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RESEARCH ARTICLE

“A STUDY TO ASSESS KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE REGARDING SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS AT SELECTED COLLEGES IN BENGALURU”

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Substance abuse, knowledge, attitude, college students, Bengaluru, demographic variables, correlation, association, nursing students, purposive sampling.

Abstract

A study on student's knowledge and attitude regarding substance abuse among college students at selected colleges in Bengaluru. Objectives of the study were to assess the knowledge and attitude regarding substance abuse among college students at Bengaluru to assess the attitude regarding substance abuse among students of selected college at Bengaluru, to assess the correlation between knowledge and attitude regarding substance abuse at its selected demographic variables, to find the association between knowledge and selected demographic variables to find association between attitude and selected demographic variables. A sample of 30 participants from smt nagarathamma college of nursing students) was selected by purposive sampling technique. The data was collected by using standard knowledge questionnaire and likert scale, and data was analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics. The hypothesis of the study was H0: There will be significant association between knowledge regarding substance abuse and their selected demographic variables, H0: There is a significant association between attitude regarding substance abuse and their selected demographic variables, H1: There is a significant correlation between knowledge and attitude regarding substance abuse and their selected demographic variables. The study result showed that there is a moderate correlation between knowledge and attitude of substance abuse among college students therefore H2 is accepted.

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Introduction:-

"The mentality and behaviour of drug addicts and alcoholics is wholly irrational until you understand that they are completely powerless over their addiction." — Russell Brand Health is a holistic concept that includes the body, mind, and soul, and is the most precious possession of humanity. Physical, mental, and social health are all equally important. The human mind, often considered a "tabula rasa," or blank slate, at birth, learns adaptive and maladaptive behaviors through various experiences and circumstances, though some genetic traits are also involved.

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People turn to substances such as drugs, alcohol, and tobacco for a variety of complex reasons. Substance abuse is a medical condition that can interfere with a person's relationships, their ability to fulfill work, school, or family obligations, and can lead to legal problems and dangerous behavior. It is characterized by increasing use of a substance, seeking it at great lengths, experiencing withdrawal symptoms, and being unable to stop or reduce its use.

Need For The Study:-

The World Drug Report 2023 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) highlights that 1 in every 17 people worldwide aged 15-64 has used a drug in the past year, indicating a steady rise in usage. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2022) reports that harmful alcohol use is a major concern, with over 283 million people globally engaging in heavy episodic drinking. The dual burden of substance dependence and poor adherence to medical treatment increases the risk of accidents, violence, and social instability. India has seen a sharp increase in substance abuse among adolescents and young adults. Recent surveys by the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC) at AIIMS (2022) show that the age of initiation for many substances has dropped to as early as 12-14 years, with usage peaking between 18-25 years. This trend is accelerated by peer influence, academic stress, easy availability, and exposure to digital media. This growing problem poses a serious threat to physical health, mental well-being, and socio-economic development. Protecting adolescents from early initiation into substance use is a national priority

Objectives:-

Statement of the Problem: A study to assess knowledge and attitude regarding substance abuse among college students at selected colleges in Bengaluru.

Purpose of the Study:

- ❖ To assess the knowledge regarding substance abuse among selected college students in Bengaluru.
- ❖ To assess the attitude regarding substance abuse among selected college students in Bengaluru.
- ❖ To assess the correlation between knowledge and attitude regarding substance abuse.

Operational Definitions:

Assess: To evaluate the knowledge and attitude of college students regarding substance abuse. Knowledge: The score a student obtains in response to a questionnaire on substance abuse, including predisposing factors, effects, withdrawal symptoms, treatment, and control. Attitude: The opinions or feelings of college students regarding substance abuse, as measured by a three-point Likert scale. Substance: Refers to tobacco, alcohol, heroin, cocaine, inhalants, hallucinogens, and meth. Substance Abuse: Disorders resulting from the use of psychoactive substances, as assessed by a questionnaire. College Students: Students aged 20-24 years from selected colleges in Bengaluru.

