

## Addiction prevention in the family: perspectives from prevention science in

### Islam

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#### Abstract

**Background:** Addiction is a disease that abuses the brain and body of the user of psychoactive substance and/or one who engages deleteriously with some habitual processes. It harms the systems of families which are the cradle of society and civilization. As a supra-major obstacle to the success of individuals and families, Islam provides its prevention methodology as a means to mount and sustain evidence-based addiction prevention intervention.

**Methods:** This paper employs the three levels of prevention science (i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary) to illustrate the application of Islamic teachings in relation to curbing addiction in the family and society. This is by presenting Islamic teachings as both protective mechanisms and relapse prevention tools and how this fits the demand (i.e. predisposition) and supply (i.e. availability) dichotomy across the levels of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.

**Results:** The foundation of Islamic prevention approaches starts with the Muslim knowing that he/she is responsible to both God and to some extent the society. This responsibility encompasses the need to be addiction free, which is based on living the five necessity of protecting faith, life, lineage, intellect and property. This paper gave practical ways on what to do at all levels of prevention. It also outlines the various actions to be taking at each levels of prevention.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, this paper presented the Islamic prevention methodology and its applicability in the three levels of prevention science. It adds more by incorporating the Islamic spiritual dimension.

**Keywords:** Addiction, Islamic Prevention Methodology, Prevention Science

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#### Introduction

Addiction is a disease that abuses the brain and body of the user of psychoactive

substance and/or one who engages

deleteriously with some habitual processes.<sup>1</sup>

Often, the use/engaging with addictive

substance/process and the resultant harms often occur within the systems of family which are the cradle of society and civilization. these harms have categorized as the “3Ds” of darkness (i.e. individual/family miseries), destruction (i.e. ruins to wealth and well-being) and devastations (i.e. resources wastages) to society.<sup>1</sup> In other words, addiction can be said to be a supra-major obstacle to the success of individuals and families. Thus, for a society to be free of harms from addiction, the family must be able to mount and sustain evidence-based addiction prevention intervention.

Several family-based interventions have been designed and implemented across the globe. Some of which are based on scientifically supported tools, and often not from the vista of Islamic prevention methodology.<sup>2</sup> Hence, this paper attempts to address family functions in addiction prevention from the perspectives of prevention science in Islam.

## **Methodology**

The approach of this paper is to employ the three levels prevention science (i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary) to illustrate the application of Islamic teachings in relation to curbing addiction in the family and society. This is by presenting Islamic teachings as both protective mechanisms and relapse prevention tools<sup>3,4</sup> and how this fits the demand (i.e. predisposition) and supply (i.e. availability) dichotomy across the levels of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.

## **Results/Discussion**

That a Muslim is responsible to both God and to some extent the society, shows the foundation of preventive science in Islam. Here the Muslim lives as a family member and also works to support the community members. Herein lies the Islamic prevention principle, outlined as the five necessity or essential elements of protecting human

beings. These five to be protected are faith, life, lineage, intellect and property. In the strivings to protect and sustain these five wellness and wellbeing, also lie the need to prevent addiction in individuals, families and societies. The following will outline the various actions to be taking at each levels of prevention.

### **Primary prevention**

The primary prevention is aimed at complete avoidance of the occurrence of addiction in the family. For the society to achieve primary prevention, it needs to:

Know the position of Islam on addiction:

The glorious Qur'an says:

**“Oye who believe; intoxication and gambling, (dedication to) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination, of Satan’s handiwork: eschew such (abomination),that ye may prosper. (Qur’an 5:90).**

That is, Islam sees addiction as both a sin and crime. This is based on a used a number of criteria like: harm to wellbeing of self and others, wastage of wealth, the altering of mind and bodily functions, limiting capacity for rational decision making, intoxication, clouding of consciousness and dampening spirituality.

Put some measures in place:

Before giving birth make dua, for it is the right of the children that their parents pray for them even before they are born. And Allah describes the righteous worshippers of Himself as making the this dua:

**"Our Lord! Bestow on us from our wives and our offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes." (Qur'an 25:74)**

Educating the parents on the right knowledge about addiction and the need to prevent it.

