

DRUG ADDICTION AND ACCOMPANYING PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS - DEPRESSION AS A MODEL*

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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18023809

Abstract

The current study aimed at researching the topic of drug addiction and highlighting the most important psychological effects of the latter on the individual and the individual's psyche from the resulting psychological disorders, the most common of which is depression, by asking the following question: What is the level of depression in drug addicts?

This study was conducted on a case following treatment at the Waseet Center for the treatment of drug addicts in Ain Tamouchant, where the clinical approach was adopted, and tools tools represented in the interview, clinical observation, in addition to the application of the Beck Depression Scale to collect information and to reveal the level of depression in addicts, where the results revealed that the level of depression in drug addicts is high.

Key words: *Drug addiction, Depression, Substance Abuse.*

1. Introduction

The loss of happiness and its disappearance in the life of an individual is one of the disturbing matters that occur and cause sadness, depression and a sense of hopelessness in the individual leading to the emergence of psychological and mental disorders that may make him feel that his life is over and meaningless, and this results in suicide, and some of them take other paths such as turning to narcotic substances and drugs as a solution to his negative psychological state and thus the individual reaches what is called addiction, this is what makes addiction in the use of substances

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a disease, and this is what makes addiction in the use of substances a disease. What makes addiction in the use of substances a disease that affects the behavior of the individual and his brain, which leads him to a state of inability to control the use of these drugs or medicines, and over time the individual begins to increase larger doses to reach euphoria, which makes the world become threatened by the seriousness of the situation, especially most of the targeted segments are young people (adolescents and youth), which is the group relied upon in building and prospering societies. Addiction poses many obstacles that hinder the individual in moving his life forward and innovating in it, and this leads to poor productivity and creativity, and thus leads him to the inability to satisfy his basic needs, so he resorts to committing crimes or undesirable things only to satisfy those needs, which he believes relieves his tension and conflicts that in fact increase his worries, and most importantly, the psychological state that he reaches because of this dependence.

2. Theoretical aspect

2.1. The concept of addiction

It is defined as a state of chronic intoxication resulting from the repeated use of the drug, and its characteristics are: Longing, need and compulsion to use drugs and obtain them in all ways and means. It is also defined as the extent to which the social and professional life of the addicted individual is spoiled, as it reaches a complex composite picture characterized by some features such as the urgent desire to repeat the use, the tendency towards increasing the quantity, the negative effects on the individual and the surrounding social environment, addiction to a drug does not mean mere habituation or length of use, but with the intention of forming a strong and urgent habit that pushes the addict to obtain the drug by any means while increasing the dose from time to time (Mohammed, 2004, p. 23).

The World Health Organization defines it as a psychological and organic condition that results from the individual's interaction with the drug and the emergence of characteristics characterized by different behavioral patterns that always include an urgent desire to use the drug continuously or periodically to feel its psychological and organic effects and to avoid the threatening or painful effects that result from its unavailability (Siham, 2013, p. 26).

2.2. Definition of drugs

Language: The origin of the word narcotics in the Arabic language is from the verb khadar, which means to cover, and it is said that a narcotized woman is said if she remains numb, i.e. covered up, hence the word narcotics was used on the basis that they are substances that cover the mind and absent it (Shaker, 2008, p. 172).

Terminology: It is defined as any natural or manufactured substance that partially or completely goes the human mind, and makes its owner unaware of what he does or behaves, as it prepares the person for some unreal things, and some types of drugs may be used in the medical fields under medical supervision and for urgent need and in small quantities that do not cause addiction (Mohammed, 2004, p. 23).

Farouk Abdel Salam (1977) defines it as any natural or manufactured substance that acts on the human body and affects it, changing its sensations,

behaviors and some of its functions, and the repeated use of it results in serious consequences on physical and mental health and a harmful effect on the environment and the group (Abdel-Moti and Mustafa, 2004).

Hence, a definition of drugs can be given briefly as any raw, manufactured or chemically prepared substance that has an effect on the human body showing special symptoms that harm the individual and society.

