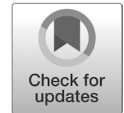


Global Trends in Hashish Use among Youth: An Empirical Review of the Global North and the Global South



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RESUMEN

Introducción: se estima que 229 millones de personas consumen hachís (cannabis) en todo el mundo. En la última década se ha producido un aumento del 23% en el consumo de cannabis. Se han llevado a cabo un número considerable de estudios tanto en el norte como en el sur global sobre los factores y razones que causan o conducen al consumo de cannabis entre los jóvenes en diferentes contextos socioculturales.

Objetivo: el objetivo principal de este estudio es obtener una comprensión profunda de las tendencias del uso de hachís entre los jóvenes a partir de los estudios empíricos realizados en el norte y el sur global. **Método:**

se revisaron 65 estudios empíricos (artículos científicos, informes y libros) para desarrollar una comprensión más profunda y completa de la amplia y creciente prevalencia del hachís entre las personas en general y los jóvenes en particular. Se consultaron las bases de datos en línea Uso de drogas y alcohol, *Science Direct*, *Google Scholar* y JSTOR, para identificar estudios relevantes. **Resultados:** los hallazgos del estudio están organizados bajo cuatro líneas: los primeros usos del hachís entre los humanos; la prevalencia del hachís entre los jóvenes en el norte global; la prevalencia del uso de hachís entre los jóvenes en el sur global, y los factores que promueven el uso de hachís entre los jóvenes a nivel mundial. **Discusión y conclusiones:** los gobiernos deben formular políticas para la prevención e intervención dirigidas para abordar esta creciente preocupación de manera efectiva.

Palabras clave: uso de hachís, juventud, adicción a las drogas, revisión empírica, prevalencia de hachís.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: it is estimated that 229 million people consume hashish (cannabis) worldwide. In the last decade, there has been a 23% increase in cannabis consumption. A considerable number of studies have been conducted, both in the Global North and the Global South, regarding the factors and reasons that cause or lead to cannabis consumption among youth in different sociocultural contexts. **Objective:** the main objective of this study is to gain in-depth insights of the trends of hashish use among the young individuals from the empirical studies conducted across the Global North and Global South. **Method:** 65 empirical studies (scientific articles, reports, and books) were reviewed to develop a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the wide and growing prevalence of hashish among the general population, particularly among youth. The online databases Drug and Alcohol Use, Science Direct, Google Scholar, and JSTOR were consulted to identify relevant studies. **Results:** the findings of the study are organized under four lines: the first uses of hashish among humans; the prevalence of hashish among youth in the Global North; the prevalence of hashish use among youth in the Global South, and the factors that promote hashish use among youth worldwide. **Discussion and conclusions:** governments must formulate policies for prevention and intervention aimed at effectively addressing this growing concern.

Keywords: hashish use, youth, drug addiction, empirical review, hashish prevalence.

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INTRODUCTION

Hashish is a drug made from the resin of the female *cannabis Sativa* plant (Chouvy, 2023) and can be consumed jointly with a cigarette. The prevalence and increase in hashish use across societies have become a key focus of sociological research. The difference between the Global North and Global South is essential when examining global patterns of hashish use. The Global North is characterized by developed nations with high standards of living, healthcare systems, and access to resources (Müller, 2018; Odeh, 2010), while the Global South comprises countries that are still facing developmental challenges and economic instability (Randolph & Storper, 2022).

Several studies in both the Global North (Baltes-Flueckiger et al., 2023; Chiu et al., 2022; Patrick et al., 2023; Van Ruymbeke et al., 2020) and Global South (Brito et al., 2021; López-Méndez et al., 2021) have documented the factors that lead to hashish use and its impacts on users and society. This paper aims to survey and skim the findings of some of the available empirical studies on this topic. When studying hashish consumption, regional differences receive significant attention as its prevalence poses a highly concerning and persistent challenge to several nations around the globe currently fighting to eradicate and reduce hashish use. Several studies have raised concerns regarding the use of hashish among youth globally.

