

**A Study of Self- Reported
Criminal Behaviors among Drug Abusers**

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Acknowledgment

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A Study of Self- Reported Criminal Behaviors among Drug Abusers

Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to explore self- reported criminal behaviors among drug abusers. Total one hundred (N= 100) drug abusers (heroin, cannabis, alcohol and crystal abusers) were interviewed sitting in Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers of Karachi, Pakistan. A semi-structured interview form was used to collect information pertaining to demographic characteristics, drug abuse and crime history. Results have revealed that most of the participants (67%) were involved in different crimes and among them majority were heroin abusers (84%). All drug abusers were commonly involved in the crime of pickpocketing (40.29%). Pickpocketing was mainly associated with heroin abuse (48%). About 20% cannabis users were equally involved in the crimes of pickpocketing, robbery and gambling. Alcoholics were, most of the time, involved in fighting (28%), whereas majority of crystal users (16%) had committed the crime of pickpocketing. Results also have depicted that majority of drug abusers (55.22%) had committed crimes to buy drugs.

Key words: Drug, abuse, crime, behaviors,



Introduction

Drug abuse and criminal behavior is associated with each other (Wish & Johnson, 1986). The use of illegal drugs results in murder, rape, robbery, burglary, theft and hate crimes. In 1972, about 54% prisoners had the history of alcohol and other drugs in United States, 53% probationers were drug abusers, 22% were using drugs occasionally, whereas 31% appeared to be frequent drug abusers as reported by Bureau of Justice (1986). They were arrested for different types of offenses such as; about 27% for drug offense, 7 % for violence, whereas 20% abusers were for property offense.

Harlow (1991) found a high level of drug abuse among incarcerated population. Narcotics and heavy cocaine users have been involved in criminal offense (Nurco et al., 1988). In another study conducted on prisoners, about 52 % women and 44 % men were found to be dependent on alcohol and drug abuse (Karberg & James, 2005). Among juvenile prisoners, 56% boys and 40% girls were drug dependents (Zhang, 2003). Drug dependency significantly predicts more crime ((Ball et al., 1983). Manifestation of criminal behavior depends on frequency of drug abuse and severity of drug dependency (Ball and Ross 1991

A national survey conducted in Pakistan (2006) depicted that approximately, 65% of drug abusers were arrested for the offense of drug use, 38% were for drug possession and 17% for selling drugs. It was also found that 16% drug abusers were involved in the crime of theft 11% in drug trafficking, 3% in burglary and 8% had been involved in shop lifting at national level. The present study will explore drug related criminal behaviors in the metropolitan city of Pakistan. It will help in addressing the drug abuse related consequences for entire society at national and international level.



Method

Participants:

One hundred ($N=100$) male adult drug abusers were interviewed with the permission of Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers working in Karachi City, Pakistan. Drug abusers were selected irrespective of their educational level, socio-economic status, and marital status. Convenient sampling technique was used for data collection. Apna Recovery Centre and 12- Steps Recovery House, Shaheed Benazeer Bhutto Model of Treatment and Rehabilitation Center (*MATRC*) and Dawood Medical Centre were approached to conduct interview of drug abusers.

Measurement

Information concerning demographic characteristics of the participants, their drug abuse and crime history, was gather using Semi-Structured Interview Form.

Procedure

With the permission of administration of the Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers, male adult drug abusers were interviewed. They were briefed about the confidentiality, privacy and benefits of the present study for whole society and prevention of drug abuse problems. During interview, they were requested to provide details of their demographics, drug abuse history and drug-related crime history. They were also asked to report the reasons of committing crimes. All participants of the study and as well as administration of Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers were thanked in response of their great contribution to the present study.



Scoring and Statistical Analysis

Frequencies and percentages were calculated with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 17.0, regarding demographic characteristics, history of drug abuse, history of crime and reasons for committing crime.



Results

Results have been described as follows;

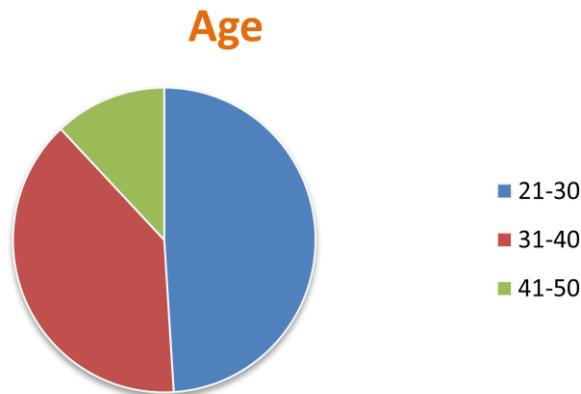
A. Demographic Characteristics of the Drug Abusers

1. Age Ranges of Entire Sample

Results reveal that most of the drug abusers (49%) were between 21 to 30 years of age. About 39 % were between 31 to 40 years of age, whereas 12 % were falling between the age ranges of 41-50 years.

