

The Role of Socialization Institutions in Combating Drug

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify the role of socialization institutions in combating drug abuse from the perspective of the students at Emirati universities. The researcher applied a questionnaire to the students selected from several universities in the United Arab Emirates (Al Ain University, Sharjah University, Emirates University), where the study sample consisted of (484) male and female students from different specialties. The results showed that unemployment, bad friends, and the lack of religious values resulted in drug abuse. The results revealed that the university's support of the role of media, in addition to family's control over their children's selection of friends and promoting religious morals will, certainly, contribute to reducing drug abuse among the youth. Based on the results, the study recommended the necessity of enhancing the university's cooperative role with the media to implement common educational campaigns about the risks of drug abuse and addiction, as universities can provide accurate professional information to the media. Additionally, the university's role can be activated by enhancing scientific research about the various aspects related to drugs.

Keywords: Drugs, youth, the Emirati university students, family, university.

Introduction

Various countries around the world, particularly the United Arab Emirates view the youth as the most precious foundation upon which the future of countries is based. Therefore, governments give more attention to satisfying the needs and requirements of the youth. In this vein, the Emirati government established the Ministry of Youth to respond to the youth's needs. Indeed, the youth face many challenges and obstacles that prevent them from achieving the expected outcomes, including the challenges of unemployment, poverty, lack of attention, and free time, in addition to other challenges that lead to committing crimes, such as theft, rape, and drug abuse that devastate communities (The official portal of the United Arab Emirates government, 15 NOV 2023).

Several Arab countries witness widespread drug abuse among the youth. In this vein, there is no need to use weapons to destroy another country, where

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spreading drugs in all the parts of a certain country contributes to identity loss and youth deviance from good behaviors and manners. Reports suggested that addiction to drugs resulted in the death of more than half million people during 2019 which, in turn, urged the United Nations to sound a warning concerning this issue and recommended doing more efforts to combat drugs. According to the World Health Organization, the number of drug abusers increased as compared to the year before. This situation is partially attributed to the availability of highly effective opioids in the illegal drug markets (World Health Organization, August 2023).

Drug abuse is considered one of the most dangerous social problems that devastate the youth and the community. Drugs affect all the domains of the abuser's personal and social life; indeed, drug abuse adversely affects the abuser's relationships with his family. Also, drugs have negative ramifications on the health, economic, and social circumstances in the community. In this context, governments and concerned agencies pay more attention to this issue, as governments assign the necessary human and financial potential to combat this unwanted phenomenon. Governments also developed specified programs and procedures and held lectures and seminars for the youth to reduce the effects of this problem (Asasi and Bin Wahiba, 2018).

Drug abuse is considered an important topic, particularly about criminal behavior; such abuse is considered an explicit crime and is indirectly related to committing illegal actions, such as the crimes of murder, rape, and theft. This type of abuse results in a decline in the capabilities of the youth, who are considered the basic pillar upon which the future and development of countries are based. Overlooking the requirements of the youth results in low productivity due to the lack of interest in work, where the youth become a burden on their communities. The Emirati government realized the increased risks of drugs to the community; therefore, this study was conducted to investigate the most important factors leading to drug abuse and addiction among the youth in the Emirati community from the perspective of the students at Emirati universities.

The phenomenon of drug abuse has increased considerably during the last few years, and it has become a global problem that attracts the attention of the concerned agencies and governments at the local and international levels. The International Drug Report- issued by the United Nations Office about crimes and drugs- suggested that the youth are still abusing drugs with higher amounts as compared to adults and that the levels of drug abuse are higher than in the past (The International Drug Report, 2022). The report also stated that in the year (2020), one out of (18) individuals aged (15-64) years old, abused drugs throughout the world, i.e. about (284) million people (5.6%) of the whole world

population were drugged during 2022, with an increasing percentage of (26%) as compared to the year before. The international estimations also revealed that (11.2) million people used drugs by injection in (2020) and that one out of (8) drug-injected individuals are infected by hepatitis C, whereas (1.1) million drug-injected individuals are infected by acquired immune deficiency (The International Drug Report, 2022).

