Chapter 12

Substance Abuse

Addiction—Overwhelming Compulsion

- Repetitive drug-taking behavior
- Serious health and social consequences

Addiction Depends upon Interacting Variables

- Agent or drug factors
- User factors
- Environmental factors

Therapeutic Use of Scheduled Drugs Rarely Causes Addiction

- Prescribed at lowest effective dose
- Prescribed for shortest time necessary

Substance Dependence

- Overwhelming desire to take a drug
- Cannot stop taking drug
- Two categories
  - Physical dependence
  - Psychological dependence

Physical Dependence

- Nervous system adapts to repeated substance use
- Uncomfortable withdrawal symptoms
Physical Dependence (continued)

- Examples of substances
  - Opioids
  - Alcohol
  - Sedatives
  - Some stimulants
  - Nicotine

Psychological Dependence

- No obvious physical discomfort when substance discontinued
- Overwhelming desire to continue substance use
- Associated with home environment or social contacts
- Craving continues for months or years
- Craving responsible for relapse

Psychological Dependence (continued)

- Examples of substances
  - Marijuana
  - Anti-anxiety drugs

Opioid Withdrawal Symptoms

- Excessive sweating, restlessness, and dilated pupils
- Agitation, goose bumps, tremor, and violent yawning
- Increased heart rate and blood pressure
- Nausea/vomiting and abdominal cramps and pain
- Muscle spasms and weight loss

Barbiturates and Similar Sedative-Hypnotics Withdrawal Symptoms

- Insomnia, anxiety, weakness, and abdominal cramps
- Tremor, anorexia, and seizures
- Skin-hypersensitivity reactions
- Hallucinations and delirium

Benzodiazepine Withdrawal Symptoms

- Insomnia, restlessness, abdominal pain, and nausea
- Sensitivity to light and sound
- Headache, fatigue, and muscle twitches
Alcohol Withdrawal Symptoms

- Tremors, fatigue, and anxiety
- Abdominal cramping and hallucinations
- Confusion, seizures, and delirium

Cocaine and Amphetamine Withdrawal Symptoms

- Mental depression and anxiety
- Extreme fatigue and hunger

Nicotine Withdrawal Symptoms

- Irritability, anxiety, and restlessness
- Headache, increased appetite, and insomnia
- Inability to concentrate
- Decrease in heart rate and blood pressure

Marijuana Withdrawal Symptoms

- Irritability and restlessness
- Insomnia and tremors
- Chills and weight loss

Hallucinogen Withdrawal Symptoms Rarely Observed

- Dependent upon specific drug

Tolerance Is Biological Condition

- Body adapts to repeated administration of a drug
  - Requires higher doses of drug to produce initial effect
- Common in substances that affect nervous system
- Does not indicate addiction or substance abuse
Tolerances Do Not Develop at Same Rate

- Tolerance to some drugs develops quickly
- Tolerance to some drugs develops slowly
- Tolerance to some drugs never occurs

Cross-Tolerance May Develop in Closely Related Drugs

- Requires dosage adjustment to obtain therapeutic benefit

Immunity and Resistance Should Not Be Interchanged With Tolerance

- Immunity and resistance apply to immune system or infection

Alcohol Is CNS Depressant

- Effects are directly proportional to amount consumed
- Psychological and physical dependence can occur
- Withdrawal syndrome can be severe to life-threatening

Nicotine Is Highly Carcinogenic

- Affects nervous, cardiovascular, and endocrine systems
- Psychological and physical dependence occurs quickly

Marijuana—Most Commonly Used Illicit Drug

- Slows motor activity and decreases coordination
- Causes disconnected thoughts, paranoia, euphoria
- Causes thirst and craving for chocolate or other candy
- Causes red or bloodshot eyes
- Produces little physical dependence or tolerance
Hallucinogens Are Schedule I Drugs

- Effects highly variable
- Flashbacks and tolerance may occur
- Moderate-to-high psychological dependence
- Little or no physical dependence

CNS Stimulants Increase Central Nervous System Activity

- Sense of exhilaration and reduced appetite
- Improved mental and physical performance
- Wakefulness and sense of “getting high”
- High psychological dependence
- Less-severe physical signs

Sedatives Prescribed for Sleep Disorders

- Physical dependence, psychological dependence, and tolerance to high doses over extended period of time
- Often combined with other drugs of abuse
- Moderate-to-high psychological dependence
- Moderate-to-extreme physical signs of withdrawal

Opioids Prescribed for Severe Pain

- Range of CNS effects
- Addiction occurs rapidly
- Intense withdrawal symptoms
- High psychological dependence

Nurse Serves Key Role in Substance Abuse

- Prevention
- Diagnosis
- Treatment

With IV-Drug Users Nurse Must Consider

- HIV infection
- Hepatitis
- Tuberculosis