

ORIGINAL ARTICLE**Factors favoring addiction to psychoactive substances in adolescents consulting at the Addictology Center, Casablanca University Hospital**OUTALHA Jalila^{1*}, ABIDI Omar¹

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SUMMARY

Addiction is considered a major global public health issue. According to statistics from the WHO (2003), drugs are responsible for 1.5 million deaths per year worldwide. Addictive behaviors are a phenomenon that is spreading, diversifying and worsening. They are both a disease and a societal fact (Economic, Social and Environmental Council, 2022). This study aims to explore and describe the factors favoring addiction among adolescents consulting at the addiction center of Casablanca. In this regard, a quantitative study was conducted where a questionnaire was used as our measuring instrument. The target population was teenagers addicts who consulted at the Addiction Center in Casablanca. Random sampling was applied where N=100. The questionnaires were carried out with adolescent addicts pursuing therapeutic follow-up. The results of this research have shown that peer pressure, family history of addiction, pleasure seeking, impulsivity and unemployment were factors that lead adolescents to addiction to psychoactive substances. As a result, the factors favoring addiction are based on key elements, namely: factors related to the patient himself and factors related to his environment. Results analysis show that teenagers addicts present increasingly complex situations and encounter difficulties on a personal, family and social level.

Introduction

Adolescence is an obligatory passage in life, marked by several changes that are often accompanied by new

experiences. This is an unstable period that favors the appearance of risky behaviors among young people (Pacé, 2009). This is a crucial phase for health. Globally, it is estimated that 70% of adult deaths from non-

communicable diseases are linked to risk factors that begin in adolescence, and that 50% of mental health disorders in adulthood appear before the age of 14. It should be noted that the use of psychoactive substances among school-going adolescents is 9% tobacco-prevalent. It should be noted that 7.9% of students aged between 13 and 17 are smokers (63.3% of whom started before the age of 14). 9% say they have used cannabis at least once in their lifetime, 13.3% have experienced alcohol consumption, 5% have experienced psychotropic drug use and the lifetime prevalence of cocaine was 1.4% (El Omari, Sabir and Taoufik, 2018).

This is an issue that involves both government authorities, because of the various costs it generates for society (arrest, therapy, etc.), and the intervention communities (Ministry of Health, 2018). Drug users present increasingly complex life situations and experience family and social difficulties. So, it was interesting to conduct this study to explain the factors that lead adolescents to become addicted to psychoactive substances and at a very young age. These factors are vulnerability factors, which can be both endogenous (related to the person) and exogenous (related to the environment).

Material and methods

Type of study

This study, aims to explore the factors favoring addiction to psychoactive substances among adolescents consulting in the addiction hospital of Casablanca. This type of research has made it possible to explain this complex fact where the psychological is combined with the social, while revealing a multi-faceted reality impacting the mental health of young people.

Study location

Our study was conducted at the addiction center of

Casablanca, because it is the only service that allows access to the target population. This center was inaugurated on 06/09/2009, with a hospitalization capacity of 3,285 overnight stays and 8,000 consultations per year. This establishment aims to provide individual and collective care for patients with addictive behaviors. It is notably made up of three consultation rooms, and two others for psychotherapy, nursing and social assistance structures. It also includes seven hospitalization rooms, a refectory, a physical exercise room, a games and occupational therapy room and another for meetings, a media library and a library.

Study population

The study population is made up of adolescent addicts consulted in the addiction hospital of Casablanca. The choice of the population is based on two main inclusion criteria: participants in this study must be adolescents aged between 10 and 19 years. It is a period of development that corresponds to this age category, which was determined on the basis of data from WHO (2003). Then, they have to be consultants at the addiction center in Casablanca.

Data collection

A questionnaire was chosen as the data collection tool. The questionnaire includes a presentation, information guaranteeing anonymity and necessary consent for participation in the study. This instrument includes a set of questions to collect information on the factors favoring addiction among adolescents, in the addiction service of Casablanca. It is written in French and translated into Arabic dialect to facilitate understanding of content and data collection. The instrument is easy to read and contains 44 items including 33 closed questions and 11 open questions.

We opted for the face-to-face method of completing the

questionnaire, which was pre-tested with two patients in order to estimate the validity of the content. The patients with whom the pre-test is carried out are excluded from the sample. The majority of encounters with patients were after the consultation to have the necessary time for the discussion, or when looking for a consultation appointment.

The sample should essentially be representative of the target population (Fortin, 1996). Our sampling will be composed in an accidental way, because we do not have a pre-established list of adolescents consulting at the addiction center in Casablanca (N=100).