This paper, by sharing the findings of various studies conducted in different sociocultural contexts around the globe, asserts that the prevalence of hashish use among the young generation is more complex and varies among various regions of the world.

In 2022, an estimated 219 million individuals globally used hashish (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2023), while in 2023, the global statistics of hashish use individuals was 219 million (UNODC, 2023). This figure demonstrates a vivid increase in hashish use. Globally, hashish use has increased by 23% over the last decade and by 5% between 2022 and 2023 (UNODC, 2024). North America has the highest number of hashish users, with an estimated 16.6% of their population using it (Patrick et al., 2023), while in South Africa, the majority of the young population is under treatment due to hashish use (Belete et al., 2023). Interestingly, the percentage of women using hashish varies across regions, from 9% in Asia to 42% in North America (Agheñeței & Gălățeanu, 2023).

The use of hashish, particularly among adoles-

cents, poses significant health risks due to the ongoing development of the brain, specifically in areas involved in decision-making, emotional regulation, and impulse control (Nassif et al., 2023). Previous studies indicate that hashish use during adolescence alters neurodevelopment and is associated with an increased risk of long-term cognitive impairments, addiction, and mental health disorders (Cyrus et al., 2021; Gabri et al., 2022; Ouellette et al., 2024). While both hashish and marijuana are derived from the cannabis plant, hashish contains a higher concentration of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) than marijuana, which results in more potent effects (Helmi et al., 2024; Ryerson et al., 2024). Studies reveal that hashish use in adolescents leads to greater cognitive and psychological harm due to its potency (Nassif et al., 2023; Ouellette et al., 2024; Ryerson et al., 2024).

Young people are the most vulnerable age group to drug use. On a global scale, in 2021, the annual prevalence of Hashish usage among those aged between 15 and 16 years was 5.34%, whereas it was 4.3% among adults (Hall et al., 2024; Ismail et al., 2022; MacKenzie & Cservenka, 2023; UNODC, 2023). Hashish use poses a particularly high risk to young individuals (Hall & Lynskey, 2020). UNODC (2024) reported that 24 million young individuals aged under 25 years suffer from disorders caused by hashish use. Oceania has the highest percentage (39%) of young individuals under treatment with hashish use disorders, followed by South Africa (36%), America (18%), Europe (17%), and Asia (10%) at the bottom of the list. The above statistics show that Hashish usage affects society and individuals and needs serious attention. The main objective of this study is to gain in-depth insights of the trends of hashish use among the young individuals from the empirical studies conducted across the Global North and Global South.

METHOD

Design

It is worth noting that this paper is a review, and we did not conduct a meta-analysis. An empirical review is a critical synthesis of research studies that are based on direct observations or experimentations rather than purely theoretical or conceptual frameworks. This study purely focuses on evaluating studies that provide data obtained through empirical methods (Creswell, 2017). Empirical studies are often more reliable because they are based on ob-

servable data (Burns & Grove, 2010). As a result, the methodology section needs to follow the structure typically used for primary data analysis. However, we employed a systematic approach and specific criteria for selecting studies for inclusion.

Procedure

Our selection criteria focused on studies conducted on Hashish use among youth. To identify relevant studies, we used online databases related to drug use, especially hashish/marijuana. These databases were Drugs and Alcohol Use, Science Direct, Google Scholar and JSTOR. We searched the terms "Hashish", "Cannabis", "Youth hashish use", and "Factors of hashish use" on said databases in order to find the relevant research articles. These databases were selected based on our access to them from Pakistan. In addition to these databases, we also focused on annual reports prepared and published by different international and national organizations, such as the World Drug Report published every year on June 26th by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which includes three national reports and books (Specifically focusing on hashish use and its historical use) written and published on the use of Hashish. The article review process continued until we reached a saturation point in our capacity to access the literature we found through the abovementioned databases and books. We initially downloaded 85 empirical studies related to hashish use. After the initial screening, we selected 65 studies to include for this research paper. The reason for the rejection of 20 studies is that they focused on the adult population and discussed hashish alongside other drugs. We reached the point of data saturation after skimming 65 research studies (scientific articles, reports, and books), see Table 1. We have attempted to ensure the authenticity of the references in the literature and sources by querying Google Scholar.

