

**OP 20**

**Do Human Relationships Play a Role to Change the Perception of Drug Addicts in Rehabilitation?: A Qualitative Study**

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**Background:** Drug addiction has become a major health issue, specifically, among young people in Sri Lanka. Family, peer and other social relationships are found to be closely associated with substance use behavior in young people. Very little evidence exists on how healthy relationships with close relatives and people in the community influence recovery rates of drug addicts.

**Objectives:** To explore the beliefs and views of young drug addicts in a rehabilitation centre in Southern Sri Lanka about associations between impact of human relationships and psychological status of drug addicts in rehabilitation

**Methods:** A qualitative phenomenological study was carried out in a drug rehabilitation centre in Galle. Twenty participants who were addicted to drugs for more than one year and currently on rehabilitation were invited to participate in the study. Semi structured, in-depth interviews were carried out. Thematic analysis method was used to analyze the data.

**Results:** The mean ( $\pm$ SD) age of the participants was 33 ( $\pm$ 6.77) years, and the mean duration of substance use behavior was 10.57 ( $\pm$ 6.59) years. Participants were on the opinion that poor family and peer relationships, and psycho-social trauma that they had to experience during childhood were the main causes for initiation of drug use. Affection and forgiveness from parents, strong romantic desires from partners, love from offsprings, and generosity from peers were the major themes emerged that would assist them to rebuild broken relationships and to have fast and sustainable recovery rate.

**Conclusions:** Development of healthy relationships seems to play a vital role in drug rehabilitation process. Rehabilitation strategies need to identify mentality of close relatives of the victims, possibilities to join them in some part of the rehabilitation process and continues follow-up both parties for effective results.

**Keywords:** *Drug addiction, Human relationships, Qualitative approach, Rehabilitation*