

## RISING ALCOHOL, SMOKING AND DRUG ABUSE AMONG TEENAGERS

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**Introduction.** The growing trend of alcohol, smoking, and drug abuse among teenagers is a global health concern. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable due to their stage of physical and psychological development. The accessibility of substances and the normalization of such habits in media have contributed to early exposure and habitual use. These risky behaviors not only endanger health but also impair academic performance and social development. Preventive measures must begin with understanding the scope and causes.

**Research Objective.** This study aims to explore the rising incidence of alcohol, smoking, and drug abuse among teenagers, identify the underlying causes, and suggest evidence-based interventions. By examining current trends, risk factors, and protective influences, the research hopes to offer insights for educators, parents, and policymakers to tackle this crisis.

**Materials and Methods.** A cross-sectional survey design was adopted, involving 500 high school students aged 14 to 18 from urban and rural schools. Data were collected via anonymous self-reported questionnaires that assessed frequency and type of substance use, influences, knowledge about consequences, and parental involvement. Ethical approval was obtained, and participation was voluntary. Data analysis included descriptive statistics testing to find associations between demographic variables and substance use.

**Research Results.** Preliminary findings revealed that 52% of the respondents had consumed alcohol at least once, 39% had smoked cigarettes, and 21% had experimented with illicit drugs. Males showed higher usage rates compared to females. Peer pressure and stress were cited as primary drivers. Teenagers with active family engagement and those participating in extracurricular activities showed significantly lower rates of abuse. Lack of awareness about the long-term health effects was common among users. The data also revealed that students exposed to social media content promoting substance use were more likely to engage in these behaviors.

**Conclusions.** Substance abuse among teenagers is escalating due to various psychosocial factors. Comprehensive approaches are needed, combining education, parental involvement, community programs, and policy enforcement. Schools should integrate substance abuse education into the curriculum, and parents must maintain open communication with their children. Continued research and proactive strategies are essential to reverse this troubling trend and promote healthier futures for adolescents.