2.3. Causes Of Addiction

Addiction has many causes, and to identify them, researchers have divided them into three main factors, as follows:

2.3.1. Factors related to the narcotic substance: Addiction cannot conceivably exist without being associated with a specific substance on which it depends, as there are factors that help the addict to become addicted to the drug or narcotic substance, including the following:

- Abundance of substances: So that the availability of the substance and easy access to it increases the chances of abuse for some individuals, as it is certain that some substances are more difficult to obtain than others, but the most consumed psychoactive substances, such as hashish, for example, are found everywhere where young people are.
- How to use the narcotic substance: So that the effect of the same drug on the human being varies according to the way in which it is taken, whether by mouth, smell, intravenous or intramuscular injection, smoking, etc.
- Chemical properties of the drug: It has been scientifically proven that each substance has its own properties and effects on humans, and that any person, after using different types of substances, will soon prefer one type over another and become addicted to it (Ghania, 2017, pp. 41-43).

2.3.2. Helping factors related to the addict himself: Each person in the world represents only himself, although he shares some similarities with others, and therefore there are qualities that belong to him alone that help him to become addicted (Abdulaziz, 2002, p. 92).

- Genetic factors: Some researchers and biologists believe that the children of addicts are more prone than others to addiction to alcohol and drugs, and this is due to the transmission of genes to children, for example, a pregnant addicted woman transmits the toxins of drugs and alcohol to her fetus, regardless of the type of drug (Hani, 1993, p. 300).
- Psychological and physical factors: Perhaps the most important of these factors are curiosity, experimentation and excitement, the personality of the user also has a role in this, environmental issues, weak religious conscience, contact with peers and bad friends and other factors that lead to addiction (Farah, 2009, pp. 49-50).
- Emptiness and boredom: A person rushes to use drugs to escape the boredom and psychological emptiness that he suffers from, especially if he is exposed to an emotional or family crisis, in addition to the many free times that he cannot exploit with activities because there are no places for activity such as clubs, even if they exist, he does not join them and does not participate in their

programs aimed at filling his free time, which pushes some to use some types of drugs such as stimulants, stimulants and hallucinogenic drugs to create special feelings that help them enjoy free time to become addicted with repeated use.

- Accompanying bad companions: Peer groups and companions in addition to the family are one of the main factors that lead to drug abuse (Al-Asfar, 2012, p. 159).
- Lack of religious conscience: The weakness of the individual's religious conscience is a motive and a strong factor in resorting to drug use, as the individual who uses drugs is haunted by the thought that drugs are not prohibited, and this is also related to the lack of commitment to Islamic values, morals and customs prevailing in society, and the atrophy of religious conscience is caused by his weak religious culture and his failure to represent the values and morals that the faith instills in the soul, and all community institutions are responsible for this (Al-Mushrif, 2011, p. 80).

2.3.3. Factors related to the social environment: The environment and the surrounding community play an important role in pushing a person to take the drug and addiction to it, the most important of these factors are the following:

- Family and upbringing: Poor socialization, excessive pampering and lack of family control over children helps to neglect them, as well as lack of interest in their troubles, which leads some to resort to drugs to forget their troubles and worries.
- Customs and traditions: The cultural vision of drug addiction varies according to the cultural level of each society from the other, where customs and traditions play an important role in criminalizing or permitting the use of drugs of various kinds (Mohammed, Ibrahim, 1994, p. 27).

2.4. Types of drugs and their effects

2.4.1. Opium and its derivatives

- **Opium:** It is one of the most dangerous types of drugs obtained by making cracks in the immature poppy fruits, in the form of sap collected and dried, has a bitter taste and is combined in the synthesis of a number of drugs, and opium is taken by swallowing it with water, coffee or tea or smoking it with cigarettes, and its users feel At first, the user feels active and the ability to imagine and talk, but this does not last long, as the psychological state is disturbed, breathing slows down, and the person ends up in deep sleep and hibernation, and the person becomes addicted after using opium and its preparations, and injections are the most common way to use it (Delainikeva, 2001).

