

## E53 An Examination of the Self-Efficacy of High School Students in the Prevention of Drug Addiction

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**Learning Overview:** After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the importance of adding a “self-efficacy development” step to addiction prevention activities along with diagnosis and treatment studies.

**Impact on the Forensic Science Community:** This presentation will impact the forensic science community by showing a new approach to the prevention of substance abuse in high school students.

Body and thought structures show rapid development under the influence of hormones. Adolescents may have difficulty keeping up with these developments and changes. In addition, at a time when they feel complex themselves, being understood by family and the environment is one of the most important factors for them to easily overcome the difficulties of adolescence.<sup>1</sup> Because adolescence is a period of young people’s transition to independence and proving themselves, the risks of starting substance use and involvement in crime are most often seen during this period. From this point of view, individuals aged 15–25 years of age constitute the risk group.<sup>2</sup> The most common causes of substance use are a sense of curiosity, the impact of the social environment, and the state of the family, which can be shown as an effort to create an independent identity.<sup>3</sup> When the processes of fighting substance abuse are examined “treatment,” “protection/prevention,” and “awareness building” steps are encountered. Nevertheless, not including the notion of “self-efficacy” in this process weakens the fight against substance abuse.

When the current literature about substance abuse is examined, it seems that most of the studies are conducted on the treatment of substance abuse or the study of people who are addicted to drugs already. The aim of this study is to demonstrate the importance of self-efficacy against substance and addiction in individuals who, unlike other studies, have not yet become addicted or have yet been introduced to substances and to bring a new perspective in the fight against substance abuse. This study was applied to students (grades 9, 10, 11, and 12) in secondary education institutions located in the Esenyurt district, Istanbul province. A total of 421 students participated in the study. But 84 of them were not included in the study because their scales were incomplete and inconsistent. Limited “Socio-Demographic Data” forms and “Self-Efficacy Scale in Substance Abuse Protection” were used to obtain data from the students involved in the study. The findings were reached through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. Distributions of variables were evaluated using the Kolmogorov Smirnov test. Cross-group comparisons of variables were performed using the Mann Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis tests. Determining the linear relationship between variables was performed using the Spearman correlation test. A statistical significance value of  $p < 0.05$  was accepted.

According to the results obtained from the data, although there are no statistically significant differences between participants when evaluated according to gender and the grade of the class in progress, schoolgirls’ and 12<sup>th</sup>-grade classroom students’ self-efficacy levels were found to be higher than others. At the same time, there were no statistically significant differences in the state of parent cohabitation and the state of psychiatric illness in the family, but it was concluded that the self-efficacy levels of participants whose family lived together and whose family did not have psychiatric illness were higher than others. In the responses to the control question, which are crucial for measuring the self-efficacy levels of the scale, it is also seen that the self-efficacy levels of the participants are weak.

In order to strengthen the findings of the study conducted, it was compared with the findings of previous studies, and it was observed that the findings were equivalent to the studies in the literature. As a result of the evaluations obtained, it can be seen that the adolescent community formed by the participants does not have the level of self-efficacy in terms of protection from substance abuse. In this sense, “self-efficacy development”—which should be organized by educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, security units, visual and written media, ministries that work with young people, and, especially, in the family—need to be added to prevention activities along with diagnosis and treatment studies.

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### Crime Prevention, Addiction, Self-Efficacy