

**Drug abuse among school students
An exploratory study from the view point of a sample of social
workers in Oman**

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1. Preface

Drug abuse and addiction is one of the most serious problems facing contemporary societies. It is critical due to many fundamental reasons, the most important of which are: the multiple destructive effects of drug abuse and addiction on human physical, psychological, and mental health. Moreover, the negative impact of drug abuse extends to human social relations and family stability. It also continues to negatively affect the economic aspects of the individual and the family through the depletion of the society's resources in the form of the large sums of money spent by drug addicts. This is in addition to the costs incurred by the states to establish additional medical, security, and justice institutions to combat their spread, as well as the costs of countering the spread of new types of crime resulting from drug abuse. Moreover, the spread of drug abuse in a society has its negative political effects, such as weakening the national identity and patriotism, the degradation of values, and so on.

The present research addresses one of the problems facing a large sector of Omani society: drug abuse among school students (grades 5-12) in public schools. Many studies indicate that these grades are the school stage where students are most likely to begin taking drugs. The number of students at this stage is 366771 students (Ministry of Education Statistics, 2016-2017). In this regard, the problem of drugs is studied from the point of view of the social workers who work at the schools of that stage.

2. Research problem

Substance misuse and addiction is one of the dangerous problems that face current societies. For social work, addiction is one of the most serious challenges issues that social workers face in the new century (Sapin, 2013: 17). Many social workers believe that social work has an important role in the field of drug prevention in the future. Social workers must work in coalitions with other professions and the public to secure preventive and curative services (Rehr; Rosenberg, 2006:162).

On the other hand, "Parrott" insured that substance misuse among young people is one area that required more focus and improvements such as developing social and psychological services, social policy, and social work education (Parrott, 2014: 117). Many social workers believe that social work must focus on preventive programs against addiction especially for youth and young people (Johnson; Yanka, 2007: 342).

Statistics of the new millennium reflect the growing problem of drug abuse and addiction globally. The number of drug abusers increased from 208 million abusers in 2006 to 226 million in 2010, an increase of 8.6% in four years. In 2014, a UN report indicated that the number of drug abusers rose to 247 million, an

increase of 15% in four years as well. The report revealed that 29 million drug abusers suffer from various diseases as a result of addiction, and pointed out that approximately 4.83 million are subject to addiction treatment programs (U. N. Office on Drug and Crime, 2016: 1-2).

While statistics indicate an increase in the number of drug abusers and addicts in various countries during the first and second decades of the third millennium, many researchers, as well drug abusers, point out that children and adolescents, especially school students, and young people represent the highest proportion of drug abusers in all societies (Pagliaro & Pagliaro, 2012: 117).

At the Arab level, all estimates point to the growing problem of drug abuse in Arab societies and the increase in the number of abusers in general (Al-Asfar, 2014: 106-109). The Secretary-General of the Arab Federation for the Prevention of Addiction in 2016 pointed out that the number of drug abusers in the Arab world amounted to about 10 million abusers, with a percentage of 3% of the total population of 344 million people. He showed that young people represent about 70% of Arab World abusers (Number of Drug Abusers in the Arab World, 2016). On the other hand, the Deputy Director General of Drug Control for Preventive Affairs and the UN expert stated that 70% of drug addicts are between the ages of 12-20 (Al-Iqtisadiya newspaper, January 26, 2017).

The results of one of the major field research conducted in the six GCC countries: Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates acknowledged the existence of drug abuse problem among school students in the Sultanate of Oman. The research adopted the social survey methodology, and quantitative data collection tools were used mainly for questionnaires. The number of Omani students was 7400 students, representing 10.7% of the total sample of students in the six Gulf countries. The most important findings of the research about the school students in the Sultanate of Oman were as follows (Al-Hamd, 2008):

- 1- The number of students who use drugs and are thought to be addicts or at least those who use drugs on a regular basis reaches 94 out of 7394 Omani students, up to 1.3% of the sample size.
- 2- The percentage of severely drug users among Omani students was 2.1% of the total sample. The percentage represents students who took these drugs even once in the last year. The number of people who took drugs more than forty times a year reached 34 students, up to 0.6% (6 per thousand).
- 3- The proportion of cannabis or marijuana abusers from Omani students was 1.3% of the total sample. This percentage represents those who took cannabis and marijuana only once in the last year. For those who used this

type of drug more than forty times a year, they numbered 17 students, up to 0.2% (two per thousand).