All the aforementioned data revealed that there is an increase in the percentage of drug abuse at the international level. Given the position of the United Arab Emirates and its advanced level in all the domains, including the technological and scientific domains, it has been necessary to highlight this type of study as a preventive measure. Indeed, this context urged the researchers to conduct this study. As far as the researchers know, there is a paucity in studies that addressed this domain in the Emirati community; therefore, this study aimed to investigate the role of socialization institutions in combating drug abuse from the perspective of the students of Emirati universities.

Research Questions

1. What is the role of the university in raising awareness and preventing drug abuse among the youth in the Emirati community from the perspective of the students at Emirati universities?
2. What is the role of the family in raising awareness and preventing drug abuse among the youth in the Emirati community from the perspective of the students at Emirati universities?

Literature review

It is worth noting that the word "drugs" has several meanings based on the domain that defines it. Drugs are legally defined as substances that cause addiction and toxicity to the nervous system, where planting, trading, or manufacturing them is prevented by law; however, they are only used based on a license by law (Abdul-Khaliq, 1999). As for the United Nations Drugs Committee, drugs refer to each substance that contains pain relievers or sleeping pills that, when used for medical or industrial purposes, may lead to addiction which, in turn, damages individuals and communities either physically, psychologically, or socially (Saleem, 1994). The Arabic encyclopedia defined drugs as "a substance that causes varying degrees of consciousness loss among people and animals, where this may lead to coma and finally to death" (Al-Moshrif and Al-Jawazi, 1995), whereas Oxford defined drugs as "any simple organic or inorganic substance, that is used on its own as an effective material" (Salem et al., 1990).

This study defined drugs procedurally as "each natural or industrial substance that contains stimulants and hallucinogens that affect the nervous

system and functioning, and cause addiction. Those substances are legally prevented according to the law of the UAE.

In the study conducted by Al-Otaibi and Awad (2023), the focus was on determining the role of universities in preventing students from drug abuse, as perceived by faculty members. The sample, consisting of 70 faculty members from Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University, revealed that a significant portion (24.9%) believed that the university occasionally implements plans to guide students in utilizing their free time and safeguarding them against drug abuse. Additionally, half of the respondents (50%) expressed that the university prioritizes developing students' responsibility, with a mean of 2.39 and a standard deviation of 0.61. In the same vein, Ali (2023) investigated the role of socialization institutions in raising awareness about the risks of drug abuse. The findings indicated that drug addicts often turn to substance use during periods of increased need for attention and care. Notably, the study pointed out the absence of adequate counseling and guidance in many schools, particularly public ones. In another context, Brahimi and Maleeka's (2022) study entitled "Drug Abuse Among Female University Students," focused on the extent of drug abuse and its social, health, and economic effects among female students at Tibessa University. Peer influence emerged as a prominent factor in female drug abuse, and the lack of effective use of free time among university girls was identified as a contributing factor. Correspondingly, Ali (2022) aimed to highlight drug abuse and addiction among the youth in the Egyptian community, emphasizing the impact on sustainable development objectives. The study, involving 1200 drug users, highlighted the prevalence of factors related to drug availability and environmental changes as key contributors to youth drug abuse, whereas Lorabi and Misawi (2022) investigated the relationship between drug addiction and criminal behavior among adolescents. The study revealed the negative effects of drug addiction on both addicts and those around them, emphasizing a close connection between adolescent drug addiction and criminal behaviors. However, Ayyad's (2022) study focused on the method of social family discipline and its role in reducing drug abuse in Tanta, Egypt. The results demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between family social discipline and drug abuse among addicts, suggesting that family social control plays a predictive role in decreasing drug abuse. Moreover, in a study conducted by Gazibara et al. (2018), titled "Using Illicit Drugs Among Academic Staff in the North of Kosovo: Prevalence, Predictive Patterns, and Health-Related Quality of Life," a sample of 514 university students was examined. The findings indicated that 16% of the participants acknowledged drug use, with cannabis herbs and Bromazepam being

the most commonly used substances among students. Similarly, Briggs (2016) explored the impact of female adolescent drug abuse on social and academic development in a study. The results demonstrated statistically significant relationships between drug use among female adolescents and both social development and academic performance. Notably, increased drug usage correlated with lower levels of social development and academic achievement. The study emphasized the importance of utilizing these findings to develop strategies for protecting female adolescents from drug abuse. Finally, Damasceno et al. (2016) conducted a study titled "Addiction to Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs among University Students," aiming to identify the level of addiction to alcohol, tobacco, and drugs among university students and its impact on life quality. The study involved a randomly selected sample of 97 university students. The results indicated that 81.4% of participants reported alcohol consumption, and 22.6% reported drug use, with cannabis herbs being the most prevalent type. Importantly, the study revealed statistically significant effects of tobacco and alcohol use on the life quality of university students.

