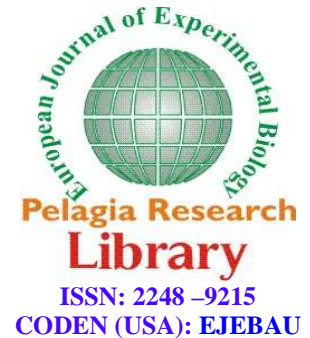




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## Comparing attachment styles in opium addicts and non addicts

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### ABSTRACT

*In this research interest style and affection maturity have been analyzed as two effective factors to avoid and treat of addiction. Researches have shown that interest styles are influential factors to shape character models. Also character is considered as an effective factor to tendency toward drug usage. So in this research the relation between interest style and addiction and emotional maturity on the other hand are studied. Statistical society was 120 individuals containing to groups with 60 members. 60 opium addicted people who referred to addiction disuse center of safe life in Kerman in farvardin1390 and 60 people who were none addicted selected from Kerman city. Measurement tool in this research was kolniz&Reid interest scale and emotional maturity scale and datas evaluated by statistical u tool of Manwhitny and Chi-Squre test. The results obtained in this research showed that there is meaningful difference between interest style and affection maturity of addicted to opium and non addicted people which means that addicted people mostly had unsafe interest style, while none addicted people frequently had safe interest style and also in addicted people affection maturity level was lower than none addicted individuals.*

**Key words:** attachment styles, emotional maturity, addicted people

### INTRODUCTION

Addiction poses serious social problems, it refers to physical, mental and psychological dependency on drugs the abandonment of which is impossible or extremely difficult. Addiction has ruined millions of lives and imposed considerable costs on nations to fight, treat and compensate for its damages. Nowadays, people are increasingly driven to drug use and suffer from its physical, mental, cultural, familial, economic and social consequences. Our country due to cultural, attitudinal and geographical conditions (adjacency to one of the main opium-producing countries), are the most vulnerable one to draw youth to drug use. Less phenomenon can be found that like an addiction threateans human society and each day the victims of this deadly trap is added [13]. Addicts suffer from negative and inflexible emotions so that they are often fraught with anger, resentment and hatred. They also suffer from loss of love, joy and intimacy. They may have not experienced hope and love for a long time. This exposes them to a serious emotional vacuum which must be dealt with in a treatment process. A typical problem with addicts is their lack of emotional maturity and propensity to self-alienation and dependency disorder which causes a universal sense of fear and mental insecurity. A thirty-year old addict may perform like a ten-year old adolescent in terms of emotional functioning because most of the addicts have been forced into adulthood before they could have experienced childhood. That is because both society and family have not given them the opportunity to grow emotionally so that they have been confined within the walls of emotional crudity and feel insecure towards the

outside world. Evidently, they need support to be able to escape the confinement and interact with their environment, which requires them to be dependent on others [11].

