

Drug use in university students

Consumo de drogas en estudiantes universitarios

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Abstract

Objectives. The general objective is to identify drug use in university students. The specific objective is to generate specific knowledge for the prevention of drug use at its various levels.

Methodology. The research is descriptive, non-experimental, cross-sectional. The participants are students of the subject "Risk behavior in educational contexts" at the Academic Unit of Psychology of the Autonomous University of Zacatecas. The Drug consumption Questionnaire (2009), prepared by the Social Security Institute of the State of Mexico and Municipalities, is used, the treatment of the data is through percentages.

Contribution. Obtained data, that lead to the knowledge of drug use in university students, will allow to base the intervention through programs aimed at eliminating drug use through prevention.

Drug addiction, Risk, Students

Resumen

Objetivos. El objetivo general es identificar el consumo de drogas en estudiantes universitarios. El objetivo específico es generar conocimientos específicos para la prevención del consumo de drogas en sus diversos niveles.

Metodología. La investigación es de tipo descriptivo, no experimental, transversal. Los participantes son alumnos de la materia "Conductas de riesgo en contextos educativos" de la Unidad Académica de Psicología de la Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas. Se utiliza el Cuestionario de Consumo de drogas (2009), elaborado por el Instituto de Seguridad Social del Estado de México y Municipios, el tratamiento de los datos es a través de porcentajes.

Contribución. Se obtienen datos que llevan al conocimiento del consumo de drogas en alumnos universitarios, lo que permitirá fundamentar la intervención por medio de programas dirigidos a eliminar el consumo de drogas a través de la prevención.

Drogadicción, Riesgo, Estudiantes

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Introduction

Drug use today is a problem involving public health. Every time different groups of people of different ages are involved, from minors to older adults with high consumption and lethality. University students are no stranger to the development of addictions with risky behaviors that endanger the lives of users.

One way to start drug use is through bullying, which over time implies problems to be solved, according to Lozano, et al, bullying can leave various consequences both at the personal level of the participants and their possible social and legal consequences (2020). This harassment can be through coercion.

The importance of identifying the different groups of people who have risk behaviors and who can be identified to carry out intervention programs in various forms of prevention.

Drugs when consumed affect the nervous system, therefore, that impacts the different areas of development such as physical, mental, psychological and social. Likewise, it can prevent from achieving goals such as labor and social incorporation in an adapted way since, in the future, it can be truncated, in addition to having potential risk factors for losing one's life.

The present work was carried out through the application of a questionnaire on drug use, the subjects of the sample are university students. It yields results with significant relevance.

Among them, it stands out that a low percentage of participants have the belief that they can stop using drugs at any time, whether they consume or not.

From the foregoing, the importance of establishing drug use prevention policies can be deduced.

Carrying out preventive actions in drug consumption will allow avoiding harm to non-consumers; on the other hand, working with individuals and groups that are more vulnerable to risk due to their context and those individuals and/or social groups that have consumed addictive substances. Remaining in treatment control groups (Pacheco, 2019).

Therefore, the problem to be addressed is drug use and its identification in university students, based on the hypothesis that if drug use is identified, better prevention can be carried out at its different levels.

What is a drug?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), cited by Centros de Integración Juvenil A. C. (2023), a drug is a substance that, introduced into the body by any route of administration, produces some natural alteration in the functioning of the body central nervous system, in addition, to be able to create dependency in the psychological, physical areas or both.

Drugs as a psychoactive substance modify important aspects of the user's nervous system, affecting thinking, feelings, perceptions and behavior. In turn, they alter personality, based on the fact that this is what identifies people and distinguishes them from others. For Morris (2011) personality is the unique pattern of thoughts, feelings and behaviors of an individual that persists over time and between situations, which affects the various areas of life.

Drugs, when incorporated into the body, have the ability to alter the psychomotor, affective and perceptual functioning. Although they can be used under medical prescription, a large number of people do so by their "decision" due to various causes, such as recreational consumption whose main objective is pleasure by exercising self-administration, therefore, they do not have a medical prescription, without health care purposes.

Drugs and their effects

The effects of drugs on the nervous system are generally divided into three: stimulants, depressants and hallucinogens. And on the other hand, the consequences of those in terms of thinking and executive functions, they deteriorate together, altering the cognitive part. Therefore the reasoning and planning capacity decreases, making it difficult to solve problems by presenting thinking difficulties.

