

## Women's Drug Addiction Motives and Causes in Palestine

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### Abstract

This study aimed to identify reasons behind women's drug addiction in the Palestinian society and the social and psychological issues that are associated with substance abuse and addiction. The study was conducted through in-depth open interviews with a group of female addicts and as well experienced social workers in the field of addiction. The most prominent result of the study is that women who have drug addicted family members are more likely to become drug addicts themselves and to suffer from psychological issues and or be subjected to violence. Consequently, the study recommends providing psychological, social and health services for women living in families with a drug addicted member.

**Keywords:** Drug Addiction; Women; Motives; Palestine

### Introduction

The drug abuse and addiction phenomenon is one of the most dangerous social phenomena in terms of the safety of individuals and society, and therefore has health, psychological, social and behavioral implications. These repercussions are not limited to the abuser and the addict, but rather extend to all members of the family and society and threaten the overall security of any society.

The fact that our Palestinian society is inseparable from the rest of the other societies due to the change and acceleration affected by the increase in the drug scourge, and this was confirmed by official reports and recent studies. Several studies have shown the extent of the growing phenomenon and according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2007), there is a rapid growth and spread in the drug problem in the Palestinian territories, with an annual increase of 2.41%. The number of new drug users increased by 2.43% in the West Bank and 2.39% in the Gaza Strip. The reports of the General Administration of Narcotics Control during the past three years showed a noticeable increase in the number of arrested women. The 2017 report indicated that out of 1921 arrested individuals, 26 of them were females. As for the mid-year report for the year 2018, it indicates that out of the 1171 individuals who were arrested, 15 were females [1,2].

Women are heavily affected by the drug phenomenon, whether they are drug users or drug addicts. Women face stigmatization and exclusion from the society if they are related to a drug addict. Women are also marginalized even in terms of research on the topic of female addiction and in terms of services provided to them. Therefore, it was necessary to summarize the causes and motives of female drug addiction, in spite of what they suffer from in terms of reaction from their families and their community, and what are the most psychological and social problems associated with their addiction?

### The Research Problem

The majority of studies, whether Palestinian or Arab indicate that the drug problem has psychological and social dimensions for the drug abuser and his family. In fact, drug addiction is constantly growing despite attempts to fight it. The issue is very crucial and problematic for those who provide awareness and treatment. The Palestinian National Institute of Public Health [3] published a report that indicates that there are 26,500 active users of drugs of all kinds, and unfortunately the issue of women was not addressed and the World Narcotics Report "Compendium Summaries" [4] mentioned that women are more negatively affected by drugs and HIV than men, and are more likely to be socially stigmatized. Women bear a heavy burden of violence and deprivation associated with drug dependence from family members in addition to the field researcher's work with drug addicts and women in particular, so this study focuses on the main question: What are the causes and motives of female drug abuse and addiction in the Palestinian society?

### The Importance of the Study

The importance of the study can be summarized in two ways: theoretical and practical theory: This study deals with women's addiction, which has long been absent from debate and conversation and with scarce information about it, according to the researcher's knowledge.

### Research Methodology

The researchers used the descriptive analytical method, which describes the subject of the study and analyzes and explains the causes and motives of women taking drugs and their effects on them. By interviewing a number of addicted women and those working in addiction treatment and counseling. The researchers used the in-depth interview as a methodology for collecting data and answering study questions from the study sample.

### The study sample

The sample used was a non-random sample, in order to properly obtain information. The sample consisted of seven female drug addicts and four social workers specialized in treatment and counseling.

The subjects were interviewed and the social workers. The study was conducted in September 2018.

### The Purpose of the Study

The study seeks to achieve a very important goal, which is to identify the social problems that follow the problem of drug addiction for women. There are sub-goals for the study, which are: Diagnosing the causes that lead to drug use, whether psychologically or socially. Learning about the characteristics of addicted women.

Identifying the social and psychological problems associated with drug abuse and addiction for women.

Contribute to providing workers with practical ideas to work with addicted women.

