



Community study entitled:

**"Promoting digital drugs and their repercussions on family and community cohesion"**

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**Preparing teachers:**

<sup>1</sup>Ahmed Rasim Abbas Alowaidi, <sup>2</sup>Zena Falah Hassan Alhaeegy, <sup>3</sup>Thabet Ali Saleh

<sup>1</sup>Environmental Health Department - College of Environmental Sciences - Al-Qasim Green University [ahmedrasim@uoqasim.edu.iq](mailto:ahmedrasim@uoqasim.edu.iq)

<sup>2</sup>Department of Electronic Marketing and Sales - Technical Administration Institute - Middle Technical University [drzenaalhaeegy@mtu.edu.iq](mailto:drzenaalhaeegy@mtu.edu.iq)

<sup>3</sup>College of Administration and Economics - University of Kirkuk [thabet.saleh@uokirkuk.edu.iq](mailto:thabet.saleh@uokirkuk.edu.iq)

**Abstract**

This study aims to clarify the impact of digital drugs and promotion on the cohesion of the individual, family and society, as global interest in studying and tracking the phenomenon of digital drugs has increased recently as one of the outcomes of technical use and technological revolution and the latest types of drugs used in light of the widespread, unprecedented and uncontrolled use of digital technologies through social media permitted in many countries and societies, including Iraq, as consumption is no longer limited to traditional means of abuse, but its methods of abuse have evolved to become electronic and digital, which has led to the spread and prevalence of the phenomenon of addiction to the use of digital technologies for the purposes of pleasure and exploitation of leisure time to the extent that these technologies have become an imminent threat to family and societal cohesion and have pushed addicts to isolate themselves away from their families and communities and created a large gap between them and others, which requires raising the level of cognitive awareness of this dangerous phenomenon and finding solutions capable of containing it and limiting its spread.

**Keywords:** Digital drugs, promotion, addiction, family cohesion.

دراسة مجتمعية بعنوان:

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اعداد التدريسيين:

م. د. احمد راسم عباس

قسم الصحة البيئية- كلية علوم البيئة- جامعة القاسم الخضراء [ahmedrasim@uoqasim.edu.iq](mailto:ahmedrasim@uoqasim.edu.iq)

م. د. زينة فلاح حسن

قسم التسويق الالكتروني والمبيعات- معهد الادارة التقني- الجامعة التقنية الوسطى [drzenaalhaeegy@mtu.edu.iq](mailto:drzenaalhaeegy@mtu.edu.iq)

م. د. ثابت علي صالح

كلية الادارة والاقتصاد- جامعة كركوك

[thabet.saleh@uokirkuk.edu.iq](mailto:thabet.saleh@uokirkuk.edu.iq)

**المخلص**

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى توضيح اثر المخدرات الرقمية والترويج على تماسك الفرد والسرة والمجتمع, اذ تزايد الاهتمام العالمي بدراسة وتتبع ظاهرة المخدرات الرقمية في الآونة الأخيرة باعتبارها أحد إفرازات الاستخدام التقني والثورة التكنولوجية وأحدث أنواع المخدرات المستخدمة في ظل الاستخدام الواسع وغير المسبوق وغير المنضبط للتقنيات الرقمية عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي المسموح بها في العديد من الدول والمجتمعات ومنها العراق, إذ لم يعد الاستهلاك يقتصر



على الوسائل التقليدية للتعاطي، بل تطورت طرق تعاطيها لتتحول إلى إلكترونية ورقمية، مما أدى إلى انتشار وشيوع ظاهرة الإدمان على استخدام التقنيات الرقمية لأغراض المتعة واستغلال أوقات الفراغ إلى الحد الذي أصبحت فيه هذه التقنيات تشكل خطراً داهماً على التماسك الأسري والمجتمعي ودفعت المدمنين إلى عزل أنفسهم بعيداً عن أسرهم ومجتمعاتهم وخلق فجوة كبيرة بينهم وبين الآخرين، الأمر الذي يتطلب رفع المستوى الوعي المعرفي بهذه الظاهرة الخطيرة وإيجاد الحلول الكفيلة بتحجيمها والحد من انتشارها.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** المخدرات الرقمية، الترويج، الإدمان، التماسك الأسري

## Introduction

One of the many amazing achievements of the current day is the rise of the Internet, which has permeated every part of life to the point where the world has become like a little town where everyone can see and hear what is happening automatically and instantly. Although this was not intended, it must have had an effect on society at large and on its users' thoughts specifically. As a result, substances known as "digital drugs" or "iDoser", also known as "Binaural Beats," are sets of tones or sounds believed to induce changes in brain consciousness akin to actual drugs like heroin, cocaine, marijuana, and others have emerged. It is unfortunately, man insists on creating things that sadly hurt him in the hopes that doing so will make him enjoy life more and the benefits of the civilization he has attained (Ahmed and Fawzi, 2020).

