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## Drugs and Mental Health

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# Drugs and Mental Health

By Peyton McClellan



# Introduction

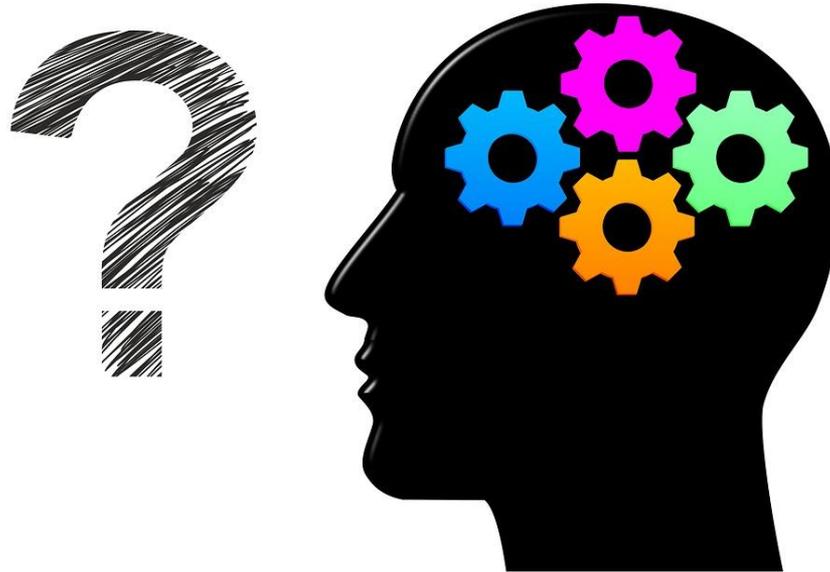
My presentation is about drug use as it relates to mental health. People are taking more prescription drugs now than they ever have, and more and more people are beginning to suffer from different mental health issues as well. People with problematic forms of drug use often suffer from both substance use and mental health disorder. In some cases, a mental health disorder can be considered a risk factor for drug use, just as drug use can trigger the development of a mental health disorder. I chose this topic because I am a chemistry major interested in pharmaceuticals and more specifically interested in furthering my education by going to pharmacy school and later becoming a clinical pharmacist. I love the psychology behind medicine and it interests me to find out information about ways drugs have an impact on one's mental health and also why people struggling with their mental health resort to drugs as a "cure".

# Prior Work

In the Healthcare for Communities survey, people who reported having a common mental health disorder, such as generalized anxiety disorder, dysthymia, panic disorder, and major depression in 1998 were more likely to report opioid use in 2001. Each individual disorder was significantly associated with opioid use. Common mental health disorders were correlated with initiation and continuation of prescribed opioids. Patients who were receiving opioids long term were 2-3 times more likely to think that they needed mental health treatment. In a different case study that involved high school students in two Sweden schools, students were interviewed on their mental health issues and drug use. The results showed that students who were suffering from different mental health issues tried to find their own solutions to the problems. The local police encountered adolescents who were self-medicating and even mixing drugs with anti-depressants, so that they could have the effects of both simultaneously.

# Method for My Study

My study is a meta-analysis study based on data from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, and the SAMHSA Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality.



# Results

People who are diagnosed with mental health disorders such as anxiety or mood disorders are twice as likely to suffer from a drug use problem. Data from a large nationally representative sample suggested that people with mental, personality, and substance use disorders were at increased risk for nonmedical use of prescription opioids. According to the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, around 8.4 million adults in America suffer from a drug abuse disorder and mental health disorder. This correlation is proven by a mental health disorder being a risk factor for drug use. People who suffer from mental health disorders or mental illness are 4.6 times more likely to use other drugs at least 10 times in their lives. Based on several different national population surveys,  $\frac{1}{2}$  of individuals suffering from mental illness also have suffered from drug abuse issues throughout their lives. Data shows high rates of drug use disorders and anxiety disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and panic disorder. Drug use disorders also have a high correlation with mental disorders, such as depression and bipolar disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), psychotic illness, borderline personality disorder, and antisocial personality disorder.

# Discussion

Mental health and drug use disorders can affect anyone of any age. Mental health issues alone or drug abuse issues alone are a big problem within themselves. It is even more dangerous if one is suffering from both of these issues simultaneously. Imagine yourself suffering not only from a mental health issue, but believing that you need drugs to “solve” that mental issue when in reality, you are only making your symptoms worse. Mental health problems can lead to drug use, as a person may misuse drugs in the form of self-medication. People with mental health issues are more likely to abuse drugs. This is because depression and anxiety disorders cause a greater amount of physical and psychological symptoms. The effects of mental disorders could be stronger for continuation of opioids because initiation (starting the drugs) may be related more directly to patient distress, while continuation of the drugs is determined by how the patient responds to the opioids. It is becoming more common for young people to self-medicate by using drugs to “solve” their mental problems. With this correlation, a solution should be made soon to decrease the amount of people with mental disorders resorting to drugs to try to solve their issues and vice versa.

# Conclusion

Mental health issues and drugs have a direct correlation, whether mental health issues cause someone to start taking drugs, or drugs cause the person to begin suffering from mental health issues. It is very dangerous for someone who is on drugs, prescribed or not, to begin suffering from mental illness, as well as it is just as or even more dangerous for someone suffering from mental illness to begin abusing drugs. It is important to look at those suffering from mental health issues or mental illnesses closely as it relates to drugs to try and diminish this correlation issue and help lessen or put an end to their suffering.

