

# How casual drug use leads to full blown addiction

I can't imagine how many people have asked themselves this very same question. I doubt anyone has ever set out having *addiction* their goal when using drugs to get high. Unfortunately many young people have made the mistake of either listening to friends or assuming on their own *they can control their drug use*.

They may be able to control their drug use in the beginning but they can't control the effects drugs have on them or their brain, especially drugs like heroin, yaba, phensidyle, ganja, crystal meth, cocaine and ecstasy.

These are not bad kids, they are inquisitive, want to fit in with their friends or maybe they are just going through an emotional period in their life and they are down and they experiment with drugs looking to feel better. People just don't realise how addictive drugs like yaba, crystal meth, heroin, cocaine and ganja are; only the drug dealers know the addictive potential these drugs have and they are counting on it.

This does not just happen to teens and young people either, there are plenty of adults that casually use drugs from time to time and the same thing eventually happens to them. What people don't realise is that the first time someone uses, substances to get high the

addictive chemicals are already at work changing normal healthy brain function. Each drug affects the brain differently but they all affect mood, behaviour and motor skills.

Some people in the beginning use drugs just on the weekends hanging out with friends. They think this occasional drug use keeps them from becoming addicted but they soon find out differently when they try to stop or their weekend supply runs out.

During the early stages of drug use, the user does not always see the changes taking place in their behaviour, especially with their moods. People close to them do but the drug user does not.

In a short period of time, tolerance to the drugs is taken over and occasional use becomes more frequent. Your brain and body becomes dependent on the drug in order to get through the day. Drug use not only becomes more frequent but the dose has to be increased because what you have been doing is not as effective anymore. Now you are no longer using drugs to get high, you are using drugs in order to somewhat function.

When dopamine is forced during drug use it not only kills healthy brain cells but the brain slowly stops taking charge and producing it normally like it once



did. In between drug use, a chemical imbalance is going on in your brain which affects your health and well-being.

You are now craving the drug, irritable, sometimes short-tempered, nervous, unable to function, down, depressed and anxious until you use again.

In the beginning of your drug use, surges of dopamine were

released when you experienced euphoria and unrealistic pleasure. That is why most people continue using drugs, they want to experience those feelings again. Now that you are dependent on your drug use when the dopamine levels begin to decrease as the drugs wears down, extreme high levels of dopamine are now becoming

abnormally low levels of dopamine and you are completely miserable.

Not only do these drugs cause symptoms of depression and anxiety when you are crashing, many also cause paranoia, stomach cramps, body aches and pains, nausea and vomiting, sometimes sweats and chills.

These symptoms are so powerfully miserable many people have overdosed on whatever they can get a hold of to relieve their misery. You are miserably hooked.

Some people consider themselves to be functional drug users because they are able to use drugs, hold down a job, and maintain a somewhat normal lifestyle so they think. They may be functioning now but the drugs have taken hold and they are unable to live without them. For most people, this does not last long either. Tolerance takes place the same way it does with occasional use and the drugs affect a functional drug user the same way they do anyone else.

Choosing to use drugs was a poor choice and a mistake, you know that by now. Make the right choice and ask for help.

The write-up is compiled from www.addictionsearch.com by Dr Satparkash.

## CURE OF EBOLA



WHO Director-General Dr Chan shaking hands with Rebecca Johnson, nurse, Ebola survivor, Sierra Leone 2014

### Cured of Ebola, Rebecca returns to cure others

For many people, December 22 was the beginning of the holiday season. But for Rebeca Johnson, a Sierra Leone nurse who survived Ebola, it marked a return to work - and a new lease on life.

"I will take the work normally as I did before. I will wear the full PPE, but I won't ever be scared again because I have immunity."

#### Ebola survivor tells her story

Last weekend, as she prepared to return to work, she told her story to WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan and received a warm hug in return. "It felt good when she (Dr Chan) hugged me," said Rebecca, "I really appreciate all you people who have come to help us."

Now fully recovered, Rebecca always carries her hospital discharge certificate to prove her good health. "In my community, I am stigmatised and people talk about me. They say 'there she is, she's the one with Ebola,' but I know I am safer than them."