RESULTS

A brief overview of the research findings is presented here to provide a comprehensive understanding of the prevalence of Hashish use from the ancient to the modern era and the factors promoting its use.

Early Uses of Hashish among Humans

Hashish has been one of the most famous recreational drugs used throughout history across different cultures and societies. In ancient times, it was

used for different purposes, including recreational, medicinal, and religious (Grivas, 1997; Pierro et al., 2023). Hashish is derived from the resin of a female cannabis plant, and it is believed that cannabis was the first plant domesticated by humans in history 12,000 years ago in China, where its seeds were used as food (Abel, 2013). Historically, the origins of hashish use among humans are traced back to the 3rd millennium BC in Central Asia, as hashish was buried with individuals who lived in 2500 BC in a graveyard in China (Benjamin, 2006; Clarke, 1998).

According to Iversen (2001), hashish was used as an analgesic in ancient times and was widely used for its ability to induce peaceful sleep. Benjamin (2006) similarly argued that hashish was used for the treatment of various mental and physical ailments, particularly in pain management. It was also viewed as a tool to establish in-depth connections with God.

Pierro et al. (2023) also assert that in ancient Egypt, Hashish was used as a central tool for unity and interaction with divine powers, and was seen as a source for higher consciousness and experiencing new spiritual realms.

It has also been used for leisure, and people use it for relaxation and escape from the toils of daily life. (Chopra & Chopra, 1957) argues that Hashish was used primarily for leisure in ancient India during 2000 BC. In Athar Vida (the sacred ancient writings of the Hindu religion), it is referred to as a source of joy and happiness, and is one of the five sacred plants gifted by the god Shiva. In the ancient Persian and Ottoman empires (the Muslim Golden Age), its use was customary among the elite class, and its medical and recreational use became habitual (Mechoulam & Shvo, 1963).

Hashish reached the Western world during the 19th century, gaining popularity for its medicinal and recreational properties (Britto, 2020; Mandel, 1966). During this period, prominent writers and poets documented their experiences with hashish, exploring its creative and euphoric effects in their works (Gray, 2023). Over time, the recreational use of hashish became more widespread, gradually overshadowing its medicinal applications.

In the 1960s, hashish became a symbol of resistance during the counterculture movement, attracting large numbers of individuals. The drug was glamorised in popular culture, with songs and films romanticising its effects (Agha & Nader, 2016). Following this popularity surge, international authorities acted to regulate its use. (The United Nations [UN], 1961) through the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, banned the cultivation, production, and