- 4- The proportion of alcohol abusers among Omani students was 3.3% of the total sample. This percentage represents students who used alcohol only once in the last year preceding the research.

Since the publication of the results of Hamad's research on school and university students in Oman and the GCC countries in 2008, no other study has been conducted on the same level to identify the prevalence of drug abuse among school students in Omani society. Thus, the present study aims to investigate drug abuse among school students in Omani society from the point of view of the social workers who work in school grades (5-12). It also tries to understand how students come across with drugs and then start taking them, and to measure the prevalence of some behaviors such as smoking, chewing tobacco, and drinking alcohol. Similarly, it attempts to know the reasons for students' drug abuse, the opinion of social workers on prevention programs and their adequacy, and their suggestions for social patterns essential to the prevention.

3. The significance of the research

- a) Scientific significance: This study has added a modest contribution to the problem of drug abuse among school students in Omani society, and the reasons and factors that drive students to take drugs from the point of view of social workers who work at schools.
- b) Practical significance: This research provided some empirical data on the drug abuse of students from the point of view of social workers, and the research has some practical mechanisms that can be applicable to address the spread of drug abuse among school students in Omani society.

4. Research concepts

- a) Drugs: Drugs are defined as a group of substances that cause addiction. It poisons the nervous system, it is forbidden to trade, plant or manufacture it except for purposes defined by law. It is only used by those authorized to do so (Al-Ghareeb, 2006: 33). The Law on Narcotic and Drugs in the Sultanate of Oman defines narcotics as "every natural or synthetic substance listed in tables 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the first set of this law", and psychotropic substances as "any natural or synthetic substance (Article 1, p. 3). Theoretically, drugs can be defined in the context of this research as "any raw or prepared substance containing immobilizing or embalming substances not used for medical or industrial purposes that lead the abuser to be dependent, and harm him/her physically, psychologically, socially, and mentally. These drugs include:
 - a. Qat.

- b. Opium and its derivatives.
 - c. Cannabis.
 - d. Cocaine.
 - e. Crack.
 - f. Heroin.
 - g. Morphine.
 - h. Marijuana,
 - i. Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD),
 - j. Medicines medically prescribed,
 - k. Paired drugs,
 - l. Inhalants such as gasoline and ether.
- b) Addiction can be defined as physical and/or psychological dependence on mood-altering substances or experiences including, but not limited to, alcohol, drugs, pills, food, sex, pornography, gambling, shopping/spending, or exercise. This conceptualization supports interceptive focus on eliminating addictive behaviors in all areas of a person's life, including food, work, relationships, as well as drugs (Ambrosino; Ambrosino; Heffernan; Shuttlesworth; 2008: 224).
- Drugs addiction is defined as the "physiological dependence on a chemical substance that has an impact on the abuser's stamina and causes refractive symptoms when it is not available. Addiction substances are alcohol, smoke, narcotics (such as opium and others), and many sedatives. Most professionals in this field apply the term "substance dependence" to describe the addiction caused by physiological dependence on chemicals (Al-Sokary, 2000: 18-19). The "Social Work Dictionary" defines addiction as "physiological and psychological dependence on a certain behavior or drug. Behavioral addiction involves addiction to "sex, gambling, spending, and excessive use of the Internet". Substance abuse includes the abuse of "alcohol, drugs, and food". These types of drugs have similar causes, expectations, methods and treatment procedures. Most professionals now use the term "addiction dependence" (Barker, 2003: 7). Also, drugs addiction can be defined as "the use of a chemical compound that leads to physiological dependence on it, where the cells of the body require this compound or substance to function comfortably, while if it is not available, the abuser is exposed to the symptoms of deprivation" (Al-Sokkary, 2000: 163)
- c) Addict: The term "Addict" refers to the abuse of narcotics and drugs for the purpose of experimentation and exploration. However, abuse may be temporary at specific or intermittent times, such as social events, or in an irregular manner that does not lead to addiction (Al-Britthen, 2002: 67).

Wood defines drug abuse as a disease involving an individual's misuse of drugs for certain reasons that may be related to occupational, legal, health, or family difficulties that he/she faces (Wood, 2017, Drug abuse and addiction).

