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## Research Article

### THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT, SELF-ESTEEM AND STRESS IN ADDICTS AND NON-ADDICTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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#### ABSTRACT

The study was aimed to measure the level of self-esteem, perceived social support and stress among addicts and non-addicts. Addicts have low level of self-esteem, perceived social support and high level stress than non addicts. There would be negative correlation b/w stress and self-esteem, stress and perceived social support and positive correlation b/w perceived social support and self-esteem. A Sample of 100 men were taken 3 out of which were discarded due incomplete form, out of which 42 were addicts and were under treatment for drug addiction relief and other 55 were non addicts. The age range of the participants was minimum 19 and maximum 60 years ( $X=27.18$ ,  $SD=6.87$ ), with minimum primary education. After taking permission from relevant authorities participants were individually administered the Urdu translated version of scales including: Respondent Profile form, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and Perceived Stress Scale (Sheldon Cohen and his colleagues, 1983) were administered to assess perceived social support; self-esteem; and stress respectively. Descriptive statistics, t-test, Correlation statistics, other relevant statistics were applied (SPSS, V.13). Cohen's d was also applied to check the effect size. The results indicated significance in self-esteem in addicts and non addicts ( $t(95)=3.101$ ,  $p=.003$ ,  $d=0.6275$ ), also negative co-relation between stress and self-esteem ( $r=-.305$ ,  $p=.002$ ) while the other results have no significance ( $p>.05$ ). Conclusion: Addicts have low level of self-esteem than non-addicts, but the level of perceived social support and stress has been seen as equal in both groups.

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## INTRODUCTION

Addiction is a state in which person has repeated act of naturally gratifying behavior of person, or excessive substance use without thinking its results. This is called a sickness or medical phenomena which lead this behavior (Angres DH, Bettinardi-Angres K, 2008, Nestler EJ, 2013). According to Medilexicon's Medical Dictionary Addiction is a routine act or physiological reliance on drug it is continuous act which out of once control. When we talk about stress it is a feeling of tension or force. Low amount of stress is helpful and healthy and even beneficial. Positive stress can improve once performance, increase motivation of work and adaption of situations. But excessive amount of stress leads to problematic situations, it causes problems mentally and physically which is harmful. Stress can be internal or external. Internal stress is caused by once perception to the world while external stress is caused by environment. When human perceive that they cannot fulfill the demand or they cannot cope with obstacles they feel stress and perceive things as threatening (Fiona Jones, Jim Bright, Angela Clow, 2001). Self-esteem is person's own

evaluation of his worth. It is a decision of once own attitudes toward self. This holds beliefs that I am Competent enough, I am valuable and feelings of accomplishment, pride, despair and sham (Witt, John, P. 2009). It is also closely related with self-awareness (Schacter, Daniel L.; Gilbert, Daniel T.; Wegner, Daniel M, 2009).

Perceived social support is one's perception toward the people of their surrounding that they are being cared, assistance is available and they are the part of helpful group. The supportive assets could be sentimental (e.g., love, care), substantial (e.g., money), helpful (e.g., guidance, suggestion) and belongingness (e.g., relations). This Support comes from different sources, which includes family, friends, pets, neighbors, coworkers, organizations, etc (Wills, T.A. Margaret, Clark, 1991). These variables have link with each other and the present study is an attempt to see their relationship and role in addicts and non-addicts. To accomplish this purpose the study has been conducted in different drug rehabilitations and data of non-addicts has been collected from general population.

