. He used to go to school and at tuitions with his friends.

#### 3.3.3. Health (Including Childhood, and Later Diseases and Injuries, Problems with Drugs or Alcohol)

He was a healthy child. He was a good player of kabaddi in school and got minor injuries while playing. He was not victim of inflammation or any serious disease. He grew up to be a strong able-bodied boy.

#### 3.3.4. Alcohol and Drugs

He had been taking opium for the last 4-5 years. His father was away and he used to go and meet him often in holidays. Once he was going with his father's employee in car.

He asked Mack whether he would like to taste opium or not. He said no but was very inquisitive about how this employee would take opium and where would he do so, whether at home or somewhere else.

So, when they reached in third flat, no one was at home and that fellow took opium in front of him with water. It was the first time he saw anyone taking drug so easily and fearlessly. He swallowed it with water, it was black in colour; as if a piece of shoe polish.

That man lured Mack by saying that unless and until one tastes it how can one know what thrill there is. He asked him to taste once, out of curiosity Mack agreed and tasted it for first. He found it very bitter and just swallowed it with water. Second day again for the sake of fun he took it, he felt better. Next day he again tried, it was different and new. It gave him sort of energy boost. He felt sudden bent of strength in him.

Mack came back, he inquired from where could he get opium. Through some links he got the phone numbers of drug peddlers. All he had to do was to just give them a ring and they would come near his house and hand it over to him. He found it very costly; only a little bit would cost Rs. 500.

### 3.3.5. Education and Training (Special Interests and Achievements)

Mack was an average student at school. He did his schooling till class IInd from his native village. He did his matric from some other school in a town where his aunt stayed. XII<sup>th</sup> he did privately. He had always kept tuitions at school. Though he was not a very bright student but he never failed.

### 3.3.6. Work Record

After XII<sup>th</sup>, he gave up studies and started working. He learnt woodwork and continued his work for couple of months. But he lost interest in it and then he used to go and supervise the people working on their agricultural land. He used to collect money from them.

### 3.3.7. Recreation and Interests

He was a very good player of Kabaddi, Football and Volley Ball. He was an active member of village and college team. He was a good sportsman with good health.

### 3.3.8. Sexual History

He has had affairs with number of girls but had not developed any kind of intimate relations with them. They were just his friends. He said that, that way he is moral and never had indulged in any physical relations with them.

He had 3 affairs: -

First girl was from the college where he studied. They were good friends and went to restaurants and talked on mobile phones.

Second girl was from the village where his aunt stayed. He used to go there in holidays and meet her at his aunt's terrace; since she was next door neighbor.

Third girl was from his own village who stayed opposite to his house. She was a teacher. All these relations were short lived and a time pass. Neither he nor girls were serious about affairs.

### 3.3.9. Strengths, Weakness and Ideals

His confidence in himself that he could give up opium was his strength. He had been a good player, those memories and moral support of his family were his strengths. His weakness was his inability to cope up with withdrawal symptoms and relapse when he gave up drugs on his own. His vulnerability to opium and bad company were his weakness.

Ideal are his uncles settled abroad. Now he wants to go to abroad, earn lot of money and become a good and responsible son. Now he is determined to give up the drug forever.

### 3.3.10. Choices and Turning Points in Life

Taking opium for the very first time and becoming an addict was a turning point in his life. He became a very weak willed individual. Deaddiction proved to be another turning point his life. With the help of family efforts, vigilance of doctors and frequent counseling he has been able to conquer his weakness and now he has become career oriented and a good member of society.

### 3.3.11. View of Future

He wants to go abroad, work hard, earn money and never take drugs and make up for what he has lost in his life.

## **4. Results and Discussions**

After taking the case history and continuous interactions with him, the following facts about his becoming an addict came to the surface.

Once he had tasted opium, he made an effort to contact those drug peddlers who could supply him opium regularly. He went astray and only wanted to be in the company of those friends who were also smack addicts; so there was no question of the repair of his self esteem as he was moving in the company of addicts.

He took advantage of the absence of his parents and other family members and used to consume it daily around 12 in the afternoon when nobody was there. At the back of his mind he knew that this opium was ruining his health so in order to compensate for that he used to take milk along with opium. After taking opium he was in the state of euphoria and felt tremendously strong and energetic.

In the presence of his family members he would often avoid sitting with them or go off to sleep or would kill his time roaming about aimlessly with his friends. He did not like to attend social functions or mix with these relatives.

### *4.1. Clues Which Could Lead to the Detection but Went Unnoticed*

Following changes were there in his behavior and physical appearance.