Data analysis

The statistical analysis was carried out using Excel in order to carry out a quantitative analysis of all the questionnaires, while developing illustrative graphical representations of the data collected regarding questions asked to patients.

Ethical considerations

This research was carried out after having obtained authorization to collect data from the regional directorate of the Ministry of Health. This is a decisive step in making contact with the people in charge of the addiction service, and this in order to be able to explain (a) the framework of the study to the professionals and patients who will participate in this work, (b) to have the agreement of the participating patients.

After obtaining the consent of the patients, a session was scheduled to explain the framework, the object and the purpose of the study, as well as the organization and the method of data collection process. Likewise, the commitment to respect anonymity is explained to the participants, while explaining that the interest is focused more on data and not on the person.

The confidentiality of the data both at the time of its collection and in its exploitation is respected. For the sake of respecting the self-determination of respondents, it was clearly explained that the wish to withdraw from the study at any time will be respected. Finally, the right to fair and equitable treatment insofar as all participants, without exception, will be informed as to the nature and duration of their participation. All these elements were explained to the participants orally.

Results

The study of the factors favoring addiction to psychoactive substances among adolescents consulting at the Addictology Center at the University Hospital of Casablanca was approached via items 1 to 44 of the questionnaire. The results of the analysis of the different items are distributed on the one hand according to the individual risk factors, namely gender, poly-drug use, temperament, personality traits and life events. And on the other hand, environmental factors such as family context, friends' influence and school exclusion.

The population of adolescent addicts surveyed is characterized by the predominance of the male gender (67%), aged between 16 and 19 years (73.3%), mainly single people (96%) and having various levels of education with predominance of the secondary level (53%).

Regarding the parameters relating to addiction, the majority of participants are addicted to tobacco, cannabis and alcohol (73.3%), with a duration of consumption of 2 to 3 years (46%). The majority of adolescents surveyed regularly use drugs 5 times a day (50%).

Environmental factors:

The analysis of the results showed that the family context

constitutes a risk factor for the child or for the adolescent in terms of addiction to psychoactive substances. Indeed, empirical data has shown that 40% of participants have a disturbed relationship with their parents. This is an alarming situation that impacts the lives of adolescents.

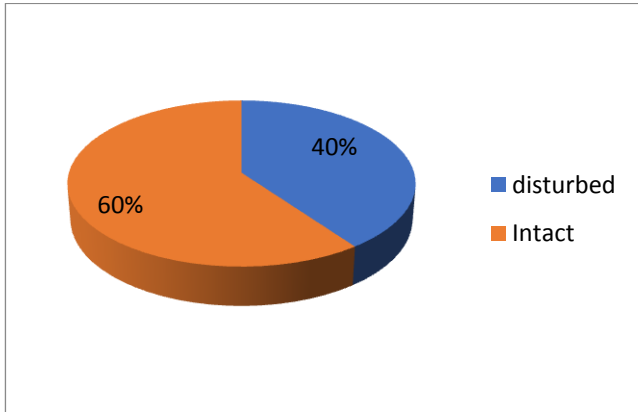


Figure 1: The relationship with the family

Along the same lines, data collected showed that 60% of addicted adolescents had permissive parents.

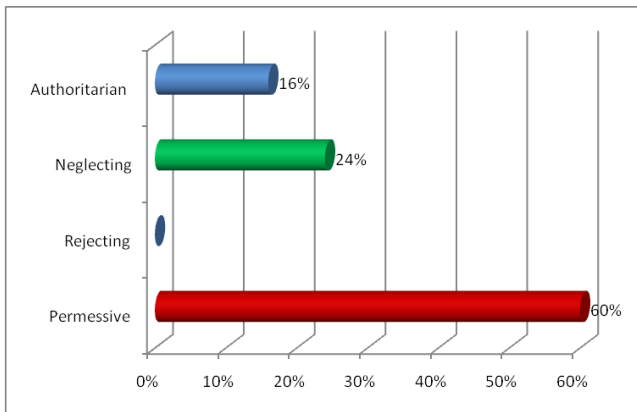


Figure 2: Parenting style

In fact, 50% of the teenagers surveyed have drug-addicted fathers.

