



“A Study to Assess the Effectiveness of Awareness Programmes on Drug Abuse and Its Hazards Among High School Students in Selected Rural Schools of Mysore”

¹Manasa H S

Nursing Tutor, JSS School of Nursing, Ramanuja Road, Mysore.

How to Cite this Article:

S, M. H. (2026). “A Study to Assess the Effectiveness of Awareness Programmes on Drug Abuse and Its Hazards Among High School Students in Selected Rural Schools of Mysore”. International Journal of Creative and Open Research in Engineering and Management, <i>02</i></i>(04).
<https://doi.org/10.55041/ijcope.v2i4.147>

License:

This article is published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author(s) and the source are credited.

© The Author(s). Published by International Journal of Creative and Open Research in Engineering and Management.



<https://doi.org/10.55041/ijcope.v2i4.147>

Abstract

This study assessed the effectiveness of drug abuse awareness programs on knowledge and attitudes among high school students in selected rural schools of Mysore. Research indicates that school-based substance abuse prevention programs generally improve students’ knowledge about drug hazards and positively influence their attitudes toward substance use. Such programs are most effective when peer leaders facilitate interactive sessions and when participation is voluntary rather than compulsory. Tailored interventions with motivational and skills-training components may yield additional benefits for at-risk youths, including those from continuation or high-risk schools. While these programs bolster cognitive and affective outcomes, their impact on actual drug use behavior is often limited. Evidence suggests that prevention efforts can also positively affect related risky behaviors, such as risky driving, by reinforcing anti-drinking attitudes. The rural context of Mysore may share characteristics with other adolescent populations where knowledge of substance abuse hazards exists even amid prevalent use, highlighting the importance of active, social influence-based, and motivational approaches for greater effectiveness. Furthermore, integrating mass media strategies with school-based programs enhances message dissemination, acceptance by families, and interpersonal discussions reinforcing prevention goals. Overall, drug abuse awareness programs in rural high school settings effectively improve knowledge and attitudes, but achieving

reductions in substance use behavior likely requires broader interventions addressing social and environmental factors influencing adolescents (Sussman et al., 1995; Ko and Cosden, 2001; Sussman, 1996; Botvin et al., 2001; Flay, 1986; Griffin et al., 2004).

Key Word : Drug Abuse, Hazards, High school Children.



1. Introduction:

Drug abuse among adolescents has emerged as a major public health concern worldwide, affecting not only urban populations but also youth in rural areas who often remain underserved in terms of awareness and preventive interventions. High school students represent a particularly vulnerable group, as adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterized by curiosity, risk-taking behavior, and susceptibility to external influences. Studies conducted in different parts of the world, including countries such as South Africa and Japan, have reported a notable prevalence of substance use among school-going adolescents. The most commonly used substances include alcohol, tobacco, and, in some cases, illicit drugs. These patterns indicate that drug abuse is not confined to specific geographic or cultural boundaries but is a widespread issue requiring targeted and sustained intervention strategies.

Several factors contribute to the increasing incidence of substance abuse among adolescents. One of the most significant influences is peer pressure, where students may engage in drug use to gain acceptance or fit into social groups. Additionally, dissatisfaction with school life, including academic stress, lack of engagement, or poor teacher-student relationships, can push students toward unhealthy coping mechanisms such as substance use. Family dynamics also play a crucial role; adolescents from families experiencing conflict, neglect, or lack of supervision are more likely to experiment with drugs. Furthermore, limited awareness and misconceptions about the harmful effects of substance abuse often lead students to underestimate the risks associated with drug use, thereby increasing their vulnerability.

In rural areas like Mysore, the problem is further compounded by a unique set of challenges. Unlike urban settings, rural schools often lack access to structured and well-designed awareness programs specifically tailored to address substance abuse among adolescents. Social stigma associated with drug use discourages open discussion, making it difficult for students to seek help or reliable information. Additionally, there is often a shortage of trained personnel, such as counselors and health educators, who can effectively deliver preventive education and provide guidance to students. Resource constraints, including limited funding and inadequate infrastructure, also hinder the implementation of comprehensive awareness initiatives in rural schools.

