

Drug Abuse

Overview: Drug abuse is the overuse of any drug that affects the mind and body. Drug abuse can lead to mind-altering side effects and can cause serious harm to our blood vessels, heart, brain, kidneys and liver. The desire to abuse drugs usually stems from poor self-esteem and a feeling of helplessness when dealing with everyday life. In addition, drug abuse frequently runs in families, and susceptible individuals may experience peer pressure leading them to drug use and eventually abuse. The most commonly abused substances are alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, heroine, prescription narcotics, barbiturates and psychedelic drugs like LSD. This is a significant problem in our society, potentially affecting tens of millions of people.

Diagnosis: The hallmark of drug abuse is adverse behavior associated with the use of the drug. This negative behavior results in self-destruction or emotional and physical injury to family and friends. People who are suffering from a drug addiction are usually irresponsible about maintaining a job and supporting their loved ones. They will subject the people around them to physical and emotional abuse. Alcoholics and intravenous drug abusers will experience severe recurrent infections and malnutrition due to the nature of the addiction. When examining the patient, the doctor can see signs of serious organ involvement in almost any part of the body. There may be a decrease of mental function, inflammation of the liver or infections of the heart or lungs.

Treatment: The physician will first treat any active infection that is present. Following this, the patient must seek help in a center, away from the substances and circumstances causing the dependency. This allows the body to detoxify. Individual counseling or support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous are very helpful. Life style changes are critical in order to get away from the environment where the substance abuse is common. The people who encourage drug abuse should be avoided to help prevent relapse. Surround yourself with people who care about you. Try to gain satisfaction through a gainful employment and a loving relationship with family or friends. Remember, if you suffer from drug abuse, nobody can solve this problem for you. You must take firm concrete steps to detoxify your body from drugs, avoid the environment where drugs are common and seek help from family, friends and support groups.