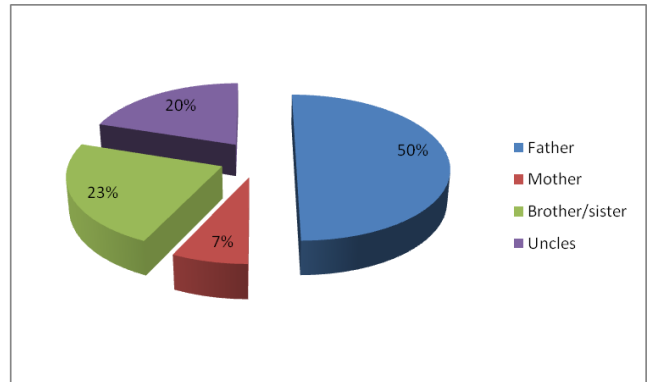


Figure 3: Family history of addiction

After examining the results of this study, it appears that there is a direct relationship between peer pressure and drug use. 83% of teenage addicts have had pressure from their friends.

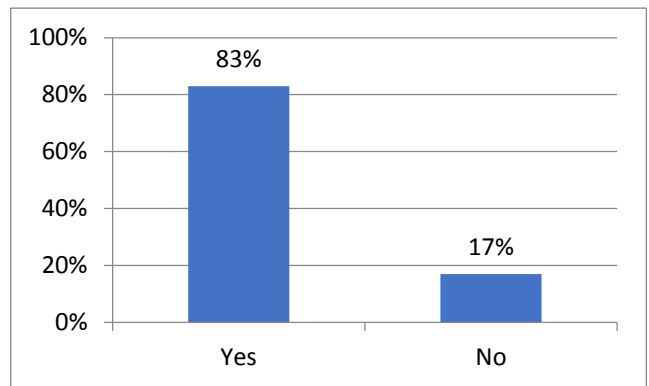


Figure 4: Consumption under pressure from friends

In addition, drug use is done in groups for the majority of adolescents surveyed (80%). The peer group promotes the initiation and consumption of psychoactive substances in adolescence, because behaviors are largely dominated by the group.

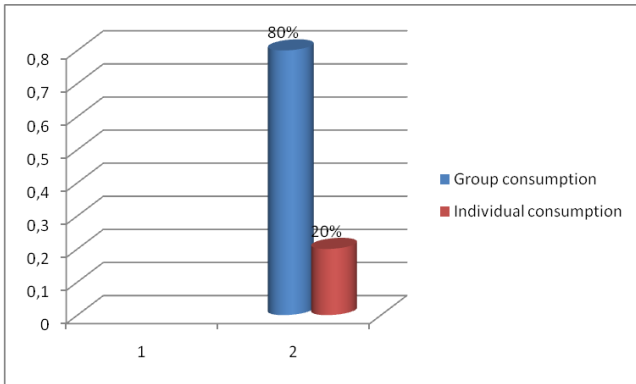


Figure 5: Distribution of adolescents according to type of consumption.

It should also be noted that 77% of the adolescent addicts surveyed confirm that the lack of educational supervision is not the cause of the addiction.

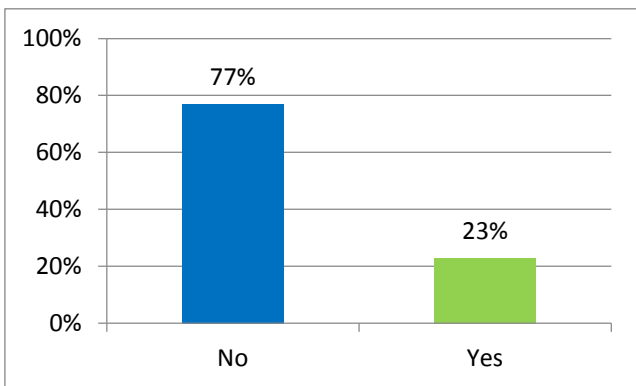


Figure 6: Lack of supervision as a cause of addiction

The majority of adolescent addicts, namely 90%, do not think that school exclusion is the cause of their addictions. This contradicts the data about their state, which shows that 53% of adolescents have a secondary education level.

Individual factors:

Individual factors are endogenous determinants linked to the person himself. They can sum up all the personal etiologies of dependence on psychoactive substances, and play a reinforcing role in the initiation of addictive behavior. In our sample, the male sex was highly representative with a percentage of 67%. In the present study, 73% of the adolescent addicts surveyed are polydrug users.

It emerges from the questionnaire that the majority of adolescent addicts declare that the goal sought by the consumption of drugs is the search for novelty.

