

Addiction

Effects of Heroin Addiction on Serum Cholesterol, Triglyceride and Protein Levels and a Study on Aids Susceptibility among the Addicts.

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Twenty seven heroin addicts and non addicts from Jaffna Municipality and suburbs were chosen randomly. They were all males in the age group of 20 - 30 yrs. The heroin addicts and non-addicts had a mean age of 26.8 yrs (\pm 5.5) and 25.8 yrs (\pm 8.6) respectively. Of this 27 addicts 57 % of the addicts take heroin intravenously and 44 % have reported that they learnt to take drugs when they were abroad. The price per 100 mg was S.S.R. 35/- and it is a blackish brown powder indicating that these samples are not pure heroin. The mean serum cholesterol level of heroin addicts and that of the normal were 520 mg dl⁻¹ (\pm 125.3) and 265 mg dl⁻¹ (\pm 40) respectively. The statistical analysis shows that elevation in serum cholesterol level in heroin addicts was highly significant ($P << 0.001$). When the mean serum triglyceride levels of heroin addicts and of normals were determined, they were 396.9 mg dl⁻¹ (\pm 244.7) and 156.6 mg dl⁻¹ (\pm 62.9) respectively. This increase in triglyceride levels of the heroin addicts was found statistically significant ($P << 0.001$). To interpret the significant elevation in serum cholesterol and triglyceride levels of the heroine addicts the serum protein levels were estimated. The serum protein levels of heroin addicts and normals were 8.8 dl⁻¹ (\pm 3.9) and 9.6 g dl⁻¹ (\pm 3.2) respectively. The difference was statistically not significant ($P > 0.5$). The average body weights of the heroin addicts and of normals were found to be 57 Kg (\pm 9.8) and 59 Kg (\pm 8.9) respectively. The difference in body weight was also statistically not significant ($P > 0.5$). These results indicate that these addicts are not malnourished. The elevation in serum triglyceride level and cholesterol level is only due to the heroin addiction and not due to the poor dietary habits. The mean blood pressure of heroin addicts and that of normals were 122 (\pm 10.2) / 79 (\pm 9.8) and 120/80 respectively. The results from HIV test showed that none of the heroin addicts have acquired AIDS.

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(details re; above paper)

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