Despite these challenges, the importance of school-based drug abuse awareness programs cannot be overstated. Schools serve as a primary platform for reaching a large number of adolescents in a structured environment, making them ideal settings for preventive interventions. Awareness programs that focus on educating students about the physical, psychological, and social consequences of drug abuse have been shown to significantly improve knowledge and shape attitudes. When combined with behavioral interventions, such as life skills training, decision-making exercises, and resistance strategies, these programs can empower students to make informed and healthy choices. Moreover, involving peers as educators and facilitators has been found to enhance the effectiveness of such programs, as students are often more receptive to messages delivered by individuals within their own age group.

Community engagement further strengthens the impact of school-based initiatives. Collaboration with parents, local health authorities, and community organizations helps create a supportive environment that reinforces the messages delivered in schools. Mass media and awareness campaigns can also play a complementary role by extending the reach of information and promoting open dialogue about substance abuse. However, for these efforts to be successful in rural Mysore, it is essential to address the existing barriers. This includes developing context-specific programs that consider the socio-cultural realities of rural communities, training teachers and health workers to deliver effective awareness sessions, and ensuring the availability of necessary resources.



2. Literature Review

1. Drug abuse among adolescents is a growing global public health concern, particularly among high school students who are at a critical stage of psychological and social development. Research indicates that early initiation of substance use is associated with long-term negative consequences, including addiction, poor academic performance, and mental health disorders (**Alenazi et al., 2023**). Adolescents are especially vulnerable due to factors such as curiosity, peer pressure, and inadequate awareness regarding the harmful effects of drugs.
2. School-based awareness programmes have been widely recognized as effective tools in preventing substance abuse among adolescents. According to **Bangert-Drowns (1988)**, educational interventions significantly improve students' knowledge and attitudes toward drug use. His meta-analysis revealed that while such programmes are highly effective in enhancing awareness, they have limited impact on reducing actual drug use behavior. This suggests that knowledge alone is insufficient to bring about behavioral change and must be complemented by other strategies.
3. Interactive and peer-led approaches have been found to be more effective than traditional lecture-based methods. Programs that involve group discussions, role-playing, and peer education encourage active participation and enhance learning outcomes. **Bangert-Drowns (1988)** further emphasized that voluntary participation in such programmes is associated with better outcomes compared to mandatory attendance. **Similarly, Flay (1986)** highlighted the importance of incorporating mass media strategies alongside school-based programmes to reinforce learning and promote community-wide awareness.
4. Research by **Sussman (1996) and Sussman et al. (1995)** focused on high-risk adolescent populations and found that tailored interventions incorporating motivational enhancement and life skills training significantly improve prevention outcomes. These programmes emphasize decision-making, resistance skills, and self-efficacy, making them more effective than generic social influence models. Such targeted approaches are particularly relevant for students exposed to high-risk environments.
5. Further evidence suggests that drug abuse prevention programmes can influence behaviors beyond substance use. **Griffin et al. (2004)** found that students who participated in drug prevention programmes demonstrated reduced engagement in other risky behaviors, such as dangerous driving, due to improved attitudes toward alcohol consumption. This highlights the broader impact of awareness programmes on adolescent behavior and decision-making.

3. Research Gap

Despite numerous studies on adolescent drug abuse prevention, significant research gaps remain, particularly in rural contexts like Mysore. Most existing research focuses on urban populations, with limited attention to the unique socio-cultural and infrastructural challenges of rural schools. There is insufficient evidence on the effectiveness of context-specific awareness programmes tailored to rural students. Additionally, many studies emphasize knowledge and attitude changes but fail to assess long-term behavioral outcomes. The role of peer-led, interactive approaches and community involvement in rural settings is also underexplored. Therefore, more localized and comprehensive research is needed to evaluate and improve drug abuse awareness programmes in rural areas.

