

Impact of Drug Abuse on Family Quality of Life

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Letter to Editor

Editor in Chief

As a chronic relapsing disorder, addiction not only erodes individuals' quality of life (QoL), it may also affect their family's QoL. Family QoL represents the family's sense of being together and the interactions of their mutual needs and their surrounding environment. Numerous studies have confirmed the reduced levels of the QoL in addicted individuals, but there have been no studies on the impacts of addiction on family members' QoL.¹ Furthermore, several research studies examining the QoL for family members of individuals with chronic diseases such as schizophrenia, gastrointestinal and skin diseases have been conducted;^{2,3} however, to the best of our knowledge, there has been no study specifically conducted on the impact of addiction on family members' QoL.

In this qualitative study, families of addicts who had referred to drug addiction treatment

clinics to receive services for detoxification and/or maintenance methadone therapy in the city of Kerman in southeastern Iran were interviewed. The interviews were conducted after obtaining informed consent and ensuring the confidentiality of data. A total of 17 individuals were interviewed, including wives, parents, and siblings. All participants stated that different aspects of their life were deteriorated due to addiction of their wives, parents, or siblings. Experiences related to the QoL of families of addicts were extracted and classified into seven main themes (Table 1).

The results revealed that the QoL for the addicts' families was significantly affected in terms of various physical, mental, social, and financial aspects. Designing a specific instrument to measure addicted individuals' family QoL based on the dimensions addressed in this study will be of great help to further studies in this area.

Table 1. Dimensions of the effects of addiction on quality of life (QoL) among family members

Dimensions	Key concepts
Financial	Inability to accumulate savings, the need to borrow money, and failure to provide the necessities of life
Marital	Impotence, lack of sex drive, and a sense of disgust by the wife
Physical health	Stress-related bodily pain and other symptoms
Emotional	Continuous changes in the addicted individuals' temperament, disputes, physical conflicts and aggression between substance abuser and their family members, poor emotional relationships between family members and addicts
Social	Limited family connections, lack of interaction with relatives, having no friends, absence in society, abandonment by society
Mental health	Depression, a sense of loneliness in children, family members' sense of embarrassment, mental damage to wives due to the preference of drugs to them
Performance-related	Lowered working hours, working to make addiction ends meet

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