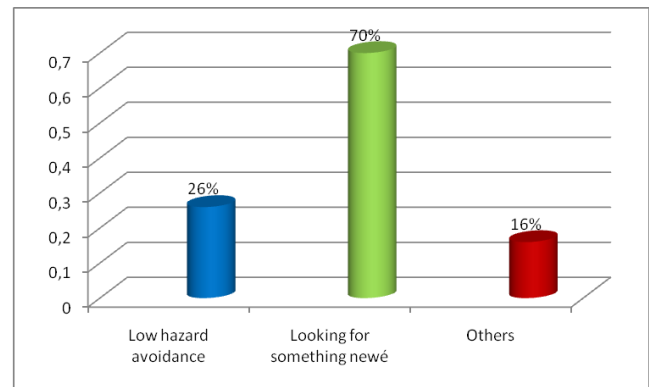


Figure 7: The purpose of drug use

As for the feeling sought after the consumption of drugs, it was noted that most of the adolescents participating in this study, namely 90%, seek pleasure after consumption.

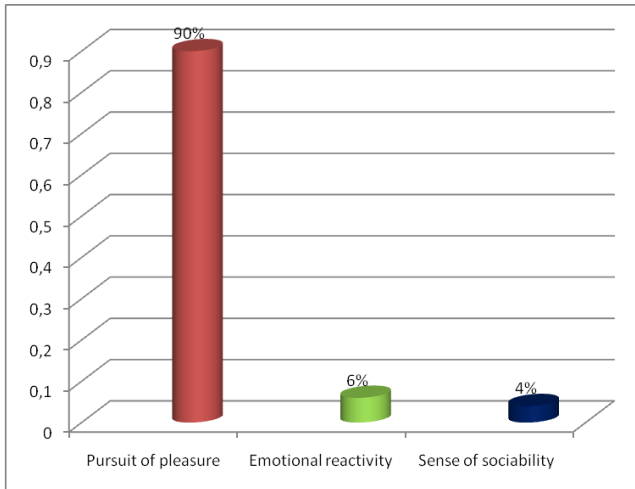


Figure 8: The desired feeling after drug use

Also, an examination of the results shows that 70% of adolescents are impulsive.

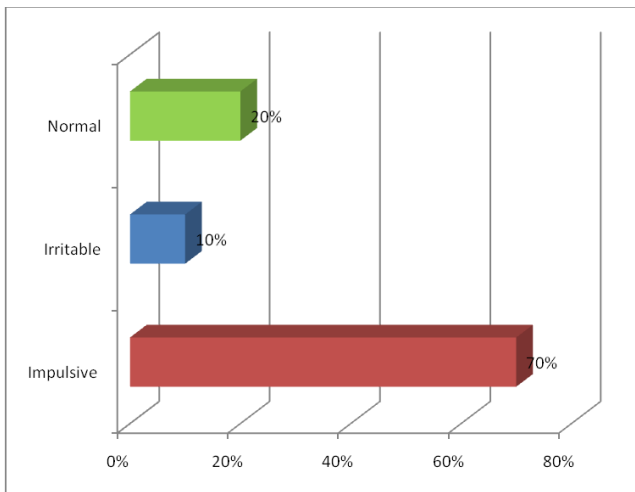


Figure 9: Distribution of adolescent addicts according to their temperament

It turned out that 77% of the adolescent addicts surveyed were not violent during childhood, and 80% of the adolescent addicts surveyed stated that they were not hyperactive during childhood. On the other hand, those who were hyperactive, declared that they had never consulted a psychiatrist.

The results of this survey show that the majority of the questioned adolescent addicts minimize addiction and have a self-esteem problem. For this reason, 70% expressed a feeling of worthlessness and 30% felt rejected. Also, 80% said that after consumption, they're able to do everything.

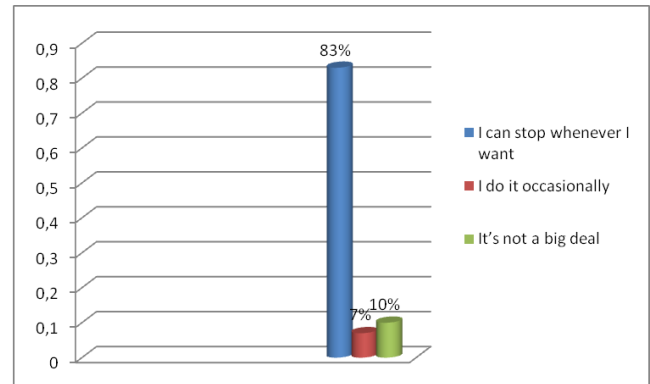


Figure 10: Distribution of adolescents according to the minimization of addiction

Then, stress presents itself as an element favoring addiction in adolescents. 60% of the latter declared that they experience a state of stress in their daily life. And 66% consider themselves incapable of managing stressful situations. In addition, 70% of adolescents use drugs as a form of escapism.

