

A STUDY OF DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG STREET CHILDREN IN BANGALORE

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ABSTRACT

The Street children are those unfortunate children who basically have only intermittent contact with parents or family but live most of the time with other street children in the city streets or have been literally abandoned by the parents / relatives, found them selves on the street from the beginning because of family problems. **1 very limited literature has been reported by Indian context. In this aspect present study aims to know the** Demographic profile and Substance abuse in Street Children below 18 years in Bangalore City. A cross sectional survey based study conducted street children in shelter homes (day care and residential), Gilgal Trust, Sparsh trust, Bosco shelter homes in Shivajinagar and K.R. Market, Bangalore during the accrual period Dec. 2011 to Nov. 2013. **A total** 100 street children were considered for the study. Direct Interview and focus group interview conducted in two consecutive intervals. The secondary data obtained from WHO structured questionnaires and pretested proforma, different parameters were considered for drug usage like - risk factors for substance abuse and religion were added from Deepti Pagare et al 4 and Poonam R. Naik 7 study because these are important to collect additional information from street children Substance abuse was more common among male children, 85% of them belongs to Hindu religion. Thirty five percent of the children had never been to school. Sixty three percent of the children worked with part time jobs. The most common risk factor for substance abuse was peer pressure. Seventy two percent of the children were inhalant users followed by tobacco (67%), alcohol (17%) and cannabis (6%). Mean age of substance abuse was 10years and earliest age of initiation of substance abuse was 8years. Many children were practicing multiple substance abuse. Frequency of usage of drugs was 20 or more days in a month. Prevalence of substance abuse was common with street children. Significant association was found with peer pressure and substance abuse. Substance abuse was started as early as 8 years. Most common substances used by street children are inhalants and tobacco and frequency of usage of these substances was also high.

KEYWORDS: Cannabis, WHO, Substance Abuse, Demographic