The characteristics of drug abusers

Individuals grappling with drug addiction often experience profound personality disorders that significantly impact their behavior and interactions. According to Zahran (2005), several key traits define the addicted person's character. Firstly, they exhibit a lack of social-personal compatibility, struggling to harmonize with their social environment. This can result in strained relationships and difficulty navigating social situations. Additionally, these individuals often display irritability and moodiness, making interactions with them challenging. Moreover, weakness and sexual deviance characterize their behavior, highlighting the pervasive impact of drug addiction on various aspects of their lives. The addicted person may also manifest aggression towards both them and others, further complicating their interpersonal dynamics. Furthermore, feelings of depression and anxiety become prevalent, contributing to the overall complexity of their psychological state. In essence, drug addiction not only poses physical health risks but also engenders a spectrum of detrimental personality traits that can profoundly affect the individual and those around them.

The theories explaining drug abuse relate to the study domain.

A- The theory of psychological analysis

The advocates of this theory stipulated that there is no unified addictive personality, where the phenomenon of drug abuse is attributed to a disorder indirect relationship between the addict and his parents, where such a disorder includes emotion duality, i.e. love and hate for the child simultaneously. This double-edged relationship is eventually transmitted to drug abuse which becomes the symbol for that contradicting relationship. Furthermore, the addicted person

looks for drugs in search of a balance between himself and the reality that he lives. According to this theory, addiction is viewed as a disorder in self-regulation. Indeed, the person uses drugs due to difficulty in facing the conflicts related to feelings of imbalance (Al-Maghribi, 2010).

B- The behavioral theory

According to behavioral theory, several internal and external factors stimulate individuals to use drugs. The advocates of the behavioral school determined three ways for learning the addictive behavior, these are:

- **Learning through operant conditioning**

This learning method is concerned with the effects that follow a certain behavior. It is well-known that drug addiction is closely related to feelings of excitement after using drugs or relapse.

- **Learning through classical conditioning**

The mechanisms of classical conditioning apply in explaining the common symptoms of addiction, such as drug craving and tolerance. This process was explained according to two models; these are:

- Compensatory conditioning response model
 - Conditioned craving motivation model of drugs.

- **Modeling:**

Social learning theory stipulates that all the forms of using drugs are governed by procedural rules and learning rules, including cognitive factors, where individuals are exposed to models that instill in them positive attitudes towards misusing drugs (Brahimi and Maleeka, 2022).

C- The functional theory:

This theory assumes community in the form of a consistent structure, where each individual has a certain role and function that has to be performed within the social system. This theory focuses on the individual's role and function, whereas the rights and duties are determined by the social system. In this way, the individuals' expectations concerning others' behaviors are formed. Therefore, the functional theory explains addiction as the addict's failure to perform his required roles within the social system (Al-Boraithin, 2002).

Causes of Drug Abuse among Youth

Various causes lead to drug abuse among the youth, some of which are real, while others are fabricated by individuals to justify drug abuse. Those causes include the demographic characteristics of the youth, their impulses towards adventure, exploration and curiosity, passion to experiment with new things, and the speed of making friendships with others as well as their interaction with their peers, either by imitation or integration. This may stimulate the youth to cope with their bad deviant friends and experiment with drugs in the light of a limited experience in life, especially when the means of immerse in the deviant behaviors exist (Al-Anzi, 2019).