On the other hand, there is a very close term which is “substance misuse” which includes the misuse of all substances including drugs, alcohol, and prescribed medication. In most western societies individuals use substance for comfort, pleasure, to treat medical conditions, or to relax or energize themselves in the face of their daily routine. Traditionally, three types of substance use have been established; experimental use, social use, dependent use (Murphy, 2013: 260-261).

Within the framework of this research, drug abusers are defined as persons who use any type of drug previously defined in this research irregularly or systematically leading to addiction. Procedurally, a drug abuser is relevant to the research in cases:

- * Omani school students in grades 5-12.
- * The treatment of one of the species mentioned in the procedural definition of drugs.
- * Drug abuse involves intermittent or regular abuse that may lead to addiction.

5- Research objectives

- a) To measure the prevalence of behavioral abnormalities that facilitate drug abuse such as smoking, chewing tobacco, and drinking alcohol among students in grades 5-12 in general education schools from the point of view of social workers.
- b) To assess the prevalence of drug abuse among children in grades 5-12 from the point of view of social workers.
- c) To identify the types of drugs that social workers believe students are using.
- d) To detect the reasons that social workers believe to encourage students to take drugs.
- e) To measure the adequacy of drug abuse awareness programs.

6. Research questions

- a. How widespread are the behavioral abnormalities that facilitate drug abuse such as smoking, chewing tobacco, and drinking alcohol among students in grades 5-12 in general education schools from the social workers' point of view?
- b. How widespread is drug abuse among students in Grades 5-12 in general education schools from the point of view of social workers?
- c. What kinds of drugs do social workers think students are using?

- d. What are the causes that social workers believe they are pushing students to use drugs?
- e. To what extent are drug abuse awareness programs adequate?

7. Methodology

This research belongs to the exploratory research, which is based on the social survey method, in order to collect the quantitative data needed. The sample of the study consists of social workers in schools that include students in grades 5-12. The research population consists of 907 social workers working in 757 schools in 61 Welaia (District) belonging to 11 governorates. A multi-stage stratified probability sample of social workers in the governorates and states of the Sultanate of Oman has been withdrawn with a total of 145 social worker up to 16% of the total research population. It should be noted that the governorate of Al-Wusta, whose schools represent only about 3% of all schools, has not delivered any valid questionnaires. The research was conducted in forty Welaia selected through a multi-stage probability method, representing urban, nomadic and coastal environments. Data collection took five months (October 2016 - Feb 2017).

- a) **Data collection tools:** The current research is based on a questionnaire for collecting data. The questionnaire consists of 28 questions divided into five sections: (a) the primary data; (b) information on student drug abuse; (c) information on the causes of drug abuse; (d) programs to combat the spread of drug abuse and its adequacy; and (e) the proposed mechanisms to counter the spread of drug abuse.
- b) **Validity and Reliability:** A prototype questionnaire of 34 questions was submitted to five arbitrators to ensure its validity and reliability. In the light of the arbitrators' observations, questions that did not secure approval rating of 80% were excluded. The research team adjusted other questions on the instructions of the arbitrators. To ensure the reliability of the tool, the research team applied "Cronbach's Alpha" consistency factor whose value was 0.87, which is an acceptable value for the reliability of the tool.
- c) **Research sample:** The sample of the research consisted of 145 social workers at schools (5 – 12). They belong to ten Governorates as follows:

Table (1)

Distribution of the sample of social workers at schools (5-12) according to Governorates (n = 145)

Governorate	Muscat	North Al Batinah	South Al Batinah	Dhofar	Al-Buraimi
S W sample	27	24	23	23	10
Governorate	North Ash-Sharqiyah	Musandam	South Ash-Sharqiyah	Ad-Dakhiliyah	Al-Dhahera
S W sample	10	9	8	8	3

Table (2)

Distribution of the sample of social workers at schools (5-12) according to gender (n = 145)

Gender	Number	%	Gender	Number	%	Total	%
Male	67	46.2	Female	78	53.8	145	100.0

Table (3)

Distribution of the sample of social workers at schools (5-12) according to experience years (n = 145)