Table: 1		
Age	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
21-30	49	49
31-40	39	39
41-50	12	12

Figure: 1



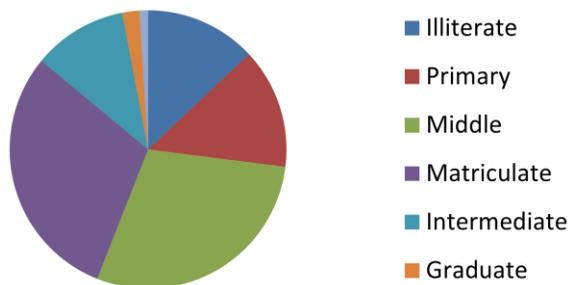
2. Educational Level of Entire Sample

Results show that most of the drug abusers (30%) got education to level of grade 10. About 29% drug abusers got education to the level of grade 8, 14% got education to grade 5 level, 11 % got education to grade 12, 2% got educated to grade 14 and only 1 % got education above grade 14. Among 100 drug abusers 13 % never attended any school.

Educational Level	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
No schooling	13	13%
Grade 5	14	14%
Grade 8	29	29%
Grade 10	30	30%
Grade 12	11	11%
Grade 14	2	2%
Above	1	1%

Figure: 2

Educational Level



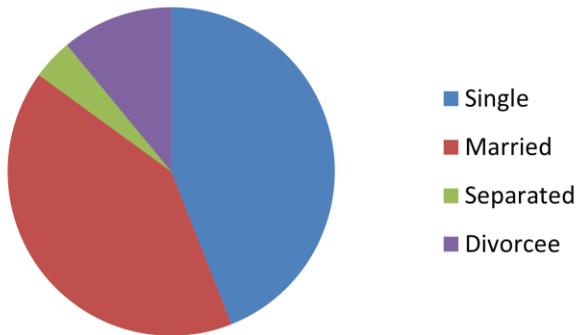
3. Marital Status of Entire Sample

It is depicted that majority of drug abusers (44%) were single, 41% were married, 11 % were divorcee and 4% were living separately from their spouses.

Table: 3		
Marital Status	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
Single	44	44%
Married	41	41%
Separated	4	4%
Divorcee	11	11%

Figure: 3

Marital Status



4. Socio-Economic Status

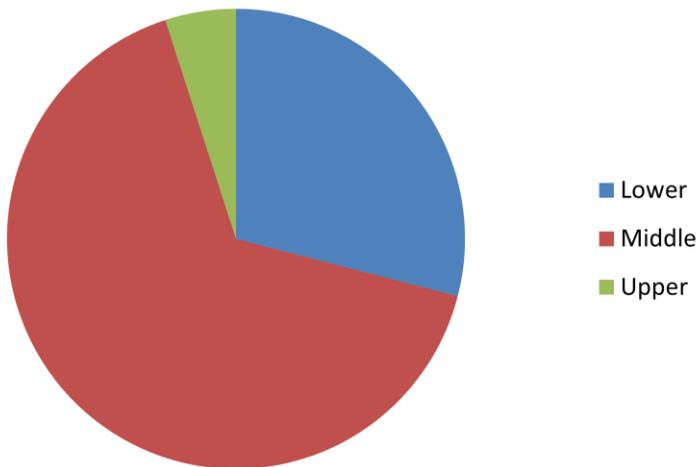
Results show that majority of drug abusers (66%) belonged to middle class, 29% belonged to lower class, whereas only 5% belonged to upper.

Table: 4

Socio- economic Status	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
Lower	29	29%
Middle	66	66%
Upper	5	5%

Figure: 4

Socio-economic Status



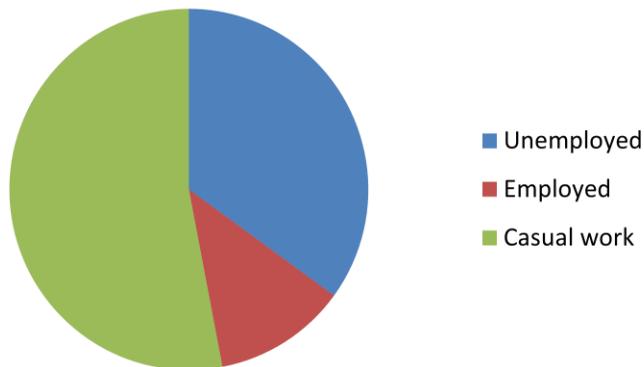
5. Employment Status

Results show that 53% drug abusers were doing casual work, 35% were unemployed and 12% were employed.