Al-Anzi (2019), also suggested that several factors stimulate the youth towards drug addiction and take them towards undesired consequences unless situations are well-managed. Indeed, factors vary, as some of them are related to individuals, family, misconceptions, or even community. The most important factors include:

A- Individual/Personal Causes

These factors include depression, stress, and psychological stressors, which these cases lead to addiction. Psychological stressors and the requirements of a rapidly changing and costly life provoke the youth to resort to methods that provide them with feelings of happiness and free them from sadness even for a short time. Also, there are health problems, where some sick people with chronic diseases may use drugs to escape pain, psychological stressors, or frustration experienced due to limited physical abilities or recovery hopelessness. Additionally, some people suffer from personal crises, where they can't accept or deal with the problems they face; therefore, they use drugs to stop thinking of those problems and escape feelings of pain, rage, and grief. Thoughts related to increased sexual ability represent another cause, where some drug abusers think that there is a positive relationship between drug abuse and sexual power, in terms of reaching maximum satisfaction, prolonging sexual intercourse, and achieving sexual enjoyment. Free time may be related to negative emotional and intellectual feelings: when the youth have more money, they may use drugs to fill their free time. Finally, the low academic level may not be a direct cause of drug abuse. However, it could be considered as one of the indirect causes that prevent individuals from dealing correctly with the various temptations and challenges (Al-Moshrifand Al-Jawazi,1995)

1. Family factors

These include the bad example. Indeed, parents are the first example to which children refer while performing their behaviors, and this applies to drug abuse, where addicted parents negatively affect the behavior of their children. Parents' ignorance of their children is another factor. When parents are busy and away from their children, either by traveling, work, or social life, they won't control the behaviors of their children, and thus children will be exposed to several problems, including drug addiction. Also, excessive cruelty against children, particularly during the adolescence period is amongst the most prominent deviance factors, where individuals may use drugs to escape their reality. However, excessive pampering may give children the feeling that they can do whatever they want to obtain anything they desire, and experiment with whatever

they like without punishment. Indeed, this may provoke children to experiment with several undesired things, such as drug abuse. Furthermore, family disintegration and family conflicts give children feelings of unsafety, increase their psychological stressors, and encourage them to escape home and look for ways, such as drug abuse, to forget those stressors. Moreover, family stressors on children to achieve excellence may stimulate children to use activating drugs to enhance their ability to stay awake and study harder; this could lead to addiction and loss. (Ghobari,1999).

2. Social factors

These factors include the availability of drugs by smugglers and pushers, where those smugglers facilitate drug abuse and addiction among the youth. Also, the availability of places that facilitate drug abuse, where some communities designate certain areas for using substances to collect money. Many young people go to those places to use drugs. Economic openness is another factor, where some people exploit the concept of economic openness to import and promote drugs among community members to get easy and rapid gains. Furthermore, the media role should be emphasized, where the various media means should frequently raise the youth awareness about the risks of drug abuse and addiction, as well as the methods of promoting them. Additionally, the lack of surveillance at schools may facilitate students escaping from schools, where they could be exposed to the risks of drug abuse. Finally, bad company, where bad friends may provoke each other to experiment with drugs (Al-Anzi, 2019).

The study methodology

A. The study approach

The researchers used the analytical descriptive approach due to its compatibility with the study nature; this approach explores the study domains and levels as they exist, where they are analyzed and correlated with other phenomena (Majdoub, 2021, p.8). The researchers used the sources of information based on the reports in official newspapers and the data collected from the study questionnaires.

B. The study population and sample

The study population consisted of all the university students in the United Arab Emirates (Al Ain University, Sharjah University, Emirates University) during the first semester of the academic year (2022/2023), where the researchers focused on the specialties of (human sciences and natural sciences). The researchers selected the study sample using snowball sampling (Dor, 2017, p. 315) based on WhatsApp and other social media sites. The sample individuals

responded to the electronic questionnaire designed by using (GOOGLE DRIVE) with a total of (505) questionnaires. (21) questionnaires were excluded due to invalidity; therefore, the sample consisted of (484) respondents.

Table (1)

The personal and demographic characteristics of the study sample

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	260	54%
	Female	224	46%
Age	18-23 years	100	21%
	24-29 years	180	37%
	30-35 years	144	30%
	More than 35 years	60	12%
Faculty	Natural sciences	204	42%
	Social and human sciences	280	58%
Job	Working	240	50%
	No- working	244	50%
University	Al Ain university	292	60%
	Sharjah university	72	15%
	Emirates university	120	25%
Total		484	100%

C. The Study Instrument

The electronic questionnaire was selected to collect the study data, where the questionnaire includes some sensitive questions, and the respondents can respond to those questions without being embarrassed. The questionnaire included

three domains. The first domain includes the personal data of the sample individuals. The second domain includes the university's role in educating the youth about the risks of drugs among the youth, and the third domain includes the family's role in educating the children about the risks of drugs.