Regarding drugs and their relationship with emotions, it has a double effect, directed towards the consumer himself, which in the long term decreases the ability to feel and express emotions as there is an effective flattening, excluding the moment of consumption. Drugs hide the development of emotions since their consumption leads to altered emotional states; as well as, regarding the relationship between perception and the use of in a serious way, it can present hallucinations because the senses capture unreal aspects that are attributed to the environment and not to real subjective conditions of the person.

Likewise, they can have visions, skin sensations, olfactory, gustatory among others. The relationship between emotions and perception in drug use is that it does not allow an adequate decoding of the emotions of other people, leading to problems of interpretation of situations of social interrelation, which in serious cases can present delusions, that is, thought disorder.

The impact of drug use is manifested mainly in behavior, either by increasing actions or by decreasing the ability to act. Behavioral changes in behavior occur, being able to present violence and legal problems, accidents, variation in appetite, modification of sleep habits, sudden changes in mood and hyperactivity.

With regard to physiological signs, dilation and irritation of the eyes, strange odors, poor language coordination, change in the body weight, and physical detriment to their body shape are presented. In the area of social relations, involvement in illegal activities, the need and search to financially solve drug use are combined; therefore, it is of great importance to locate friendship relationships, recreational activities, changes in activity schedules and vigilance in situations of school failure.

The use of addictive substances can cause various psychological disorders that include the areas mentioned above, thought, emotions, perception and behavior (Villatoro, et al. 2015).

Some disorders will require intervention at the level of treatment from drug use; for this reason, it is important to clarify that the intervention must be at its three levels: universal, selective and indicated. Due to the foregoing, knowledge about drug use allows such timely interventions to be carried out for each type of consumption diagnosis.

According to Martínez and Osorio (2021) the levels of prevention are structured to prevent iatrogenesis, which implies misinformation and its untimely exposure, as well as the selection of strategies of greater relevance for the historical moment of the community, its members and type- proof of consumption.

Situation that is taken as a basis to implement some level of prevention, as the situation requires. Universal prevention is identified as the one that is aimed at the whole of society, regardless of the level of risk, no prior diagnosis is needed, unlike selective prevention, which is for those social groups that through a diagnosis are identified in conditions of vulnerability, whether due to economic aspects, geographic community location, educational situation, personal psychological characteristics, peer group and their relationship, etc.

The indicated prevention applies to people who already consume drugs and have been detected, where the risk is greater because they can present problems or increase them.

According to the results from the Drug Consumption Questionnaire in the face of prevention, the main objective is to reach total abstinence by pretending that people do not try drugs once.

Some facts about drug use

According to Villatoro Velázquez, et al (2016), the consumption trends and the consumption pattern by type of drugs show the influence of exposure to the opportunity of its use, that is, to the ease of disposition of type of drug. In the Survey of Drug Consumption in High School and Secondary Students of the year 2014 (ENCODE) in the state of Zacatecas, 13.4 percent of students have used some drug, for the aforementioned data, the State is significantly below the national average, which stands at 17.2 percent.

Regarding drug use in Young university students, according to the data issued by Dr. María Elena Medina Mora, director of the Faculty of Psychology, she stated that from 2011 to 2017, marijuana use increased from 1.9 to 3.5 percent, while cocaine use increased from 0.8 to 1.5 percent. Hermida (2021).

Methodology

This research is of type quantitative, non-experimental, descriptive, random cut, cross-sectional for students of the subject “Risk behaviors in educational contexts”. The instrument used is The Drug consumption Questionnaire (2009), elaborated by the Social Security Institute of the State of Mexico and Municipalities, specifically by the Health Services Coordination, (2009). This questionnaire is used as screening, for identifying use of addictive substances. The questionnaire has 20 questions in a dichotomous scale, where the answer is yes or not. The score has the following values: one for the answer yes and zero for the answer no. The rating is as follows:

0 points = does not report abuse.

From 1 to 5 points = low level of abuse.

From 6 to 10 points = intermediate level of abuse.

From 11 to 15 = substantial abuse.

From 16 to 20 = severe abuse.

The statistical reliability is obtained through the formula 20 (KR-20) de Kuder-Richardson.

$$KR20 = (K/(K - 1))(1 - (\sum p \cdot q)/Vt)$$

The results of the survey were processed through percentages obtained from the answers that the participants expressed at the time of answering it.

