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## Gender differences in Substance Use Disorder

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The essential feature of a Substance Use Disorder (SUD) is a cluster of Cognitive, Behavioral, and Physiological symptoms indicating that an individual continues using the substance despite significant substance-related problems. SUDs have a broad range of severity, from mild to severe; the assessment of severity is based on a number of established criteria of symptoms.

Gender differences in the rates of substance abuse have been consistently observed in the general population and treatment-seeking patients, with men showing significantly higher rates of substance use, abuse, and dependence.

However, recent epidemiological surveys suggest that this gap between men and women has narrowed in recent decades. Clinicians and program administrators are increasingly becoming aware of the important differences between men and women in terms of the physical effects of substance use and the specific issues related to SUDs. They are also recognizing that these differences have an impact on treatment, that gender does have an influence.

When the specific needs of women are addressed from the outset, improved treatment engagement, retention, and outcomes are achieved.

Women describe unique reasons for using drugs, including controlling weight, fighting exhaustion, coping with pain, and attempts to self-treat mental health problems.

Consequences of substance use in women have a serious outcome on her family health like HIV infection, stillbirth fetus, neonatal withdrawal syndrome, and on society like street children and prostitution.

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