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## QUALITATIVE JOURNAL ARTICLE REVIEW

### **Introduction**

The article I chose to review discusses how children and adolescents who initiate substance use in their early life and how this affects them later down the line. I chose this topic because there has been an increase in substance abuse and usage in adolescents and young children in public and out-of-home schools in recent years. They are being exposed to these most likely from peers and fall into the peer pressures that can ensue. I feel that there is not enough exposure to this problem as there should be, and it should be spread more. This doesn't only impact the children and the parents of the children, but it can impact others who interact with those children, etc. This paper will give us an overview of the article, explore the methodology of their study, then a critique of the study, and lastly a reflection portion. The last portion will be a place to reflect and find takeaways to remember.

### **Overview**

The qualitative study, "A Qualitative Study of the Context of Child and Adolescent Substance Use Initiation and Patterns of Use in the First Year for Early and Later Initiators," by Kelly, A. B., Chan, G. C. K., & Toumbourou, J. W, shows the context of substance use initiation and patterns of use among children and adolescents, specifically focusing on early and later initiators. The researchers attempts to find answers to two research questions which were "What

contextual factors lead to substance use initiation and patterns of use in the first year of use”, and “What differences in contextual factors exist between early and later initiators?”

To perform the study, the researchers used a qualitative approach, using interviews with 28 volunteers between the ages of 12 and 18 who stated that they used substances within the past year. The participants were divided into two groups: early initiators and later initiators. Those in the early initiator group revealed that they used before the age of 12 and the later initiators are those that used after the age of 12. The interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns among the participants' experiences.

The findings of the study showed that in the context of substance use, the initiation of both groups had significant differences. The early initiators were more likely to report using substances as a way to cope with difficult life circumstances, including but not limited to, trauma, family dysfunction, and mental health issues. Later initiators, on the other hand, were more likely to report using substances as a result of peer pressure. Additionally, the study found that early initiators were more likely to develop patterns of regular use down the line and experience negative consequences, including legal or academic issues, within the first year of use compared to the later initiators. These findings overall supported the hypothesis originally found.

### **Methodology**

The participants in this study were recruited from four outpatient substance use treatment centers in the Northeastern United States and the selected participants were between the ages of 12 to 18 that had used within the past year. A non-probability type of sampling was used by the researchers as well. The researchers divided the participants into two groups based on their age

of substance use initiation: “early initiators (n=13) and later initiators (n=15).” (Kelly, A. B., Chan, G. C. K., & Toumbourou, J. W. 2017)

The study used interviews to collect data from the participants. The interviews were conducted in a private setting and lasted about 60 to 90 minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed to be used later for analysis. This was an appropriate tool to find the data because of the questions presented and how the data was interpreted.

### **Critique**

This study did well in some aspects and lacked in other areas. One of the areas that they did well in was the use of qualitative methods. This allowed the researchers to collect in-depth and detailed information about the participants' experiences. The use of sampling was appropriate given that the study's focus was on specific age groups and substance use initiation patterns.

However, One area that this study lacked was the size of the sample population. The small sample size of 28 participants limited how well it could be generalized. In addition, the study did not account for all the different substance types and how they were administered. This makes it possible that certain substances or methods of use could have different factors that could be associated with initiation and patterns of use. Also, the study's findings were based on data that was self-reported, and this could be subject to bias or social desirability bias meaning they could have lied to make themselves look better in front of peers. In future studies, they could benefit from confirming the self-report data with other sources of information, such as teachers, parents, or drug screenings.

I feel that overall, their justifications were justified because they were able to find the data within their bounds and make conclusions. A good follow-up to this study would be to take the same participants for a couple of years and see if their hypothesis and conclusions were accurate. I would also run a similar test on them in those couple of years to be sure of their findings.

### **Reflection**

After reading and reviewing this qualitative journal article, it has provided me with valuable insights and skills that may be useful in my future career and life in general. This article has highlighted how environmental and social factors can affect a child's future and mental state. Although I am not taking up a job in the medical profession I feel that it is still crucial to better understand different factors and be able to read them to my future children and other children for potential drug abuse. By reading these factors, I will better be able to offer care for them and provide them with the medical and holistic care they may need. This article really emphasizes the importance of having early intervention and possible prevention of substance abuse. By being able to intervene early and address the underlying factors contributing to substance use, I can better prevent the development of more severe substance abuse disorders in the future.

Overall, this article review has helped provide me with valuable insights and skills that can be useful in my future endeavors. By better understanding and promoting early intervention and prevention, we as a whole can work towards preventing substance abuse and promoting healthy behaviors in children and adolescents.

### References

Kelly, A. B., Chan, G. C. K., & Toumbourou, J. W. (2017). A Qualitative Study of the Context of Child and Adolescent Substance Use Initiation and Patterns of Use in the First Year for Early and Later Initiators. *Plos One*, 12(1), e0170794. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0170794