A STUDY OF DRUG MISUSE IN RELATION TO HEALTH LOCUS OF CONTROL AND HEALTH CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG YOUNGER AND OLDER ADULTS

ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT

The topic of the present research investigation is "A study of Drug misuse in relation to health locus of control and health consciousness among younger and older adults". The misuse of medicinal drugs is our most widespread and serious drug problem. Medicinal substances that affect the nervous system and emotions often have adverse effects in addition to curing effect. More problematic drugs are sedatives and sleeping pills. Adverse effects can also be caused by pain killers that affect the central nervous system, diet pills, some cough mixtures and certain medicines that affect the intestinal functions. Studies reveal that misuse of prescription medicines is common. Some of the misusers do not use medicines according to the specifications of the prescription and may therefore risk their health. It is hazardous for health to stop course of medication because the symptoms have been alleviated, to overuse drugs and to increase the dosage after habitual use of drugs.

The misuse of physicalistic medicine refers to more or less conscious use of medicines in order to become intoxicated. Drug misuse is taking a legal drug inappropriately e.g. using drugs with an expired shelf life, swapping pills given by other persons, accidently taking wrong medication and taking incorrect dosage. Drug misuse may include overuse, underuse, contraindicated use, drug interactions and other drug related problems.

The elders are the greatest consumers of medications but the emergence of youthful drug misuse has attracted an enormous amount of media and scientific interest.
The present study has examined the relationship between drug misuse and health locus of control, and drug misuse and health consciousness. Health locus of control is the degree to which individuals believe that their health, controlled by themselves, others or by chance. Health consciousness refers to those activities which individual undertake in promoting their own health, and preventing their illness and restoring their health. Health consciousness could be defined as one's acute awareness, interest or concern about achieving and maintaining high level of wellness.

The following research objectives have been set in the present study.

1. To develop the Drug Misuse Questionnaire.

2. To determine differences between younger and older subjects with high internal health locus of control on different levels of drug misuse.

3. To determine differences between younger and older subjects with low internal health locus of control on different levels of drug misuse.

4. To determine differences between younger and older subjects with high powerful others health locus of control on different levels of drug misuse.

5. To determine differences between younger and older subjects with low powerful others health locus of control on different levels of drug misuse.

6. To determine differences between younger and older subjects with high chance health locus of control on different levels of drug misuse.
7. To determine differences between younger and older subjects with low chance health locus of control on different levels drug misuse.

8. To develop Health Consciousness Scale.

9. To determine differences between younger and older subjects with high health consciousness on different levels of drug misuse.

10. To determine differences between younger and older subjects with moderate health consciousness on different levels of drug misuse.

11. To determine differences between younger and older subjects with low health consciousness on different levels of drug misuse.

The sample of the present study consisted of 350 subjects, 180 younger subjects and 170 older subjects. Random sampling technique was utilized to draw out the sample. The age range of younger adults was from 21 to 40 yrs and older adults was from 61 to 75 yrs. The sample was further divided on the basis of scores obtained on Multidimensional Health Locus of Control (MHLC) Scales and Health Consciousness (HC) scale.

Drug misuse was measured by Drug Misuse Questionnaire and Health Consciousness Scale was developed to assess degree of health consciousness. Drug Misuse Questionnaire and Health Consciousness Scale were developed by the researcher. Multidimensional Health Locus of Control scale developed by Wallston, Wallston and Devellis (1978) was used to measure health locus of control orientation among subjects.

The questionnaires were administered individually. Critical Ratio (CR) of percentages was used to examine differences between the comparison groups. The major findings of the present study were:
- Older subjects in comparison to younger subjects have reported that they misuse significantly different kind of drugs for alleviating various kinds of sickness.

- Whereas younger subjects with high IHLC significantly misuse appetites suppressants, inhalants or other things to sniff, throat or cough medicines, cold or congestion relievers, and cornpads and footpowders.

- Younger subjects with high CHLC as compared to older subjects with high CHLC significantly misuse tonic rejuvenators. Antidepressants were also misused significantly by younger subjects with low CHLC in comparison to older subjects.

- Older subjects with moderate health consciousness in comparison to younger subjects with moderate health consciousness significantly consume eyedrops prescribed by other persons.

- Older subjects than their younger counterparts with high, low and moderate health consciousness significantly misuse emfroctions or ointments and anti-allergics.

The fight against drug misuse is not easy. Resources across the whole spectrum of society are needed to make a dent in the problem from community action, political intervention, and through health education.