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THE EFFECTS OF LIONS-QUEST SKILLS FOR ADOLESCENCE (SFA) PROGRAM (DRUG COMPONENT) ON ADOLESCENTS' DRUG PRONE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

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Background and Aim : Based on UNODC international Standards on drug use prevention (2013) as well as according to NIDA (2003,2014), and research findings(Taylor, et al, 2017) drug abuse is a developmentally risk behavior(UNODC, 2015, NIDA, 2014). Therefore, prevention of such behaviors depends on evidence based interventions through critical developmental periods. It is cleared that the primary prevention is more cost effective than the other interventional procedures. Childhood and early adolescence periods have a critical role in developing drug prone behaviors. These developmental periods are also important for prevention. Changing adolescents' attitudes and behaviors about using drugs could help them to avoid experiencing early drug use. In addition to social and emotional competence (UNODC, 2015, Taylor, et al 2017)), reinforcing anti-drug attitudes and behaviors and drug resistance skills are key elements of drug abuse prevention in adolescence (NIDA, 2003, 2014). Evidence based programs have a key role for transferring these skills to children and adolescents(UNODC, 2013, 2015; NIDA, 2003, 2014). Following our efforts for adaptation and standardization of international evidence based programs for promoting Iranian children and adolescents' positive development and prevention of drug abuse and the other risk behaviors among them such as PATHS program (Persian version) as an exemplary and model program for children ages 6 to 12 (Behrad, 2014), we are working now on adaptation and standardization of Lions-Quest skills for adolescence (SFA) program. SFA is an international and evidence based program that is developed for adolescents in ages 12 to 15. SFA is recognized as an evidence based program by independent reviews such as CASEL (2015), NREPP(2016), SAMHSA (2016), as well as NIDA exemplary program for adolescents (NIDA, 2003). The SFA also has been evaluated by many countries such as Canada, India, Finland, Japan, Germany, Spain, Norway and Sweden as an effective program independently. The program has been administered by over 90 countries. The SFA has been administered as a prevention program by UNODC from 2014. The purpose of current study was to investigate the effects of SFA drug component intervention on Iranian adolescents' attitudes and drug prone behaviors.

Oral & Poster Presentations

Methods : We examined 800 adolescents that were selected conventionally and were assigned to 2 groups Randomly. The experimental group received the SFA drug components intervention for 1 year. The 2 groups attitudes and drug prone behaviors were assessed by SAMHSA-30 Day Use ATODs and CSAP Favorable Attitudes Toward Drug Use before and after the intervention.

Results : Results by ANCOVA showed two groups differences were significant ($p < 0.05$). Indeed experimental group had lower drug prone attitudes and behaviors.

Conclusion : We know that prevention of drug abuse is cost effective and the most important component of coping with drug abuse in society. Children and adolescents are target populations for preventive efforts and the evidence based programs and interventions have a main role in this process. SFA is an international and evidence based program that showed significant effects on adolescents' drug prone attitudes and behaviors. The findings of current study have promising implications for using SFA for preventive purposes in Iranian adolescents' population.

Keywords : Prevention, Lions Quest Skills for Adolescence Program, Drug abuse, Adolescence