

CHAPTER 2

DRUGS IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

1. Chapter Objectives and Discussion Questions

A. Chapter Objectives

After completing **Chapter 2: Drugs in Contemporary Society** the reader should be able to describe:

1. How the effect of drugs are affected by society's perception of drugs.
2. The impact that drugs have had on society.
3. Different reasons for experimental, social and compulsive drug use.
4. Factors that have influenced the rate of drug use.
5. Changes in the incidence of drug use over the last 30 years.
6. Limitations of drug testing.
7. The effect of drugs on the family, criminal activity, and academic achievement.
8. Differences among physiological, behavioral, acute, and chronic toxicity.
9. Risks associated with injecting, inhaling, and ingesting drugs.
10. Findings of the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN).

B. Discussion Questions

1. How does society's perception of drugs influence the effects of drugs?
2. Describe the five types of drug use.
3. Discuss the impact of drug use on the U.S. economy.
4. Discuss the trends in drug use among adolescents.
5. Describe the major methods used in drug testing.
6. What are the inherent issues in drug testing?
7. Discuss the impact of drugs on the family.
8. What are the differences between designer drugs, look-alike drugs, and sound-alike drugs?
9. How does DAWN help to identify the dangers in drug use, misuse, and abuse?
10. Describe the different types of toxicity.

2. Key Terms Defined

Acute: Describes a condition that arises abruptly and is not longstanding.

Analog: A synthetic derivative of an existing drug.

Biphetamine: A powerful stimulant.

China white (fentanyl): A synthetic drug that mimics heroin, but is considerably more potent.

Chronic drug use: The habitual use of drugs.

Compulsive drug use: Obsessive drug use without regard for society.

Designer drugs: Synthetic substances that are chemically similar to existing drugs.

Employee assistance programs (EAPs): Company-sponsored programs to help employers.

Experimental drug use: Infrequent drug use usually motivated by curiosity.

False negative: A test that is negative for drugs even though drugs are present in the urine.

False positive: A test that is positive for drugs even though no drugs are present in the urine.

Fentanyl: A synthetic narcotic that is 1,000 times more potent than heroin.

Gas chromatography: A drug-testing procedure that is more specific, sensitive, and expensive.

Immunoassay: A drug-testing procedure that tests for metabolites of drugs.

Intensified drug use: Taking drugs on a steady, long term basis to relieve a persistent problem.

Look-alike drugs: Substances that appear similar to illegal or pharmaceutical drugs.

Margin of safety: The difference between a beneficial level and a harmful level of a drug.

Mass spectrometry: A type of drug test.

MDA: A hallucinogen that is structurally similar to amphetamines.

MDMA (methylenedioxymethamphetamine): A synthetic hallucinogen related to amphetamines.

Meperidine: A synthetic derivative of morphine.

MPPP: A synthetic drug that is similar to meperidine.

Social-recreational drug use: Taking drugs in a social environment to share pleasure experiences.

Sound-alike drugs: Substances with names that sound similar to illegal or prescription drugs.

Thin-layer chromatography: A simple, inexpensive, urine-based drug test.

Toxicity: A drug's ability to disturb or nullify homeostasis.

3. Lecture Outline

I. Prevalence of Drug Use

- A. Health and social costs of drug use is \$193 billion annually
- B. Economic costs of alcohol abuse in the U.S. is \$185 billion annually
- C. Over 500,000 people are in American jails on any given day for violating a drug law
- D. American children consume 90% of all the Ritalin produced worldwide
- E. In 2008, more than 970,000 people visited an emergency room due to the nonmedical use of prescribed drugs

II. Impact of Drug Use and Abuse

- A. In 2010, among college students aged 18-24, 1,825 students died from alcohol-related unintentional injuries, 599,000 were unintentionally injured while under the influence of alcohol, 696,000 were assaulted by another student who had been drinking, 97,000 were victims of alcohol-related sexual abuse
- B. More than 500,000 Americans die each year from using tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs
- C. Illegal drug use has a substantial connection to crime
- D. 8.1% of those aged 12 and older in the U.S. used an illicit drug in the past month
- E. No hard-and-fast rules are available for determining when drugs become a problem for an individual

