

Integration, intersectoral coordination must to curb drug abuse, says expert

KU organises symposium on challenges, awareness, redressal



Srinagar, Sep 6: To highlight the challenges of drug abuse and to create awareness with viable solutions through collaboration and coordination, the Department of Clinical Biochemistry, University of Kashmir (KU) Wednesday inaugurated a symposium here.

On the directions of the Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir, Prof Nilofer Khan, the symposium titled ‘Drug Abuse: Challenges, Awareness and Redressal’ was organised in collaboration with the Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS), Government Medical College (GMC), Srinagar; Jammu and Kashmir Science, Technology and Innovation Council (JKSTIC) and Directorate of School Education, Kashmir (DSEK).

Head, IMHANS, GMC, Srinagar, Prof Arshad Hussain while advocating policies and facilities for patients of substance abuse said treatment with disease model is the best and the most effective way of tackling the ‘pandemic’.

He said, “Substance abuse spreads like a pandemic, mostly peer-to-peer, and we need to have integration and intersectoral coordination at all levels to prevent it.”

He further said sensationalisation trivialises the problem but we need restriction on availability through mass-awareness and community-participation.

Commissioner/Secretary, Department of Science and Technology & Skill development , Jammu and Kashmir, Dr Saurabh Bhagat said NGOs, academic institutions and religious scholars need to join hands to educate and sensitise young generation about the critical importance of understanding the issue of drug and substance abuse.

“We collaborate with the education institutions like University of Kashmir to pick up important social issues and deliberate upon them and through resolution come up with long-term solutions for the betterment of our society,” he said.

Registrar University of Kashmir, Dr Nisar Ahmad Mir underscored the social dimension of drug abuse and stressed on love, affection and compassion to deal with the problem.

He said, “Once an individual gets involved, it is not difficult to get rid of it because we live in close-knit social structures. We only need to take collective efforts to counter the menace of drug and substance abuse.”

Registrar, Central University of Kashmir, Prof M Afzal Zargar stressed on engaging and educating the youth to spread the message and to be the brand ambassadors of change.

“Age is not a factor for falling prey to drugs. Our young generation needs attention not only of the healthcare providers but of teachers, parents and peers as well,” he said, adding that technology and media can play a significant role in overcoming this problem.

Assistant Director, Dr Shabina Gulshan, DHSK said the pandemic of drug abuse is destroying individuals and families and that we need comprehensive initiatives and preventive programmes to tackle it.

“As we all deserve a healthier life, we need to remove the stigma attached with drug abuse by providing compassionate treatment solutions and affordable medication to eradicate it,” she said.

Head, Department of Clinical Biochemistry, KU, Dr Fouzia Rashid said since most crimes are attributed to drug abuse, we need a comprehensive approach to educate and aware people of the consequences of falling prey to drugs.

She said, “Tackling the menace of drug abuse is an uphill task and we need to sensitise people, especially the youth about the ill-effects of drug abuse.”

She said besides other clinical lab investigations, the department is exploring to include drug abuse testing and diagnostics as an in-campus facility. A documentary on effects of drug abuse was also screened on the occasion