Promoting digital medications that vibrate with electricity and have audio tones, their effects vary depending on the user's preference and the degree of their impact. They only need to cause the person to reach the stage of addiction, which is characterized by euphoria and numerous symptoms as noted by doctors, as well as psychological and physical dependency on the drug, making the need for it an urgent and forced requirement. These medications are dangerous since they are easily obtained through websites and may sometimes have the same effect as natural drugs (Li et al., 2022).

## The importance of the study

Studying digital drugs and their direct and indirect effects on social and familial cohesion is important because, in contrast to the benefits that were anticipated from them or the objectives that led technology scientists to create them, they are a phenomenon that came along with the drastic changes brought about by the technological revolution after the second half of the twentieth century and gave rise to what we can call the phenomenon of chronic addiction to the use of these technologies. This issue affects the great majority of society groups, some of whose members are impacted by this occurrence, rather than any one particular category. Thus, given the current stage of this phenomenon's expansion and prevalence, it is crucial to investigate it, pinpoint the dangers that contribute to its spread, and look for treatment options based on an analysis of diagnosed cases.

## The problem of the study

Undoubtedly, the rise of technology and the Internet has had a significant impact on social life in general and on the individual in particular, since some of it can be detrimental to both the individual and society at large and may have negative impacts on mental, psychological, physical, and physiological conditions. One of the new aberrant behaviors linked to the Internet is the



phenomena of digital drug misuse, which has become dangerous enough to endanger the lives and safety of young people in significant numbers, particularly in Western cultures. Since it has started to spread into some Arab societies, albeit not many so far, it has become crucial and the responsibility of science to attempt to understand the nature of this practice, its history and evolution, the cultural aspects connected to it, and the potential risks and harms to our Iraqi society's security, particularly the security of its youth, who are the most susceptible to such threats. There are numerous psychological, social, media, medical, legal, and economic facets to the problem of digital drug abuse, and many users are ignorant of the grave hazards associated with this behavior. Therefore, preventing the harm caused by digital pharmaceuticals is a multifaceted issue that calls for coordinated efforts in numerous fields. Thus, the goal of this study is to clarify what this issue is, how serious it is, how it affects Iraqi youth, families, and society, and ways to prevent it.

### **The aim of the study**

The main objective of the study is to identify the concept of digital drugs and the role of modern technology in promoting and selling them and the mechanisms to combat them, and the following objectives branch out from it:

1. Raising awareness of the family and society on how to use these contemporary drugs.
2. Shedding light on the dire consequences of drug abuse on the individual, family and society.
3. Shedding light on the methods of marketing and promoting these drugs in order to find appropriate legal and social frameworks to restrict and contain them.

### **Concept and origin**

In contrast to previously known drugs, new drugs have recently been discovered that pose a threat to society, including youth, through websites that are used to weaken the lives of youth and turn them into auditory drug addicts. These sites use carefully prepared music clips to cause brain disintegration in the event of an overdose, making them more dangerous psychologically and physically than psychotropic drugs, as they simulate a type of drug by reaching feelings or emotions that the user wants to reach, such as ecstasy (2013, Al-Majali). The German physicist Heinrich Wilhelm Dove was the first to discover this type of drug in 1839, and it was first used in 1970 to treat a group of patients with moderate depression who refused to take medications or other forms of treatment (Kalo, 2021). Although the use remained limited to specific categories, there was a significant change in 2011, particularly in France, where the phenomenon spread more widely and its use became what could be considered an epidemic. However, there was no media hype to go along with this widespread spread (Al-Khalidi, 2012). The idea of drugs and psychotropic chemicals needs to be defined in order to arrive at a precise and unambiguous definition of digital drugs. According to scientific definitions, pharmaceuticals are chemical substances that reduce pain and induce drowsiness, sleep, or unconsciousness. In terms of its legal meaning, it is a class of drugs that poison the nervous system and lead to addiction. Whether they are synthetic or natural medications, it is illegal to manufacture, trade, or cultivate them unless for legally permitted uses, and only those with a license may use them (Mohamed Marai, 2007).