Hypotheses:

H0: There will be a significant association between knowledge regarding substance abuse and selected demographic variables.

H1: There will be a significant association between attitude regarding substance abuse and selected demographic variables.

H2: There will be a significant correlation between knowledge and attitude regarding substance abuse and selected demographic variables.

Review of Literature:-

A review of literature reveals that substance abuse is a global issue with a rising prevalence among young people. A cross-sectional study in Morocco with a sample of 1,236 students showed that male gender, older age, and a history of depressive disorders were strongly linked to alcohol use, with higher prevalence in urban areas. Another cross-sectional study in Chandigarh on 206 college students found that 52.7% of students aged 19-21 used substances, with law students having the highest prevalence (76.2%). Alcohol was the most commonly used substance, followed by tobacco and cannabis. A descriptive cross-sectional study in Puducherry found that the overall prevalence of alcohol use among individuals aged 18 and above was 9.7%, with the highest prevalence in the 46-55 age group. A third of the users started drinking before the age of 20. Research on adolescents in Udaipur showed that a majority had moderately adequate knowledge (61%) and a favorable attitude (60%) toward alcoholism. Another study in New Delhi on 150 nurses found that 89.33% routinely asked about substance abuse during patient history collection, and 94% felt the need for education sessions to improve their knowledge.

Methodology:-

Research Approach: A non-experimental quantitative research approach was used. **Research Design:** The study adopted a non-experimental descriptive research design to assess the knowledge and attitude regarding substance abuse among college students in Bengaluru.

Variables:-

Research Variables: Knowledge and attitude regarding substance abuse.

Demographic Variables: Name, age, gender, year of study, religion, history of alcoholism in the family, monthly pocket money, and place of stay.

Setting: The study was conducted at Smt. Nagarathamma College of Nursing, Bengaluru, selected for its accessibility and proximity.

Population: The target population was college students in Bengaluru, specifically those aged 20-24 years.

Sample: The sample consisted of 30 college students aged 20-24 from a selected college in Bengaluru.

Sampling Technique: A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to select participants based on the specific characteristics required for the study.

Inclusion Criteria:-

College students available at the time of data collection. Students between the age group of 20-24 years.

Students willing to participate in the study.

Tool Description: The tool consisted of three sections:

Section A: Demographic variables.

Section B: A structured knowledge questionnaire with 25 multiple-choice questions.

Section C: A standardized Likert scale with 25 questions to assess attitude.

Data Collection: Data was collected after obtaining permission from the college authorities. A participant information sheet was provided, and the data was collected by the research group using the structured questionnaire and attitude scale.

Content Validity: The tool was validated by five nursing experts, and modifications were made based on their suggestions, including grammar corrections, adding more relevant questions, and incorporating an attitude scale.

Pilot Study: A pilot study was conducted with 10 samples to establish the tool's reliability.

Reliability: The reliability of the tool was established using the split-half method with Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient. The result was a reliability coefficient of 0.67, which was considered reliable for the study.

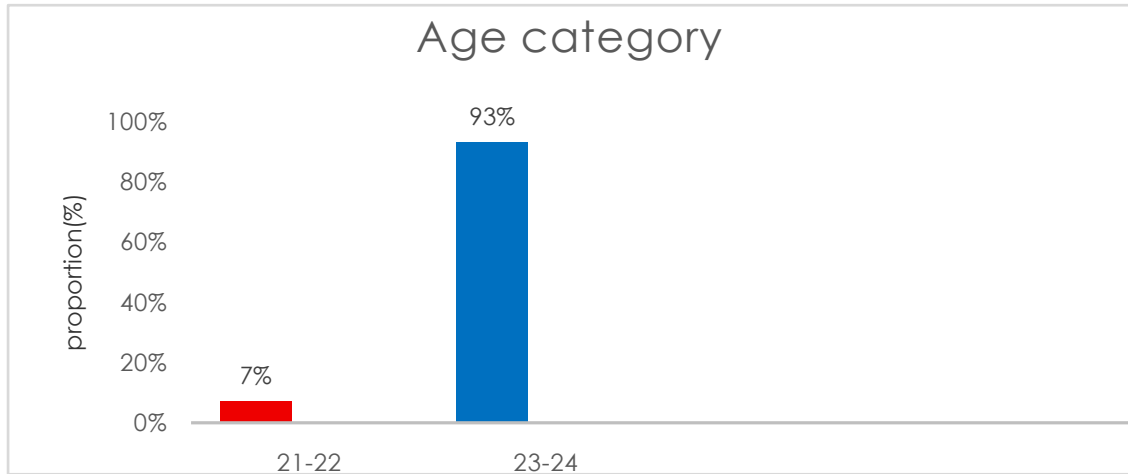
Data Collection Procedure: The main study was conducted on 16/09/2025. Thirty samples were selected, and the data was collected by three members of the research group.