Glanz and Harter (2002) considered, in their proposed model, substance abuse due to Individual factors (such as cognitive expectations, and individual psychological factors), Social factors (such as factors associated with school, family, media and peer influence) and historical factors and history (Such as demographic characteristics, biological and environmental) [8]. According to Kohut's narcissistic personality disorder, addicts suffer from severe feelings of disillusionment with their mothers. Mother's disregard for the child's emotional needs causes disruption in children's self-regulatory processes and consequently damages their mental structure of internal behavioral control. As a result, they will become dependent on external mediums like drugs to compensate for their emotional deficiencies. Therefore, their harmful experiences of childhood in regard to disillusionment with their mothers may be drawn upon to account for the mechanisms which influence attachment styles. Accordingly, mothers' disregard for children's emotional needs may justify the prevalence of insecure attachment styles in these children [1]. Research has shown that insecure attachment style contributes to the development of mental disorders. Developed at early childhood, insecure attachment is a risk factor for drug abuse and may also influence the treatment of drug abuse disorder. Using Hazan and Shaver adult attachment interview (AAI), Taracena et al (2006) reported that there is positive correlation between drug abuse and avoidant attachment styles [16]. A research conducted at Illinois University reported that there is positive correlation between insecure attachment styles and smoking, alcohol use and marijuana use. In a follow-up research in the same university, the results showed that there is a significant positive correlation between anxious attachment style and the prevalence of stimulant drug use, smoking and alcohol use [6]. Haward and Medway (2004) investigated the relationship between attachment styles, coping styles, life stresses and due responses in 75 couples. They reported that with secure styles, adults' attachments are positively correlated with family relations but negatively correlated with negative social behavior including alcohol use, smoking and/or drug use [5]. Casper et al (2005) studied the relationship between attachment styles and drug use in a sample of 48 adopted children. The results revealed that insecure attachment style is positively correlated with effective non-emotional regulation which results in non-adaptive behavior in adults. The results also showed that insecure attachment style is positively correlated with high rates of drug use and affects the social support received by the individual. Regression analysis showed the high prevalence of drug use among the individuals with insecure attachment styles comparing to those with secure styles. The results also demonstrated high rates of drug use among the individuals with avoidant or anxious attachment styles. This suggests that either of insecure attachment styles is positively correlated with ineffective emotional regulation, which brings about psychological disorders in adults [2]. Mehrabi Zadeh et al (2008) reported that adolescent drug dependency can be accounted for based on such variables as depression, thrill-seeking behavior, aggressiveness, attachment styles, and socio-economic status [11]. Besharat (2007) reported that there is significant difference in attachment styles between opiate addicts and non-addicts. Besides, there was a significant negative correlation between the severity of opiate addiction and secure attachment style but a significant positive correlation between the same variable and insecure attachment style. Therefore, attachment styles can influence drug abuse disorders through the processes of familial interaction, social control, emotional regulation and self-efficacy [1]. Marlatt et al (2002) investigated the factors contributing to the frequent relapse of addiction and reported that encounters with negative emotions and events are most effective in addiction relapse. It seems that insecure individuals more frequently resort to drug use as a self-treatment mechanism to relieve their negative emotions and experiences comparing with secure individuals [10]. Shakibaie (2000) studied 137 people and reported that 91.3% of the participants suffered from at least one mental disorder. Accordingly, 68.7% of the participants experienced decreased libido, 59.3% had hypersomnia, 58.7% suffered from major depression and 24.7% suffered from apprehension [15]. On the other hand Carol and Nich (1995) and Formiguni (2001) knew some various factors such as, stress and lack of interest and attachment to family, mental health problems such as lack of courage and fail to have proper maturity the main reasons for turning to addiction [13], therefore, in line with previous studies, the present research aims to find any difference between attachment styles between addicts and non-addicts.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method of the present study is causal-comparative whereby attachment styles are compared between opiate addicts and non-addicts. The population of the study consisted of all opiate addicts who referred to centers for addiction abandonment in Kerman city considered as a first group as well as non-addicts considered as the second group. 120 participants were selected and assigned into two groups. The first group consisted of addicts who referred to Healthy Life clinic in Kerman and the second group was non-addicts who had no drug dependency. Chi-

square was used to compare the attachment style between two groups. The instruments of the study included Collins & Read attachment scale and emotional maturity scale. This questionnaire is a self-report scale which examines relation building skills and self-descriptive procedures for establishing close attachments, consists of 18 items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (From 1 = It is not at all compatible with my characteristics till 5=It is quite compatible with my characteristics). Factor analysis has revealed three subscales of this questionnaire including dependency (D), closeness (C) and anxiety (A), each of which consists of 6 items. Collins and Read (1990) showed that the three subscales of dependency (D), closeness (C) and anxiety (A) remained consistent and reliable within a 2-month and even an 8-month interval. Due to high Cronbach alpha equals 0.80 or more than it, so the reliability was high, too. Mohammad Khani administered to 115 teenager girl and boy students (15 yrs), the reliability of the questionnaire was reported to be 0.83.

## RESULTS

By examining data from the questionnaires there is the most ambivalent insecure attachment among addicted people and there was the most secure attachment among non-addicted ones.