III. Drugs from a Social Perspective

- A. People who use legal drugs are not viewed in the same negative light as those who use illegal drugs
- B. Risk factors that raise the potential for young people to use drugs include growing up in a chaotic household, having parents who abuse drugs, and lacking mutual attachment and nurturing
- C. Other risk factors include school failure, extreme shyness or aggressiveness in the classroom, poor coping skills, and the perception that drug use is acceptable and associated with peers who engaged in drug use and other deviant behavior

IV. Patterns of Drug-Taking

- A. Five types of patterns of drug-taking behavior
 - 1. Experimental use
 - 2. Social-recreational use
 - 3. Circumstantial-situational use
 - 4. Intensified use
 - 5. Compulsive use

V. Extent of Drug Use

- A. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health
 - 1. The group with the highest rate of illegal drug use during the past year and month was the 18-25 age group
 - 2. 26 year olds and older had the lowest monthly rate of drug use
 - 3. The most commonly used illegal drug was marijuana
 - 4. 1.5 million Americans currently use cocaine
 - 5. 1.3 million Americans currently use hallucinogens
 - 6. 695,000 use ecstasy
 - 7. 353,000 use methamphetamines
 - 8. Males have higher rates of drug use than females
- B. Monitoring the Future Study
 - 1. 2010 data includes 50,000 students (8th, 10th, and 12th grades)
 - 2. Declines since 2009 noted in use of marijuana, amphetamines, and crystal meth, alcohol use including binge drinking
 - 3. Since 2009, ecstasy use decreased for 12th grade students but increased for 8th and 10th grade students
- C. Factors which may account for decline in drug use
 - 1. Perception of harm
 - 2. Peer disapproval
 - 3. Perceived benefits vs. perceived risks

VI. Drug Abuse by Older Adults

- A. Drug abuse by Americans over 60 is an invisible epidemic
- B. 2.5 million older Americans have problems related to alcohol
- C. In 2008, 49,000 people age 55 and older went to an emergency room as a result of an adverse reaction to an illicit drug
- D. It is estimated that 6-11% of elderly patients admitted to hospitals exhibit symptoms of alcoholism
- E. Too often substance abuse by older adults is ignored because of the unspoken attitude that treating older adults is not worth the trouble

VII. Drugs in the Workplace

- A. Over 70% of substance users hold a job
- B. It is estimated that employee drug abuse costs the workplace \$25.6 billion each year
- C. Alcoholism results in 500 million lost work days each year
- D. Part-time workers have higher rates of drug use than full-time workers
- F. Identifying drug problems in top level managers is more difficult because of less supervision
- G. Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) developed to help workers deal with personal problems including drug abuse
- H. Because of EAPs, absenteeism rates are reduced, productivity increases, job-related problems decrease, and morale increases

VIII. Drug Testing

- A. Drug-using employees are five times more likely to file for worker's compensation
- B. Most Americans view drug testing as degrading and dehumanizing
- C. Testing with athletes
 - 1. Almost all high schools randomly test athletes
 - 2. The Supreme Court said that drug testing does not violate a student athlete's right to privacy
- E. Methods of Drug Testing
 - 1. Immunoassay
 - 2. Gas chromatography
 - 3. Thin-layer chromatography
 - 4. Gas chromatography/mass spectrometry
- F. False Positives (test positive, but did not use the drug in question)
- G. False Negative (test negative, but did use the drug in question)
- H. Legalization of drug testing debated in two cases that came before the Supreme Court. Both cases upheld

IX. Drugs and the Family

- A. There is a relationship between drug use and likelihood of separation or divorce
- B. Women with alcohol-dependent partners had significantly more marital and family problems
- C. Women subjected to violence have increased rates of alcohol dependence
- D. Frequency of marijuana use is not a strong predictor of divorce
- E. Children who are sexually abused are more likely to become involved with drugs as adolescents