Results:-**Statistical Analysis:-**

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the baseline characteristics of the study participants. Categorical variables are presented as frequency counts (n) and percentages (%). To assess the impact of the intervention on students' attitude and knowledge regarding substance use, changes between pretest and post-test scores were analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. The results of this test are reported as median values with corresponding interquartile ranges (IQRs). A p-value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant for all comparisons. All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 26.

Results:-**Table 1: Age distribution of participants (n=30)**

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
21-22	2	7%
23-24	28	93%



With respect to age distribution, the vast majority of participants (93%) fell within the 21-22 years age group, whereas only a small proportion (7%) belonged to the 23-24 years category, highlighting that the study population was predominantly concentrated in the senior age range of 23-24 years.

Table 2: Gender distribution of participants

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	12	40%
Female	18	60%

In terms of gender distribution, the study revealed that a greater proportion of participants were females, accounting for 60% of the total sample, whereas males constituted the remaining 40%. This indicates that female representation in the study population was relatively higher compared to their male counterparts.

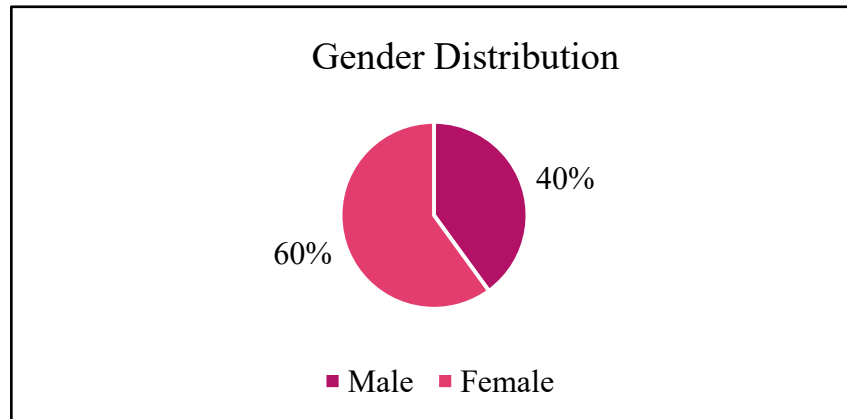


Table 3: Distribution of participants by religion, history of alcoholism in the family, pocket money, and place of stay.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Religion	Hindu	16	53.33%
	Christian	10	33.33%
	Muslim	4	13.33%
History of Alcoholism in family	No	26	86.67%
	Yes	4	13.33%
Monthly Pocket Money	Below 500	1	3.33%
	500–1000	10	33.33%
	1000–2000	14	46.67%
	Above 2000	5	16.67%

Place of Stay	Others	21	70%
	Paying guest	8	26.67%
	Hostel	1	3.33%

More than half of the participants were Hindus (53.33%), followed by Christians (33.33%) and Muslims (13.33%). The majority (86.67%) reported no relevant history, while only 13.33% did. Regarding monthly pocket money, nearly half (46.67%) received ₹1000–2000, followed by 33.33% who received ₹500–1000, 16.67% above ₹2000, and only 3.33% below ₹500. As for the place of stay, most participants (70%) lived with family/relatives ('Others'), while 26.67% stayed in paying guest accommodations, and just 3.33% stayed in hostels.

