


Chapter 22

Family and Family Functioning as an Indispensable Stakeholder of the Fight Against Addiction

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ABSTRACT

Whether or to what extent family functions are fulfilled may be perceived differently by family members. In the relationships between parents and children, the behavior displayed at the source is often not the same as the feeling it creates in the recipient. While harmony within the family is considered among the protective factors in terms of addiction, the opposite situations appear as a risk factor. This chapter evaluates the family relationships within the scope of the study conducted with opioid/polysubstance addicts and their relatives who applied within the scope of the multidimensional counseling, treatment, and rehabilitation program called “Opening the Door to Hope, Holding on to Life” for addicts.

INTRODUCTION

Substance addiction is the most important public health problem. Substance addiction, which leaves deep effects on the individual, family and society and has become an important social problem today, continues to increase day by day (Işık, 2018). According to United Nations data, the number of people who use substances in the world has increased by 23% in the last decade and reached 296 million (World Drug Report, 2023) Substance addiction requires a multidisciplinary approach in the fight against substance addiction because it negatively affects not only the health of the individual, but also family life, community safety and economy, and has a biopsychosocial aspect (Öge, 2018). Individuals with substance addiction face many problems in the psychosocial dimension such as education, family, spiritual, social

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and economic problems and these problems negatively affect the quality of life of individuals (Dikeç & Kutlu, 2020). Considering that substance use is associated with many situations such as homelessness, psychiatric disorders and crime as well as its own problems, it is possible to say that problems related to drug use are everywhere and affect everyone (European Drug Report, 2023). It is known that the most affected structure in society is the family, which also affects the addict the most. The family is blamed or honored both in the development of addiction and in the treatment and rehabilitation process. Especially in causality researches and treatments, approaches that consider all family members and their mutual relationships have started to be emphasized, resulting in addiction being called a family disease (Dekkers et al., 2020). Strengthening the ties within the family and making communication healthier is seen as the strongest protective factor that the individual has against substance addiction. In other words, family is a protective factor against substance addiction, a supportive and empowering factor in the success of the treatment and the recovery of the addicted individual during the treatment process, and a protective feature that eliminates the risk of substance use again after treatment (Küçükşen et al., 2016).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Family system theory argues that the family is a living, social-emotional organism or system. Within this system, certain rules and roles indicate that interpersonal interaction and family members are interconnected. This approach argues that emotional disorders are a feature of the entire system, not just the individual (Jerebic, 2019). Family functionality is of great importance in ensuring that the physical, psychological and social development of family members progresses in a healthy and beneficial direction (Zeng & Tan, 2021). Research shows that good interaction between parents and children within the family is protective against the development of problematic behaviors. While problematic family relationships can contribute to the development and maintenance of addiction, supportive family dynamics can facilitate the recovery process. The family plays a very important role in the development and treatment of substance addiction., It is shown that the risk of substance use is higher in adolescents with problematic family functions and relapse tendency can be reduced by family functions (Dekkers et al., 2020; Jerebic, 2019; Kourgiantakis et al., 2021; Kivuva & Muasa, 2023). Although it is stated that family dynamics affect substance addiction, there are not enough studies investigating the steps at which the problem occurs and the factors that facilitate the emergence of the problem. Therefore, in this study, it was hypothesized that family relationships of addicts were problematic in all subgroups. And it is aimed to determine how addicts perceive their relationships with their families; how families of addicts perceive intra-family relationships; whether there are problems in the subgroups of problem solving, communication, roles, affective responsiveness, affective involvement, behavioral control and general functioning within the family for addicts and whether there are problems in problem solving, communication, roles, affective responsiveness, affective involvement, behavioral control and general functioning subgroups in terms of addict families. It is also aimed to determine the factors that may cause problematic relationships.

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