

Social Problems

Name

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Abuse of alcohol and illegal drugs have been linked to many social ills. These problems exist in societies around the world and seem to increase regardless of laws and other attempts to curtail such harmful habits. Alcohol abuse is experienced by individuals of all ages. Some begin drinking even during childhood or early adolescence. Adults also tend to abuse alcohol socially as a coping mechanism, dealing with domestic problems, social problems, and stress from work. Young people often abuse alcohol due to peer pressure and wanting to fit in. Like alcohol, people of all ages also abuse drugs. Often, an individual will accidentally become addicted to prescription drugs, not realizing that the drugs are addictive (Pettite, 2012). These drugs may be prescribed as pain medications or as anti-depressants, for example. Adolescents and adults may take illegal drugs recreationally or to deal with social awkwardness. Adults may also find themselves taking illegal drugs as a way of dealing with stress, just like they do with alcohol. Often, adolescents and adults have underlying problems of which they are unaware and they consume alcohol or take drugs as a way of self-medicating. In any case, the abuse of alcohol and drugs leads to social concerns.

One obvious concern about alcohol and drug abuse is the lack of control over one's actions. For example, people driving under the influence often cause accidents. Unfortunately, many of these accidents result in fatalities. However, not all accidents happen on the road with other cars. People have caused accidents by falling asleep, speeding, hitting the wrong pedal, hallucinating, or simply not being able to focus. Sometimes they drive off the road, hit a tree, plough into a crowd, or go through a building. Groups of innocent bystanders have often found themselves victims of cars that suddenly veer off the road. Other problems manifest themselves in domestic violence. The abuser loses control and strikes out at his loved ones, physically, mentally, and emotionally. Children are scarred by these experiences, and often the spouse is left

to take care of the family. These families suffer economically, as well, not only for treatment but also because the abuser may have trouble keeping a job or may use his earning to pay for alcohol and illegally obtained drugs. Moreover, the quality of work suffers when an individual is abusing alcohol and drugs.

There is no easy answer to preventing alcohol or drug abuse. However, it costs society in many ways if it is not effectively addressed. For example, tax money is spent on the harm that is done to society. Passing and enforcement of laws is only one solution. Another one is prevention. Children and adults must be educated as to what harm alcohol does to the brain in the development of infants born to mothers who are alcoholics or drug abusers. Children and teenagers need to have a sense of what drugs and alcohol do to their brains, and they need an outlet or support for the various reasons that might drive them to try alcohol or drugs to begin with. Finally, adults need support to help prevent abuse on their parts, as well. Public education can come from many segments of society.

The purpose of the article was to examine some of the causes and the consequences of alcohol and drug abuse and to offer some suggestions for addressing it. Possibilities for addressing it include reactive and preventive measures, especially in the area of public education. The problem is a serious one world-wide and can be expected to continue to grow, causing economic hardships as well as harm physically, emotionally, and mentally for both the abusers and those closest to them.

### **References**

Pettit, B. (. (2012). Drinking and Drugs. *Social Problems Vol 52(4)* , 437-579.