Table 4: Comparison of Knowledge and Attitudes on Substance Abuse between Pretest and Post-test

Variable	Pretest Median (IQR)	Post-test Median (IQR)	p-value
I know where to seek help or counseling for substance abuse	2.5 (2,3)	4 (4,4)	<0.001
I can identify different types of substances commonly abused	2 (2,3)	4 (4,4)	<0.001
I know the common reasons why college students start using substances	2 (2,3)	4 (4,4)	<0.001
I am aware of the physical health effects of substance abuse	3 (2,3)	4 (3,4)	<0.001
I am aware of the psychological effects of substance abuse	2.5 (2,3)	4 (4,4)	<0.001
Substance abuse is a serious problem among college students	2 (2,3)	4 (3,4)	<0.001
A hospital is the best place to treat an alcoholic or drug addict	2 (1,2)	3 (2,3)	<0.001
I know legal consequences of using illegal substances	2 (1,2)	4 (4,4)	<0.001
Withdrawal symptoms can be shown when a drug is stopped	2 (1,2)	4 (4,4)	<0.001
I am aware of government programmes/campaigns against substance abuse	2 (1,2)	4 (4,4)	<0.001
I know that peer pressure can influence substance abuse	2 (1,2.75)	4 (3,4)	<0.001
I know that early intervention can prevent dependence	2 (1,3)	4 (3.25,4)	<0.001
Students who use substances should be punished	2 (2,3)	2 (1,2)	<0.001
Students who use substances need support and counseling	3 (2,3)	4 (4,4)	<0.001
It is acceptable for students to use substances to relieve stress	2.5 (2,3)	1 (1,1)	<0.001
Peer pressure makes it difficult to refuse substances	2 (2,3)	4 (3,4)	<0.001
Talking openly can reduce prevalence of substance abuse	2 (1,2)	4 (4,4)	<0.001
It is the responsibility of colleges to create awareness	2 (1,2)	4 (4,4)	<0.001
I would support my friend if they want to quit	2 (1,2)	4 (4,4)	<0.001
Seeking help for substance use is not shameful	2 (1,2)	4 (4,4)	<0.001
Substance abuse can be prevented through awareness programmes	2 (1,2.75)	4 (4,4)	<0.001
Students can play a role in preventing substance abuse	2 (1,3)	4 (4,4)	<0.001
Substance abuse negatively affects relationships/social life	2 (2,3)	4 (4,4)	<0.001
Substance abuse is a serious problem among college students	3 (2,3)	4 (4,4)	<0.001
Using substances occasionally is harmless	2.5 (2,3)	1 (1,1)	<0.001

P Values obtained using Wilcoxon signed rank test. P < 0.05 is considered significant

Figure 3: Change in students’ knowledge of common reasons why college students start using substances before and after the intervention.