### Research questions

- What are the causes and motives for drug abuse and addiction of women in Palestinian society?
- What are the social and psychological problems associated with women's drug abuse?
- What are the most common types of drugs among addicted women?
- What services are available to treat female addiction especially in Palestinian society?
- What are the obstacles and challenges facing treatment and seeking help for female drug addicts?

### Definitions of terms

- **Abuse:** Illegal use of drugs in an irregular and non-recurring manner that individuals take in order to cause a change in mood or mental state ([5]: P. 23).
- **Addiction:** The World Health Organization (WHO) defines addiction as the psychological or organic condition that results from drug interaction in the human body ([6]: P. 39). Abu Al-Khair [7] defines it as compulsive use of a natural or synthetic anesthetic, and this use results in harm to the individual and society or both together. At the same time this results in psychological and organic dependence that increases the abuser's tolerance and increases his eagerness and his longing of the anesthetic substance after the effects of the previous dose wear off.
- **Drugs:** Drugs are a natural or synthetic substance that triggers change in the body in terms of feelings and behaviors, as a result of the continuous and repetitive use of the drug. Drugs have serious consequences on the physical and mental health and have negative effects on the environment and society, according to Al-Bustani [8]: P. 14.
- **The addict:** As defined by Abu Al-Khair [7]: P. 26 based on the definition of Yahya Al-Rakhawi: He is the person who obscures his consciousness, he reaches the level of harmful dependence, which is represented in his dependence on a natural or synthetic external chemical.

### Theoretical framework and related studies

Many psychosocial schools of thought have tried to explain drug abuse and addiction. Every perspective had its interpretation, since the psychological perspective viewed addiction as withdrawal and escape from a painful reality that the individual is unable to face. Al-Mughrabi [9]: P. 94 confirms that addicts suffer from anxiety and tension and they resort to drug abuse. While the behavioral perspective that looked at abuse and addiction solely from a stimulus and response perspective. According to Farida [10]: P. 52 a person's behavior, whether it is regular or problematic, is a result of learning. As for the behavior of drug use, it is evident that individuals will repeat the actions for which they have been rewarded: and they will refrain from actions that they have not been rewarded for. And psychosocial interpretations, they focused on the environment and socialization experienced by the abusive individual, in addition to some social pressures that are responsible for the deviation and drug use of the person only ([6]: 194) that the behavior of drug abuse is a behavior that results from the interaction of the child with his environment.

Addiction according to Sadiqi [11]: P. 196 is a result of a personality disorder, and the social factors, are only auxiliary factors for the emergence of underlying disorders in the form of abnormal behavior. Addictive behavior is not the result of a specific event or one interpretation. Therefore, it is important to understand female addiction and its causes in order to provide them with adequate help. The most prominent studies on female addiction are: -A study by Hosni and Ababo [12] titled "Family factors leading to drug addiction among girls". The study aimed to reveal the relationship between family factors leading to drug addiction in girls, and the two researchers used the descriptive analytical approach to a sample that included (15) girls addicted to drugs, inside a treatment center. The most prominent results of the study were that the presence of family disintegration represented in divorce and abandonment, or the death of one or both parents affected the drug addiction of girls. In addition, wrong family upbringing and bad parenting have a great role in the girls' drug addiction.

Al-Didi Study [13]: The dynamics of sexual dysfunction in females who use substances that cause psychological impact. Exploratory study: The study aimed to understand the effect of addiction on sexual function in addicted women. In two cases of addicted women in Al-Qanater prison, the most prominent results of the study were that female addicts had a disorder in the sexual identity, sexual role, and dysfunction.

The study by Haji Ahmad [14]: titled "drug use among female university students (the opinions of male and female students about the causes and effects)". The study aimed to identify the problem of drug abuse and drug addiction among university students in Khartoum,

in terms of the reasons that cause female students to abuse drugs as well as studying the implications of drug abuse. The study was conducted on a sample consisting of (1055) male and female students from ten governmental universities, especially in Khartoum, using the stratified random sample discussion groups were formed using the same individuals as the sample questionnaire. The study found that there is a proliferation of drugs among female students, and the main reason for this is the absence of family control and the presence of family problems. In addition, the problem of drug use among female students has psychological and social implication.