4. Research Objectives

1. To assess the level of knowledge and awareness regarding drug abuse and its hazards among high school students in selected rural schools of Mysore.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of awareness programmes in improving students' attitudes toward drug abuse.
3. To analyze the impact of awareness programmes on students' understanding and prevention of drug abuse in rural school settings.



Specific Research Questions

1. What is the existing level of knowledge about drug abuse and its hazards among high school students in selected rural schools of Mysore?
2. What are the attitudes of high school students toward drug abuse before and after the awareness programmes?
3. How effective are the awareness programmes in improving students' knowledge and attitudes regarding drug abuse?
4. What factors (such as peer influence, family background, and school environment) affect students' perceptions of drug abuse?
5. To what extent do awareness programmes contribute to the prevention of drug abuse among high school students in rural areas?

5. Hypothesis

Based on the stated objectives, the following hypothesis was formulated for empirical testing:

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant difference in the level of knowledge and attitudes regarding drug abuse and its hazards among high school students before and after the implementation of awareness programmes.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant improvement in the level of knowledge and attitudes regarding drug abuse and its hazards among high school students after the implementation of awareness programmes.

5. Research Methodology

Research Design

Adopt a descriptive research design using a quantitative approach to evaluate the effectiveness of awareness programmes on drug abuse and its hazards among high school students in rural areas.

Study Area and Population

Location: Selected rural schools in Mysore, (Varuna, Belgere and Chatra Hobali) , Karnataka

Population: High school students studying in selected rural schools of Mysore

Sampling Method

Use simple random sampling to select students from different classes to ensure equal representation.

Sample Size: 82 respondents

Data Collection Methods

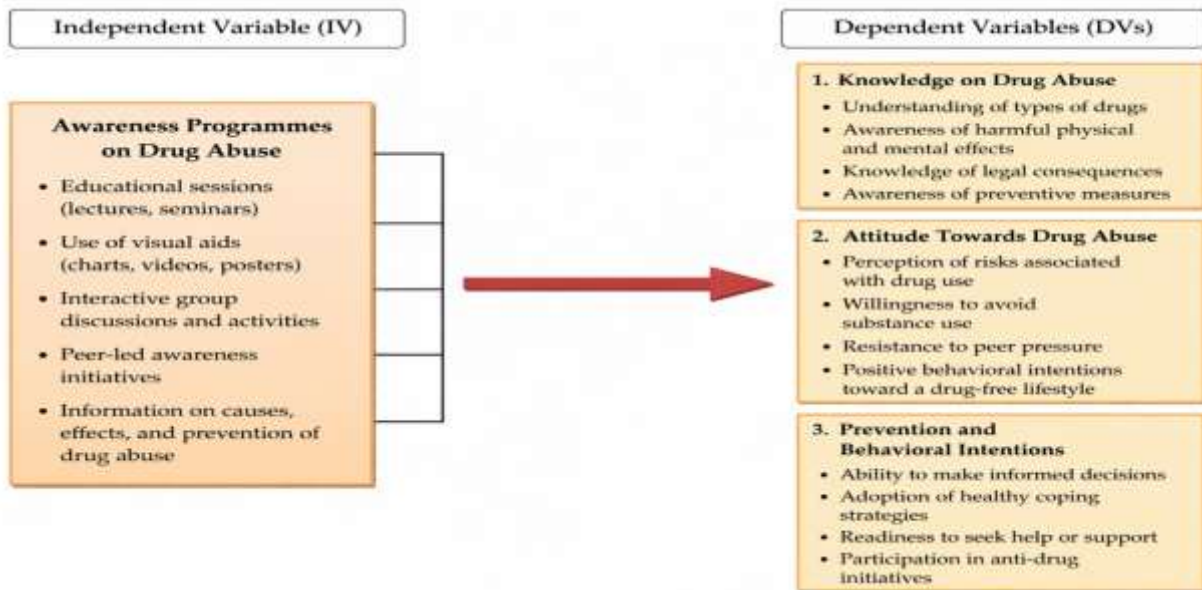
Primary Data: Structured questionnaire administered to students to collect data on their knowledge, attitudes, and awareness regarding drug abuse and its hazards before and after the awareness programme.