D. The statistical processing and the methods of data analysis

To answer the study questions, (SPSS) was used to analyze data, where frequencies, percentages, standard deviations, Pearson correlation coefficient, and Cronbach alpha coefficient were used.

The validity of the study instrument

To verify the validity of the study instrument, it was introduced to several specialized arbitrators who are specialized in the domain of Applied Social Sciences to tell their opinions and perform the required modifications, so that the questionnaire would be ready for application. The final version of the questionnaire consisted of (20) items distributed as follows:

Table (2)

The distribution of the questionnaire items according to domains

Domain	Number of items
The university's role in educating the youth	10
The family's role in educating the youth	10
Total	20

The reliability of the study instrument

To verify the reliability of the study instrument, Cronbach Alpha was calculated, where the total reliability was (0.915). Therefore, the study instrument has a high reliability that is appropriate for the current study purpose, as illustrated in Table 3.

Table (3)

Reliability coefficients using Cronbach Alpha

Domain	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha
The university's role in educating the youth	10	.875
The family's role in educating the youth	10	.886

E. The Study Results

Here is a display of the study results and their analysis based on the theories adopted by the researchers, and their comparison with the results of the previous studies. The instrument items were scored by using a 5-point Likert scale, rated as follows:

Table (4)

The means for the sample individuals' responses

Value	Weight	Mean	Degree
Disagree	1	1-1.66	Low
Neutral	2	1.67 - 3.33	Medium
Agree	3	3.34 – 5	High

The results relate to the first question.

The first question: What is the role of the university in raising awareness and preventing drug abuse among the youth in the Emirati community from the perspective of the students at Emirati universities?

Table (5)

Means and standard deviations for the responses of the sample individuals about the role of the university in the education and prevention of drug abuse among the youth in the Emirati community.

	Item	Mean	SD	Degree	Order
1	The university is interested in raising awareness about the risks of drugs among young people	4.14	.925	High	3
2	The university organizes seminars and scientific lectures to investigate the phenomenon of drug abuse among young people	4.03	.989	High	6
3	The university makes more efforts to develop religious awareness among young people and provide guidance to them	4.10	1.029	High	4
4	The university assigns researchers to	4.04	.905	High	5

	conduct specialized scientific research on the phenomenon of drug abuse among young people and the causes that lead to it				
5	The university publishes the annual drug report issued by the United Nations to students	3.77	1.026	High	9
6	The University participates in the World Day for combating drugs	4.14	.975	High	2
7	There is a special, mandatory course for university students on the risks of drug abuse	3.71	1.204	High	10
8	Enhancing the role of the media in developing cultural awareness and demonstrating the harms to which the addict will be exposed	4.17	.880	High	1
9	The university coordinates awareness activities to serve the community, where its mission is to reveal the dimensions of drug abuse among young people	3.94	1.024	High	7
10	The university provides financial and moral support to scientific research about the phenomenon of drug abuse among young people	3.84	1.046	High	8
	Average mean	4.18	.901	High	

Table (5) revealed that the means for the role of the university in the education and prevention of drug abuse among the youth in the Emirati community from the perspective of the Emirati university students ranged between (3.71-4.17). The average mean was (4.18) with a high degree. The results showed that items (3 and 8) gained the highest importance, where item (3) stated "The university does more efforts to develop religious awareness among young people and provide guidance to them" and item (8) stated "Enhancing the role of the media in developing cultural awareness and demonstrating the harms to which the addict will be exposed" had a mean of (4.17) with a high degree. Item (6) stating "The University participates in the World Day for combating drugs" was in the second place with a mean of (4.14) and a high degree. The lowest means were for item (7) stating "There is a special, mandatory course for university students on the risks of drug abuse" with a mean of (3.71), and item (5) stating "The university publishes the annual drug report issued by the United Nations to students" with a mean of (3.77) and a high degree.

The second question: What is the role of family in raising awareness and preventing drug abuse among the youth in the Emirati community from the perspective of the students at Emirati universities?