Results

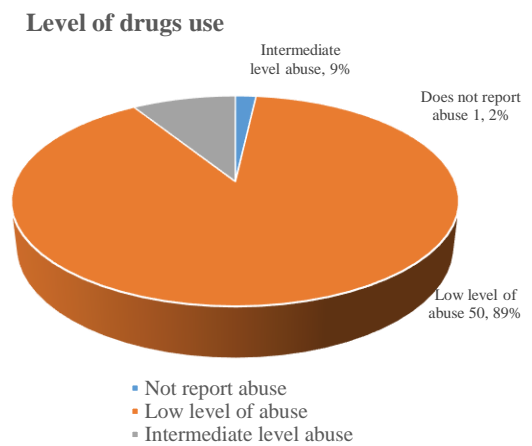
The level of drug use of the university students surveyed is the following:

a) Does not report abuse, one participant, equals 2 percent.

b) Low level of abuse, 50 people, equivalent to 89 percent.

c) Intermediate level of abuse, 5 people, representing nine percent.

d) The levels of substantial and severe consumption did not exist.

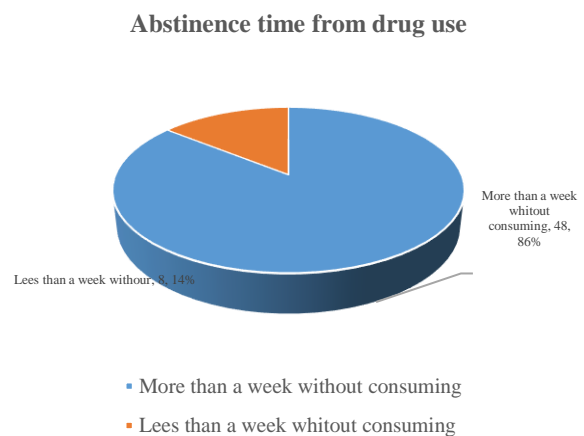


Graphic 1 Level of drug use

Source: Own elaboration

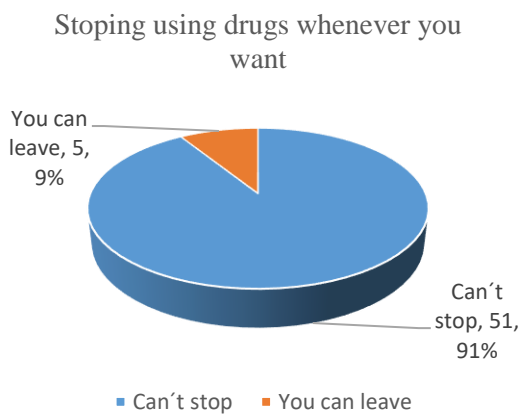
Regarding the specific questions and their response rates, it was found that in question four, which consists of having not used drugs for more than a week, 86 percent answered affirmatively, while 14 percent have used drugs within a week.

In question number five, which consists of being able to stop using drugs whenever you want, the lowest percentages in denial were presented, with ninety-one percent, while only nine percent affirmed the ability to stop using drugs whenever they wanted.



Graphic 2 Abstinence time from drug use

Source: Own elaboration



Graphic 3 Stopping using drugs whenever you want
Source: Own elaboration

Regarding the reliability of the Drug Consumption Questionnaire, it reached a 6.1, which represents weak reliability.

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Conclusions

The objective is met, since risk behaviors due to the use of drugs in university students were identified, they were located in a low consumption with 89%, and only 2% do not report drug abuse (do not consume) and 9% presents an intermediate level of abuse, clarifying that the legal consumption of medicines is included. It should be noted that there is no substantial or severe consumption of drugs, however, all those who have low-level consumption may be potential subjects of greater types of consumption and various substances, so it is essential to carry out intervention proposals such as, it is pointed out in the authors cited in the development of the research as it is the selective and indicated type of prevention.

With regard to drug use and quitting when desired, only few participants consider that they can do so, which represents risky behavior, since drugs, used or not, put them at risk by not perceiving the danger of consumption and acquisition of addictions. Within the last week, drug use was identified.

Regarding the instrument, it has a weak reliability, but it fulfills the screening function, by identifying drug use behaviors. Therefore, it is stated that prevention programs should be carried out at various levels among university students.

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