Al-Omari Study [15]: titled "The contact between addicted adolescents and their families through the application of the Family Appreciation Test (FAT). The study is a clinical study of an intentional sample of three cases in the state of Al-Blaidah (CDC) The study aimed to highlight the role of ineffective family contact (The family of the drug addicted teenager who feels estranged and excluded. The study uses the clinical method through clinical observation, clinical interview and using the family appreciation test. The teenager suffers from a struggle between his desire for independence and his desire for love, affection, tenderness and psychological security. Therefore, the adolescent resorts to addictive behavior as an aggressive reaction towards the self. Also, from the results, the reason for adolescents' addiction to drugs is due to the absence of effective communication represented by cold contact with the family and the absence of dialogue between family members. In addition, it is caused by the parents' conflict, marital incompatibility and the absence of internal environmental alliances.

Mohsen's study [16] titled "Psychology of drug abuse and addiction of a female university student (case study)". The study aimed to identify the causes of drug addiction and the dynamics of the addict's personality and psychological characteristics. The study was applied on female in Al-Aqsa University in Gaza, who was addicted to Tramadol. The study employed interviews as well as drug addiction questionnaire the results indicated that the reasons that led to the addiction of the university student to the tramal pills are: Personal reasons, such as lack of love and security, Family reasons, such as family arguments, lack of follow-up and control, Social reasons, such as bad social conditions, Cultural and religious reasons, such as weak faith,. In addition to the feeling of depression, lack of love and feelings of distrust, helplessness and despair, which prompted the situation for drug addiction?

Paul YIP (2010) study titled "Drug Abuse among Youths and Family Relationship" The study was conducted by the Center for Suicide Research and Prevention University of Hong Kong. The study aimed to identify the background of the families of teenage abusers as well as the pattern of nurturing and family structure. The study used the methodology of focused interviews, discussion groups, and a questionnaire. The study population consisted of drug users aged (12 - 34) present in educational centers or institutions, experienced social workers and doctors as well as the parents of addicts. Eight focus groups were formed according to age groups as well as according to some common features including a group of specialists and a group of parents who have problems with their addicted children. The population of drug abusers was divided into a group of users that only tried drugs, and another group that uses drugs continuously, as well as a group of adult drug abusers. The study focused on identifying (the economic situation, sources of income for the family, the educational level of the family, work, social status, place of residence, social class to which they belong, type of housing and family reactions when discovering the individual's use) in addition to and with whom the individual lives. The most prominent results of the study and its recommendations were: One of the reasons for drug use amongst young individuals is pressure from peers as well as curiosity. The deprivation and dysfunction in the family pushes teenagers to use drugs. The majority of the abusers suffer from an imbalance in communication with their families, where 77% of them do not live with their families and have easy access to drugs due to the drugs' abundance in their community. However, the study indicated that effective social upbringing within the family is one of the protective factors for children. The study recommended the importance of equipping parents with the right skills before having children, and teaching family members the mechanisms of effective positive communication between them, as well as the importance of caring for families at risk.

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parents with the right skills before having children, and teaching family members the mechanisms of effective positive communication between them, as well as the importance of caring for families at risk.

After reviewing these studies, we conclude that majority of studies were similar to current study about reasons of women's addiction. The study by Hosseini [12] clarified the relationship between the female's drug abuse and her relationship with her family. The study focused on the causes and effects on the future of the girl as the current study and previous studies pointed out the importance to investigate the causes of addiction and the implications of her addiction.

### Results and Discussion

The results showed that the causes and motives for women's drug addiction and addiction in Palestinian society? All subjects indicated that the causes and motives behind women's drug addiction and addiction are:

1. Family problems and domestic violence directed at them in all its forms.
2. Relationships with males who abuse or sell drugs.
3. Enticing women to try drugs, especially by the husband, either for sexual pleasure or for her exploitation in order for him to gain access to drugs or money".
4. Ignorance and lack of awareness on the dangers of drugs.
5. Curiosity and love to experience.
6. Building relationships with the opposite sex.
7. Escaping from reality.

