

# PERSONALITY PROFILE OF PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCE USE PRESENTING TO A TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The present study aimed at finding out the personality factors that are associated with drug addiction.

**Methodology:** It was a quantitative research design, descriptive study and was carried out at department of Psychiatry Military Hospital Lahore from June 2013 to March 2014. Sixty patients admitted in Psychiatry Department Lahore with diagnosis of mental and behavioural disorder due to psychoactive substance abuse were selected by purposive sampling technique. Patient's diagnosis was made on ICD-10 criteria. Assessment of personality factors were done by using The 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire. Data was analysed by using SPSS version 18 and descriptive statistics were used.

**Results:** Results revealed that some sample scored high on two personality factors that were vigilance (61.66%) and apprehension (65%). This sample scored low on reasoning (68.33 %) and emotional stability (71.66 %) as well.

**Conclusion:** Low emotional stability, low reasoning, over vigilance and apprehension are significantly associated with psychoactive substance use. The findings have preventive and therapeutic implications.

**Key Words:** Personality factors, Drug addiction

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## INTRODUCTION

In an effort to stimulate designing of effective prevention and care services an inspiring collaborative research effort between the Ministry of Narcotic Control, Pakistan bureau of Statistics and UNODC<sup>1</sup> was carried out in 2013 that revealed 6.2 million drug users in Pakistan, 4 million (3.6 %) of adult population being affected and highest users being in provinces bordering principal poppy cultivating areas of Afghanistan. The bulk comprises cannabis, opiates (Opium and Heroin) and emergence of methamphetamine use in certain areas. In addition an alarming rise has been observed in non-medical misuse of opioid-based painkillers, tranquilizers and sedatives often available over-the-counter. The current study has focussed on personality factors of psychoactive substance users.

Personality originated from word "persona" (Latin) means mask<sup>2</sup>. Personality is defined as a dynamic set of traits acquired by a person that influence his or her perceptions, motivations and behaviours in various occasions. Besides the pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetic characteristics of individual drugs, the personality traits seem to be another important variable contributing to predisposition for psychoactive drug abuse. Various psychometric instruments are used to assess

personality traits. The 16 Personality Factors listed by Cattell<sup>3</sup> (in the questionnaire 16 PF) are warmth, reasoning, emotional stability, dominance, liveliness, conscientiousness, social boldness, sensitivity, vigilance, abstractedness, privateness, apprehension, openness to change, self-reliance, perfectionism and tension. From "warmth" one can deduce an individual who is warm, outgoing and easy going with people. A person low at this factor will be aloof, cold in relations, impersonal and detach in his interaction with others. "Reasoning" factor of an individual states that an individual is having good abstract thinking, intelligence and a fast learner who can reason out situations more quickly and act accordingly in an appropriate manner and whereas low score on reasoning indicates dull and low intelligence capacity. Chander<sup>4</sup> and Chaturvide defined "emotional stability" as multifaceted emotional system that can automatically keep its equilibrium competently. The emotional stability points out the individuals who are having high ego strength, face reality calmly, adaptive and mature in his thinking patterns, the person scoring low would be emotionally unstable with negative effect regulation. "Dominance" involves the tendency to behave in assertive, forceful, and self-assured way. The opposite to this factor would be a person with submissive attitude and comply to others will or orders. "Liveliness" is a factor defined as an individual being enthusiastic, talkative,

