STRATEGIES TO TACKLE DRUG ABUSE AMONG STUDENTS

Ika Zakiah *¹
Universitas sali Al- Aitam
ikazakiah41@gmail.com

Entin Solihah
PTGMI Kabupaten Sambas

Cut Suraiya Wahyuni Utami
STIKes Assyifa Aceh
cutsuraiya@gmail.com

Abstract

Drug abuse among students is a serious problem that requires attention and action from various parties. The method used is a literature study The results showed that effective strategies include: (1) education and socialization of the dangers of drugs in schools, (2) strengthening the role of families in supervision and guidance, (3) improving law enforcement, (4) developing appropriate rehabilitation programs for students, and (5) utilizing technology for early detection and education. In conclusion, a multi-dimensional approach and cooperation between various parties are needed to address this problem. Consistent and sustainable implementation of these strategies is expected to significantly reduce the level of drug abuse among students.

Keywords: *Strategies, Tackling, Drug Abuse, Students.*

Introduction

Drug abuse among students has become a serious problem that threatens the future of Indonesia's young generation. This phenomenon not only affects students' health and academic performance, but also has the potential to cause wider social problems.

Drugs, which stands for Narcotics, Psychotropic Substances, and other Addictive Substances, are substances or drugs derived from plants or non-plants, both synthetic and semi-synthetic, which can cause a decrease or change in consciousness, loss of pain, and can cause dependence. (Saloner et al., 2021). This category includes various types of substances such as opium, cocaine, cannabis, amphetamines, heroin, ecstasy, and various other illegal drugs. Drug use outside of medical necessity and without a doctor's supervision is considered illegal in many countries, including Indonesia, due to its harmful effects on physical and mental health, as well as the social impact it has (Mixson et al., 20). (Mixson et al., 2024)..

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¹ Correspondence author

Drug use by students can have very serious and long-lasting negative impacts. Academically, drugs can damage the cognitive function of the brain, causing a decline in concentration, memory and learning ability. This causes academic performance to drop dramatically, and can even lead to dropping out of school. In addition, drugs also affect the physical and mental development of students who are still in their infancy, inhibit the maturation of the organs of the body and brain, and interfere with emotional and social development. (Sajid, 2020).

Socially and behaviorally, student drug users tend to experience significant changes in attitude. They may become more aggressive, irritable, or otherwise apathetic and withdrawn from the social environment. Drug dependence can also lead students to commit crimes in order to get money to buy drugs. (Knopf, 2022). Furthermore, drug use increases the risk of accidents, transmission of diseases such as HIV/AIDS through shared needles, and even death from overdose. These impacts not only affect the future of the students themselves, but also affect their families, communities, and the country as a whole. (Davis et al., 2021).

Drug abuse among students is a complex problem caused by various interrelated factors. Internal factors such as high curiosity, the desire to be accepted by the peer group, and the search for new sensations are often the initial triggers. (He et al., 2023). In addition, academic pressure, family problems, and low self-esteem can also encourage students to seek escape through drugs. Lack of knowledge about the dangers of drugs and the misperception that drug use is "cool" or "grown-up" also contribute to this problem. (Tahjiba, 2020).

External factors also play an important role in drug abuse among students. The social environment, including negative peer influence and easy access to drugs, can increase the risk of abuse. Family instability, lack of parental supervision, and exposure to drug abuse in the family or community are also significant factors. Social media and popular culture that sometimes glamorize drug use can have a negative influence on students' perceptions. In addition, socioeconomic factors such as poverty and lack of access to positive activities can also push students towards drug abuse as a form of escape or an attempt to cope with stress. (Faqih & Alharbi, 2024)..

Despite various efforts by the government and related institutions, the level of drug abuse among students is still high. This indicates the need for evaluation and development of more effective countermeasure strategies that are in line with the characteristics of students. (muza, 2021).

Advances in technology and social media have changed patterns of drug distribution and access, making prevention and control efforts more challenging. Countermeasure strategies need to be adapted to these developments (Namada & Karimi, 2021).

Schools and communities play a key role in the prevention and control of drug abuse among students. However, there is often a gap between policy and implementation in the field.

Existing coping strategies are often general and do not take into account the specific characteristics of students as a target group. An approach that is more tailored to the needs and challenges faced by students is needed.

Based on this background, this research examines more about drugs, and tackling drug abuse among students.

