Project Title: Phenomenology of Drug Addiction: Exploring Substance Abuse and Recovery Through Experience

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Abstract:
America, much like the rest of the world, is currently in the midst of battling record breaking drug addiction. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reported in 2018 that prescription drug abuse, cocaine and opioid addiction have recently shattered the metrics from previous years. And while remarkable amounts of resources have been dedicated to slowing down the global dependency on addictive substances (and indeed many developments have been made), the consideration of victims of substance abuse and the experiences that are relevant to drug addiction has remained extremely underwhelming. In order to bridge the gap between those suffering from drug addiction and the professionals and systems that are in place to address drug addiction, this essay will act as an inventory of the feelings, thoughts, and experiences associated with substance abuse and recovery. We have gathered qualitative data through interviews with victims of drug addiction, either presently or having recovered from past abuse. In order to corroborate the reports provided by the random individuals that were interviewed, we have conducted research into cognitive science and provided quantitative data from prior studies. The central findings of the research conducted here produce a new perspective through which to view drug addiction as an intersectional issue that is far more than simply a set of chemical reactions or criminal activity. Additionally, the paper posits several new methods and insights into recovery and rehabilitation from drug addiction, culminating in a brief guide created to provide support for victims of substance abuse.