Opium, if a person becomes accustomed to it, becomes part of his life, his body cannot perform its functions without taking the usual dose, and he feels severe pain if he does not take it and his health deteriorates, his memory weakens, his muscles atrophy, his appetite for food decreases, slow breathing, blue eyes and weight loss occurs (Al-Gharib, 2006).

- **Morphine:** It is a derivative of opium, and this substance was extracted by the German scientist "Sertunner" in 1804, and morphine is a white crystalline

powder, as it can be in the form of tablets, or needle solutions, and its color varies from white to yellow or brown depending on its purity, and it is bitter in taste and its use for medical purposes has spread in the western world, especially the United States of America (Mushtaqiya, 2007).

It is used to treat pain, severe diarrhea and cough by injection, and stopping its use causes symptoms such as red eyes, sweat, drowsiness, abdominal and muscle pain, vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, rapid heartbeat, high blood pressure and insomnia (Kazan, 2005).

The main effect of morphine is to increase the quantitative effect (inhibition) of the cerebral cortex on contact sensation centers, and then the feeling of pain decreases, and there is no drug in medicine to date that has the power of morphine to relieve physical pain, and the addict takes morphine through subcutaneous or intramuscular injections, and it is rarely taken by swallowing, because in this way large amounts of it must be taken and this needs high costs, and usually the addict in cases of advanced addiction resort to direct intravenous injection, as its effectiveness is faster than subcutaneous injection (Mushtaqiya, 2007).

- **Hashish or marijuana:** Hashish is extracted from the cannabis plant, which is the popular term for the narcotic substance extracted from the cannabis plant, whether from its flowers, stems or roots, and it has several names that differ according to the country from which it is extracted, and hashish or so-called marijuana has no medical use (Swass, 2001).

The use of hashish causes a feeling of well-being, light-headedness and euphoria with frequent talking, increased motor ability with a disturbance in temporal and spatial recognition, and a lack of sense of the passage of time, if the dose increases, causing fatigue and mental confusion. In 1967, Soueif found in his research on hashish in Egypt that patients often start using hashish before the age of twenty, due to joining a group of friends, searching for euphoria, curiosity, and trying to play the role of a man.

Scientists have recently identified that the chemical compound in marijuana that produces psychoactivity is (TSH), and the amount of this compound varies depending on the type of environment, the location of its growth and growing conditions, and the action of marijuana as a mild intoxicant or a hallucinogenic agent depending on the amount used and the person's tolerance for its use, and the addict feels the effect of the drug 15 minutes after smoking the cigarette and its effect lasts for between two or four hours, and reactions vary between feeling depressed and feeling excited (Schwer and Millman, 2008).

- **Khat Catha:** The World Health Organization has included khat among the narcotic substances, which is an evergreen shrub, and the first person to describe it by its scientific name was the Swedish botanist "Perforskal" in 1763, and the scientific name he gave to this plant is *Catha Edulis*, and the length of the khat tree ranges between five and ten meters.(Swaif, 1996).

The narcotic substance lies in its leaves and is consumed by chewing them slowly, as they are stored in the mouth of the addict for long hours during which

their juice is absorbed, and this process is interspersed with drinking water from time to time.

The use of khat leads to a feeling of satisfaction and happiness to the point of forgetting painful news, and may even reach the point of forgetting the feeling of hunger, and after several hours of use, the addict feels mentally and physically lethargic, and suffers from digestive disorders, stomach infections, bouts of constipation, and high blood pressure. The addict also suffers from psychological disorders represented by insomnia, a sense of general weakness, mental lethargy, and mood swings (Shehata, 2006).

2.4.2. Stimulants (Stimulants)

- **Cocaine:** Cocaine is one of the most addictive and dangerous substances, and is extracted from the coca plant by grinding its leaves, the latter of which grows in South America.

