

Addiction and Women; Gender Differences Concerning Drug Abuse and its Treatment

By: Fatemeh Safari

Abstract:

This article focuses on the quantitative grounds for the emergence and spread of addiction among women, its medical, social and psychological problems, impediments for the treatment of addiction among women as well as gender differences concerning drug abuse and its treatment. This article is a translation of a statistical research on addiction among women and a number of other researches.

Based on conclusions drawn from the said researches, women become inclined to addiction mostly by their husbands due to their cordial relationships. Moreover, the negative attitudes of peer groups can overshadow girls and women more than boys and men. From the viewpoint of psychological disorders, the relationship between disorders resulting from psychological pressure after an incident and addiction is stronger among girls and women compared to boys and men. Addiction among women in addition to certain ailments such as malnutrition, hypertension and cancer, can expose them to dangerous diseases such as Hepatitis and AIDS. There is more possibility for addicted women to be infected with AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases compared to men and they are more exposed to female ailments compared to other women.

As far as treatment impediments are concerned, women face a greater social stigma due to their addiction compared to men. Social approach considering addicted women as an indecent person is a major impediment for their treatment. Taking care of the child is also another obstacle for their treatment. There is less possibility for women to receive support from their families for quitting their addiction compared to men. Treatment programs also unwantedly may create obstacles for the treatment of women such as financial constraints, administrative bureaucracy, concentration of treatment programs for men and lack of sensitivity towards women's addiction.

The psychological impediments to treatment include internalizing the notion that addiction is a moral collapse and this prevents women from following up treatment. Since living without drugs requires drastic changes in the living style and making such changes seem to be difficult therefore resistance in the face of these changes is considered as another impediment for treatment.

In all, successful treatment programs for women must respond to the special needs of girls and women.

Key Words: Women's Addiction, Gender Differences, Dangerous Factors and Treatment Impediments.