Working with the Parents of Drug-Affected Infants Experiencing Withdrawal

by
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Objectives

- Describe the characteristics of women who abuse drugs during pregnancy.
- Describe the attitudes of health care providers toward pregnant women who use addictive substances during pregnancy.

Objectives

- Identify factors that contribute to health professionals attitudes towards women who abuse drugs during pregnancy.
- Identify strategies that will improve communication between health care professionals and women who abuse drugs during pregnancy.

Personality Risk Factors

- Anxiety
  - Cognitive or personality style
  - Fear that anxiety will cause
    - Physical illness
    - Social embarrassment
    - Loss of mental control
    - Some combination of these
  - Use of Alcohol and Benzo’s

Stewart, 1996

Depression

- Risk factor for alcoholism and narcotic use
- Introverted personality
- Punishment sensitivity – abuse
- Turn to drugs and/or alcohol for analgesic properties

Conod, et al, 2000

Sexual Abuse

- 1 in 4 girls is sexually abused before the age of 18
- 30-40% of victims are abused by a family member
- Estimated 30 million survivors of childhood sexual abuse in US today

CDC Adverse Childhood Experiences Study, 2008; Kirpatrick et al, 2003
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Abuse</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young girls who were sexually abused are 3 times more likely to develop psychiatric disorders or alcohol and drug abuse in adulthood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-80% of sexual abuse survivors report excessive alcohol and drug use.</td>
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Day et al, 2003; Voeltanz et al, 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extraversion/Novelty Sensation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use alcohol and drugs for the euphoric and intoxicating effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensation seeking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No other signs of psychopathology</td>
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Conrod, et al, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depression, Anxiety &amp; Self-Esteem</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female substance users:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- have lower self-esteem than males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- have more depression and anxiety symptoms than males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Study: 50 male and 50 female drug abusers</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Findings: females more anxiety disorders</td>
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Brady et al, 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family and friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genes in conjunction with environment</td>
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NIDA InfoFacts, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depression</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In US population in general depression is more common among women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range is 2:1 to 4:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May not be linked to drug abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could be a risk factor for drug abuse</td>
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Weissman & Klerman, 1977; Psychology Information Online, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impulsive/Disinhibited</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased risk for early-onset alcohol and drug problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-regulation deficit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of inhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of fear of negative consequences</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Conrod, et al, 2000
Attitudes of Health Professionals

- Clients are stigmatized
- Tainted
- Weak personality
- Failing character

Moodley-Kunnie, 1998; Cannon & Brown, 1988; Sheehan, 1992; Greenwood, 1992

Where do these attitudes and perceptions come from?

- Our experiences
  - Negative
  - Lie
  - Manipulate
  - Unrewarding
  - Unpleasant

Attitudes & Perceptions

- Negative perception not directed at the illness but strikes at the essence of the drug users personality
- Viewed as corrupt and flawed
- Unwilling to change
- Unable to deal with their problems

Greenwood, 1992; Forrester & Murphy, 1992

Effects of Our Negative Attitudes

- Our attitudes block client’s ability to change
  - Inappropriate care
  - Expect them to conform to our negative stereotype
  - Our attitudes further marginalize them

Scrambler, 1991; Miller, 1983; McLaughlin & Long, 1996

Where do these attitudes and perceptions come from?

- Society
  - Crime
  - War against drugs
  - Economic cost - $180.9 billion in 2002
- Clinical literature
  - Describes client as immature, psychopathic, inadequate

National Drug Intelligence Center, 2006; Romney & Byner, 1972

Understanding Drug Abuse

- Viewed as a social problem
- Drug abusers should be able to just stop taking drugs if they are willing to change
- Drug abuse is a complex issue
  - Disease that impacts the brain
  - Stopping is not just a matter of willpower

NIDA InfoFacts, 2009
Drug Addiction
- Chronic relapsing brain disease
- Causes compulsive drug seeking
- Abuse of drugs leads to changes in structure and function of the brain
- Initial decision is voluntary

NIDA InfoFacts, 2009

Perinatal Substance Abuse
- Sample
  - 392 nurses
  - 50% Associate Degree
  - 26% BSN
  - 21% Diploma
  - 3% MSN

Selleck & Redding, 1998

Drug Addiction
- Over time causes changes in brain that affect self-control and ability to make sound decisions
- Intense impulses to take drugs
- Difficult to change due to brain changes

NIDA InfoFacts, 2009

Questionnaire
- Attitudes About Drug Abuse in Pregnancy (Coles et al, 1992)
  - 20 items related to knowledge
  - 14 items related to attitude

Selleck & Redding, 1998

Results
- Knowledge
  - Range of scores 6-20
  - Higher the score the greater the knowledge
  - Average score 12% (range 6-18)
  - 60% of sample had little knowledge of perinatal substance abuse

Selleck & Redding, 1998

Naomi was 20 when she took her first hit of heroin. She readily admits she spared no thought for her 2 year old daughter or her 1 year old son.

“I didn’t think of the consequences at all; I didn’t think there was any reason too. I had no idea heroin was addictive.”
Results

- Attitudes
  - Range 14-70
  - Lower the score the more punitive, negative attitude
  - Mean 36 (range 16-56)
  - 51% of sample had negative or punitive attitudes toward women

Selleck & Redding, 1998

Strategies

- Give positive reinforcement for women who are in treatment
- Provide referral information for those who are not
- Be honest
- Let mom participate in care

Effects of Education on Results

- As nursing educational level ↑ their knowledge ↑
- Knowledge and attitude scores were ↑
  - Substance abuse knowledge was given in school
  - Abuse was part of their personal or family history

Selleck & Redding, 1998

Strategies

- Understand
  - Being a drug user is humiliating and discrediting for the client
  - Drug addiction is a disease – can’t just stop

Gorman & Morris, 1991

Strategies

- Increase education in curriculum
- Increase number of CE programs
- Provide support for staff to attend
- Welcome mom’s when they come to the unit
- Give positive feedback
- Ask about their treatment program

Essential When Providing Care

- Non-judgmental
- Non-confrontational
- Non-punitive
- Care based on cooperation and acceptance
- Provide a framework for change and recovery

Miller, 1983; Nitschke, 1990
Remember

- Professionals negative views blocks the client's ability to change
- We lock client's into stereotypical attitudes by believing they can not or are unwilling to change

Lyttle, 1986; Miller, 1983

References

- Conrod
- Psychology Information Online: www.psychologyinfo.com/depression/women.htm
