



## QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF WOMEN'S ADDICTION TO DRUG ABUSE IN TEHRAN

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### ABSTRACT

One of the most important measures in the field of drug use is the recognition of different aspects of drug use among women. The purpose of this research have been to identify outcomes of drug abuse by qualitative method among addicted women. This research was carried out using the grounded theory method. Data collection was done by field method and with the researcher's referral to the women's addiction center in the Vardavard (situated in Tehran, Iran). In the induction section, an inductive sampling method was used and the theoretical saturation after 23 interviews achieved. The data were analyzed using open coding, theoretical and selective. Then a questionnaire was used to confirm the findings of the induction section and total 36 questionnaires were completed in the center of The Vardavard. Data were analyzed using SPSS® software and regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The results showed that the addiction consequences for women at three levels were: physical outcomes, psychological consequences, and social outcomes. Regarding the key role of women in family and community health, and in view of the wide-ranging consequences of drug addiction, it is suggested that comprehensive therapeutic and comprehensive counseling and treatment programs be provided and implemented from affected patients.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Addiction is considered as a social disorder, which many developed and developing communities face with it beside other problems such as environmental pollution and malnutrition (Pour Allah Verdi, 2016). Addiction is one of the greatest problems of human communities. It not only causes social and behavioral disorders, but also influences many aspects of physical health and imposes financial loss to person, families and community. Based on the statistics of the Welfare Organization, 2 to 6 percent of those admitted to addiction treatment centers are females in recent years (Grossi, 2011). Addiction does not relate to gender per se, but it leaves harmful impacts on

women body. Moreover, social conditions of addicted women increase the sensitivity among this group of consumers.

Studies indicate that addicted women have different behavioral patterns compared to addicted men. A research conducted on 672 female addicted people in 10 developing countries revealed that females are more likely to engage in risky sexual relations with their partner. A research carried out in Indonesia revealed that the beginning of drug abuse among women can be seen as a commitment to the male partner, who abuses the drug (Erika et al., 2012). Females' experiences of addiction and their impacts are different from those of males, and they have their own needs, for example, experiences related to physical and sexual violence and prenatal care (Pinkem et al., 2008). On the other hand, drug abuse abnormalities would cause more barriers for females compared to males, affecting their access to treatment (Tachman, 2011). In addition, recent studies have indicated that pregnant women addiction has a psychological, social, and economic impact on children and family in general (Denton, 2014, Bangalore, 2010). In a study, Niazi (2013) evaluated the factors affecting the addicted women in the Central Prison of Isfahan. The research results revealed that the phenomenon of drug abuse in women and the commitment of social deviations (theft, prostitution, drug sale and beggary) are the key phenomena of research.

Ghorbani and Ansari Talebi (2016) investigated this issue in a research entitled "A review of two decades of studies conducted on women's addiction prevalence in Iran since 1995 to 2015". The research results revealed high rate of addicted women and the most important reason involved in this regard was personality and psychological factors. The most commonly used drugs in women were ecstasy and stimulating drugs. Ghorbani (2015) investigated this issue in a research entitled "review of variables affecting women's drug abuse and its impacts" by using library and documentary method. Findings of his study suggests that female addiction has a direct relationship with factors such as age, level of education, marital status and type of job, and other factors such as personal, familial and social causes might also have a significant effect on females' tendency to addiction. Moreover, reduced marriage opportunities for addicted girls, being rejected by family, lack of playing the maternal role, collapsed family, lack of control on behavior of children in family, providing inappropriate behavioral patterns, reduced family relations, and the risk of family members to diseases such as AIDS, etc. can be regarded as impacts of the female addiction.

Farhani Darreh (2014) also examined this issue in a research entitled "explaining the backgrounds and the way of exposure of females with drug addiction in Yazd" using the qualitative method. Findings revealed that addiction history in the family is the most important factor in the tendency of females to addiction, and the family context or background is the main factor paving the way for addiction of females. Friendly interactions and poor life skills are also factors affecting the phenomenon of drug use in females. The impacts of this phenomenon include commitment of social deviations, violating the social relationships, and physical and mental problems. A study conducted by Elizabeth et al. (2016) revealed that drug use in pregnant women results in mental disorders, physical diseases, and social problems.

Maronguni and Olivera (2013) investigated the issue in a research entitled "factors involved in drug abuse among females" using the qualitative and semi-structured interviews. They collected their data through a semi-structured interview from 12 addicted females in Sao Paulo city. Their research

results showed that the drug abuse is affected by various factors at individual, family, familial, social, and economic levels. At the individual level, these factors include low level of education, escaping from school and home in adolescence and spending nights on streets, and sometimes using drugs and having a dangerous sexual relation and failure in finding job.