Table: 5		
Employment Status	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
Unemployed	35	35%
Employed	12	12%
Casual work	53	53%

Figure: 5

Employment Status



6. Criminal Behaviors reported by Drug Abusers

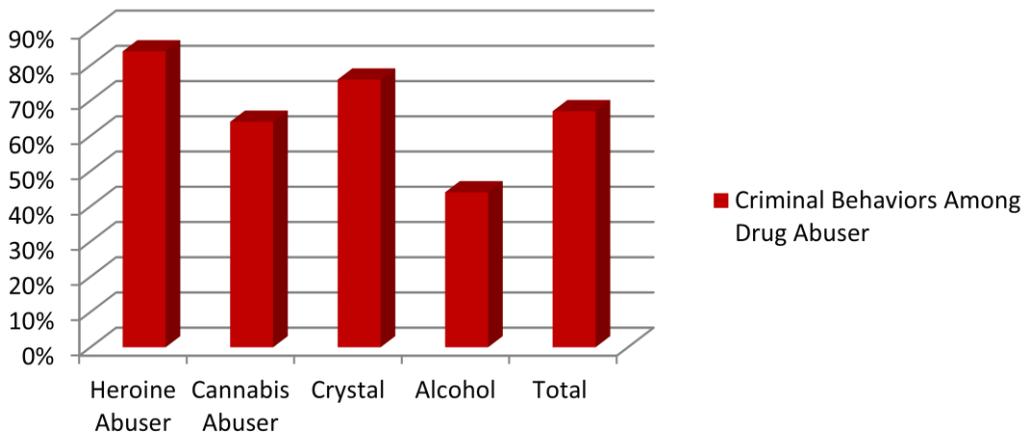
Results reveal that total 67 drug abusers out of 100, reported different crimes related to their drug abuse problems. More crimes were reported by heroin abusers (84%). About 76 % crystal abusers, 64% cannabis abusers and 44% alcohol abusers reported different criminal behaviors during interview.

Table: 6

Frequency and percentages of Criminal Behaviors reported by Drug Abusers			
Types Of Drug Abusers	Total		Criminal Behaviors
	<i>N</i>	<i>F</i>	%
Heroin abusers	25	21	84
Cannabis abusers	25	16	64
Crystal abusers	25	19	76
Alcohol abusers	25	11	44
Total	100	67	67

Figure: 6

Criminal Behaviors Among Drug Abuser



7. Types of Self-Reported Criminal Behaviors

Results reveal that majority of drug abusers (40.29%) were involved in pickpocketing, 18% were involved in snatching, 25.37% were involved in robbery, 19.4% were involved in gambling, 17.91% were involved in fighting, 16.41% were involved in drug peddling, 8.95% were involved in extortion and 1.49% were involved in the violent crime of murder. Results also depict that most of the heroin abusers were involved in pickpocketing. Cannabis users were more involved in the crimes of pickpocketing, robbery and gambling (31.2%). Alcohol abusers (63.6%) were more involved in fighting and crystal abusers were found to be more associated with the crime of pickpocketing (21%).