expressive and impulsive. The opposite of this would be a person with glum, silent features and mostly restrained in situations. "Conscientious" is another factor in 16 PF that highlights the individuals with high super ego strength. "Social boldness" has been highlighted by 16 PF in a manner that it affects the individual way of dealing with his social contacts. "Sensitivity" is how much an individual is sentimental, tender minded and intuitive. Warm and Matthews<sup>5</sup> defined vigilance, as the ability to uphold attention and watchfulness over a long period of time. "Vigilance" factor of an individual shows that person is sceptic about other people. The opposite of this would be a person trusting others easily, unconditional and easy to move around with<sup>6</sup>. "Abstractedness" another factor highlighted in 16 PF is considering individual abstracting abilities in a situation or content. The person with high score on this attribute tends to cater abilities such as imaginative, absent minded, unpractical and constantly day dreaming. A person scoring low on this factor is practical, solution orientated, steady and conventional. "Privateness" is a feature defined in 16 PF in a way that a person scoring high on this factor is discreet, shrewd, diplomatic, and worldly in his relations basically place high value on privacy whereas, one who is scoring low on this factor has abilities such as farsightedness, open, naïve, involved and guileless in their daily life interactions. "Apprehension" is defined as a fear or forbidding of future. The person who scores high on the apprehension factor provide traits such as self-doubting, self-blaming, insecure, guilt prone and worried in his life dealings whereas the person with low score tends to be untroubled about situation he is facing and sure of himself. The individual is self-content, confident and free of guilt. They find it easy to deal with different situations without fretting much on it. "Openness to change" is another personality factor included in 16 PF. A person getting high score on this factor tend to be flexible, liberal, experimental and willing to change where as individual scoring low on this factor is conservative in his thinking and not willing to change or accept the change easily in the environment. "Self-reliance" can be defined as a person who relying on own abilities and judgment. A person scoring high on this factor will be self-sufficient, resourceful, individualistic and solitary, whereas individual scoring low on this factor in 16 PF will be a follower, who would prefer to join a group. "Perfectionism" is the restless strive for attaining very high standards, or judging own self-worth in attaining those high standards<sup>7</sup>. "Tension" is an emotion of psychological and physical pull along with discomfort and pain. A person scoring high on this factor is very energetic, impatient, frustrated and over wrought, whereas person scoring low on this factor is placid, calm and relaxed.

Pakistan being a developing country with large young population needs every individual to be phys-

ically and psychologically healthy. This study proposes to investigate the personality factors that are more prone towards addiction so that preventive measures and therapeutic options can be developed in this regard.

## METHODOLOGY

Participants were briefed about the aim, purpose and nature of the study. Sample consisted of 60 in-patients with diagnosis of mental and behavioural disorder due to psychoactive substance use. Purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study. Descriptive technique was employed to find out the results.

16 Personality Factor questionnaires were administered to assess the personality factors along with a demographic form. Statistical package of social sciences version 18 was used for analysis of sample.

## RESULTS

Sample was consisted of only male in-patients (N=60), their age ranged from 18-45 (M=25.43, SD=6.02). Results indicated that the sample scored average on 12 personality factors (Table1) Warmth (46.66%), Dominance (40%), Liveliness (48.33%), Conscientious (51.66%), Social Boldness (55%), Sensitivity (43.33%), Abstractedness (48.33%), Privateness (51.66%), Openness to Change (56.66%), Self-Reliance (53.33%), Perfectionism (43.33%) and Tension (55%). Sample scored high on two personality factors that are vigilance (61.66%) and apprehension (65%) (Table2). Furthermore, sample scored low on reasoning (68.33 %) and emotional stability (71.66 %) (Table3).

## DISCUSSION

Psychoactive substance abuse is common public health problem primarily affecting the youth. Present study revealed that the affected individuals scored low on reasoning

Indicating their dull, low general mental capacity, concrete thinking and poor problem solving skills. The majority of the sample in this study was dependent on drugs for more than three years. IQ is one of the important factors of human personality and plays a vital role not only in occupational but also in social competence. Findings of our study is consistent with findings of Meier et al<sup>8</sup> who evaluated the effects of persistence use of Cannabis on IQ. The study revealed that individuals using drugs regularly showed decline in intelligence by 5 points vis-à-vis the ones who used it occasionally showed 3 points decline in their IQ. Cannabis and other drugs not only cause decline in one's memory whether it is long term or short term. It causes impairment in encoding storage and retrieval of memory process but also other neurodevelopment along with IQ<sup>9</sup>. Our

