

International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

Drug addiction is a pressing issue not only for the healthcare system but for society as a whole. This is due to the severe medical and social consequences of psychoactive substance use, as well as the widespread prevalence of drug use among the population.

Given the importance of the problem, in 1987 the UN General Assembly proclaimed March 1 as **the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking**.

the WHO definition , " **drug**" (from the Greek . ναρκωτικός — causing numbness, Greek. Stupor (νάρκωσις — stupor) is a chemical agent that causes stupor , coma , or insensitivity to pain. The term usually refers to opiates, which are called "narcotic analgesics ." However, in medical and legal literature and documentation, as well as in everyday life, the term "narcotic" is often used more broadly, denoting all prohibited psychoactive substances, regardless of their pharmacology .

Drug addiction is a disease caused by the systematic use of drugs. The development of drug addiction is characterized by the development of psychological dependence, physical dependence, tolerance, and withdrawal symptoms.

Psychological dependence is a painful urge to continuously or periodically use a narcotic substance in order to experience certain sensations or relieve psychological discomfort. It occurs in all cases of systematic drug use, often after a single use.

Physical dependence is a state of specific restructuring of all human body systems due to chronic drug use. The drug becomes integrated into the body's metabolic processes, and the person can no longer feel normal without taking the drug.

Tolerance is the development of adaptation, or habituation, to narcotic substances, when a progressively less pronounced response is observed to repeated administration of the same amount. Therefore, to achieve the same psychophysical effect, the patient requires an increasingly higher dose of the drug. As a result, after some time, the initial dose increases many times over, and the toxic effects of the drug increase correspondingly.

Abrupt cessation of drug use leads to the development of a severe condition called withdrawal **syndrome** . It is characterized by mental and physical disturbances (nausea, vomiting, salivation, sneezing, flushed skin, hyperhidrosis , muscle and joint pain, abdominal pain, and confusion), which cause unbearable suffering.

The duration of the period from the first use to persistent addiction to drugs depends on their type and the individual characteristics of the person - age, past illnesses, level of physical and mental development, characteristics of biochemical processes in the body.

The younger a person is, the faster they become dependent on drugs. A teenager can become completely dependent on the drug for just a few weeks or even months. A single use of the psychoactive substance is often enough.

Drug-induced pathological conditions are, to a certain extent, irreversible, and some of the negative changes in the body remain permanent. The most common disorders caused by psychoactive substances include:

- damage to the human brain, which subsequently leads to irreversible changes in its structures;
- decreased immunity, and as a consequence, a longer course of various diseases;
- disturbances in the functioning of the cardiovascular system (hypertensive crises, arrhythmia) during withdrawal of psychoactive substances, which leads to the development of cardiovascular pathology;
- during the period of withdrawal and an irresistible craving for drugs, all thoughts and actions of a person are aimed at immediately obtaining a “dose” under any conditions, in any syringe and with any needle - hence the danger of contracting HIV infection, parenteral hepatitis and other blood-borne diseases;
- the development of pathological changes in the liver, kidneys and other organs, which result from increasing toxic doses of the drug.

Personality changes in drug addicts lead to the destruction of social connections. Domestic disputes and domestic violence are common, as well as the loss of social contacts with family and friends. Without medical treatment, progressive mental health problems lead to personality degradation and a narrowing of interests.

While under the influence of drugs or in a psychotic state A person often commits illegal acts (murder, robbery, violence, etc.) . Moreover, according to statistics, a drug addict hooks five to six people on the needle per year.

Mortality among drug addicts is very high. Its causes include:

- drug overdose - the addict typically sets the dose themselves, especially when preparing the drug at home. With continued use, tolerance to a certain dose develops, requiring regular increases;
- accidents while under the influence of the drug - people who use drugs lose control over their behavior and are prone to actions that are dangerous to their own lives and the lives of others;
- damage to internal organs (liver, heart, kidneys and others);
- suicides and crimes that occur during periods of deep depression during drug withdrawal syndrome;
- the emergence of infectious and venereal diseases.

The motives that lead a person to use drugs can be very diverse. The most common ones are:

- curiosity, experimentation with one's own state. This can be especially often observed in young people and teenagers;
- psychologically unhealthy environment in the family;
- inadequate assessment of one's own condition and the state of the microenvironment and, as a result, drug use to neutralize negative emotions;

- hereditary burden of mental or drug-related diseases;
- among teenagers, the reason for drug use may be rebellion, which is a form of protest against the values professed by society and family.
- in the perception of drugs as an attribute of an independent life, as the only way to solve problems;
- open or hidden advertising of the drug consumption culture in the media;
- widespread use of psychoactive substances in the area.

A person may be suspected of using psychoactive substances based on a number of physiological symptoms and behavioral signs:

- Behavior may change from euphoria and complacency to aggression, and hallucinations may develop. Memory and attention impairment, insomnia, or drowsiness may also occur. Speech may become disjointed, slow, or accelerated;
- a person can perform actions that were previously not typical for him;
- irritation of the mucous membranes of the upper respiratory tract (causeless cough, redness of the eyes), excessive constriction or dilation of the pupils, loss of appetite or excessive food intake, chronic cough, poor coordination of movements (staggering or stumbling), gastrointestinal upset may be observed;
- symptoms of an overdose of psychoactive substances, including respiratory and cardiovascular arrest ;
- symptoms of dependence on psychoactive substances and withdrawal symptoms;
- the presence of injection marks on the body in the area of blood vessels, cuts, bruises.
- the presence of attributes indicating a switch in interests to drugs (syringes, bags, sooty spoons and foil, pieces of paper and banknotes rolled into tubes, packs of sleeping pills or sedatives, the use of drug jargon in speech, etc.).
- decreased interest in usual hobbies and learning in children and adolescents;
- alienation, secrecy, deceit, leaving home, desire to steal money.

Typically, drug use is sporadic at first, and therefore changes in behavior may be subtle.

of psychoactive substances used is quite broad. However, it's worth noting that new psychoactive substances have begun to replace "classic" drugs (heroin, hashish, methadone , etc.) . For example, herbal smoking mixtures (spice) have recently become widespread among young people .

" Spice " or smoking mixtures are mixtures of herbs treated with synthetic substances (synthetic cannabinoids) and produced entirely in laboratory conditions. Synthetic cannabinoids are five times more potent than natural cannabinoids in terms of hallucinogenic effect , and addiction develops twice as quickly. Furthermore, smoking is the first step toward transitioning to harder drugs.

The peculiarity of drugs is that they are very easy to become addicted to, but very difficult to stop. While they may temporarily improve your psycho-emotional state, they don't solve existing problems, but only create new ones.

Many talented and great people have become drug addicts, but no drug addict has ever become a great person. Drugs are a road to nowhere...

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