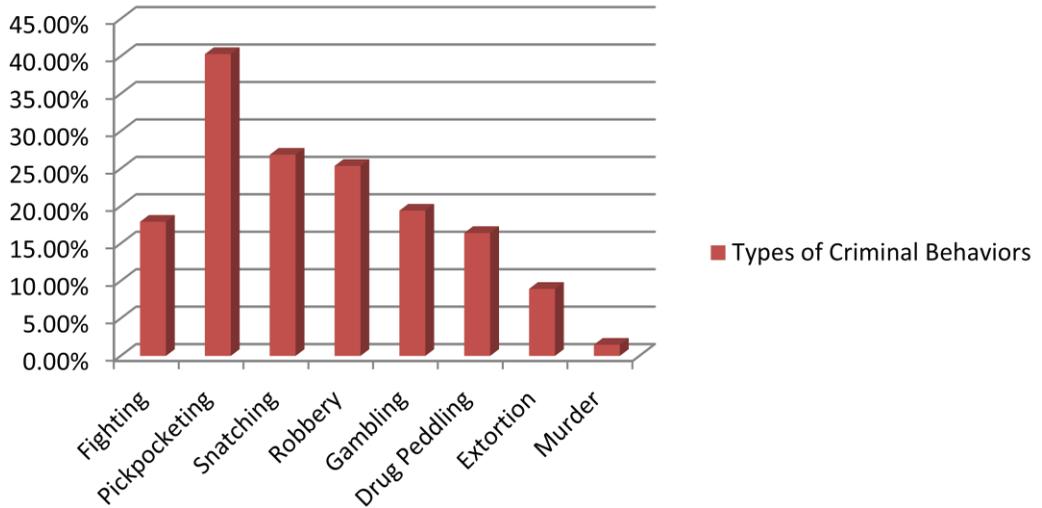
Table: 7

Frequency and Percentages of types of self- reported criminal behaviors in relation to types of drug abuse (N=67)

Criminal Behaviors	Types of Drug Abuse				
	Heroin (n = 21)	Cannabis (n = 16)	Alcohol (n=11)	Crystal (n=19)	Total (n =67)
Fighting	2 (9.5%)	3 (18.7%)	7 (63.6%)	2 (10.5%)	12 (17.91%)
Pickpocketing	12 (57.1%)	5 (31.2%)	6 (54.5%)	4 (21%)	27 (40.29%)
Snatching	8 (38.1%)	3 (18.7%)	4 (36.3%)	3 (15.7%)	18 (26.86%)
Robbery	9 (13.4%)	5 (31.2%)	0 (0%)	3 (15.7%)	17 (25.37%)
Gambling	1 (4.7%)	5 (31.2%)	5 (45.4%)	0 (0%)	13 (19.40%)
Drug Peddling	8 (38.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (15.7%)	11 (16.41%)
Extortion	0 (0%)	1 (6.2%)	3 (27.2%)	2 (10.5%)	6 (8.95%)
Murder	1 (4.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.49%)



Types of Self-Reported Criminal Behaviors



8. Reasons for committing crimes

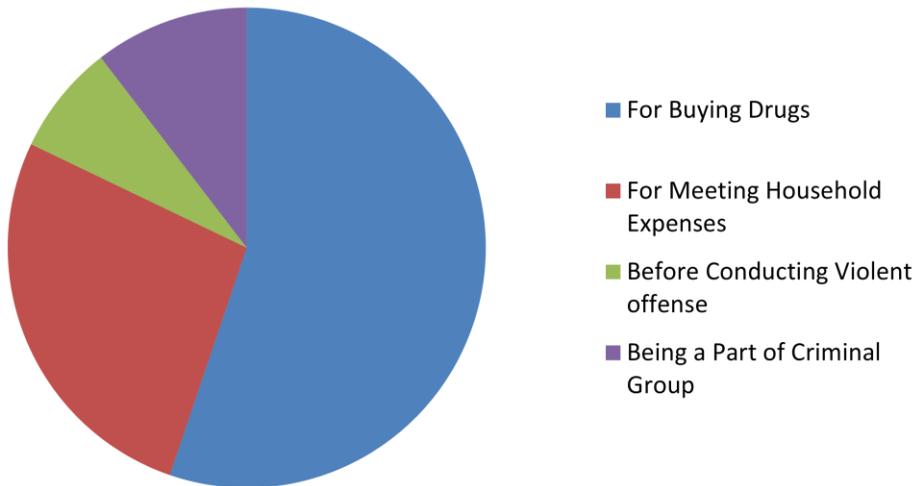
It is shown by the findings that majority of drug abusers (55.22%) were involved in the crimes to get money to buy drugs. Approximately, 26.87% committed crimes in order to meet their household expenses, 10.45% were affiliated with criminal groups, whereas 7.46% used drugs before committing crimes.

Table: 8

Frequencies and Percentages of Reasons for Committing Crimes Reported by Drug Abusers ($N = 67$)

Reasons for committing crimes	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
For buying drugs	37	55.22
For meeting household expenses	18	26.87
Before conducting violent offense	5	7.46
Being a part of criminal group	7	10.45