Table (6)

Means and standard deviations for the responses of the sample individuals about the role of the family in the education and prevention of drug abuse among the youth in the Emirati community.

Item	Mean	SD	Degree	Order
1	4.51	.683	High	1
2	4.38	.923	High	4
3	4.42	.715	High	3
4	4.24	.940	High	8
5	4.18	1.030	High	9

	children always go to the mosque for prayer				
6	The family provides children with useful entertainment means and takes them to health clubs	4.38	857	High	5
7	Parents motivate children to invest their free time in doing useful things	4.29	889	High	6
8	Parents supervise their children's selection of their friends	4.42	842	High	2
9	Parents encourage their children not to stay late outside home	3.92	1.015	High	10
10	Family members care about children, give them full attention and listen to their thoughts and opinions	4.24	.885	High	7
	Average mean	4.53	.740	High	

Table (6) revealed that the means for the role of family in the education and prevention of drug abuse among the youth in the Emirati community from the perspective of the Emirati university students ranged between (3.92 - 4.51). The average mean was (4.53) with a high degree. The results showed that items (1 and 8) gained the highest importance, where the item (1) stating "The family enhances the children's religious and moral motives by giving advice" had a mean of (4.51), and item (8) stating "Parents supervise their children's selection of their friends" had a mean of (4.42) with a high degree. However, the lowest means were for the item (9) stating "Parents encourage their children not to stay late outside home" with a mean of (3.93) and item (5) stating "The family makes sure that male children always go to the mosque for prayer" with a mean of (4.18) with a high degree.

Discussing the Results

The average mean for the role of socialization institutions in combating drug abuse from the perspective of the students at Emirati universities was (4.18) with a high degree.

The results of this study agree with (Al-Otaibi, 2023) which revealed that the university is sometimes interested in developing the student's thoughts towards leadership and responsibility-taking. The mean was (2.39) with a standard deviation of (0.61). The results also agree with (Ali, 2023) which revealed that the

process of guidance that should be performed by the school is missing in many schools, particularly public schools.

The researchers attributed these results to the role played by media means in guiding the youth towards healthy behaviors as well as understanding the risks of drug abuse and providing accurate information which can contribute to reducing drug abuse in universities and enhancing their knowledge concerning their risks. Also, universities in cooperation with media can organize campaigns to raise the youth's awareness concerning the risks of drug abuse. Furthermore, advertisements, printed materials, and social media sites can be used to publish information about the social and health risks of drug abuse. Publishing stories about people who overcame drug abuse and established a healthy lifestyle can also be beneficial, where such stories inspire the addicted youth and give them more hope to recover.

As for the second question, the average mean for the role of the family in the education and prevention of drug abuse among the youth in the Emirati community from the perspective of the Emirati universities was (4.53) with a high degree. This finding agrees with (Brahimi and Maleeka, 2022) which revealed that the lack of religious upbringing during childhood and the lack of control over their commitment to good behaviors give children more space to use drugs. This finding also agrees with (Ayyad, 2022) which revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between the way of family social discipline and drug abuse among a sample of addict youth. Also, family social control as an independent variable contributed to reducing drug abuse as a dependent variable among drug users and non-users.

The researchers attributed that to the case that teaching children the right religious values and controlling their behaviors as well as urging them to follow the right path and good manners have the potential of reducing drug abuse among them. Indeed, promoting religious morals contributes to establishing a solid foundation among children and helps them make the right and responsible decisions. These social values are integral to the programs of educating the youth about the risks of drug abuse.

Recommendations

a. Family has an effective role in guiding children towards selecting a good company, where families should be encouraged to establish open relationships with their children so that they can talk about their friends and problems.

- b. Encouraging the youth to take part in religious activities, such as praying at the mosque as well as performing charitable and voluntary activities, where that can help them direct their time and efforts towards positive activities.
- c. Enhancing the role of family in conveying religious principles and values, where parents can help in establishing an environment that encourages commitment to religious values and reduces drug abuse.
- d. Enhancing the university's cooperative role with the media in establishing educational campaigns about the risks of drug abuse and addiction, where the university can provide professional and accurate information to media.
- e. Activating the role of universities in supporting scientific research about the various domains of drug abuse and addiction. Indeed, this research may contribute to developing better preventive and therapeutic methods.

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