Table 1
Literature Review

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Title</i>
Abel, 2013	Global North	Marihuana: The First Twelve Thousand Years
Agha, & Nader, 2016	Global North	A Stylistic Analysis of the Beatles' 'Let it be'
Agheniței, & Gălățeanu, 2023	Global North	Global Drug Addiction
Ahmed et al., 2020	Global North	Hashish Addiction at Higher Education Institutions: Factors and Remedies
Aslam, 2019	Global North	Substance Use among Pakistani Youth -Current Situation, Preventive and Intervention Strategies
Baltes-Flueckiger et al., 2023	Global North	Effects of Cannabis Regulation in Switzerland: Study Protocol of a Randomized Controlled Trial
Belete et al., 2023	Global North	Cannabis Use in sub-Saharan Africa: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis
Benjamin, 2006	Global North	On Hashish
Bouquet et al., 2023	Global North	Recreational Cannabis Use: French Perspective of Adverse Effects
Brito et al., 2021	Global North	Recreational Cannabis Use: French Perspective of Adverse Effects
Brito et al., 2021	Global North	Licit and Illicit Substances Use among Brazilian Youth Population: A Cross-Sectional, Nationwide Study
Britto, 2020	Global North	Marijuana Boom: The Rise and Fall of Colombia's First Drug Paradise
Chiu et al., 2022	Global North	Trends in Cannabis Use Intention Around the Period of Cannabis Legalisation in Australia: An Age-Period-Cohort Model.
Chopra, 1957	Global North	The Use of the Cannabis Drugs in India
Chouvy, 2023	Global North	Moroccan Hashish As an Example of a Cannabis Terroir Product
Ciesluk et al., 2024	Global North	Cannabis Use in the UK: A Quantitative Comparison of Individual Differences in Medical and Recreational Cannabis Users.
Clarke, 1998	Global North	Hashish!
Daldegan-Bueno et al., 2022	Global North	Cannabis Use, Risk Behaviours and Harms in Brazil: A Comprehensive Review of Available Data Indicators
Duff et al., 2011	Global North	A Canadian Perspective on Cannabis Normalization among Adults
Faeh et al., 2006	Global North	Clustering of Smoking, Alcohol Drinking and Cannabis Use in Adolescents in A Rapidly Developing Country
Gonçalves et al., 2023	Global North	Cannabis Recreational Legalization and Prevalence of Simultaneous Cannabis and Alcohol Use in the United States
Gonçalves et al., 2023	Global North	Habit Forming: Drug Addiction in America, 1776-1914
Grivas, 1997	Global North	Cannabis, Marihuana, Hashish
Hall, & Lynskey, 2020	Global North	Assessing the Public Health Impacts of Legalizing Recreational Cannabis Use: The US Experience
Hall et al., 2024	Global North	Cannabis Use and Cannabis Use Disorders and their Treatment in the Europe.

Table 1 (Continuation)

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Title</i>
Haque et al., 2017	Global North	Cannabis Smoking and its Social Impact in A Village of Bangladesh: A Qualitative Study.
Ismail et al., 2022	Global North	Prevalence of Drug and Substance Use among Malaysian Youth: A Nationwide Survey
Iversen, 2001	Global North	The Science of Marijuana
Karki & Rangaswamy, 2023	Global North	A Review of Historical Context and Current Research on Cannabis Use in India
Khan, et al., 2020	Global North	Psychosocial and Socio-Environmental Factors Associated With Adolescents' Tobacco and Other Substance Use in Bangladesh
Kivuwa, & Muasa, 2023	Global North	Role of Family Functioning in Substance Addiction among Emerging Adults in Ongata Rongai Sub County In Kajiado County, Kenya
Kokkevi et al., 2006	Global North	Early Initiation of Cannabis Use: A Cross-National European Perspective
López-Méndez et al., 2021	Global North	Age-Specific Rates of Onset of Cannabis Use in Mexico
MacKenzie & Cservenka, 2023	Global North	Cannabis and Emotion Processing: A Review of Behavioral, Physiological, and Neural Responses
Mader et al., 2019	Global North	Correlates of Lifetime Cannabis Use and Cannabis Use Severity an A Canadian University Sample
Mahir & Thaseem, 2020	Global North	Some Aspects of Drug Addiction in Sri Lanka
Majid et al., 2023	Global North	Prevalence of Addiction in University Students of Asia
Makokha et al., 2021	Global North	Psychosocial Factors Influencing Drug Abuse among Youths in Informal Settlements: A Case Study of Mathare Slums, Nairobi County, Kenya
Malabadi et al., 2023	Global North	Medical Cannabis Sativa (Marijuana or Drug Type); the Story of Discovery of Δ^9 -Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)
Mandel, 1966	Global North	Hashish, Assassins, and the Love of God
Mechoulam, & Shvo, 1963	Global North	Hashish-I: The Structure of Cannabidiol.
Patrick et al., 2023	Global North	Monitoring the Future Panel Study Annual Report: National Data on Substance Use among Adults Ages 19 to 60, 1976-2022
Pierro et al., 2023	Global North	Cannabis: 12,000 Years of Experiences and Prejudices
Potter et al., 2013	Global North	World Wide Weed: Global Trends in Cannabis Cultivation and its Control
Poulton et al., 1997	Global North	Prevalence and Correlates of Cannabis Use and Dependence in Young New Zealanders
Raitasalo, et al., 2023	Global North	Changes in Co-Use of Alcohol and Cannabis among Nordic Adolescents in the 21st Century: Results from the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs Study.
Reilly et al., 2022	Global North	Long-Term Cannabis Use: Characteristics of Users in an Australian Rural Area
Rostam-Abadi et al., 2021	Global North	Evidence for an Increase in Cannabis Use in Iran - A Systematic Review and Trend Analysis