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In a study adolescents and young adults who were using tobacco, alcohol and other drug were found to have low self-esteem and lack of self awareness (Ward, 1995). Another study suggested that people were found to have high self esteem before using Cocaine and before an onset of drug abuse (Rickwood, and Braithwaite 1994, Shaffer, and Jones 1989). Some studies have found that people who have high level of self-esteem tend to display lower involvement in using drug or experimenting the drug (e.g. Gorman, 1996; Schroeder, Laflin, and Weis, 1993). According to Piko (2000) in adolescence those who were addicts had low perceived social support. It was also noted in the same study that less support by father leads to all types of drug addiction as compared to other social supports such as mother and friends. Family plays a major role in life of an individual who is addict. Treatment of addicts also depends upon family's support (Nirmala, 2005). social support and self-esteem have positive association with each other (Esenay, 2002; Kahrman, 2002; Unuvar, 2003). Social support is a positive strength by which people can cope with their anxiety and stress easily and in a good manner (AfsarDir, 2011). Study by Seeman and Seeman (1992) has suggested that people who are addicts have both acute and chronic stress. They found that more than 500 people who were alcoholics have different kinds of stress some were acute and some were chronic such as illness, death of loved once and occupational stressors these stressors were combined with powerlessness of people.

There is a strong association between low self-esteem and delinquent behavior Kaplan (1980). According to him those failure individuals such as failing in exams, difficulty in getting along with their age group were having low self-esteem. Their behavior of low self-esteem is shown by antisocial behavior. Studies suggested that if they are provided adequate environmental support they can cope up with these unacceptable and harmful behaviors (Moradi and Funderbunk, 2006). Positive link was found between perceived social support and self-esteem Lipschitz-Elhawi and Ltzhaky (2005), Teoh and NurAfiqah (2010).

Present study aimed to analyze the discrepancy between addicts and non addicts on the variables of perceived stress, perceived social support and self-esteem. A lot of literature available on the interaction of these variables, but little work has been done in Pakistan in the context of drug addicts. It is therefore important for us to have a better understanding as it will be useful when rehabilitation programs are developed and conducted for this group. Furthermore, relationship between these variables is also calculated to have a better comprehension of the variable interaction. After a detailed literature review it is hypothesized that:

- H1: Addicts would have low of level of self-esteem than non addicts
- H2: Addicts would have high stress level than non addicts
- H3: Addicts would have low perceived social support as compare to non addicts
- H4: There would be a positive correlation between perceived social support and self esteem
- H5: There would be negative correlation between stress and self esteem
- H6: There would be negative correlation between stress and perceived social support.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the purpose of the study the following steps were followed by examiner: a) Selection of subjects b) Selection of scale c) Data collection procedure d) Statistical analysis of data.

### *Participants*

Sample of 100 people both drug addicts and non addicts were taken for the present study the age range of sample was between 19-60 years ( $X=27.18$ ,  $SD=6.87$ ) The addicts were taken from The Drug rehabilitations centers, Drug Free Pakistan and The New Horizon. The non-addicts were taken from different educational institutes and workplace. All the participants were taken from middle socio economic status.

### *Measures*

#### *Demographic Sheet*

A demographic form attached on the top other material. The demographic information which will be needed for the study include: Age, Gender, Socio economic status, Marital status etc.

#### *Perceived Stress Scale*

This scale was developed by Sheldon Cohen & colleagues in 1983. It measures the level of stress of an individual. It is used to assess the stress of situations, the effectiveness of stress-reducing interventions, and the extent to which there are associations between psychological stress and psychiatric and physical disorders.

#### *Rosenberg self-esteem scale*

The Rosenberg self-esteem scales (RSES), developed by sociologist Dr. Morris Rosenberg (1965,) is a self-esteem measure widely used in social-science research. It is a ten-item with items answered on a four-point scale — from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Five of the items have positively worded statements and five have negatively worded ones. The scale measures state self-esteem by asking the respondents to reflect on their current feelings. The Rosenberg self-esteem scale is considered a reliable and valid quantitative tool for self-esteem assessment.

#### *The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)*

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS; Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988) is used to measure person's level of social support within his surroundings. It is a seven point scale consists of 12 items. Each four questions cover family, friends, and significant other. The MSPSS has been locally validated and shown to have satisfactory internal reliability, factorial validity, and test and retest reliability.