Research Methods

This research uses a literature review. The literature research method, also known as a literature study or literature review, is a research approach that uses written sources to collect and analyze data. This method is very important in various fields of science, because it allows researchers to understand the state of the art of a topic, identify gaps in existing research, and formulate relevant research questions. (Setiowati, 2016); (Syahran, 2020); (Helaluddin, 2019).

Results and Discussion
Drug Abuse among Students

Drugs, which stands for Narcotics, Psychotropic Substances, and Other Addictive Substances, is a term that refers to a group of substances that generally carry the risk of addiction for their users. These substances can affect the functioning of the brain and central nervous system, altering the mood, thoughts, feelings, and behavior of their users. Drugs cover a wide range of substances, both legal (such as alcohol and nicotine) and illegal (such as heroin, cocaine, and marijuana). Drug use can result in serious short-term and long-term effects on physical and mental health, and can cause social and economic problems for individuals, families, and communities. (Namada & Karimi, 2021). Therefore, drug use and trafficking are strictly regulated by law in most countries around the world.

Drugs consist of different types of substances that can be grouped into several main categories. The first category is narcotics, which includes opium, morphine, heroin, and cocaine. Second are psychotropic substances, including ecstasy, LSD, amphetamines, and methamphetamines. Third are other addictive substances, such as alcohol, nicotine (tobacco), caffeine, and inhalants (such as glue, gasoline, and paint). (Knopf, 2020). In addition, there are also cannabinoids such as marijuana and hashish. Some medicines used in the medical world can also be misused as drugs, for example tranquilizers (such as Valium and Xanax) and painkillers (such as codeine and oxycodone). Each type of drug has different effects and risks, but all have the potential to cause dependence and negative health effects if abused. (Hurst, 2023).

Drug abuse among students has become a serious problem that threatens the future of the younger generation. This phenomenon does not only occur in big cities, but has also spread to smaller areas. The factors that drive students to engage in drug abuse are diverse, ranging from curiosity, peer pressure, family problems, to lack of knowledge about the dangers of drugs. Often, students who experience stress due to academic demands or personal problems also seek escape through drug use. (Burnley et al., 2020).

The impact of drug abuse on students is devastating, both physically and mentally. Physically, drug use can lead to organ damage, reduced endurance, and even death from overdose. Mentally, drug use can lead to impaired concentration, decreased learning ability, behavioral changes, and mental health problems such as depression or anxiety. In addition, drug addiction can also disrupt students' social relationships with their family and friends, and potentially lead them to commit crimes to fulfill their need for drugs. (Ezomo & Prinsloo, 2023)..

To address this problem, a concerted effort is needed from various parties, including schools, families, communities and the government. Prevention and education programs on the dangers of drugs need to be improved in schools, by actively involving students in anti-drug campaigns. (Krupa, 2020). The role of the family is also very important in providing emotional support and supervision of their children's activities. The government needs to strengthen law enforcement against drug trafficking and provide adequate rehabilitation facilities for students who are already caught up in drugs. With a comprehensive approach and close cooperation between various parties, it is hoped that drug abuse among students can be suppressed and the younger generation can be protected from this serious threat. (Boden & Day, 2023).

Factors Causing Drug Abuse among Students

Drug abuse in students is caused by various interrelated factors. One of the main factors is the strong curiosity and desire to experiment in adolescence. Students are often encouraged to try new things, including drugs, without fully understanding the risks involved. Coupled with peer pressure, many students feel the need to use drugs to be accepted in their social group. Lack of parental supervision and a dysfunctional family environment can also encourage students to seek escape through drug abuse. (Yadav & Parajuli, 2021).

Environmental factors also play an important role in drug abuse among students. Easy access to drugs, both in the school environment and in the community, makes it easier for students to be exposed and tempted to try them. Social media and the internet can also be a means of spreading misinformation about drugs, as well as facilitating illegal transactions. In addition, difficult socio-economic conditions and lack of healthy recreational facilities can encourage students to seek instant pleasure through drugs. (Enos, 2024).

Internal factors from the students themselves are equally important. Low self-esteem, lack of stress management skills, and inability to cope with personal problems can make students vulnerable to drug abuse. Undiagnosed or poorly treated mental disorders, such as depression or anxiety, can also encourage students to use drugs as a form of self-medication. (Johnstone et al., 2022).. The lack of comprehensive knowledge about the dangers of drugs and the skills to refuse drug offers also contributes to the high rate of abuse among students. Therefore, effective prevention efforts must consider and address all these factors holistically. (Enos, 2024).