Years of Experience	No.	%	Experience Years	No	%
Less than 2 years	3	2.1	6: less than 8 years	27	18.6
2:4 years	12	8.3	Less than 8 years: 10	27	18.6
4: less than 6 years	25	17.2	More than 10 years	51	35.2

8. Literature Review:

The literature of the drug abuse problem in Omani society are relatively few, it includes tens of studies. The research team defined five studies in the area of drug abuse and youth. However, there is an only study focused on school students; it was published in 2008. Al-Hamed, the principal investigator, has made an extensive research in the GCC countries: Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. It aimed at ten main objectives, the most important of which are (Al-Hamd, 2008):

- a) Determining the prevalence of drugs - especially among school and university students - in each of the Gulf States.
- b) Identifying the types of drugs used by addicts and which are the most used ones.
- c) Reviewing preventive programs issued in the six countries. The research was based on direct survey approach through holding interviews, questionnaires, file reviews and panel discussions with relevant government agencies. Data collection tools were interviewing schedules and questionnaires. The process of data collection took about 18 months according to the executive plan. The research has showed several significant results in the six GCC countries. The most important results related to the current research are the following:
- d) The percentage of alcohol users among Omani students was 3.3% of the total sample. This percentage represents students who used alcohol only once in the

last year (prior to the research). In the past year, the number of drug users has increased to 34.

- e) The proportion of cannabis or marijuana users of Omani students was 1.3% of the total sample. This percentage represents those who took cannabis and marijuana only once in the last year. The study counted 17 students, with the percentage of 0.2%, of those who took this drug more than forty times a year.
- f) The percentage of severely drug users among Omani students was 2.1% of the total sample. This percentage represents students who took these drugs even once in the last year. The number of students who used drugs for more than forty times a year was 34 with the percentage of 0.6%.
- g) The most common types of drugs in the sample of students in descending order were as follows: Opium and its derivatives (0.5%), amphetamines (0.4%), barbiturates (0.4%), sedatives (0.3%), hallucinogens (0.3%), cocaine and volatile substances (0.2%), and finally heroin and methacholine (0.1%). It should be noted that these substances are not necessarily the most used now as other recently introduced species may have been most commonly used at present.
- h) There are preventive efforts and programs carried out by some institutions such as audio-visual media, in addition to the implementation of some preventive activities such as lectures, seminars and competitions.
- a) The results showed that there is no coordination for the awareness programs between the implementing agents, and that each agent does not provide an integrated program.

Out of the results of the Sultanate of Oman, it is clear that the broad basis of school and university students do not use alcohol and drugs with a percentage of 93.3%, while the percentage of students who experienced abusing alcohol or drugs of all types does not exceed 6.7%; a percentage resulting from considering various types of abuse (alcohol and soft and hard drugs), without considering those who used drugs for once or those addicted, and without taking into account answering one respondent for more than one time on the use of these types of alcohol and drugs, on the one hand. For those who responded that they had been taking drugs or drinking alcohol more than 40 times during the past year and those who are thought to be addicts or at least those who use alcohol and drugs almost regularly, they were 94 out of 7394 Omani students with the percentage of 1.3%. That is a small percentage compared to the higher rates in western countries.

9. Research Results

The following are the main results of the research in terms of its questions and objectives:

The answer to the first question: How widespread are the behavioral abnormalities that facilitate drugs abuse such as smoking, chewing tobacco, and drinking alcohol among students in grades 5-12 in general education schools from the social workers' point of view?

The results showed that a group of social workers (45.5%) confirmed that some students practiced the behaviors of chewing tobacco and smoking at the schools at which they work. On the contrary, 54.5% of the sample stated that there is no such behavior in their schools. The researchers of the present study noted that smoking was ranked first as the most prevalent behavior among students. The percentage of social workers who indicated that some students smoked was 29.6% of the total sample size, while the behavior of chewing tobacco was ranked second with the percentage of 15.2%. Elsewhere, all the members of the sample asserted that they did not monitor the problem of drinking alcohol among the students.

On the other hand, the results confirmed that all the female social workers working at girls' schools did not record any of the behaviors of chewing tobacco, smoking or drinking alcohol among the students. The principal researcher can support this result through his work as a field training supervisor at all stages of schools in Oman for more than ten years. This can be attributed to the cultural factors that characterize the Arab societies in general and the Omani society in particular, which do not accept or encourage females in such behaviors.