Freud's first reference to cocaine was in one of his letters in 1884, where he considered it a therapeutic project, so he tested this substance on himself and noticed amazing results, as it dispelled the feeling of fatigue, fatigue and hunger, in addition to removing depression with the activity and vitality that he had not known before, and for this reason the use of this drug spread to his friends, family and patients, and he held many hopes for it as its ability to treat neurotic diseases, so many studies were written about the cocaine preparation and methods of use in many fields. Cocaine was classified as a drug in 1914 AD, after the appearance of its effects as an addictive substance. Cocaine powder is consumed by inhalation using a tube, or by rolling an ordinary paper in the form of a tube through which it is inhaled. It can also be injected intravenously, subcutaneously or intramuscularly after it is dissolved in water or lemon juice (Mohammed, 2011).

The addict initially feels a kind of euphoria, happiness and flowing activity, but this state does not last long, as it is soon followed by laziness, apathy and general weakness, so he tries to overcome it by taking other doses of the drug, entering the second stage, and here he shows behavioral disorders of hallucinations Here the addict feels that everything around him is moving, as well as entering a state of feeling that he is being watched, and from here he enters the third stage, and this stage often occurs after seven years of cocaine use, the most important features of which are complete degradation of all body functions and disintegration of the personality.

Increased inhalation or injection causes poisoning, which sometimes leads to cardiac and respiratory disorders with sudden death due to paralysis of the heart muscles, and leads to the destruction of brain cells, loss of control and self-control (Abdul Ghani, 2005).

3. Problematic

Modern psychological studies have varied, which considered the issue of drug addiction as one of the social issues that affect the construction of society and its members and the consequent psychological, social, economic and health effects that affect both the individual and society, and it is also considered as a pathological social phenomenon that has a great impact on the psychological space of the

individual gives him negativity, dependence and inability to bear psychological tension, pain and frustration and pushes him to feel loneliness, despair, sadness, pessimism and powerlessness in facing life issues, as these symptoms can be included in psychological disorders, the most common of which is depression.

Currently, addiction has become more widespread than before, and the most dangerous thing is that it has touched different social segments, as its damage did not stop at the limits of the impact on the nervous system of the individual, but exceeded the soul, body, relationship with others and his social status, the issue of drug abuse has worsened and become global, as well as a form of self-destructive behavior in drug abuse, many individuals who depend on drugs do not care about the possible risks that offend them, and therefore the addict has become moody and behavioral change, concerned only with the ecstasy at that moment. Among the studies that dealt with addiction and the resulting psychological disorders is the study of Amina Ibrahim Badawi and Mahmoud Fattouh Saadat (2016), which aimed to identify the health and psychological effects of young drug users on a sample of 100 young people, where its results found that drug use entails many psychological effects (anxiety, chronic depression and memory loss) as well as serious health effects affecting the body systems, as the researcher used the descriptive and analytical approach. Through this study, we will try to shed light on the phenomenon of drug addiction in terms of theory (concept), and on the other hand, its association with psychological disorders, and this on a sample of addicts at the Waseet Addiction Center, from which we ask the following question:

- **What is the level of depression in drug addicts?**

4. Research Design

4.1. Hypothese and Objectives of the study

Hypothese

- The level of depression in drug addicts is high.

Objectives of the study

The aim of the case study is to:

- Determine whether drug use results in some psychological disorders, including depression.
- Identify and determine the level of depression in a sample of drug addicts.

Importance of the Study

The importance of the current study lies in the following points:

- Highlighting the most important psychological symptoms and psychological issues related to drug addiction.
- Drawing attention to this segment and taking care of them psychologically.

Study concepts

Addiction: It is the compulsive use of one or more narcotic substances, which leads to a state of organic or psychological dependence or both with tolerance and the appearance of withdrawal symptoms in case of withdrawal (Karima, 2005, p. 113).

Drugs: Scientifically, drugs are drugs that affect the central nervous system by activating or inhibiting the central nervous system, causing hallucinations and

fantasies to lead to habituation and addiction, as they harm human health and social and lead to social and economic damage affecting the individual and society (Ghania, 2017, p. 17).