Table 1 (Continuation)

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Title</i>
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2022	Global	World Drug Report 2022
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2023	Global	World Drug Report 2023
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2024	Global	World Drug Report 2024
Ullah, et al., 2019	Global North	Effect of Chronic Hashish Consumption on Liver Function and Coagulation Profile in Hashish Users
Ullah, et al., 2019	Global North	Hashish Use as Health Risk Behaviour among Students in District Bajaur of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
Van Ruymbeke et al., 2020	Global North	Is Vulnerability Associated with Substance Use? A Study among Youth in Switzerland
Müller, 2018	Global North	In Search of the Global East: Thinking Between North and South
Odeh, 2010	Global North	A Comparative Analysis of Global North and Global South Economies
Randolph, & Storper, 2022	Global North	Is Urbanization in the Global South Fundamentally Different? Comparative Global Urban Analysis for the 21 st Century.
Nassif et al., 2023	Global North	Psychological Interventions for Cannabis Use among Adolescents and Young Adults: A Systematic Review.
Ouellette et al., 2024	Global North	Use of ENDS Devices and Modifications to Vape Cannabis among Adolescents and Young Adults who also Vape Nicotine.
Gabri et al., 2022	Global North	Changes in Cannabis Policy and Prevalence of Recreational Cannabis Use among Adolescents and Young Adults in Europe: An Interrupted Time-Series Analysis.
Cyrus et al., 2021	Global North	A Review Investigating the Relationship between Cannabis Use and Adolescent Cognitive Functioning
Helmi et al., 2024	Global North	Oral Health Status among Recreational Cannabis (Marijuana And Hashish) Users In the USA: A NHANES-Based Cross-Sectional Study.
Ryerson et al., 2024	Global North	Exploring the Relationship of Rurality and Region: An Analysis of Adolescent Marijuana Use in the United States.

use of hashish. In 1962, the UN released “A Note on the Problem and the History of International Action,” addressing the global misuse of hashish, particularly its illegal trade.

A significant breakthrough came in 1964 when Israeli scientist Dr. Raphael Mechoulam identified Delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) as the primary psychoactive compound in hashish, responsible for its euphoric effects (Malabadi et al., 2023). This discovery deepened the scientific understanding of hashish, further influencing its regulation and research worldwide.

Hashish Prevalence among Youth: Empirical Evidence from the Global North

Despite better living standards, Hashish is the most prevalent drug used by the young population in first-world countries. Baltes-Flueckiger et al. (2023) reported that, among developed nations, Switzerland has the highest percentage of Hashish-using individuals, 27.3%. Van Ruymbeke et al. (2020) conducted a longitudinal study among educated youth and reported that 22% of young individuals in schools and professional institutes use hashish daily, indicating that its use among youth is not only recreational, but

habitual.

