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Literature Review Essay

Drugs Can Turn a Family Upside Down

Growing up adolescences have to make very difficult and life changing decisions. Many scholars agree one decision that many adolescences are faced with while growing up is whether or not to try drugs. Many adolescences try drugs because their friends or even parents are using drugs. Drugs are very addictive. When adolescences try drugs just once they are very likely to become addicted. When drugs come into families the relationships start to fall apart. Beyond the challenges that a drug addict faces, scholars have studied how families play a role in drug addiction including how parents of addicts play a part in addiction, how drugs cause chaos in families, and how families need to cope/deal with the addict.

Summary

Adolescences are influenced by their parents. When adolescences are small, they are with their parents all the time watching them, learning from them, mimicking them, and figuring out how to live. Journals have shown that the way people treat their adolescences influence their drug use. Montgomery, Fisk, and Craig (2008) states, “individuals are more likely to use drugs if they feel neglected by their parents” (p. 640). Many people use drugs to relieve tensions. Being neglected by parents, who you thought you trusted, causes many tensions between the child and the parents. This often leads to drug abuse. Nuño-Gutiérrez, Álvarez-Nemegyei, and Rodriguez-Cerda (2008) explains that drug addiction is influenced by “conflictive marital relationship; a

semi peripheral father and a mother with overprotective tendencies; parental styles with diffuse rules; distanced families; low income; [and] parents with low schooling [levels]” (p. 362).

Kumpfer (2016) states, “Research suggests that children of addicted parents experience two to nine times greater risk of becoming substance abusers as adolescents or adults” (p. 7). Parents think their adolescences will make better choices and learn from their mistakes, but this research shows that children of addicts are at way higher risk of following their parents same path of addiction. The first journal Montgomery, Fisk, and Craig (2008) also says, “One study revealed that children of parents who exhibited little warmth and control increased their drug use during adolescence” (p. 641). This research shows stress, tensions, and unbalanced relationships in families have a big impact on their adolescences, making adolescences at greater risk of drug use.

Drugs affect the way families function. The drugs become a tornado ripping apart the relationships, fun, activities, and calmness in families. Choate (2015) expresses, “Parents saw their lives beginning to fall into a pattern of chaos” (p. 468) when family members use drugs. Dawe, Harnett, Rendalls, and Staiger (2003) explain, “Parents were reporting elevated levels of stress in the parenting role” (p. 305) when dealing with children on drugs. Drugs change how a person acts and they have the potential to make bad choices. This causes lots of stress for parents. Choate (2015) also states, “Parents reported a growing desperation and an increased inability to effectively cope” (p. 468) with the addiction in the family. Parents are very desperate to have life back to the way it was before their child started taking drugs. The parents want their family to be “normal.”

Researchers have studied the way families of drug addicts can receive help. One way families can receive help is by coping with the drug addiction. Dawe, Harnett, Rendalls, and Staiger (2003) explain, "Coping skills are acquired within the context of a supportive, validating therapeutic relationship" (p. 300). Once you are able to cope with the drug addict's problem then it is time to start family therapy. Family therapy has the addict and their family meet with a therapist to bring up problems in a safe environment. Smith, Hall (2008) has come up with a new type of family therapy called "Strengths-Oriented Family Therapy (SOFT)" (p. 185). The study explains, "SOFT shares many components with other prominent models of family treatment. . . the SOFT approach contains four main activities: (1) family-based assessment and motivational feedback (that is, SORT), (2) work with individual families that progresses through three stages, (3) multifamily groups, and (4) SOFT case management, as needed" (p. 185). Smith and Hall (2008) goes on to explain "SOFT treatment usually lasts for about 12 weeks, with adolescent clients attending approximately five biweekly two-hour family sessions. Families also attend 10 weekly two-hour multifamily groups. Thus, each client receives approximately 30 hours of SOFT treatment. In our preliminary report, families, on average, received 24.8 hours of treatment. Approximately 57 percent of clients completed SOFT treatment, which was 12 percent higher than the comparison group" (p. 187). This program not only helps the addict but also the family copes with their problem.

Discussion and Evaluation

All of the preliminary research has shown that parents are a big part in the addict's life. The influence of the parents is very important. The article by Montgomery, Fisk, and Craig (2008) explain that parents "have been found to influence the initiation into drug use as an

adolescent” (p. 640). This is research concluded by lots of studies. The Study by Nuño-Gutiérrez, Álvarez-Nemegyei, and Rodríguez-Cerda (2008) explains, “The fact that 90% of the interviewed families had a history of legal drug use and another 72% had a history of illegal drug use on the part of the male authority figures defined familial tolerance attitudes toward drug use. Still, parents believed their children would avoid repeating the same drug use pattern if they observed the associated problems” (p. 361). Their influence may be causing permanent damage that takes lots of time, money, and therapy to fix. No parent wants their child to become a drug addict, but before you know it, they can become addicted to drugs.

The article by Montgomery, Fisk, and Craig (2008) and the article by Kumpfer (2016) both lack the knowledge about the drug addict’s parents. Who knows if the parents take drugs? Or if they are addicted to drugs? Knowing information about the drug addict’s parents is very important. The gap of research from Montgomery, Fisk, and Craig (2008) and Kumpfer (2016) is filled with knowledge found in Choate’s (2015) article. Choate (2015) explains one father’s experience with drugs, “I smoked pot for 30 years and I couldn’t really cut it down. You know, I was going to do it. I was gonna get up in the morning and do it all day long until I went to bed. And I saw my son doing the same thing, but I saw him like just going down the toilet” (p. 467). The evidence provided in Choate’s article strengthens his point.

The research also agrees that coping with the drug addiction is very important. The journal by Smith and Hall (2008) brings light to families and therapists about a different way to deal and cope with the addict. Dawe, Harnett, Rendalls, and Staiger (2003) also gives families another way to help with drug addiction in the family by having “family-based interventions that are aimed at helping parents use consistent, non-punitive parenting practices to manage child behavior, improve family relationships and employ problem-solving strategies” (p. 299). With

more tools, families have a choice to use what method works best for them.

Two journals that are very similar is Dawe, Harnett, Rendalls, and Staiger (2003) journal and Choate (2015) journal. They both conclude that parents do have an impact on their adolescence drug addiction. Dawe, Harnett, Rendalls, and Staiger (2003) explain that “the outcome for children raised in families which either or both parents’ use illicit substances is generally poor” (p. 300). Choate (2015) explains that parents “who had a significant history of substance dependence [their children] were strongly influenced by those experiences” (p. 467). Both journals stated that the outcome of adolescences who grow up with parents using drugs become very likely to take drugs.

Proposed Research Question

There are many questions that are missing from the research articles. One that is very important to expand on and research is how do drug addicts view their addiction? People have different views/opinions on many things in life like where to go to school, which president to elect, etc. Our opinions have the potential to change not only what we think, but also what others think. Researching the different views people have on drug addiction will show all the different opinions people have.

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