At the family level, these factors include drug abuse by family members, the conflict between members of family, the types of abuses by parents, other members of the family, and especially the godfather, divorced parents, having addicted spouses and emotional and fragile bond with the family. At the social level, these factors include easy access to drugs, lack of health services, social support, and appropriate training. Helm and Echmato (2016) investigated issue in Hawaii, United States in a research entitled "perceptions based on the drug users' gender, aggression and violence" using the qualitative method. The objective of the research was to investigate the shared chapter of drug offering/refusing the drug with regard to violence and aggression with especial emphasis on perceptions based on the gender. In this research, feminist theories and approaches were used to investigate the role of violence and aggression in refusing the drugs. The research findings revealed that the perception of males and females is different conditions, where drugs are offered.

Findings also revealed that sexual norms and stereotypes are associated with perception of violence and aggression, and females are particularly concerned on the victims of sexual violence. The research findings revealed that violence and aggression are ways to refuse drug offer. Evidence of this research showed that both females and males experienced violence, and aggressive during the abuse refusal. Haritowern (2017) investigated the issue in a research entitled "sustainability of violence: tactics in females injecting drug in Thailand" using the qualitative method. The research author collected data through observing and in-depth interviews with 35 females in Thailand. The research results indicate that tactics of females using the drug to cope with structural violence are escaping from home, adopting male traits, involving in various activities, such as sale of drugs, exchange of sexual relation, and having a consumer partner. The goal of these tactics was to reduce the effects of structural violence and the balance between drug use and gender. Given the results of the mentioned studies, it seems that the causes of drug use and its impacts among males and females are different, despite having similarities. In Iran, several studies have examined the factors and impacts of drug use in males, but a few studies have used qualitative and systematic approaches to examine the impact of addiction, especially among females. Thus, the objective of this research was systematically identifying the impacts of drug abuse among addicted females in Tehran city.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted using the grounded theory approach. The data were collected using the field method and by researcher's referring to females' addiction treatment center. Convenient non-probabilistic sampling method was used in the induction section and theoretical saturation was achieved after 23 interviews. The data were analyzed using open, theoretical, and selective encoding. Then, a questionnaire was developed to confirm the results of induction section. A total of 36 questionnaires were completed by observing ethical considerations and obtaining the consent of respondents. Content validity was used to measure the validity of the questionnaire. Accordingly,

items were provided for 10 experts and 8 experts stated their views on the appropriateness of the items. The content validity of the questionnaire was calculated to be 60%, indicating the acceptable level of content validity. The reliability of the questionnaire was also obtained to be 91% using Cronbach's alpha test, indicating that the research tool has an acceptable level of reliability .

### 3. FINDINGS

The research results are summarized in two sections. The first section is the analysis of qualitative research data, which is the result of a semi-structured interview, determined by open, theoretical, and selective encoding, concepts, categories and focal core. The second section confirming the results of the first section are the analysis of quantitative data of research. As the subject of the current research was the addicted women in Tehran and as different impacts were identified in this regard, each of these aspects was independently investigated, *see* Table 1.

**Table 1:** Concepts, categories, core.

Concepts	Categories	Core
Hallucination and illusion	Psychological effects	The impacts of drug dependence
Aggression		
Depression		
hospitalization in psychiatric hospital		
Weakened short term memory	Physical effects	
Loss of teeth		
Loss of intestines and spleen		
Hair loss		
Sudden weight loss	Social effects	
Job loss		
Leaving school		
The history of being imprisoned		
Theft		
Being rejected by family and community		
Carton sleeping		
Lose of trust of others		
Lost value and respect of the person in community		
Divorce		
Lack of playing maternal role		
Illegitimate sexual relation		
Abortion		
Entry into drug trafficking bands		

In addition, to confirm the induction section of the research, a questionnaire was developed based on the analysis of qualitative data, and its data were collected through interview and tested (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Mean psychological effects of drug abuse.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
tavahom.score	36	20.00	100.00	46.11	25.22
parkhashgari.score	36	20.00	100.00	67.78	29.19
afsordegi.score	36	20.00	100.00	66.67	28.28
bastari.score	36	20.00	100.00	33.33	22.93
asaratravani.score	36	20.00	80.00	44.03	15.06
Valid N (listwise)	36				

According to Table 2, 46.11% of the respondents reported hallucination and illusion as a result of drug abuse, 67.77% of respondents reported aggression, 66.66% of respondents reported

depression, and 33.33% of respondents reported the history of hospitalization in psychiatric hospitals. In general, the psychological effect of drug abuse is 44.02 in Table 3.