Rebecca, a 28-year-old nurse caring for people with Ebola virus disease at the Police Training School (PTS) Hastings I, in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown, developed symptoms of the disease herself on November 14. "My mind would not think Ebola. No, it was not possible. I was paralysed with vomiting for days."

She vividly remembers the shock on her colleagues' faces when her family brought her in, not to work, but to seek treatment. "It was hard for all of us, but thank God I survived."

#### Ebola can be beaten

And now, having survived the disease she is not only returning to work to care for people with Ebola but spreading the word that Ebola can be beaten. "I want Ebola to finish so we can get back to normal. My country is drowning - no schools, the economy is in ruins. It's not easy."

Source: World Health Organisation

## HEALTH bulletin

### Some information on using paracetamol

#### Monitoring kids' screen time may improve their behaviour

Children's sleep, behaviour and school work improves when their parents closely track their media use, according to a new study appeared in the journal JAMA Paediatrics.

Researchers found that increased monitoring of the time they spent online, watching TV and playing video games reduced their total amount of screen time. In turn, this led to children getting more sleep, doing better in school and being less aggressive.

#### Even slightly higher blood pressure may raise stroke risk

High blood pressure has long been pegged as a risk factor for stroke, but a new analysis suggests that even slightly elevated blood pressure levels raise the odds of suffering a stroke, according to a new study published in the journal Neurology.



Paracetamol (acetaminophen) is an over-the-counter (OTC) drug that reduces pain such as headache, muscle aches, arthritis, backache, toothaches, colds, and fevers. But overdose of paracetamol can cause serious harm on vital organs.

An overdose (maximum amount of paracetamol for adults is 1000 mg per dose and 4000 mg per day) of paracetamol could cause liver damage. So some general information is crucial to know for the patients during uses of paracetamol.

- Patients should tell the doctor if they have liver disease or a history of alcoholism. Because alcohol is a risk factor for damaging liver while taking paracetamol.
- Patients should not use paracetamol if s/he has allergic to it.
- Do not use paracetamol without telling your doctor if you are pregnant and breast-feeding a baby.
- If you are diabetic and you notice changes in your glucose levels while you are taking paracetamol then talk to your doctor or pharmacist because paracetamol may produce false result in urine glucose tests.
- Do not use extra medicine to make up for a missed dose. In this case you should talk to your doctor.
- There may be other drugs that can interact with paracetamol. Tell your doctor about all your prescription and over-the-counter medications, vitamins, minerals, herbal

products, and drugs prescribed by other doctors. Do not start a new medication without telling your doctor or pharmacist.

#### Signs of a paracetamol overdose:

Loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, sweating, and confusion or weakness are the first signs of a paracetamol overdose. Pain in upper stomach, dark urine, and yellowing of skin or the whites of eyes are the next symptoms.



#### Stop using paracetamol and take advice if:

- Fever is not reduced after 3 days of using paracetamol
- Pain is not relieved after 7 days of using paracetamol
- You have any inflammatory signs such as skin rash, redness or swelling after using paracetamol

The write-up is compiled by Amit Sarker, Department of Pharmacy, Primeasia University, Banani, Dhaka.

#### Health Tips

### Serve kids power foods

If you want your young athletes to play hard, make sure they are powered up with the right foods. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics offers these suggestions for power meals and snacks:

- Start with a breakfast of whole-grain cereal or whole-grain muffins with fruit. Or begin the day with a yogurt and fruit parfait, with whole grain cereal.
- Pack a breakfast of a bagel, fruit, string cheese, yogurt, juice box and low-fat milk.
- Pack a snack bag to include crackers with cheese, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, sliced veggies and dip, fruit and trail mix. Use a frozen juice or water bottle to keep perishables cold.
- Offer plenty of water to keep your child hydrated.



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## Knowing for better living

Smoking increases the risk of stroke, coronary heart disease and impotence by **100%**

Avoid smoking in public place

Avoid smoking in working place

Exercise regularly

Drink plenty of water

Stay away from stressful situations

Consult your Doctor



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