Be the model you want your children to become i.e. parents should live and lead by

good example e.g. avoiding addiction, addiction-related lifestyle and not taking a stance against it. Living a lifestyle guided by bashfulness and tawba. Note that, it is only human nature that children love to imitate their models, especially the first, who is their parents.

Other measures include:

Educating children, neighbors, peer groups and the whole society with the right knowledge on addiction, the right understanding and the need to prevent it before they are wrongly informed. Let them know that, it takes one poor decision to start but it is beyond one's will to stop, hence the definition of addiction as a brain disease, not sustained deliberately by individuals, spirits or enemies. Also, that addiction is not a sign of successful individuals and groups.

Furthermore, it is paramount for them to know that starting use or continuing to use will only make one a commercialized entity

for the drug abuse industries and their cronies.

Educate them on the fact that Islam, societal norms and values are against addiction. For addiction destroys physical, social, mental and spiritual health of societies. Today, addiction is the leading cause of other mental illnesses. In addition, it predisposes individuals to crime, violence, poverty, sexually transmitted diseases and prostitution. Emphasized the necessity of belonging to the right peer group that avoids glamourizing addiction.

Emphasized the need to commend and/or reward members of the family who do not get involve in addiction.

All religious believes, institutions, organizations and communities should emulate IMAN, NYSC etc by forming addiction prevention groups or committees that is committed to addiction prevention.

**Secondary prevention**

The secondary prevention is the next stage as some individual(s) in the family might not succeed with utilizing the primary tools to their advantage. Here, the secondary prevention is aimed at limiting the spread of harms from addiction affected individuals and onto non-affected other family members, neighbors and the society as a whole. This takes into consideration the peculiarity and particularity of time and location. Some strategies to be employed include:

Screening for at risk individuals and families.

Enhancing family members' strengths, resolve and resilience to be of help to the individual at risk.

Ensuring the affected family member receive prompt evidence-based treatment and prevent it from getting worse

The knowledge of contacting the right professionals and centers for rational intervention.

**Tertiary prevention**

The last stage is the tertiary prevention, and it is aimed at preventing chronicity, destitution, dependence, nuisance and societal liability despite addiction. This is by employing measures that will restore functional performance, good coping, and finally abstinence. Some of the measures are encompassed in evidence-supported rehabilitation services and include:

Education, occupational i.e. vocational skills acquisition or apprentice scheme, spiritual enhancement practices, recreational and sporting activities, excursions, holidays, visitations, entrepreneurship skills etc.

Others are:

Individual, group and/or family psychotherapy, and organizing unanimous

groups like ex-alcoholics or ex-drug addicts groups to continue to strengthen their spirit of sustaining abstinence i.e. preventing relapse and campaigning for addiction prevention.

This further stresses the enhancement of family strengths and wellbeing to be of service to the affected member.

The biggest don'ts of addiction prevention for the family is to curse or disown a member being abused by the addiction.

Another don't is to continue to over pamper the drug using member of the family, especially when such individual is the apple of their parent's eye and the joy of their heart. This is emphasized in the Qur'an as:

**“Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world” (Qur'an 18:46)**

Hence for family to give effective support to a member being abused by addiction, the family needs to:

Use prayer in a way to encourage adaptive coping and to seek treatment using Islamic fellowship such as Millati Islami: the path of peace (MI).

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

**“... do not pray against your children ... lest that coincides with a time when Allah is asked and He gives, so He answers your prayer.” Narrated by Muslim (3014).**

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this paper presented the Islamic prevention methodology as a veritable tool for achieving successful addiction prevention within the family and society. It is applicable in the three levels of prevention science. And it adds more by incorporating the Islamic spiritual dimension. Hence, family should be alerted on the possibilities of occurrence of addiction among their members and the need to employ the Islamic prevention

methodology to limit this. As addiction prevention is a lifelong process, the family must continue to employ the Islamic approaches generation in and out.

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