Reasons For Committing Crimes



Discussion

Prevention of drug abuse problems requires not only reduction in drug demands but emphasize on reduction in drug related harm (Loxley et al., 2004). Having that aim, the present study was done to explore drug related crimes. Results have shown that majority of drug abusers (67%) were involved in different crimes such as; snatching, robbery, gambling, fighting, drug peddling, extortion and even murder. Majority (40.29%) were found to be committing the crime of pickpocketing in the present study. Results also reveal that mostly drug abusers (55.22%) committed crimes for buying drugs. Getting drugs is the prime concern of drug abusers. When they do not have money or anything else to get drugs, they indulge in crimes. Majority of the participants were from middle class (66%) and also from lower class (29%). Most of them (53%) were not having regular job and 35% were unemployed. They wanted to gratify their need for drugs along with meeting other expenses, for this, they found illegal means to get money. Pickpocketing might have seemed to them less dangerous as compare to robbery, snatching and drug peddling. Regarding the crime of pickpocketing, usually, victims do not remember the cheating person; even they have no idea of the time when their wallet was taking out from pocket. Therefore, complaining to police is usually considered useless. It also seems to be easiest way to get money and 200 to 500 hundred rupees are enough to gratify their need as drug abusers reported.

It is also revealed that most of the heroin abusers (84%) were involved in different crimes even in violent crime (i.e, murder). Majority (48%) committed the crime of pickpocketing. In a previous study, Riaz, Shahzad, Ali and Abrar (2011) also had found that about 81.90% heroin abusers were arrested for the offense of drug addiction/drug trafficking, 5. 71% were imprisoned for being involved in theft and 12.38% for committing multiple crimes. Due to chronic dependency on heroin, their sense of right and wrong is largely deteriorated. Even they feel to be detached from their own self. Their deteriorated mental state does not let them feel the intensity of crime in which are involved at that time. As results of the present study show that some drug



abusers were associated with criminal groups (10.45%) and took drugs before conducting violent crimes (7.46%).

Other drugs were also found to be associated with crimes. Cannabis users (20%) were more involved in robbery, gambling and pickpocketing respectively. Approximately, 16% crystal users were involved in pickpocketing. Majority of alcoholic (28%) were involved in fighting. Klausner and Foulks (1982), in a survey, found that alcoholics to be involved in fighting twice after intoxication. Alcoholism is associated with aggressive behavior (Giancola, 2002), therefore, they were more involved in fighting either at home or outside.

Involvement in crimes of gambling, extortion, snatching, drug peddling and robbery is usually associated with the need for making money. As has appeared in the present study mostly drug abusers got involved in crimes due to their need for drugs. Money-making crimes fulfill their need to get drugs. Need for buying drugs is major cause of committing crimes (Shafer, 1973, as cited in Riaz et al., 2011).



Conclusion

Overall results show that drug abuse problems are the cause of different crimes. Heroin, cannabis, crystal and alcohol abusers commit crimes which is alarming for entire nation. The basic reason for committing crime was to buy drugs, therefore proper treatment of drug abuser problems definitely will decrease the crime rate in the city.



Limitations of the Present Study and Future Directions

The present study examined self-reported criminal behaviors of drug abusers. During interview, drug abusers admitted to be involved in different crimes. Although, information was confirmed from the administration of drug treatment centers where they were being rehabilitated but it is essential to get data from police department. Arrestees must be examined drug testing immediately after their arrest in order to confirm their drug dependency. Drug testing results should be taken into account while charging different crimes. Further investigations need to be done to get exact facts and figures of crimes committed by drug abusers with the help of law enforcement agencies or police officials.



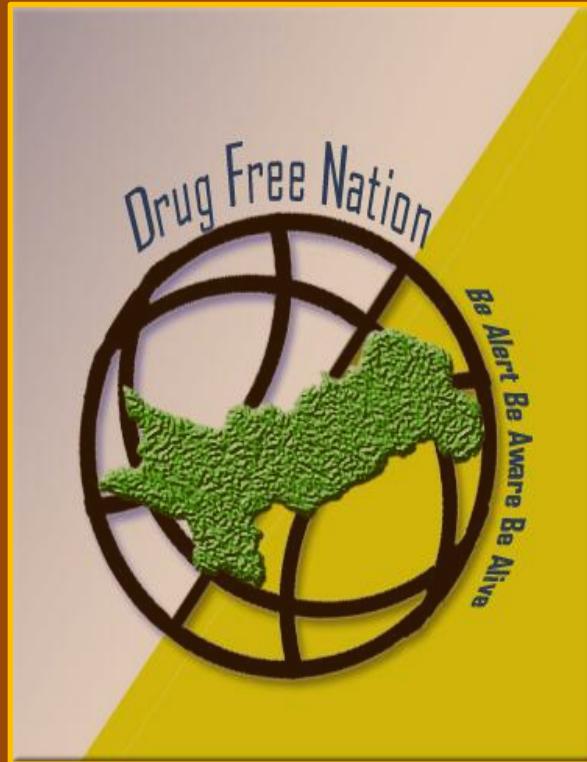
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