### *Procedure*

The researcher approached to two rehabilitation center 1) New Horizon 2) Drug Free Pakistan for taking addict participants and to approach non-addicts researcher visited University of Karachi. In drug rehabilitation centers the permission letter was given to them in which study was briefly defined and confidentiality issue was mentioned. In University of Karachi

50 participants were approached and consent was individually taken from them. After taking permission from the participants, they were given the demographic form, The Perceived Stress Scale (Sheldon Cohen and his colleagues, 1983), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988) and The Rosenberg self-esteem scale (Dr. Morris Rosenberg, 1965) was administered. The examiner was observing and addressing them properly and items of the scale were explained if the participants felt any difficulty.

**Ethical Considerations**

Each participant was told about study purpose. Administration of the scales was preceded by taking consent and assuring them confidentiality. The participants were not required to write their names on the form. This anonymity further supported the issue of confidentiality and gave them comfort in filling the forms. Furthermore it was informed that they have right to withdraw from study.

**Statistical Analysis**

The data was manually scored and then it was analyzed on statistical package for social sciences (SPSS, V.16). ANOVA and correlation coefficient was applied to see the differences and association among variables.

**RESULTS**

**Table-1** showing Descriptive Statistics, t values and Cohen’s d on all variables

	Addicts and Non addict	N	Mean	SD	df	t value	p value	Cohen’s d
Self-esteem	Non-addicts	55	21.7818	3.83788	95	3.101	.003**	0.627
	Addicts	42	19.1190	4.61283				
Perceived stress	Non-addicts	55	18.3273	6.38881	95	.151	.427	0.030
	Addicts	42	18.1190	7.18807				
Perceived social support	Non-addicts	55	63.2000	17.14686	95	1.806	.503	0.370
	Addicts	42	56.8095	17.42473				

\*\* p<.01

Table showing statistically significant difference between the two samples on the variable of Self-esteem (t (95) =3.101, p=.003). On the other two variables, insignificant differences were found.

**Table-2** showing Bivariate Correlation among the Variables (N=97)

Variables		Perceived Stress	Perceived Social Support
Self-Esteem	r	-.305**	.193
	p	.002	.059
Perceived Stress	r	--	-.078
	p		.447

\*\* p<.01

Table showing significant moderately negative correlation (r=-.305, p=.002)

**DISCUSSION**

Now-a-days drug addiction is very common in our society due to which the social and occupation functioning of these addicts starts getting disturbed and they also start facing psychological illnesses. It has been observed that drug addicts usually start with common soft drugs such as pan, chhaliya and gutka. Then

they move to the other drugs such as heroin, opium and cocaine etc. Some of the addicts face different stressors before using drugs and some face stressors after using drug. This can affect their self-esteem too. Our results indicated that the self-esteem of drug addicts is significantly lesser than that of non-addicts. Gold (1980) suggested that people who use drug become drug dependant for feeling good and feel themselves powerful to cope with low self-esteem. Study also suggested that low self-esteem associated with alcohol abuse (Galizio, 1985).

In contrast to the literature, the present study revealed insignificant differences of both groups on social support. One major reason for this could be that for the present study, the data of drug addicts was taken from different drug rehabilitation center, where they are getting treatment. During this process, they must be having support from family and friends. Even the doctors and the nursing staff would be very supportive for them to come out of this addiction. If we had taken the data of those who are still addicts, we might have found differences. According to Baron and Byrne (2005) family members, support of peers and others may helpful in removing of abusive behaviors by supportive behavior. Same can be the reason for not finding differences in the perception of stress between the two samples.

Further result findings suggested a moderately negative relationship between stress and self-esteem.

Although the relationship is moderate, but the significance suggests that the higher score on one relates with somewhat lower score on the other. Though the two groups do not differ in their perception of stress, but self-esteem has some togetherness.

Overall we can see that the group of addicts that are under treatment improves their perception of stress and social support. But self-esteem in the group of addicts is still lesser than those who are not addicts. Future research workers can focus on the differences of those addicts who are not under treatment, those who are under treatment, and those who have successfully completed their treatments to have a better understanding of these variables.

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