Also, the results of the what are the social, psychological and behavioral problems associated with female abuse?

The effects of drug use on addicted women are very brutal, as most addicts experienced attempts to sexually exploit them during their addiction phase, whether by a family member (incest) or from outside the family. In addition, they face excessive pressure due to social stigma, especially when they are involved in sexual work:

1. Social problems such as divorce or a continuous dispute between spouses.
2. Continuous problems with the husband.
3. Insomnia, mood swings, fear, depression, anxiety and tension.
4. Bad and violent social situation (violence towards others).
5. Inability to make new friends.
6. High social stigma.
7. Psychological disturbances (depression, frustration, anxiety, and high fear).
8. Hallucinations and a sense of persecution.

In the meantime, the results showed that of the types of drugs are commonly used by women were: Psychiatric medications, Cannabis and marijuana, Ecstasy pills and TRIP, Heroin, abuse of alcohol.

The results showed that services are available to treat female, especially in Palestinian.

### Treatment services:

1. Treatment services are limited to two centers affiliated with the private sector and do not qualify as professional health care services centers. The centers receive only males.
2. The alternative treatment program by the Palestinian Ministry of Health and deals only with opioid addicts.

### Educational counseling services:

1. Female addiction is dealt with through counseling. Either face to face or by phone.
2. Transferring some cases to other institutions that suit the needs of women.
3. Providing awareness for women and men in different locations.
4. Providing some psychological and social services through the mental health clinics of the Ministry of Health.

Finally, the obstacles and challenges facing treatment and seeking help for addicted women were:

1. Lack of services for treating female addiction and the scarcity of specialists.
2. Fear of being murdered by her family in case they find out.
3. Being shy and unaware of the problem, especially among the users of sedatives and Tramadol.
4. Social stigma and society's intolerance of women's addiction issue and shaming the abuser instead of treating the issue as a disorder.
5. Not knowing the services available.
6. The high expectations of a woman for the role she plays in her family makes her try to hide her addiction from others.
7. The biological nature of women and their mood swings.

The subjects of the study suggested that to face women addiction as follow: Providing treatment services appropriate to the needs of addicted women and the culture of society, Providing women with experienced female professionals, Finding supportive psychological and social program, educating doctors working in primary health care centers especially with regard to dispensing misused and finding specialized centers that work scientifically while providing services that focus on positive alternatives, whether private or governmental.

It is clear from the results of the study that the girl or woman who lives in the family of one of its members is a drug addict, who lives in a painful way, which contributes to creating problems (if she really is, the girl who is beaten and insulted may consider suicide or flight). The beginning may be with a psychiatrist and taking sedatives, because the 2013 age study emphasized the role of the family in protecting children and how she saw herself going to be lost while leaving a state of inconvenience as most studies have shown that domestic violence is practiced and she has been able, in addition to Hosseini's study [12], which has moved The results with it, especially with regard to marijuana use, are the beginnings, but an addiction disorder is associated with a large number of surrounding youth. It is important to keep his presence between them. Drugs and their effects extend beyond all body systems, and abuse is a means of escape from reality, so studies that have been put forward on the causes and effects confirmed. The study by Al-Omari [15] showed the extent of the influence of family social relationships and clarified that adolescents flee from parental authority to the peer paralysis.

### Conclusion

The study aimed at identifying the causes, motives for women's drug addiction, addiction in Palestinian society, the social and psychological problems associated with women's drug addiction and addiction. This was accomplished through in-depth and open interviews with a sample of addicted women. The results of the study showed that women who live in the families of one of its members, especially women who have been subjected to domestic violence and neglect within the family by the family with a crack and disintegration within the family, so its use was either because of deceit and exploitation by the addict within the family who has control or to escape from its painful reality and ignorance of the effects of drugs on her life.

Drug addicts are more likely to be involved in drug use. The study recommended the importance of caring, providing psychological, social and health services for females who live in families suffering from addiction by one of its members.

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