The answer to the second question: How widespread is drug abuse among students in Grades 5-12 in general education schools from the social workers' point of view?

The results showed that 126 social workers, up to 86.8% of the total sample, indicated that they had not dealt with any cases of students taking drugs. Moreover, nineteen social workers, up to 13.2% of the sample of social workers, revealed that they had already dealt with cases of students taking drugs at the schools where they work. There are some observations associated with this finding as follows:

- a) The results showed that more than one-third of the social workers who dealt with drug users treated only one case with a percentage of 36.8%, while the percentage of those who treated with two to four cases was 31.6%, the percentage of those who dealt with more cases was 31.6%. By calculating the number of drug abuse cases treated by social workers at their schools according to these ratios, it is clear that the number of cases is between 49 and 61, by about 3 to 4 cases per specialist. It should be noted that these numbers are within the context of cases discovered or reached by social workers; definitely, drug abuse cases can be more than these.

- b) Since the sample of social workers represents only about 16% of the total social workers working in grades 5-12, the expected average number of students who can be classified as drug users in these schools is expected to be 382 in all schools in this stage. Thus, the estimated average number of students who are likely to take drugs at schools at this stage is about one in every 1,000. This estimate is far below the results of research and statistics published in some western, Arab and local communities. Statistics in Ontario (Canada), for example, indicate that 42% of high school students took drugs even once in 2010, as well as students who used drugs in previous stages (Canadian Drug Crisis, 2015). At the Arab level, one study estimated that the percentage of high school students in Arab societies who use drugs (especially cannabis), even once, ranges between 1 - 5% (El-Sayed, 1997: 294). For the Sultanate of Oman, the results of one study showed that the percentage of students who use cannabis is 1.3% and those who use hard drugs is 2%, of which 0.6% is taking this type of drugs more than 40 times a year (Al-Hamad, 2008: 351-352). Therefore, the results of social workers in the current research are less than the results of previous studies and statistics, which requires a more detailed study on students of the same stage.
- c) The results also show that 51% of the social workers do not know who make students know about drug abuse. This is due to the fact that a large percentage of social workers (86.8%) indicated that they did not deal with this problem at the schools at which they work. Yet, the results show that 41.3% of the research sample of social workers indicated that students know about drug abuse from a family member, relative, friend or schoolmate. Moreover, the means of indirect knowledge such as the media, or students' use of the Internet and others were mentioned only 7.6% of the sample. The process of direct contact is therefore important in combatting drug abuse.
- d) A significant percentage of social workers of the sample, about 46.2%, did not know how students get drugs, while 31% of social workers indicated that students get drugs from a friend or colleague at the school. About 13.1% believe that the students get drugs from colleagues recruited by traders or promoters.
- e) Regarding the classes in which students start to use drugs, 56.5% of the social workers in the research sample did not know when they start to use drugs, while 18.6% of the social workers indicated that students start taking drugs in grades 5-10, most of whom represent the age group of 11-16 years. Also, about 20.7% of the social workers view that the treatment begins in the last two grades of secondary school (grade 11, 12). Thus, 39.3% of social

workers believe that drug abuse begins during the age group of 12 to 18 years. The present results are consistent with some of the results of Al-Hamad's research as the results of the former asserted that 9.7% of Omani students taking drugs began drug use in the primary stage, 39.3% in the intermediate stage, and 50% in the secondary school. Moreover, the results showed that the sample of university students in the research began to take drugs in secondary and higher education (Al-Hamad, 2008: 355).

- f) Nearly 44% of the social workers indicated that the students get drugs from a friend or colleague at the school. A percentage of 13.1% believe that the students get drugs from colleagues recruited by traders or promoters. The percentage of those who believe that students get drugs directly from traders or promoters is very low, with the percentages of 2.1% and 4.1% respectively. The low percentage is expected because of the fear of many traders and promoters of dealing directly with the users to avoid drug enforcement agencies.
- g) The cases of students referred to by social workers as drug abuse cases were not ascertained that these students were subjected to the necessary tests or medical examinations to classify them as addicts. These cases can therefore be described as cases of students who are most likely to be drug addicts.

The answer to the third question: What kinds of drugs do social workers think students are using?