Depression: It is a state of severe sadness and depression that reflects negatively on the patient's behavior, rejecting himself and his environment as measured by the depression scale used (Adel, 1988, p. 2).

It is defined procedurally as the score obtained by the drug addict through the Beck Depression Scale.

Substance abuse refers to the persistent or excessive use of substances such as drugs or alcohol that negatively affect an individual's psychological and physical functioning, often resulting in behavioral disorders and disruptions in daily life (American Psychiatric Association, 2020).

4.2. Methodology of the study

The clinical approach was used in the current study, because the subject of the study is about addiction and the psychological disorders associated with it, which requires a case study, and the clinical approach is the most appropriate and most appropriate, based on in-depth studies of psychological and social phenomena and their reflections on personality dynamics.

Weemer defined it as a method of research based on using the results of examining several patients and studying them one by one, in order to extract general principles, suggested by the observation of their competencies and deficiencies (Zawawi, 2012, p. 29).

Tools of the study

This study relied on three data collection tools, namely:

Clinical interview: It is one of the scientific research tools that collect information and data in the study of individuals and groups, as it is through conversation or direct dialogue between the researcher and the respondent in the case of confrontation, in which the role of the researcher is to prepare interview questions well in accordance with the nature of the subject and ask them to the examinee and let the examinee answer them (Wael, 2007, p. 76)

Clinical observation: which is considered a complementary method to the interview, when we want to compare different communication records (digital and even written), observation allows studying clinical phenomena in their context

Beck Scale (1996): Developed by **Beck** and colleagues in 1961 and consisted of 21 items, where we relied on direct observations of symptoms described by depressed patients in the field of psychiatry, in addition to observations and descriptions given by non-depressed patients. were harmonized into 21 symptoms "sadness, pessimism, feeling of failure, dissatisfaction, guilt, punishment, self-loathing, self-accusation, suicidal thoughts, crying, irritability, difficulty working, insomnia, rapid fatigue, loss of appetite, preoccupation with the body, loss of libido, which can be rated on a four-point scale from 0 to 03 based on severity."

In 1993, the modified version appeared, which contains 11 items, each item consists of four statements ranging from 0 to 03, and the application time varies from

approximately 5 to 10 minutes, the modified version measures the depressive trait, while the original version measures the depressive states

Method of correction and application: The examinee is asked to read each category of the scale and then choose a phrase that seems to fit or describe his condition in the last week, including the day of applying the scale, and circle it. To correct the scale, the scores obtained by the examinee in the 21 groups are summed to reach the total score on the scale, where the score is corrected according to the following areas (Abu Zeid, 2000, pp. 182-183).

Table 1. Correction Scale Of The Beck Depression Scale

Score	Depression severity
0-9	No depression
10-15	Minor depression
16-23	Moderate depression
24-36	Severe depression
36+	Very severe depression

Psychometric properties of the Beck scale: This scale is one of the most popular tests, due to its psychometric properties that were calculated after it was adapted to an Algerian sample by researchers.

- **Stability:** Among the studies that verified the psychometric properties of this scale is the study of Bashir Maamaria (1998) who recalculated the stability coefficient on a sample of 63 male and female students from the four years of the social sciences, arts and Arabic language at the University of Patna with a time interval between the two applications ranging from 18 days to 27 days, the correlation coefficient between the application of the Pearson method of raw scores reached 0.832 at the significance level of 01.0.

- **Honesty:** Regarding reliability, we see that in the same study, the reliability coefficient was calculated by the internal consistency method, which is one of the methods of calculating construct validity. The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated from the raw scores between the score of each statement and the total score of the scale, where the scores of males ranged between (0.60 - 0.44) on the statements of the scale at the significance level of 0.01, while the scores of females on the statements of the scale ranged between (0.48 - 0.65).

The reliability and validity coefficients that were extracted for this scale are all high and statistically significant, which makes the scale valid for application in this study.

