

Introduction to Drug Abuse- Dr. Hemanthkumar R.G

1. Define drug use, drug misuse, drug abuse, and drug dependence with one example each.

- Drug use is taking a drug as prescribed, in the correct dose, for a valid medical reason.

Example: Taking paracetamol 500 mg for fever as prescribed.

- Drug misuse is using a drug in an incorrect manner or without medical advice.

Example: Taking antibiotics for a viral cold without prescription.

- Drug abuse is using a substance for non-medical purposes to obtain pleasure or relieve stress.

Example: Drinking cough syrup containing codeine to feel euphoric.

- Drug dependence is a physical or psychological reliance on a substance, with withdrawal symptoms on stopping it.

Example: Inability to sleep without regular use of sleeping pills.

2. Why are medical students considered a vulnerable group for drug abuse?

Medical students face intense academic pressure, long study hours, emotional stress, and burnout. They also have easier access to prescription drugs compared to the general population. These factors increase the risk of experimenting with substances, which may later lead to abuse or dependence.

3. Explain the difference between drug misuse and drug abuse.

Drug misuse refers to incorrect or inappropriate use of a drug, often without harmful intent, such as taking medicines without prescription. Drug abuse involves intentional use of substances for pleasure, stress relief, or to get high, which is harmful and non-medical in nature.

4. Mention any two common myths related to drug abuse discussed in the session and briefly explain them.

- Myth 1: “I can stop whenever I want.”

In reality, addiction alters brain function, making quitting difficult without help.

- Myth 2: “Prescription drugs are safer than street drugs.”

Many addictions begin with legally available prescription drugs like sedatives or painkillers, which can be equally dangerous if misused.

5. Why is awareness about drug abuse particularly important for future doctors?

Future doctors are role models for patients and society. Drug abuse can affect their judgment, credibility, and ability to counsel patients effectively. Being aware helps them protect their own health, maintain professionalism, and provide responsible guidance to patients suffering from substance use problems.