With regard to the types of drugs used by students, 60% of the social workers in the sample were unable to answer this question, which may indicate a lack of information on this aspect. Approximately 13.8% of the social workers in Dhofar governorate indicated that "qat" is the drug that is prevalent there, followed by "inhalants" substances such as volatile substances (7.6%), and cannabis (6.2%). Social workers have emphasized that students are taking other types of drugs, even in few amounts, such as medically prescribed drugs, marijuana and others. On the other hand, about 48% of the social workers in the sample indicated that they do not know how easy or difficult the student access to drugs; 22.1% of the social workers believe that the students get drugs with difficulty, while 27% of the social workers believe that they believe they get drugs easily.

The answer to the forth question: What are the reasons that social workers think they are pushing students to use drugs?

First: The personal reasons: The results of the research show that there are five main personal reasons have received up to 85.3% of the pushing reasons for drug abuse. They are as follows:

- 1- Students' search for happiness and ecstasy as they hear that drugs achieve with a percentage of 32.4%
2. Students' imitation of adult behavior c 22.1%
- 3 - The adolescence-related problems students face with a percentage of 17.2%,
4. Trying to escape from their various problems in the family, school, or friends with a percentage of 6.9%
- 5 - Finally, the lack of religious deterrent with a percentage of 6.9%. Furthermore, there are other secondary reasons when considered in the overall framework of the drug abuse problem.

These results differ from those of Al-Saadi (2010), as the latter showed that weak religious awareness and moral vacuity were the two most key factors that push for drug abuse, followed by social factors related to family disintegration and relevant problems, moral vacuity, and bad company.

Second: Family-based reasons:

The results indicate that there are three main reasons that accounted for up to 90.3% of all causes of drug abuse. The order of these reasons is as follows:

- 1- Frequent problems within the family, with a percentage of 53.8% of the total sample of social workers.
- 2- Poor follow-up of the family to the student with a percentage of 18.6%.
- 3- Poor guidance of the family to the student, with a percentage of 17.9% of the sample size, this may be due to a relative degree dysfunction in the family functions, especially the function of socialization, and lack of family's follow-up to the social performance of children at the family, school and social level.

Third: Community-based reasons:

The social workers pointed out that there are five main reasons that may lead to drug abuse. They are as follows:

- 1- Access to drugs with a percentage of 35.2%
- 2- Watching movies and TV series that encourage deviation and drug abuse with a percentage of 18.6%
- 3- Watching some media content that encourages them to use drugs using their smart phones with a percentage of 14.5%,
- 4- Lack of awareness of the dangers of drug abuse with a percentage of 10.3%
- 5- Being pushed by some close friends to use drugs with a percentage of 10.3%.

The Answer to the fifth question: To what extent are drug abuse awareness programs adequate?

Nearly 74% of the total sample of social workers pinpointed that there were programs to prevent the spread of drug abuse at the level of the schools at which they worked. Many of the social workers of the sample indicated that they organize

these programs and activities each year to educate students about the dangers of drug abuse in their work plan. These activities include: lectures and symposia, distribution of brochures, some educational outreach items on school radio, collective counseling workshops, etc. On the other hand, about 26% of the social workers indicated that there are no programs to deal with the problem of drug abuse in the schools at which they work (the principal researcher believes that this happens mostly in the schools for female students because they do not recognize the problem of drug abuse).

Approximately 13.8% of the social workers in Dhofar governorate indicated that "qat" is the drug that is prevalent there, followed by "inhalants" substances such as volatile substances (7.6%), and cannabis (6.2%). Social workers have emphasized that students are taking other types of drugs, even in few amounts, such as medically prescribed drugs, marijuana and others. On the other hand, about 48% of the social workers in the sample indicated that they do not know how easy or difficult the student access to drugs; 22.1% of the social workers believe that the students get drugs with difficulty, while 27% of the social workers believe that they believe they get drugs easily.

Nineteen social workers, up to 13.2% of the sample of social workers, revealed that they had already dealt with cases of students taking drugs at the schools where they work.