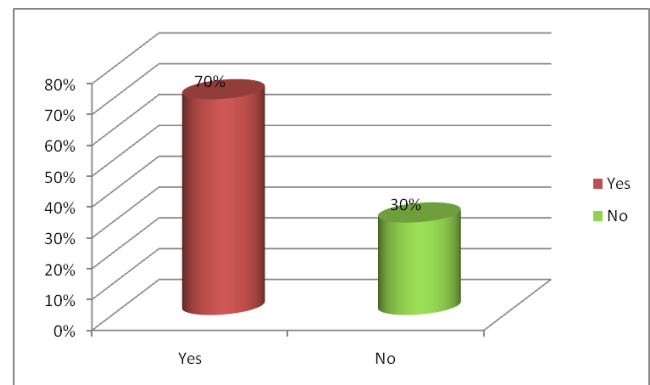


Figure 11: Recourse to drugs by addicted adolescents in the face of a stressful situation

Given that 10% of adolescent addicts surveyed have suffered sexual abuse. Of these, 66% suffered from it during childhood. They see drug use as a solution to this

situation.

Finally, 87% of teenagers surveyed confirm that not having a job is a good cause for drug use.

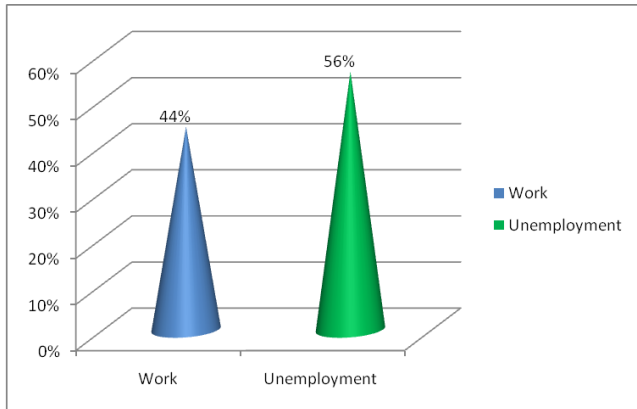


Figure 12: Distribution of adolescent addicts according to social situation

Discussion

The results for environmental factors are consistent with previous research. The disturbed relationship with the family exposes young people much more to addictive behavior. This result converges with what was confirmed by Hawkins, Catalano and Miller (1992). They explain that an unstable parent-child relationship is a risk factor for substance dependence. This relationship can be translated by a coercive, unfair and incoherent attitude on the part of the parents, a weak parental support and a lack of closeness that is perceived by the child.

In addition to that, Permissive parental education would be more favorable to the emergence of consumption of psychoactive substances (Choquet, 2008). And also, family tolerance of alcohol or drug use and the use of various substances by parents are also considered the strongest risk factor for substance abuse in children and adolescents.

The parents' attitude towards psychoactive substances can

play an inciting role and promote the onset of addiction. The risk is then linked to several factors such as: (a) the degree of availability of psychoactive substances within the family environment, (b) the extent of addictive behavior among parents and siblings, (c) the precocity of the exposure of the child to these behaviors of substance use (Kaminer, 1992).

This study also showed that peer pressure is a factor of substance abuse and especially in first dose consumption (Johnston and Harlow, 1997). The group can play a reinforcing role, insofar as the adolescent abuser of psychoactive substances tends to choose groups within which these substances circulate (Bolognini, 2019, Soubhi FZ & Touri B, 2020).

Despite the fact that the majority of adolescents have stated that the lack of educational support is not the cause of addiction, the majority of research confirms that the absence of educational supervision is dangerous and harmful to the child or adolescent. Especially when he is on his own, crosses paths with deviant peers and searches for novelty (Bariaud and Dumora, 2004).

Having a high school education means that addicted teenagers have not been able to continue their studies, even if they consider that school exclusion is not a cause of addiction. Exclusion or dropping out of school leads to the establishment of an experimental situation of idleness and which greatly facilitates contact with deviant peers and the risk of engaging in addictive consumption (Beck, Dervaux, Du Roscoät, Gallopel-Morvan, Grall-Bronnec, Kern, Krebs, Legleye, Melchior, Naassila, 2014).