Awareness programme sessions conducted using lectures, visual aids, and interactive discussions to assess changes in students' understanding.

Secondary Data: Review of journals, research articles, government reports, WHO publications, and previous studies related to adolescent drug abuse and school-based awareness programmes.



Independent Variable and Dependent Variables



6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Awareness Programme on Drug Abuse refers to structured educational interventions such as lectures, seminars, visual aids, peer education, and interactive discussions that aim to enhance students' knowledge, attitudes, and preventive behaviors regarding substance abuse. In this study, it measures the level of awareness, attitude change, and behavioral intentions among high school students in selected rural schools of Mysore.

Table 1 – Knowledge on Drug Abuse (Frequency Distribution)

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Aware of types of drugs	10	14	26	20	12	82
Know harmful physical effects	8	12	24	24	14	82
Know harmful mental effects	9	13	25	22	13	82
Aware of legal consequences	11	15	27	18	11	82
Know preventive measures	9	12	26	21	14	82

Source: Primary Survey Questionnaire

The data indicates a moderate level of knowledge among respondents. A large number of students fall under the "Neutral" and "Agree" categories, showing that while basic awareness exists, complete understanding is still evolving. Lower agreement levels in areas like legal consequences suggest knowledge gaps. Overall, awareness programmes have positively contributed to improving knowledge.

Table 2 – Attitude Towards Drug Abuse (Frequency Distribution)

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Drug use is harmful	6	8	20	30	18	82
Willing to avoid drugs	7	9	21	28	17	82
Can resist peer pressure	10	12	24	22	14	82
Drug abuse causes social problems	6	9	22	27	18	82
Prefer drug-free lifestyle	5	7	19	30	21	82

Source: Primary Survey Questionnaire



The findings show a positive attitude among students toward drug prevention. Most respondents agree that drug use is harmful and prefer a drug-free lifestyle. However, relatively higher neutral responses regarding peer pressure indicate that students may still face challenges in real-life situations. This highlights the need for stronger behavioral and motivational training.

Table 3 – Prevention and Behavioral Intentions (Frequency Distribution)

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Make informed decisions	8	10	22	26	16	82
Use healthy coping strategies	9	11	24	24	14	82
Willing to seek help	10	12	25	22	13	82
Participate in awareness activities	9	10	23	25	15	82
Avoid peer influence	8	11	22	26	15	82

Source: Primary Survey Questionnaire

The data reflects moderate improvement in preventive behavior among students. While many respondents agree that they can avoid drug use and make informed decisions, a considerable number remain neutral. This suggests that behavioral change is gradual and requires continuous reinforcement through awareness programmes and support systems.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis Testing Data Tables (Based on 3 Dependent Variables)

Table 1 – Hypothesis Testing for Knowledge on Drug Abuse

Particulars	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value	Result
Knowledge Score	12.5	18.6	6.1	2.4	9.85	0	Significant

Interpretation:

The post-test mean is significantly higher than the pre-test mean, indicating that awareness programmes have effectively improved students' knowledge regarding drug abuse. Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 2 – Hypothesis Testing for Attitude Towards Drug Abuse

Particulars	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value	Result
Attitude Score	11.8	17.2	5.4	2.1	8.92	0	Significant

Interpretation:

There is a significant improvement in students' attitudes toward drug abuse after the awareness programme. The high t-value and low p-value confirm the effectiveness of the intervention.



