

## Addiction: A big challenge of social security in Iran

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Due to special conditions of Iran; i.e., neighboring to major centers of drug production in Afghanistan during the last few decades, it was the passageway of the drug to Europe. Moreover, because of appropriate context of social, economic and cultural situations, there was an increased addiction and drug trafficking in Iran. It is obvious that a lot of people would be involved directly and indirectly with drugs; so the drug has become a major problem in Iranian society, especially in the provinces in near of Afghanistan and Pakistan borders. The reports have indicated an increasing spread of drug addiction in Iran. Addiction among all social classes and occupational groups, age and sex, is raised. In fact, an important part of social problems, directly or indirectly related to drug dependence. Therefore, prevention of addiction as the basis of many diseases is vital priority for Iran. Fair distribution of facilities and services in society and equal opportunities for all members of society can legitimately, step forward in to deal with social ills such as addiction.

Editorial

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## INTRODUCTION

Iran, as a young developing country has two different public health issues: elderly and young population issues.<sup>1</sup> Due to special conditions of Iran; i.e., neighboring to major centers of drug production in Afghanistan during the last few decades, it was the passageway of the drug to Europe. Moreover, because of appropriate context of social, economic and cultural situations, there was an increased addiction and drug

trafficking in Iran. It is obvious that a lot of people would be involved directly and indirectly with drugs; so the drug has become a major problem in Iranian society, especially in the provinces in near of Afghanistan and Pakistan borders.

Iran, with its young population structure, geopolitical situation and the lack of a proper strategy to cope with supply, demand and treatment of addicts, is one of

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the countries with most vulnerable population to drug problem. Iran has actually been in a war against drug trafficking and addiction since three recent decades.<sup>2</sup> Formal reports have demonstrated an increasing spread of drug addiction in Iran in recent years. The number of addicts is about 2 to 3 million people, 8 to 10 of them die every day. In total, more than 5.5 million people are involved in this problem. Drug addiction has been indeed raised among all social classes and occupational groups, ages and sexes; in fact, the mean age of onset of drug use in Iran has reached up to 14 to 16 years; i.e., the Youth, students, college students, with its potential complex social issues, resulting in many social deviations damages.<sup>3-5</sup>

Economic losses of addiction and direct and indirect social effects in Iran are very high, about 3 to 5 billion dollars per year; in addition, in the clashes between police and smugglers, about 3,700 policemen were killed and about 13000 wounded.<sup>6</sup> Addicts and smugglers are prone to commit the crime more than anyone else.<sup>6,7</sup> According to the Iranian Interior Minister in 2014, addiction was the cause of most terrible social problems in Iran.<sup>6</sup> In addition, addiction is the reason of 55 percent of the divorces, 65 percent of domestic violence, 30 percent of child abuse, 23 percent of strife, 35 to 40 percent of robberies, 25 percent of murders and 65 percent of prisoning, directly or indirectly.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, environmental, geographic, behavioral, social, political and economic factors could affect on the abundance and distribution of social abnormalities such as addiction.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, reducing the risks of addiction is possible only with the knowledge of its constituent and the effect of environment.<sup>10,11</sup> Scientific approach and attention to all aspects of the socio-economical phenomenon of addiction is then the fundamental solution. Unemployment,

poverty, discrimination and inequality, corruption, hopelessness and despair, homelessness could be the main reason of this public health problem in Iran.<sup>12</sup>

Eliminating all forms of discrimination, the creation of decent work and providing equal opportunities for individuals, will be increase the hope in young people for the future. Increase soil and water sports facilities can also reduce the prevalence of drug addiction. On the other hand, regular and adequate exercise as a way of treating patients is recommended.<sup>13</sup> Nowadays, addiction acts as a major threat to social security in Iran and could jeopardize national security. Fair distribution of facilities and services in society and equal opportunities for all members of society can legitimately, step forward in to deal with social ills such as addiction.

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