

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Substance abuse can be described as the harmful usage pattern of chemical substance for mood altering purposes. This is still considered a vague definition as there are many factors and rules that come into play when discussing substance abuse. These “substances” can also include alcohol and nicotine which are legal in most parts of the world but fits the definition quite well. Abuse is defined as the ‘improper use of something’. To smoothen the process or substance control, officials have considered the usage of substance harmful when that repeated use, causes significant health degradation, various disabilities, impaired control, and social issues.

On the other end of the spectrum, there are also people willing to defend substance use stating that it can be used as a stress reliever, for medicinal purposes and going as far as stating that it's a cure for various diseases. Although not proven for most cases, these statements should not be disregarded. There are countries which allow the recreational use of drugs for recreational and medicinal purposes. According to the New Straits Times on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2019, Health Minister Dzulkefly Ahmad was said to introduce a potentially game changing bill which was said to decriminalise drugs in Malaysia. This is a very polarising change to otherwise a very strict policy when it comes to drugs possession. A small amount of cannabis can result in drug possession and trafficking charges and once prosecuted can result in the death penalty. This new policy proves that the governments of the world are acknowledging the beneficial use of drugs.

Although recreational drug use is allowed in many countries, substance abuse is a completely different animal. Abuse of even allowed drugs can be harmful to the user's health. The most common types of substance which are abused are marijuana, heroin, painkillers, meth, cough medicines, and even over-the-counter medicine. Alcohol can also

be abused when consumed in a manner which may cause harm to self or others. Heavy alcohol consumption can also cause liver damage.

Any drug, given its use or legality can be abused. It depends on the individual. Addiction is very dangerous especially in the context of drugs. Fortunately, there are steps to overcome and cure drug addiction and alcohol withdrawal. Anyone who's having issues with substance abuse should come forward to seek help. Especially with the way the government are handling the issue; putting the people's health first before any sort of prosecution. Hopefully with this change, anyone who's having trouble with drugs or alcohol may feel more inclined to seek professional help.

Most drugs which are being abused tend to have negative impact on someone's physicality whether it being intense weight loss, malnutrition, and even contributing to cancer. These medical conditions can be treated by partial hospitalisation. This treatment requires patients to visit the medical centre at least 7 hours per day to be monitored and return to their family or daily life. This treatment strikes a perfect balance between medical treatment and mental healing. There is also obviously professional counselling aimed towards helping with substance abuse. There are tons of websites where someone could seek help even anonymously. Professional counselling includes much more than a face to face talk but also, building a sober family, having commitment exercises, and self-esteem building activities.

Substance abuse is a very vast and intricate topic to just assume the causes and effects. There are many factors that come into play like personal trauma, the environment the person grows in, and various other factors. When it comes down to it, the individual should understand the decisions they are taking to lead a healthier life. And for the people who are suffering from substance abuse, they should come forward and get help. Know that you are not alone, and people are willing to help.

## Reference

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