**Table 1: Percentages, frequencies of personality factors on which the sample scored average (n=60)**

S.No	Factors	Dimension	Frequency	%	Score
1	Warmt	Aloof, Cold	28	46.66	Average
		Warm, Social			
2	Dominance	Submissive, Mild	24	40	Average
		Dominant, Aggressive			
3	Liveliness	Glum, Silent	29	48.33	Average
		Enthusiastic, Talkative			
4	Rule conscious	Casual, Undependable	31	51.66	Average
		Conscientious, Persistent			
5	Social boldness	Timid, Shy	33	55	Average
		Adventurous, Thick			
6	Sensitivity	Tough, Realistic	26	43.33	Average
		Sensitive, Effeminate			
7	Abstractedness	Conventional, Practical	29	48.33	Average
		Bohemian, Unconcerned			
8	Privateness	Simple, Awkward	31	51.66	Average
		Sophisticated, Polished			
9	Openness to change	Conservative, Accepting	34	56.66	Average
		Experimenting, Critical			
10	Self-reliance	Dependent, Imitative	32	53.33	Average
		Self-sufficient, Resourceful			
11	Perfectionism	Lax, Unsure	26	43.33	Average
		Controlled, Exact			
12	Tension	Phlegmatic	33	55	Average
		Composed			

**Table 2: Percentages, frequencies of personality factors on which the sample scored low (n=60)**

S.No	Factors	Dimension	Frequency	%	Score
1	Reasoning	Dull, Low capacity	41	68.33	Low
		Bright, Intelligent	4	6.66	
2	Emotion Stability	Emotional, Unstable	43	71.66	Low
		Mature, Calm	3	5	

**Table 3: Percentages, frequencies of personality factors on which the sample scored high (n=60)**

S.No	Factors	Dimension	Frequency	%	Score
1	Vigilance	Trustful, Adaptable	7	11.66	High
		Suspecting, Jealous	37	61.66	
2	Apprehension	Confident, Unshakable	10	16.66	High
		Insecure, Anxious	39	65	

sample showed low scores on emotional stability; the results replicate the findings of a study conducted by Korner and Nordvik<sup>10</sup> evaluated 5 factor model of personality in opioids dependence, it revealed that neuroticism (emotion instability) found high in opioid dependent sample. Emotions play an important role in adjusting to different environments as well as individual relationships. Work places are mostly a mixture of different cultures and perceptions. In order to settle in a work place easily one needs to handle his emotions in reaction to different situation and opinions. Expressing one's own emotions and understanding others contributes to growth of relationships and make it easy for the individual to blend in.

Our findings are similar to those of Terraccino et al<sup>11</sup> who found that users of cocaine, cigarette smokers, heroin and marijuana addicts showed a high correlation with emotional instability.

Our sample scored high on another personality factor that is vigilance which specifies a suspecting and jealous attitude in daily matters of life. Bojed and Nikmanesh<sup>12</sup> evaluated their relationship of negative schemas with drug uses; they showed high association of over-vigilance with substance abuse; Parker and Damos<sup>13</sup> also studied the effect of recreational drug use. The results revealed that those using drugs scored high responses on false alarms on vigilant test as compared to non-addicts. When adaptability and trust is lacking in life then inner relaxation is absent from one's life. Being vigilant is good but being extra skeptic and distrustful towards others, make it difficult for the co-workers to work with the person. The environment becomes very stressful thus affecting the productivity level of that individual and also of the people around him. Our sample also scored high on apprehension which is consistent with finding of Vollrath and Torgersen<sup>14</sup> who reported that heavy smokers score high on insecure and impulsive personality trait. Davidson and Ireland<sup>15</sup> who studied relationships between attachment styles, personality traits and coping in drug and non-drug users demonstrated that drug users are insecure in their relationship and daily dealings; individuals will be reluctant to make and to maintain relationships due to having irrational anxieties and insecurities in connection with people around them.

## CONCLUSION

Individuals affected by psychoactive substance have low reasoning and emotional stability along with high apprehension and vigilance level that are likely to make them vulnerable.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Pharmacotherapy along with psychotherapeutic interventions such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT),

group therapy and rational emotive behavioural therapy (REBT) focused on the personality factors highlighted by our study seems a worthwhile evidence based and logical approach. The findings have preventive and therapeutic implications.

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### CONTRIBUTORS

FSS conceived the idea, planned the study, and drafted the manuscript. MS helped acquisition of data and did statistical analysis. SG drafted and critically revised the manuscript. All authors contributed significantly to the submitted manuscript.