In the United States of America, the [National Survey on Drug Use and Health \(2022\)](#) revealed that 22% of youth (61.1 million) had used Hashish once in the past year. [Patrick et al. \(2023\)](#) also confirmed the findings of the survey and argued that it is a popular drug among the young population; as shown in a recent study by [Gonçalves et al. \(2023\)](#), after the legalization of Hashish in more than 18 states, the ratio of its use among youth increased. These findings suggest that the legalization of recreational hashish use accelerated its use among the younger generation.

This trend is not limited to the United States; similar trends have been observed across Europe. [European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction \(2023\)](#) reported a 3% increase in Hashish use among young individuals throughout Europe. In Scandinavia, a study realized by [Raitasalo et al. \(2023\)](#) in Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, found that while alcohol consumption is declining among youth, hashish use is on the rise, suggesting a shift in substance use preferences.

In Australia, the [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(2023\)](#) reported that 36.1% of young people had tried hashish at least once, with a prevalence rate of 12.1%. [Chiu et al. \(2022\)](#) confirmed that hashish is the preferred drug among Australian youth, surpassing other substances in popularity. This aligns with global trends, where hashish is increasingly being used recreationally by younger individuals despite its legality status in various regions.

The situation in France is similar. [Rezag et al. \(2023\)](#) reported that 47.3% of the French population had tried hashish at least once, with an annual prevalence rate of 10.6%. In England, [Ciesluk et al. \(2024\)](#) highlighted that 15.4% of youth aged 15 to 25 are addicted to hashish, indicating that its use extends beyond experimentation to problematic levels.

Canada has also experienced rising rates of hashish use among young people. A recent survey by the [Canadian Health Department \(2023\)](#) revealed that 27% of the youth population uses hashish despite the legalization of cannabis for recreational purposes. The data suggests that the legalization of hashish has not reduced its use and it has actually increased, particularly among the youth.

The empirical data indicates that the growing prevalence of hashish use among youth in the Global North is increasing with the passage of time. Legalization efforts in some regions appear to have contributed to this increased use, potentially by both reducing the stigma attached to hashish use and

making it more accessible for young people. Furthermore, the shift from alcohol to hashish signals a change in the youth's attitude, where hashish is seen not only as a recreational tool but also as a substance of choice.

Hashish Prevalence among Youth: Empirical Evidence from the Global South

Among the numerous social challenges that developing countries face, drug addiction, particularly Hashish addiction, presents a significant concern for governments seeking to protect their populations. [Brito et al. \(2021\)](#), in a cross-sectional study of 8,581 young individuals aged 16 to 25, reported that 27.3% of respondents were addicted to Hashish.

[López-Méndez et al. \(2021\)](#) claim that 14% of the male youth population in Mexico consume Hashish daily, although the percentage among young females is 3.7%. The study further argues that its usage is more common among youth aged 17 and above.

However, the situation in Kenya is more severe than in other developing countries. In a study, [Musyoka et al. \(2020\)](#) stated that Hashish use has recently increased by 90% in Kenya. They further elaborate that one in every 53 young individuals is a regular Hashish user. [Makokha et al. \(2021\)](#) reported that in Kenya, Hashish is the most-common drug used by youth aged 15 to 25 residing in slums.

Additionally, the findings of a study realized by [Khan et al. \(2020\)](#) show that young individuals in Bangladesh prefer Hashish drugs over other drugs. According to statistics from the National Dangerous Drug Control Board (NDDCB, 2020) of Sri Lanka, 2% of youth use Hashish daily in the country. ([Mahir & Thaseem, 2020](#)) contend that hashish and heroin are the two drugs most commonly used by Sri Lankan youth. The survey results of [Iran Open Data \(IOD, 2022\)](#) reveal that 5.3% (4.5 million) of Iranian youth use drugs. The survey additionally reported that hashish is the most common, with 37% of youth being addicted to it, and it is followed by opium (17%).

Furthermore, [Rostam-Abadi et al. \(2021\)](#) conducted a systematic review of international and Iranian databases and reported that Hashish use increases by 1.3% annually among Iranian youth. Like other developing countries, India is no exception to this. According to [Karki & Rangaswamy \(2023\)](#), 2.8% of the population (31 million) uses Hashish daily.