Strategies for Combating Drug Abuse

Tackling drug abuse requires a comprehensive strategy that involves various parties and approaches. One of the main strategies is education and prevention. Effective education programs should start early, both in schools and in the community, to provide a deep understanding of the dangers of drugs. Continuous public awareness campaigns, utilizing various media, including social media, can help disseminate accurate and relevant information. In addition, life skills training and character development for adolescents and young adults can help them develop resilience to drug temptation. (Enos, 2022b).

The second strategy is firm and consistent law enforcement. This involves strengthening cooperation between law enforcement officials, the government, and the community to eradicate drug trafficking networks. Strict surveillance at the country's borders and entry points, as well as covert operations to dismantle drug syndicates, are important parts of this strategy. (Enos, 2022a). However, law enforcement must also be balanced with a more humane approach to drug users, focusing on rehabilitation rather than punishment alone.

Rehabilitation and post-rehabilitation support is a crucial third strategy. Adequate rehabilitation facilities and effective recovery programs should be available and easily accessible for those experiencing drug dependence. These programs should include not only physical recovery, but also psychological and social support. It is also important to provide post-rehabilitation support programs, including job skills training and assistance with reintegration into society, to prevent relapse and help former drug users build productive lives. (Bio-Sya et al., 2023).

The fourth strategy is community empowerment and cross-sectoral cooperation. Communities must be actively involved in drug prevention and control efforts, for example through the establishment of drug awareness groups at the community level. Cooperation between the government, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and the international community is also important to address the drug problem that often crosses national boundaries (Islam & Biswas, 2020). Evidence-based policy development and continuous program evaluation are also necessary to ensure the effectiveness of countermeasure strategies. By implementing

these strategies in an integrated and consistent manner, it is hoped to significantly reduce drug abuse and create a healthier and safer society. (Ma et al., 2023).

The fifth strategy in tackling drug abuse is to increase access to mental health services. Many drug abuse cases stem from untreated mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, or trauma. By providing accessible and affordable counseling and therapy services, and reducing the stigma associated with mental health, it is hoped to prevent at-risk people from seeking escape through drugs. Peer support programs and therapy groups can also play an important role in helping individuals overcome emotional and psychological problems without relying on drugs. (Ibrahim, 2024).

The sixth strategy involves the use of technology and innovation in the response. The use of big data and artificial intelligence can help predict drug abuse trends, identify high-risk areas, and design more targeted interventions. Mobile applications for education and recovery support, as well as online platforms for counseling and reporting can expand the reach of services and facilitate access to help. Technology can also be used to improve the effectiveness of drug surveillance and detection at various points of entry. (Marshall et al., 2021).

The seventh strategy focuses on research and development. Investing in scientific research on addiction, the effects of drugs on the brain, and new treatment methods is essential to improve our understanding and develop more effective approaches to prevention and treatment. Research is also needed to evaluate the effectiveness of various existing coping strategies, so that policies and programs can be continuously refined based on the latest scientific evidence. (Ament et al., 2024).

In conclusion, tackling drug abuse requires a multidimensional approach that includes prevention, law enforcement, rehabilitation, community empowerment, improved mental health services, technology utilization, and ongoing research. These strategies should be implemented in an integrated manner and tailored to the local and national context. Close cooperation between various stakeholders, including government, civil society, the private sector, and the international community, is critical to the success of these efforts. With long-term commitment and consistent implementation of these strategies, we can expect to significantly reduce the negative impact of drug abuse on individuals, families, and communities, and create a healthier and safer environment for current and future generations.

Conclusion

Strategies to tackle drug abuse among students require a comprehensive approach that involves various aspects. These include education and prevention in schools, enhancing the role of families, strengthening law enforcement, providing effective rehabilitation programs, and utilizing technology for education and early detection. Cooperation between schools, parents, government and the community is key in creating a supportive environment for students to avoid drug abuse.

The implementation of these strategies should be consistent and sustainable, taking into account the specific characteristics and needs of different learner groups. Regular evaluation and refinement of the program is essential to ensure its effectiveness in the face of changing challenges. With a holistic approach and commitment from all parties involved, we hope to create a generation of students who are strong, healthy and free from the threat of drug abuse, so that they can focus on self-development and contribute positively to the future of the nation.

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