X. Drugs and Deviant Behavior

- A. There is a strong relationship between drug use and deviant attitudes and behavior
- B. Drug users tend to display more rebelliousness and rejection of moral and social norms
- C. The most important distinction between drug users and nonusers is their degree of conventionality
- D. Drugs are linked to violent behavior
- E. The drug involved with the greatest number of violent incidents is alcohol

XI. Drugs, Education, and Employment

- A. The unemployed have a higher rate of drug use than the employed
- B. Only a small minority of states ask welfare recipients about drug use
- C. Alcohol abusers earn significantly less than moderate drinkers and abstainers
- D. Drug use is associated with higher accident rates on the job

XII. Drug Toxicity

- A. At high doses, drugs can be poisonous or toxic
- B. Toxicity related terms
 - 1. Margin of safety
 - 2. Physiological toxicity
 - 3. Behavioral toxicity
 - 4. Acute toxicity
 - 5. Chronic toxicity

XIII. Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN)

- A. Government mechanism for monitoring drug-related emergency room visits in many metropolitan areas
- B. DAWN collects information on the number of times drugs are implicated in both nonlethal and lethal visits to the emergency room
- C. Opiates are the drugs most linked to suicide
- D. Cocaine was cited most often in drug-related deaths
- E. DAWN data reflect acute drug relapse problems, not chronic drug use

XIV. Designer Drugs

- A. Designer drugs are synthetic substances chemically similar to existing drugs
- B. Examples of designer drugs
 - 1. Fentanyl
 - 2. MPTP
 - 3. MDMA
- C. Bath salts, smoked or inhaled, yield an effect similar to ecstasy
- D. Synthetic cannabinoids (K2, spice) mimic the effects of marijuana but are very dangerous

XV. Look-alike and Sound-alike Drugs

- A. Appear or sound like illegal or pharmaceutical drugs, but contain over-the-counter substances
- B. Examples
 - 1. Biphentamine
 - 2. Herbal ecstasy

XVI. The Drug Business

- A. Drug trade is big business with no sign of slowing down
- B. Tactics for supporting the flow of drugs into the U.S. have proven ineffective
- C. A significant percentage of illicit drugs come from Central America
- D. Internet has contributed to international drug trafficking
- E. Until demand decreases, drugs will be abundantly available

4. Web Activities

Activity # 1: Log on to <http://www.nida.nih.gov>, click on “[Related Topics](#),” and then click “[trends and statistics](#).” Review the information and identify five drugs and write a brief narrative on the trends regarding the use, misuse, and abuse of these drugs.

Activity # 2: Log on to <http://www.nida.nih.gov>, click the link “[About NIDA](#),” and answer the following questions: (1) What is NIDA’s mission? and (2) What are NIDA’s milestones?

Activity # 3: Log on to <http://www.sober24.com>. Who is Sober 24? Do you think this is a useful site? Why or why not?

5. Small Group Activities

1. Drug testing is becoming more prominent in society. Do you feel that all workers should be tested for illegal drugs? How about all students?
2. Would your attitudes about drugs change if they were shown to be more harmful than expected? What if they were less harmful than expected?
3. The federal government spends billions of dollars to prevent drugs from crossing the borders. Should there be more emphasis placed on reducing the availability of drugs or the demand for drugs?
4. RAVE parties are frequently noted as places where drugs are used. Should there be more effort to make sure that drugs at RAVE parties are safe, or should more effort be put into preventing drug use at RAVE parties?

6. InfoTrac Activity

Sandy Smith. “What every employer should know about drug testing in the workplace: Think you don’t have a problem with drugs in the workplace? Think again.” *Occupational Hazards*, Vol. 66, Issue 8, August 2004, p. 45.

1. Provide an example of a cost/benefit analysis of an occupational drug testing program.
2. List three types of drug test procedures as described in this article. Which procedure can detect the presence of drug use for as long as 90 days?
3. Describe the important components of an occupational “drug-free workplace” policy.