They further reported that a 3% increase in Hashish use has occurred in recent years. Similarly, [Karki, & Rangaswamy \(2023\)](#), argues that it is the primary recreational drug among the young population of India, both in rural and urban populations.

Hashish stands out as one of the predominant drugs used by Pakistani youth. Aslam (2019) reported that 3.6% (5 million) of Pakistani youth use Hashish daily. Moreover, Majid et al. (2023) reported that Hashish is not only the prevalent drug among the general population, but also a very famous drug in educational institutes, where young individuals use it without any hesitation or fear.

Factors Promoting Hashish Use among Youth across the Globe

The factors that escalate hashish use among youth are more complex than their prevalence. Researchers in the developed world have conducted a significant number of studies on the causes of Hashish use among the young generation and found that these vary from country to country. For instance, in Switzerland, familial relations, social surroundings and peer pressure are the leading causes of Hashish use (Baltes-Flueckiger et al., 2023). Recent research in the United States of America has indicated that three social surroundings lead individuals to engage in Hashish use (Gonçalves et al., 2023; Patrick et al., 2023). Empirical studies conducted in Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, and Finland have revealed that, along with other risk factors, parental drug use is an influential factor in the initiation of hashish use among youth (Chiu et al., 2022; Poulton et al., 1997; Reilly et al., 2022). Studies conducted in France indicate that low parental supervision over social interactions and less communication with parents lead young individuals to use Hashish (Bouquet et al., 2023; Kokkevi et al., 2006). Studies in Canada take a different side and argue that young people use Hashish as a coping mechanism to reduce stress and homelessness (Duff et al., 2011; Mader et al., 2019).

A considerable number of studies conducted in developing countries present different findings concerning the risk factors associated with hashish use. The socioeconomic conditions and lack of educational opportunities in developing countries provide a background for their population to use drugs (Faeh et al., 2006). One of the main factors escalating hashish use in these countries is poverty and economic stress (Potter et al., 2013). Daldegan-Bueno et al. (2022) reported that the availability of Hashish and peer influence are the most common factors associated with Hashish use among youth in Brazil. Makokha et al. (2021) reported that early marriages, university and dropping out of school are the leading causes of hashish use in Kenyan youth.

A recent study realized in Kenya by Kivuva & Muasa (2023) reported that the easy availability and

poor parenting (lack of supervision, absence of parents) are the factors that escalate Hashish use among youth. Studies in Bangladesh have shown that unemployment, familial instability, and peer influence are the main causes of Hashish use (Haque et al., 2017; Khan et al., 2020). Empirical studies from Pakistan have shown that peer pressure, unemployment, easy availability, and media influence are the factors that influence Hashish use among the younger generation (Ahmed et al., 2020; Aslam, 2019; Majid et al., 2023; Ullah et al., 2019; Ullah et al., 2020).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of many studies conducted in different societies across the globe, we conclude that Hashish prevalence is not a single-country issue, but an international social problem that needs serious attention. Empirical studies have shown that Hashish use is increasing among the young population globally at a very high rate. The causes that escalate the use of Hashish are more complex than the prevalence. Peer pressure, easy availability, unemployment, coping mechanisms, personal issues, poverty, familial issues, a lack of parental supervision, the social environment, parental drug use, and media influence are the common factors that influence the use of Hashish among youth. These findings suggest that governments should formulate policies for targeted prevention and interventions to keep young people safe from the effects of Hashish use.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study include variability in research methodologies, such as differences in sample sizes, survey tools, and cultural contexts, and the fact that this review focused exclusively on hashish use among the young population, which limits the generalizability to other age groups.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Rooh Ullah: conceptualization, methodology, validation, investigation, resources, data curation and writing the article.

Hazir Ullah: conceptualization, methodology, supervision, formal analysis and article review and editing.

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