The results also show that 25.5% of social workers believe that programs to address the problem of drug abuse in schools are fairly adequate, while 6.2% believe that they are quite adequate. Around 49% of social workers believe that programs to combat the prevalence of drug abuse among students are inadequate, which indicates the importance of evaluating these programs and activities to ensure their effectiveness. These results are linked to some important results as follows:

- 1- Nearly 57% of social workers believe that drug abuse programs in schools are somewhat effective, 7.6% believe that drug abuse programs significantly effective, and 19.3% believe that drug abuse programs are ineffective.
- 2- On drug control efforts at the community level, 70.3% of social workers reported that these efforts succeeded to a certain extent in reducing the prevalence of drug abuse, while 2.1% indicated that these efforts had completely succeeded. On the contrary, 18.6% of social workers believe that these efforts did not succeed. These ratios may indicate the necessity for these programs and activities to be evaluated and to identify the mechanisms for improving and developing them on the one hand, as well as raising the awareness of the social workers on the efforts of many stakeholders in dealing with the problem of drugs such as the Ministry of Education, the

Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Social Development, and the National Committee for Narcotics & Psychotropic Substances (NCNPS).

- 3- The patterns that social workers view as more effective than others in protecting children and students from drug abuse are as follows: The family by far ranked first as it obtained a higher preference ratio than the school by about 160%, the media by about 230% of, the mosques by about 237%, the clubs by about 560% of clubs, and anti-drug police by about 725%.
- 4- Concerning the most effective methods of raising the awareness of students about the dangers of drug abuse from the social workers' point of view, the results significantly ascertained the importance of school methods as well as the new media as follows:
 - a. The social workers emphasized the great role that the school can play in raising awareness against the dangers of drug abuse. In the light of the responses of the sample members, the school has received five methods of raising awareness out of ten methods: peer education, interactive model programs, curricula, teachers as role models and mobile exhibition respectively. These methods obtained advanced ranking among other methods for three of which came in the top five.
 - b. As social workers pointed to its importance, it is necessary to rely on the media, especially the new media, in the awareness-raising processes, as well as the use of social networking sites. These two methods have received two advanced positions among the proposed means of awareness: second and sixth, respectively. In this regard, we can distinguish between two types of media: (1) traditional media viz. read, audio and visual, and (2) new media viz. smart phones, the Internet, social networking sites, and satellite channels. One study confirmed that classical (traditional) communication is less effective in communication processes, while new interactive communication models are characterized by the communicator's ability to receive, persuade, configure, publish, add, and expand contact with larger groups of new media. Therefore, the use of the media must have new rules that commensurate with the rapid developments taken place in the field of communications. Also, those concerned with raising awareness against the dangers of abuse should use these techniques through the modern methods used by children and young people now in the late second decade of the new millennium (Rawas, 2015).
 - c. The possibility of using interactive counseling programs at schools, which ranked third, as a part of awareness-raising campaigns against the dangers

- of drug abuse through using small groups as a means of carrying out the awareness- raising process through regulated activities prepared for this purpose.
- d. Developing the role of religious institutions in raising awareness against the dangers of drug abuse because of its acceptance, credibility and impact.
 - e. The use of curricula in drug abuse prevention programs was ranked fourth.
 - f. Raising awareness through teachers playing as role models ranked sixth; a method that is similar to the method of peer education if it was perfectly designed and applied.
 - g. Raising awareness through the General Directorate for the Control of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.
 - h. Utilization of sports club activities and mobile exhibitions against drug dangers

10. Conclusion:

The main conclusions of this research can be identified in the following points:

- 1- There are cases of drug abuse among students in grades 5-12, nearly up to 1/1000 students, and this rate is much lower than in Arab and foreign communities. The ratio of 1/1000 is also less than the last study conducted in Oman (Al-Hamad, 2008) that reported that the ratio is 6/1000 students in cases of regular use, and is 34/1000 students in cases of experimental or non-regular use.
- 2- The rates of drug abuse among students in this study are most likely the rates of chronic abuse or obvious addiction cases, a fact indicating that there are other cases in schools but not detected by social workers.
- 3- The necessity to conduct field research on large samples of students themselves to collect in-depth and accurate data.
- 4- The possibility of relying on social workers to study the problem of drug abuse in schools, especially in "drug demand reduction" field, and to participate in preventive plans and programs to combat this problem.
- 5- The necessity to conduct research to evaluate preventive methods used in grades (5-12) as well as research to develop these methods to reduce this growing problem among school students.

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