**Table 3: Mean physical effect of drug abuse**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
tazifehafeze.score	36	20.00	100.00	60.00	26.62
asibedandan.score	36	20.00	100.00	56.11	28.21
asiberode.score	36	20.00	80.00	27.22	15.23
rizeshmo.score	36	20.00	100.00	43.89	24.76
kaheshvazn.score	36	20.00	100.00	67.22	29.14
asaratjesmi.score	36	20.00	76.00	50.89	16.44
Valid N (listwise)	36				

According to Table 3, 60/60 respondents reported short term memory impairment due to narcotic drug use, 56.1% of the respondents reported dental loss, 27.22% of the respondents lost bowel and spleen, 43.88% of the respondents Hair loss, 67.22% of respondents reported sudden weight loss. Overall, the average physical effects of drug use were 88.85. Based on the results of the above table, 60.00% of respondents reported that weakened short term memory as a result of drug abuse, 56.1% of the respondents reported loss of teeth, 27.22% of the respondents reported loss of intestines and spleen, 43.88% of the respondents reported hair loss, and 67.22% of respondents reported sudden weight loss. In general, the mean physical effect of drug abuse was 50.88 in Table 4.

**Table 4: Mean social effect of drug abuse.**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
azdastdadanshoghli.score	36	20.00	100.00	47.78	32.52
tarktasil.score	36	20.00	100.00	45.56	31.93
soesabeghe.score	36	20.00	100.00	32.22	23.56
serghat.score	36	20.00	100.00	23.33	13.94
tard.score	36	20.00	100.00	48.33	25.91
kartonkhabi.score	36	20.00	100.00	34.44	21.71
azdastdadaneatemad.score	36	20.00	100.00	66.11	24.29
azdastdadanehteram.score	36	20.00	100.00	58.33	25.01
talagh.score	36	20.00	100.00	34.44	24.19
adameifayemadari.score	36	20.00	100.00	38.33	25.01
ertebatenamashrojensi.score	36	20.00	80.00	40.00	22.42
seghtejanin.score	36	20.00	100.00	36.11	26.11
vorodbandaghachagh.score	36	20.00	100.00	33.33	22.93
asaratejtemai.score	36	20.00	72.86	43.25	12.18
Valid N (listwise)	36				

According to above table results, 47.77 respondents reported loss of job a result of drug abuse, 45.55 respondents reported leaving the school, 32.22 respondents reported the history of being imprisoned, 23.33 respondents reported theft, 48.33 respondents reported the history of being rejected by family and community, 34.44 respondents reported carton sleeping, 66.11% respondents lose trust of others, 58.33% respondents reported loss of value and respect, 34.44 respondents reported divorce, 38.33 respondents reported lack of playing maternal role, 40.00 respondents reported illegitimate sexual relation, 36.11 respondents reported abortion, 33.33 respondents reported entry to drug trafficking bands. In general, the mean social effect of drug abuse is 43.25.

## 4. DISCUSSION

Moreover, based on the research results, the impacts of addiction for women at three levels included: 1. Psychological level, including hallucination and illusion (consistent with studies conducted by Becker: 1980, Vanagae: 2010), aggression (consistent with studies conducted by Susan Helm and Scott Echmato: 2016; Farmer: 2010, Bennett and Patricia, 2008; Apple: 2002, etc.), depression (consistent with the studies conducted by Semnanta L. Illangascar et al. 2013; Bonomi et al. 2006; Datong et al. 2006; etc.) and hospitalization psychiatric hospital. 2-Physical / biological level, including weakened short-term memory (consistent with studies conducted by Sasman and Ames: 2001; Bennett and Patricia: 2008), loss of teeth, loss of intestine and spleen, hair loss, sudden weight loss (consistent with studies conducted by Shannar et al. 2006). 3- The social level, including job loss (consistent with studies conducted by Karamizadeh and Boustani: 2017), leaving school, theft, being rejected by family, the history of being imprisoned (Abdi: 2009; consistent with studies conducted by Nyazi, 2013; Danesh et al , 2013), loss of trust of others, loss of value and respect, divorce, lack of playing maternal role (consistent with studies conducted by Farmer, 2010; Bennett and Patricia: 2008; Apple: 2002); prostitution (consistent with studies conducted by Abdi: 2009, Nyazi: 2013; Borjois and Donald: 1993), the abortion and entry to drug trafficking bands. Given the consistency of the research findings with the theories of deviations and the focus of this study on impacts of addiction and its causes, the control approach can be adopted. The control approach emphasizes on disrupted relationships, especially relationships with others and institutions. Disruption in the relationships with others and institutions can weaken the controls and finally paves the way for deviation of the person. As female addiction disrupts the relationship between the person and family and it is associated with weakened and disrupted social controls (formal And informal) and self-control, it results in social deviations, including theft, entry into drug trafficking bands, prostitution, abortion, etc.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it could be concluded that addiction, especially female addiction, is one of the major harms of current society of Iran. In general, these harms can be divided into two parts. The harms imposed on the addicted person as a result of drug abuse and the harms imposed on others and the community.

Given the key role of women in family and community health and considering the great impacts and harms of female addiction, it is recommended that comprehensive therapeutic and supportive programs to be developed and implemented for this vulnerable group of people to rehabilitate them.

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