**Table 1. Frequency of Attachment styles among addicted and non-addicted**

Groups	Secure Attachment	Insecure avoidant attachment	Ambivalent insecure attachment	Total
addicted	18	17	25	60
non-addicted	52	4	4	60
Total	70	21	29	120

**Table 2. Results of attachment styles comparison between addicts and non-addicts**

Variable	Levels	N	Chi-square	df	P
Attachment styles	Addicts	60	34.938	2	0.001
	Non-addicts	60			

As it is shown in Table 2, Chi-square test was run to examine the significance of differences in attachment style scores between opiate addicts and non-addicts. According to the table, the Chi-square value is 34.938 which indicates that there is a significant difference in the attachment styles between opiate addicts and non-addicts ( $\alpha=0.01$ ). Accordingly, addicts often have insecure attachments styles while non-addicts often have secure styles.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Over the last century, we witnessed dramatic propagation and prevalence of narcotics among societies as well as a variety of drug development and subsequent use of this material by the various segments of people in different communities. Addiction is an essential problem in any society. Addiction refers to physical, mental and psychological dependency on narcotics the abandonment of which is impossible or extremely difficult. Nowadays, people are increasingly driven to drug use and suffer from its physical, mental, cultural, familial, economic and social consequences. Our country due to cultural, attitudinal and geographical conditions (adjacency to one of the main opium-producing countries), are the most vulnerable one to draw youth to drug use. Less phenomenon can be found that like an addiction threatens human society and each day the victims of this deadly trap is added [13].

The present findings showed that there is significant difference in attachment styles between opiate addicts and non-addicts ( $\alpha=0.01$ ). Accordingly, addicts often had insecure attachment styles while non-addicts had secure styles. Research results have shown that there is a significance difference between attachment styles of patients with opiate use disorders and attachment styles of non-addicts. Also, a positive and significant correlation was found between secure and insecure attachment styles with the severity of opiate use disorders. Based on research findings, attachment styles can develop disorders of narcotics through the processes of family interaction, social control, regulate emotions and affect efficacy. There is a significant difference in the attachment styles between opiate addicts and non-addicts ( $\alpha=0.01$ ). Addicts often have insecure attachments styles while non-addicts often have secure styles. A research conducted by experts at the University of Illinois showed that there is a positive correlation between insecure attachment styles and smoking, alcohol and marijuana use [6]. Manal, Palfay, Levine and Murray (2003), Rich (2005) also affirmed the same results [13]. Casper et al (2005) studied the relationship between attachment styles and drug use in a sample of 48 adopted children. The results revealed that insecure attachment

style is positively correlated with effective non-emotional regulation which results in non-adaptive behavior in adults. The results also showed that insecure attachment style is positively correlated with high rates of drug use and affects the social support received by the individual [2]. Torberg and Lyvers (2005) investigated the relationship between attachment, fear of intimacy and differentiation of self in 158 volunteers including 99 individuals registered in an addiction treatment program. As expected, the patients under treatment who suffered from alcoholism, heroin dependency, amphetamines dependency, cocaine or hashish abuse reported high levels of insecure attachment, fear of intimacy and low levels of secure attachment and differentiation of self comparing with the control group. Insecure attachment, fear of intimacy and differentiation of self may indicate vulnerability of drug abuse [17]. Besharat (2007) reported that there is significant difference in attachment styles between Iranian drug addicts and non-addicts. There were also significant negative and significant positive correlations between the severity of drug dependency with secure and insecure attachment styles, respectively [1]. Consequently, attachment styles can influence dependency on drugs through the processes of familial interactions, social control, emotional regulation and self-efficacy. Similarly, Mehrabi Zadeh *et al* (2008), Lajavardi (2004) and Ghafoori (2005) came up with same results [5, 9, 13]. Menally *et al* (2003) and Rich and Vanheule (2005) came up with the same results [12, 14]. Casper *et al* (2005) investigated the relationship between attachment styles and drug use in a sample of 48 adopted children. They reported that there is relationship between insecure attachment style and high rates of life-long drug use. With regard to the role of cultural factors in enhancing public health, it is recommended that educational authorities raise parents' awareness regarding the influence of children's attachment styles on their future lives. Finally, it is notable that the present participants consisted of addicts who were under treatment in a clinic, which limits the generalizability of the present findings to other individuals [2].

Given the role of cultural factors in the high level of health care, it is recommended educational authorities in order to educate parents and to inform society about the impact of children's attachment styles on their lives, predict measures effectively. It should be noted that the sample group of drug addicts constitute a medical center that makes it difficult to generalize results to other people.

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