



An Assessment of the Risk Factors Associated with Substance Abuse among South African Adolescents

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ABSTRACT Increasing numbers of South African adolescents are engaging in substance abuse, a social ill which is approaching epidemic proportions, despite concerted efforts by the South African government to provide effective preventative measures and treatment. As the aim of this paper was to identify and investigate the risk factors which encourage South African adolescents to become initiated into substance abuse, a systematic and comprehensive review of relevant available literature was conducted. The literature revealed that substance abuse by adolescents is prompted by individual, family, and environmental factors. From the conclusions which have been drawn from the findings of the study, it is suggested that drug testing should be carried out in schools and psycho-educational support should be provided to learners who have fallen prey to substance abuse and their families, in order to increase the effectiveness of the prevention programmes which are being implemented at present.