



**THE SOCIAL FACTORS INFLUENCING  
ADOLESCENT DRUG ABUSE: A STUDY OF  
INPATIENT ADOLESCENTS AT  
MAGALIESOORD CENTRE**

by

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to explore the influence of social factors on adolescent drug abuse. The researcher's interest in the study evolved from her involvement with adolescent drug patients at Magaliesoord Centre.

Drug abuse is recognised as one of the greatest social problems in South Africa. Youth, particularly adolescents, are found to be amongst the high risk groups.

The exploratory design was selected for conducting this research. This design is appropriate for this study particularly as it is aimed at exploring to what extent social factors influence adolescent drug abuse. A face-to-face structured interview schedule was used as a data gathering instrument.

Adolescent drug abuse is a phenomenon which is determined by multiple factors. These factors are imbedded in the cultural and social structures within communities. Family and peer behaviour and standards are for most youth the greatest sources of influence.

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To explore the extent to which poor family relationships influence adolescent drug abuse
- To explore the influence of the home environment on adolescent drug abuse
- To explore if peer pressure influence adolescent drug abuse.

From the data acquired, it can be concluded that multiple factors influence adolescent drug behaviour. Of the social environmental factors influencing adolescent drug abuse, the family and peers are perceived as having the strongest influence. Poor family relationships, particularly those characterized by poor communication between parents and their adolescent children, do contribute towards adolescent drug behaviour. Adolescents who

experience their home environment as unstable often resort to drugs as a response to or an escape from their home situation.

Peer pressure resulting from association with drug taking friends often lead adolescents to experiment with drugs, thus leading to eventual abuse.

### **Recommendations**

- ❑ Parents should strive to create a positive atmosphere within the home. This can be achieved by encouraging open communication amongst the family members
- ❑ Parents should communicate openly with their children regarding both acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. This will enable the children to know where they stand in relation to their parents regarding their behaviour.
- ❑ Adolescents should be guided in their selection of friends. Parents should know who their children associate with outside the home.
- ❑ Children should be encouraged and supported at an early age to take part in recreational activities. This will enable them to use their leisure time constructively.

## ABSTRAK

Die doel van hierdie studie was om die invloed van sosiale faktore op adolessente se dwelmmisbruik te eksplorieer. Die navorser se belangstelling het ontstaan uit haar betrokkenheid by adolessente dwelmpasiënte te Magaliesoord-sentrum.

Die misbruik van dwelmmiddels is een van die grootste sosiale probleme in Suid-Afrika. Die jeug, veral adolessente, is 'n hoë risiko-groep.

Vir hierdie navorsing is die eksploratiewe ontwerp gebruik. Hierdie ontwerp is baie paslik in hierdie geval, veral omdat hierdie studie ten doel het om die mate waarin sosiale faktore adolessente se dwelmmisbruik beïnvloed, te ondersoek. 'n Aangesig-tot-aangesig gestruktureerde onderhoudskedule is gebruik as instrument om die data in te samel.

Adolessente se dwelmmisbruik is 'n verskynsel wat deur veelvuldige faktore bepaal word. Hierdie faktore is ingebed in die kulturele en sosiale strukture van gemeenskappe. Gesins- en portuurgedrag en –standaarde is vir die meeste jeugdige die grootste bronne van invloed.

Die doelstellings van hierdie studie was die volgende:

- om die mate waarin swak gesinsverhoudinge adolessente se dwelmmisbruik beïnvloed, te eksplorieer;
- om die invloed van die huislike omgewing op adolessente se dwelmmisbruik te eksplorieer;
- om te eksplorieer of portuurdruk adolessente se dwelmmisbruik beïnvloed.

Uit die data wat verkry is, kan afgelei word dat veelvuldige faktore adolessente se dwelmgedrag beïnvloed. Van die sosiale omgewingsfaktore wat adolessente dwelmmisbruik beïnvloed, word die gesin en portuur as die sterkste invloede beskou. Swak gesinsverhoudinge, veral verhoudings wat gekenmerk word deur swak kommunikasie tussen ouers en hul adolessente kinders, dra by tot adolessente dwelmgedrag. Adolessente wat in 'n

onstabiele huislike omgewing verkeer, wend hulle gewoonlik tot dwelms as 'n reaksie op, of 'n ontvlugting van hulle huislike situasie.

Portuurdruk, komende uit 'n assosiasie met vriende wat dwelms gebruik, lei dikwels tot eksperimentering met dwelms, wat uiteindelik tot dwelmmisbruik lei.

### **Aanbevelings**

- Ouers moet daarna streef om 'n positiewe atmosfeer in die huis te skep. Dit kan bereik word deur ope kommunikasie tussen gesinslede aan te moedig.
- Ouers moet openlik met hul kinders oor beide aanvaarbare en onaanvaarbare gedrag kommunikeer. Dit sa die kinders in staat stel om te weet waar hulle met hul ouers staan met betrekking tot hul gedrag.
- Daar moet aan adolessente leiding gegee word met betrekking tot die keuse van vriende. Ouers moet weet met wie hul kinders assosieer buite die huis.
- Kinders moet van jongs af aangemoedig en ondersteun word om aan ontspannings aktiwiteite deel te neem. Dit sal hulle in staat stel om hul vrye tyd konstruktief te gebruik.



## KEY WORDS

drug abuse

drug behaviour

adolescence

family

parenting

peer group

peer pressure

environment

communication

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