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Substance abuse and criminal behavior: Sports a preventative measure for tackling this menace

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Abstract

In the 21st century drug abuse is epidemic around the world. Its menace is worst in our country especially in the state of Punjab. More worrisome fact is that substance abuse is linked with crime. The present study analyse criminal behavior among substance abusers and sports person. A total of 200 samples were selected between 18 to 30 years of age group. The result shows that there was a significant difference in criminal behavior among the two groups. Since, p-value at 0.00 was statically significant at 0.05 level of significance. Youth should provide ample time for their participation in organised sports activities. This diverts their mind and channelised there energy in a more meaningful manner. This study strongly recommended sports for diverting criminal behavior among youth.

Keywords: Substance abuse, criminal behavior and sports

Introduction

Substance abuse had spread through out the world in the 21st century (Macneil *et al.*, 2000). It has become one of the biggest problem effecting millions of children and youth in our country. States like Mizoram, Goa, Manipur and Punjab has been facing this epidemic over a long period of time. In 2015, a study was commissioned by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE), Government of India, which reported 2,32,856 persons in the state of Punjab are drug users, out of which 99% are males. One more interesting fact comes out from that study which revealed that more then 80% of these drug users tried to give up drug, but unfortunately only 30% were able to receive help or treatment. In fact, experts observed health and welfare programmes do not reach millions of people affected by drugs.

Substance abuse is related to crime in many ways. Literature shows role of drugs and alcohols in proliferation of crime. Regarding this Mumola (1999) ^[4] “reported that 60% to 80% of crime is related to drug”. In addition Singh and Singh (2011) ^[10] “observed that drug users are involved in crime and possess traits that predispose individuals to criminal behaviour such as antisocial personality disorder (ASPD)”. In America 60 to 70% of juvenile arrested for numerous convictions were tested positive for drugs, out of that 50 to 60% of juvenile blood samples were found to be tested positive for marijuana (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, 1998) ^[11]. According to Hoaken and Stewart (2003) ^[7] “alcohol is undoubtedly the utmost drug to support intoxication and violence relationship”. Contrary to this, cannabis intoxication decreases likelihood to violence, but multiple evidence correlate its withdrawal with aggressive behaviour. In addition, Wittrock (2006) ^[12] identified that crime rate among drug user is greater and they also possess more criminal records than non-users.

Sport is a physical activity governed by a set of customs and rules involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes with each other for winning. These rules vary in individual and team oriented sports, with demonstration of different skills and competencies dominated by various types of strength, speed and dexterity so as to perform effectively. Further, participation across multiple sports and in various development programmes yielded a positive development in youth (Zarrett *et al.*, 2009) ^[13].

Hypothesis

There exists a significant difference in criminal behavior among Substance abusers and sports person.

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Delimitations

- A total of 200 samples were selected out of which 100 were substance abusers and 100 were sports person that participated in different organised team games over a period of 8 weeks viz; Handball, tennis ball cricket, badminton, football and volleyball.
- The substance abusers were selected from four different drug rehabilitation centers of Jalandhar district.
- Sports person were selected from the physical education department of Lovely Professional University (Phagwara).
- The study was further delimited to males between 18 to 30 years of age group.

Research Tool

To measure criminal behavior among substance abusers and sports person, 'criminal propensity scale' developed by Singh and Sharma (2017) [9] was used in the study. The scale was found to be highly reliable for its use in this research work. The reliability of the scale was found to be 0.89 which was very high above the acceptable limit of 0.69.

Statistical Technique

Descriptive statistics and independent t-test was used for the analysis of data in this research work.

Results and Interpretation Pertaining to Criminal Behavior

Table 1: Independent sample t-test between Substance Abusers and Sports person measuring Criminal Behavior

Measure	Samples	N	Mean	SD	df	(p-value)Sig.
Criminal Behavior	Substance Abusers	100	176.39	11.095	198	.000
	Sports person	100	121.15	11.915		

Note: p -value < .05 indicates significant difference

Table 1 represents the values of mean and standard deviation of criminal behavior among substance abusers and sports person. Since, p -value at 0.00 was statically significant at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the $H_{(0)}$ "There exists no significant difference in criminal behavior among substance abusers and sports persons" was failed to get accepted.

Discussion

These findings get support from various studies with a well-documented boon that have considered "sports as a mechanism through which the prevention and reduction of crime can be done" (Nichols & Crow, 2004; Bailey, 2005; Collins & Kay; 2003, Coalter; 2007) [5, 1, 3]. Conversely to this, Nichols (1997) [6] reviewed various evidences contributing in the management of crime, however, the support concerning the effectiveness of sports and leisure activity in reducing crime has little evidence.

Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant difference in criminal behavior among substance abusers and sports person. Thus, it was recommended to consider sports while mapping prevention programmes in tackling criminal behavior among youth.

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