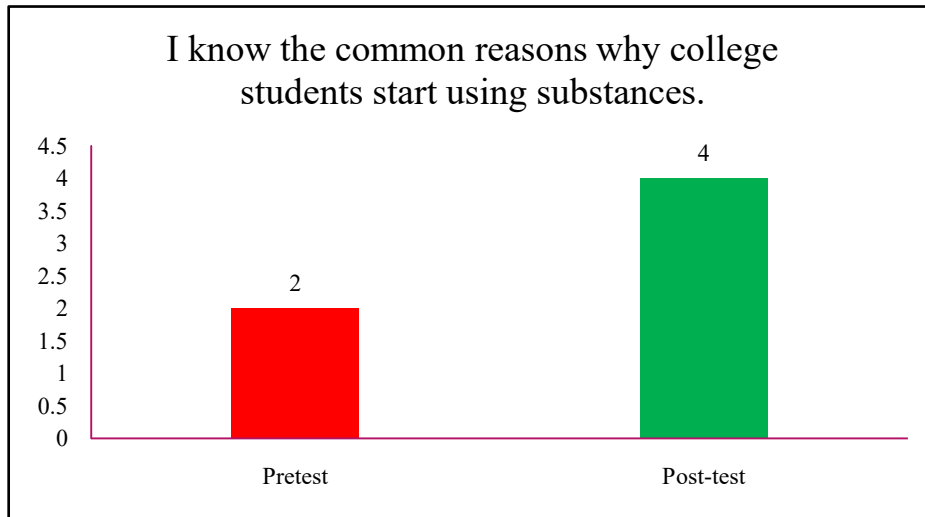
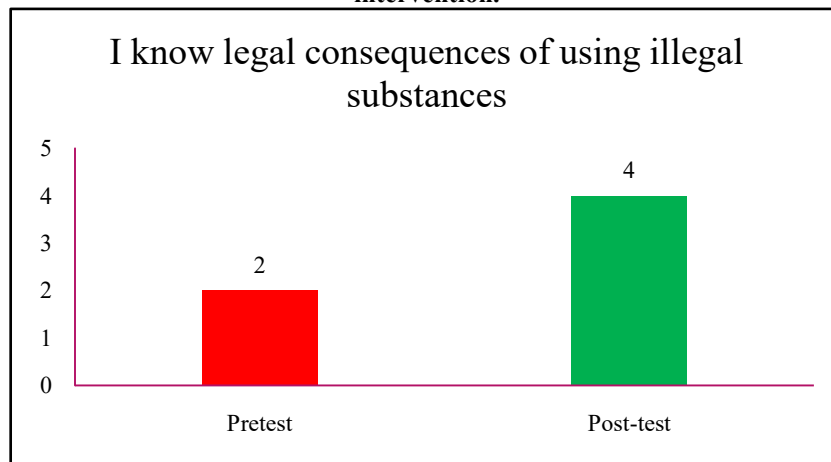


Figure 4: Change in students’ knowledge of legal consequences of using illegal substances before and after the intervention.



Attitudinal changes were also evident. Agreement that talking openly can reduce substance abuse, that it is the responsibility of colleges to create awareness, and that seeking help is not shameful shifted markedly from median scores of 2 to 4.(Figure 5) Importantly, misconceptions also declined: the median score for “It is acceptable to use substances to relieve stress” dropped from 2.5 to 1, (Figure 6) and the view that “using substances occasionally is harmless” shifted from 2.5 to 1, indicating reduced acceptance of risky behaviors.

Figure 5: Change in students’ attitude toward seeking help for substance use without feeling shame before and after the intervention.