Study sample and method of selection

The study sample consisted of a single subject: a 34-year-old married man with a child, employed at a coffee shop, living with his parents, and earning a middle-income. It is important to note that while this case provides valuable insights into the psychological and physiological effects of drug addiction, the limited sample size restricts the ability to generalize the findings to the broader population of drug addicts.

The extent to which this individual case is representative for testing the research hypothesis must therefore be considered with caution, as further studies

with larger and more diverse samples are necessary to confirm these results across different demographics and addiction patterns.

5. Results and interpretation

The findings of the present clinical study indicated that the examined case obtained a **score of 32** on the *Beck Depression Inventory*, corresponding to the category of **severe depression**. This result validates the initial hypothesis stating that *the level of depression among drug addicts is high*. However, beyond the numerical value, this outcome reflects a complex psychological state resulting from the interaction of psychological, biological, and social determinants, all of which converge to intensify emotional suffering and reduce the individual's capacity for adaptation.

From a **psychological perspective**, the case demonstrated symptoms of social withdrawal, emotional numbness, and a profound sense of worthlessness. These manifestations are consistent with the concept of *learned helplessness* and the loss of perceived control over life circumstances.

Addiction, in this sense, appears not as an isolated cause but as the culmination of prolonged psychological struggles and unresolved inner conflicts. Initially sought as a temporary escape from distress, drug use gradually evolved into a compulsive behavior that reinforced depressive feelings and deepened emotional dependence. Thus, the subject's depression can be viewed as both a consequence and a perpetuating factor of addiction, forming a self-reinforcing cycle of emotional pain and chemical dependency.

From a **biological standpoint**, sustained substance use disrupts the balance of neurotransmitters such as **dopamine** and **serotonin**, which play crucial roles in mood regulation and the reward system. The case's reported health issues - including hypertension, liver inflammation, and digestive complications - suggest a systemic physiological deterioration that exacerbates mood instability.

This neurochemical imbalance explains the persistent *anhedonia* (inability to experience pleasure) and emotional exhaustion observed in the subject, indicating that depression is not solely a psychological response but also a neurophysiological consequence of addiction.

At the **social level**, the data obtained from the clinical interview revealed a context of marital conflict, family tension, and social isolation. The absence of emotional support and the presence of interpersonal stressors served as both *precipitating* and *maintaining* factors of the addictive behavior. Economic dependence and the lack of social belonging further reinforced feelings of inadequacy and hopelessness, which are core dimensions of depressive experience among addicts.

Therefore, the individual's depression is not merely self-generated but socially conditioned, reflecting the interplay between personal vulnerability and environmental adversity.

These results are consistent with the findings of Badawi and Saadat (2016), who demonstrated that drug users often exhibit chronic depression and anxiety, as

well as with Ghania (2017) and Farah (2009), who identified emotional emptiness and loss of meaning as central precursors of addictive behavior. Such convergence of findings reinforces the conclusion that depression is a *primary psychological outcome* of addiction rather than a secondary or incidental condition.

6. Limits of the study

- **Temporal Limitations:** The time period of the study was set from March 02, 2025 to March 13, 2025.
- **Spatial Boundaries:** The field study took place at Al-Wasit Addiction Treatment Center in the governorate of An Tammuchent.

7. Conclusion

In light of the above discussion, it becomes evident that drug addiction profoundly undermines the psychological and emotional structure of the individual. It not only deteriorates physical health but also erodes the sense of self, purpose, and human connection. Depression among addicts emerges as a manifestation of both biological disruption and existential despair, representing the collapse of internal equilibrium rather than a mere symptom of substance withdrawal. Accordingly, any effective approach to addiction treatment must transcend medical detoxification and address the psychological reconstruction of meaning, emotional healing, and social reintegration.

This study therefore recommends that addiction treatment centers incorporate systematic psychological evaluation — particularly the *Beck Depression Scale* — to identify high-risk depressive cases early and provide targeted psychotherapy and family-based interventions. Ultimately, combating addiction requires not only medical and legal frameworks but also sustained efforts in psychological prevention, emotional education, and family support, so that emptiness and despair do not turn into gateways for addiction and self-destruction.

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