The majority of adolescent addicts are men. This agrees with the majority of studies which have shown that abuse and dependence on psychoactive substances mainly

concern boys. It reaches around two boys for every girl (Bolognini, 2019; Soubhi FZ & Touri B, 2020).

The adolescent addicts surveyed are polydrug users. Indeed, research has revealed the increase in the consumption of cannabis, alcohol and particularly tobacco, namely that the trajectories of experimentation with alcoholic intoxication and cannabis are similar. Moreover, high cannabis use is often linked to a history of heavy tobacco and alcohol consumption (Kpozehouen, Glèlè Ahanhanzo, Noël Paraïso, Munezero, Saizonou, Makoutodé and Tinoaga Ouedraogo, 2015).

The search for novelty is an effect sought by teenage addicts. This sensation is the cause of smoking. Knowing that smoking predisposes to the consumption of cannabis and constitutes a kind of "legal springboard" towards the consumption of illicit drugs (Reuband, 2008).

In the majority of cases, substance use is about pleasure. So subjects who have difficulty feeling pleasure for trivial stimuli have a greater probability of engaging in addictive behavior, as do the most impulsive subjects (Beck et al., 2014).

Pleasure is an essential dimension during the consumption of psychoactive substances. It results from a direct action on the brain for an instant result. Some authors insist on the role played by the "reward zone" of the brain, because all drugs have an action on this zone. This gives rise to addictive behavior by the dopaminergic system. On the other hand, others specify that addicts are looking for a single particular effect, namely: the strange experience, relaxation, stimulation and euphoria. As a result, addicts will try to maintain these sensations to achieve pleasure (Phan and Bastard-Dagher, 2004).

Most of the young people surveyed were impulsive.

Indeed, the traits of impulsivity, aggression and difficulty with sociability are more associated with the use of substances (Canadian Center on Substance Abuse, 2014).

Previous research has shown that the combination of a savagery trait and an aggressive character, in young age, could develop an addiction to psychoactive substances, although adolescent addicts have reported the absence of this trait in childhood

Moreover, hyperactive children followed into adulthood are more likely to develop substance use disorders. Moreover, the appearance of disruptive behaviors and early conduct disorder in childhood seem to be indisputable indicators and major risk factors in subsequent substance abuse (Canadian Center on Substance Abuse, 2014).

To deal with the problem of self-esteem, adolescents turn to drug use and crime in order to improve their self-esteem with a view to feel recognized by others (Bariaud and Dumora, 2004).

The first experiences of use can influence the young person in his choices of hedonic activities and his way of fighting against the stress of daily life. We should add that the first subjective and positive effects of psychoactive substances are a determining factor in the entry into regular consumption and then into dependence (Phan and Bastard-Dagher, 2009). Stress levels are often associated with substance use and coping difficulties during adolescence (Bolognini, 2019).

Sexual abuse (rape) among teenage girls, who had undergone pregnancy and associated with a mental health problem, are more prone to substance use. In the same way, the sequels of sexual abuse experienced in childhood often manifest themselves, in the short term, by internalized (anxiety, depression, somatization),

externalized (aggressiveness, addiction to substances, problematic sexual behaviors) or mixed disorders. Therefore, addiction is the sign of a malaise and previous suffering (Vasseur, 2013).

Unemployed people are more likely to use alcohol hazardingly, smoke (tobacco), use illicit drugs, take medication, or have substance abuse or dependence (Althaus, Ladreyt, Le Hénaff, Mezza and Lhuilier, 2020).

Indeed, the low self-esteem felt by young unemployed people, the reduction in their professional expectations and the social rejection that unemployment inflicts on them lead them to want to flee their surroundings. The consumption of drugs would be a means of escaping from a universe that rejects them (Reuband, 2008).

Conclusion

Addiction refers to the excessive and greedy consumption of psychoactive substances. It is an act that is likely to cause pleasure for a determined period. The susceptible child or adolescent is often in search of these substances, because they give him exceptional and new sensations. Thus, this target becomes dependent on these substances which prevent them from dissociating themselves from this experience deemed to be exceptional.

The occurrence of addiction or addictive dependence is linked to two factors analyzed in this study. They can be internalized (related to the person) and externalized (related to the environment). The identification of these factors is considered as an element of diagnosis and prognosis as a first stage. This will help to put in place a rational policy to protect adolescents and to take the necessary measures to reduce the prevalence of this phenomenon and minimize

the costs that it generates for society and the areas of intervention.

Conflicts of Interest

The author(s) declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this Article.

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