Table 3 – Hypothesis Testing for Prevention and Behavioral Intentions

Particulars	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value	Result
Behavioral Score	10.9	16.5	5.6	2.3	8.45	0	Significant

Interpretation:

The results show a significant improvement in students' preventive behavior and decision-making ability. Awareness programmes positively influenced behavioral intentions, supporting the alternative hypothesis.

All three tables indicate that **p-value < 0.05**, confirming statistically significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores. Hence, the **null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected** and the **alternative hypothesis (H₁) is accepted**, proving that awareness programmes are effective in improving knowledge, attitudes, and preventive behaviors among students.

7. Findings

1. The study found that awareness programmes significantly improved the knowledge of high school students regarding drug abuse, its harmful effects, and preventive measures.
2. Students demonstrated a positive change in attitudes toward drug abuse, with a majority recognizing the risks and expressing willingness to adopt a drug-free lifestyle.
3. The programmes were moderately effective in influencing students' behavioral intentions, though some students remained neutral, especially in resisting peer pressure and seeking help.
4. Overall, the findings indicate that awareness programmes are effective in enhancing knowledge and attitudes, but continuous and interactive interventions are required to achieve long-term behavioral change.

8. Suggestions

1. Schools should conduct regular and continuous awareness programmes using interactive methods such as group discussions, role plays, and peer-led sessions to strengthen students' understanding of drug abuse.
2. Life skills training, including decision-making, stress management, and resistance to peer pressure, should be integrated into the curriculum to promote positive behavioral change.
3. Involvement of parents, teachers, and community members should be encouraged to create a supportive environment and reinforce anti-drug messages beyond the classroom.
4. Government and educational authorities should provide proper training to teachers and allocate adequate resources to implement effective and sustainable drug abuse prevention programmes in rural schools.

9. Conclusion

The study on the effectiveness of awareness programmes on drug abuse among high school students in rural Mysore highlights the importance of early intervention in preventing substance abuse. The findings clearly indicate that awareness programmes play a significant role in improving students' knowledge about the harmful effects of drugs and related risks. Students demonstrated better understanding of various aspects such as types of drugs, health consequences, and preventive measures after participating in the programmes. In addition, there was a noticeable positive shift in their attitudes, with many students expressing a strong preference for a drug-free lifestyle. However, the study also reveals that while knowledge and attitudes have improved, behavioral changes are gradual and require continuous reinforcement. Factors such as peer pressure and lack of support systems still influence students' decisions. Therefore, awareness programmes must be supported by interactive methods, life skills training, and community involvement to ensure long-term effectiveness. Overall, the study concludes that awareness programmes are essential tools in combating drug abuse among adolescents, but sustained and comprehensive efforts are necessary to achieve lasting behavioral change and promote a healthy future generation.



References

1. Alenazi, A. M., et al. (2023). Awareness and perceptions of substance abuse among adolescents. *Journal of Public Health Research*, 12(3), 1–10.
2. Bangert-Drowns, R. L. (1988). The effects of school-based substance abuse education: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Drug Education*, 18(3), 243–264.
3. Flay, B. R. (1986). Mass media and smoking cessation: A critical review. *American Journal of Public Health*, 76(2), 153–160.
4. Griffin, K. W., Botvin, G. J., & Nichols, T. R. (2004). Long-term follow-up effects of a school-based drug abuse prevention program on adolescent risky driving. *Prevention Science*, 5(3), 207–212.
5. Sussman, S. (1996). Development of a school-based drug abuse prevention curriculum for high-risk youth. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 28(2), 169–182.
6. Sussman, S., Dent, C. W., & Stacy, A. W. (1995). Project towards no drug abuse: A review of the findings and future directions. *Preventive Medicine*, 24(5), 563–571.
7. World Health Organization (WHO). (2020). *Preventing substance abuse among adolescents: A global perspective*. WHO Publications.
8. National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). (2021). *Principles of adolescent substance use prevention*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.