- Redness in the eyes and feeling of drowsiness.
- Weakening of health and weight loss.
- Aggressive and fussy over trifles.
- Lying & cheating his parents in order to buy drugs. Denial and isolation from the family.

At times villagers and friends reported that he was becoming a drug addict they questioned Mack and he outrightly denied. They too trusted him blindly because they could never even imagine that their son could take to drugs.

#### *4.2. His Coming for De-Addiction*

After few years he realized his folly; and repented that how has ruined his health, career and life. He wanted to make a fresh start and tried to give up opium twice on his own, but he failed to cope up with withdrawal symptoms. Then he shared his problem with his father's close friend. His parents were shocked and scolded him for cheating them. Mack confessed that he was very guilty of what he has done and assured them that he wants to give up opium for good and do something constructive with his uncles in foreign country.

Mack's parents made it very clear to him that they would take him to de-addiction centre only if he does not repeat this mistake again in his life. So, I happened to meet him at de-addiction centre, Civil Hospital, Jalandhar.

In the beginning, he was very reserved and gave to the point and brief answers to my queries. He had some fears and apprehensions in his mind. When he got this assurance that I am his well wisher and will not reveal anything to anyone about him, he opened up and shared his shady acts with me.

I analysed his case and delved deep into the factors responsible for making him an addict. I made him realize that he can definitely overcome his weakness and can once again lead a very happy, normal and meaningful life. I made him aware of the disastrous consequences of drugs and gave examples of addicts who had ruined lives and gained nothing out of it.

I helped him to get rid of his irrational beliefs by stressing that he had the real potential of becoming a great player and a good business man by channelizing his energy in right direction rather than scumming to those temporary boosts of energy that drugs gave him.

Thus, with the help of ABC (A for Antecedent Factors, B for Believe System, C for consequences and outcomes) model of Rational Emotive Cognitive Theory I succeeded in restructuring his cognitions and changing his mental makeup from negative to positive.

Along with RET. Counseling of the family members was done. I suggested them that they should keep him busy in one or the other work & should never ever talk about his past and always make him feel loved, wanted and acceptable member of the family. He should be consulted in every matter so that he feels important and worthwhile. They should also see to it that he should not fall into the bad company again.

#### *4.3. Conclusion*

The finding of my case-study interview are as follows: -

##### 4.3.1. Isolation

The most important factor that contributed to his becoming a drug addict was that he was most of the alone at home. His father used to be away on some business tours and mother was busy in her daily chores. Moreover, his sister was studying at distant places. He felt free to do whatever he liked and there was no check on him.

##### 4.3.2. Father's Absence

In the absence of his father he assumed the role played by his father. He gave up studies, started doing work went to collect money from land owners etc and the female members could not question him about what he was doing. As a result, he became master of his own self; and spent lot of money on opium.

##### 4.3.3. Faulty Peer Group Pattern and Low Self Esteem

He was a weak character and was easily influenced by the employee of his father to take the drug. He was not strong enough to resist the temptation rather opium became his weakness and he went to the extent of selling his bike in order to buy opium.

Over and above, he fell prey to bad company as his friends were smack addicts so, the peer group could not enhance his self esteem.

##### 4.3.4. Lack of Focus in Life

Mack had the potential to become a good Kabaddi player but he did not pursue it seriously. He changed his school twice and gave up his studies after XII<sup>th</sup> and tried his hand in various jobs and could not concentrate on any one thing. Hence he became easily vulnerable to opium.

##### 4.3.5. Lack of Motivation in Life

He could not do well in studies or in sports because of lack of motivation on the part of his parents and teachers. Nobody made him realize his potentials or channelized his energies. As a result, his achievement was not upto the mark and he remained an average performer, easily giving a way to drugs.

##### 4.3.6. Non-Identification of Skills

Every child has some special skills and talents which need to be identified. Born in a village, living with illiterate parents and educated in rural school his skills were never identified and remained dormant in him. Has his skills been identified and efforts made to promote them, he would have become a successful and strong boy with high self esteem and would not have easily become a victim of drugs.

#### 4.4. Present Status

After Mack's treatment at de-addiction centre he is trying to lead a normal, healthy and happy life. He acts according to the advice of doctors and comes for regular follow ups. He and his family are in constant touch with me and the members of his family gives me his progress report; he has given up bad company. He now sits and enjoys with his family members and he takes nutritious diet.

#### 4.5. Future Outcomes

Mack has become aware of his responsibilities as a son and a brother. He wants to go abroad and join his uncles in business. He wants to contribute to family income and help his father in marrying off his sisters.

Thus, he wants to do something worthwhile and useful in life and make his parents happy.

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