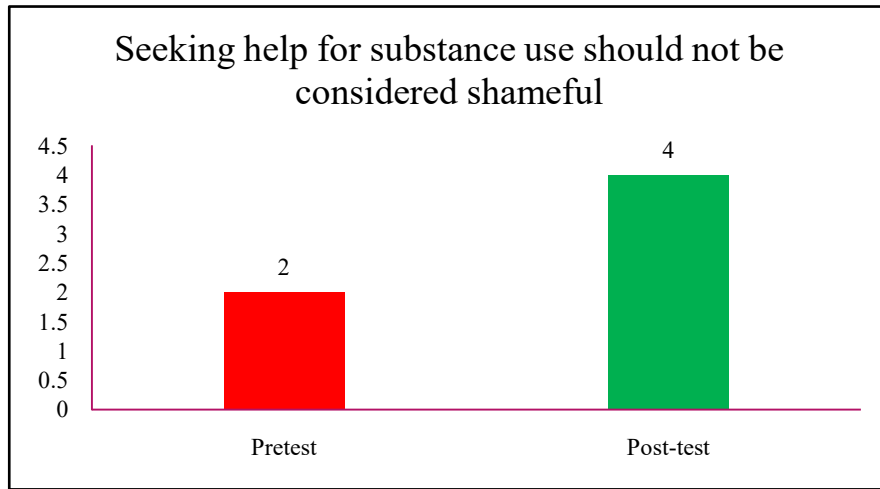
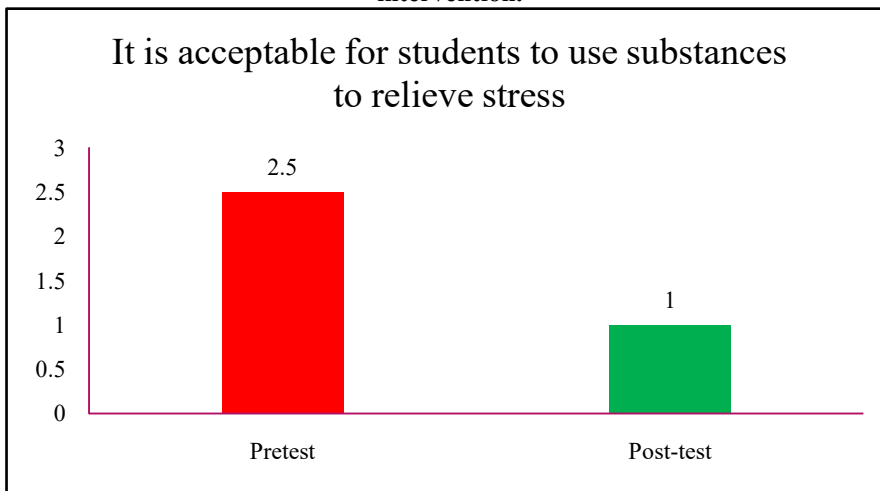


Figure 6: Change in students’ acceptance of using substances to relieve stress before and after the intervention.



Taken together, these findings suggest that the intervention led to a significant enhancement of knowledge, awareness, and positive attitudes toward substance abuse prevention, while simultaneously reducing misconceptions and punitive perspectives toward students who use substances.

Demographic Characteristics:-

The study included 30 participants. The majority of participants (93%) were between 23 and 24 years old, with only a small portion (7%) in the 21-22 age group. The sample was predominantly female, accounting for 60% of the total, while males constituted the remaining 40%. More than half of the participants were Hindus (53.33%), followed by Christians (33.33%) and Muslims (13.33%). A significant majority (86.67%) reported no family history of alcoholism. Regarding monthly pocket money, nearly half (46.67%) received between ₹1000–2000, while a third (33.33%) received ₹500–1000. Most participants (70%) lived with family or relatives, 26.67% stayed in paying guest accommodations, and only 3.33% lived in a hostel.

Discussion:-

The findings indicate a statistically significant improvement in both knowledge and attitudes regarding substance abuse from the pretest to the post-test ($p < 0.001$). The intervention was highly effective in enhancing key areas of understanding. Students showed a substantial increase in their knowledge about substance abuse, with median scores

rising from 2 to 4 for several critical questions. This included the ability to identify different types of substances, knowledge of the reasons for substance initiation among college students, and awareness of the legal consequences and withdrawal symptoms. Similarly, awareness of government campaigns and the psychological effects of substance abuse also improved from a median of 2 to 4.

Conclusion:-

The study successfully assessed the knowledge and attitude regarding substance abuse among college students in Bengaluru. The non-experimental descriptive design, along with the structured questionnaire and attitude scale, proved to be an effective method for evaluating the study objectives. The key findings highlight a significant and positive shift in the participants' understanding and perspective after the intervention. The students demonstrated an enhanced awareness of the various aspects of substance abuse, including its effects, the reasons for its initiation, legal consequences, and the importance of seeking help.

Summary:-

This study was a non - experimental descriptive research that assessed the knowledge and attitude of 30 college students regarding substance abuse. A pilot study confirmed the reliability of the research tool with a correlation coefficient of 0.67. The main study, conducted on 16/09/2025 at Smt. Nagarathamma College of Nursing, showed that the intervention led to a statistically significant improvement in both knowledge and attitude toward substance abuse.