Digital drugs, sometimes known as iDoser, are audio samples that users can listen to on specific websites. To utilize this kind of medicine, one must listen to these tones in both ears while wearing headphones. The impact of broadcasting specific frequencies in one ear and lesser frequencies in the other is what digital drug technology depends on. A disruption in brain activities concerning the level of electrical signals released by the brain may result from the brain's attempt to combine the two frequencies transmitted in both ears to create a single level of the two sounds. By doing this, online drug sellers regulate the level of electrical signals and disturbance to provide the necessary high for each user.

The abuser (user) and these frequencies mimic the effects of drugs taken orally, by injection, and by inhalation. For instance, cocaine use can produce euphoria and psychological effects by sending certain frequencies to the brain that cause electrical signals that mimic the effects of the real drug as if it were used (Aygün et al., 2023).

## Types of digital drugs

### 1- Digital drugs that mimic narcotic substances:

Numerous audio tracks that mimic the effects of drugs have been made available, in addition to other tracks that promote calmness and relaxation, like:

- a. Alcohol Waves: The goal of this opiate is to provide the listener with a soothing, relaxing feeling that is comparable to what alcohol produces when it is ingested.
- b. Opium Waves: The opiate track mimics the actual effects of opium by making the consumer feel euphoric, joyful, and drowsy.
- c. Marijuana waves: Marijuana waves induce euphoria and calmness, relax body processes, and produce the desire to use marijuana.
- d. Cocaine Waves: This composition contains notes that stimulate the nervous system, producing a sense of energy and activity that is similar to that of cocaine.
- e. Sexual waves: Similar to the experience of achieving the intended outcome during the sexual act, sexual tones provide the user with a sense of ecstasy.
- f. Entertainment waves: The user feels entertained and happy by this piece of music, as though he had everything he could ever want and lives in a condition of luxury and pleasure (Muhareb, 2010).

### 2-Digital drugs according to audio tracks:

Frequencies or sound tracks designed to change brainwave activity and stimulate different mental states are divided into several types, which are (Smith, 2019):

- a. Alpha Waves: Because binary pulses have frequencies ranging from 7 to 13 Hz, they can be used to promote relaxation and lower tension.
- b. Beta Waves: Binary pulses with frequencies between 13 and 30 Hz are used to improve concentration. At the higher end of the spectrum, this frequency range may also make people more anxious.
- c. Theta Waves: When practitioners adjust the binaural beats to a frequency of 4–7 Hz, it promotes REM sleep and meditation, which aids in creativity.



d. Delta Waves: enhances deep sleep and relaxation because, according to the results of brain scans with an electroencephalogram (EEG), people enter a deeper stage of sleep when the binaural beats in the delta pattern, which operate at a frequency of (0.5-4) Hz, are linked to dreamless sleep.

e. Gamma Waves: This frequency pattern, which spans from (30-50) Hz, is used to improve memory and cognitive processes. It also helps maintain arousal throughout waking hours.

### **The role of modern communication technologies in drug marketing**

The promotion of drugs through various websites on the World Wide Web and the efforts of certain nations to increase the drug trade through gangs and drug trafficking mafias globally are both heavily influenced by electronic means. Thus, we are attempting to clarify here the part the Internet plays in the promotion of various narcotic and psychotropic substances, up to the point where we get at what are now referred to as digital drugs:

### **Digital drug promotion mechanism**

According to (Al-Asi, 2004), promotion is "the function of informing, persuading, and influencing the consumer's purchasing decision." Digital drug use on the Internet entails the drug dealer receiving purchase orders for narcotics through his website while seated in front of his computer. In this case, the buyer downloads the desired substance in the form of files rather than having one of his minions deliver it, this is referred to as "digital drugs." In order to purchase the narcotic substance, the user selects the correct dose and its type from the list of doses on the website, each of which corresponds to the kind of drug the user desires

Where any drug-related content posted on these sites can reach a wide range of teens and young adults (Duggan and Smith, 2013). After that, he downloads the selected and bought tracks to an MP3 player and stereo headphones, lies down in a dimly lit room, covers his eyes, and concentrates on the music, which lasts for 15 to 30 minutes for mild medications and 45 minutes for extremely effective drugs. Digital drug traffickers verify the legitimacy of audio files or (audio and electronic drugs) on their websites. Since there is no law that makes it illegal to download audio files, even if they have a narcotic effect, the use of sound waves to simulate various sensations in the mind is already employed in other fields, including psychotherapy and the treatment of anxiety, tension, insomnia, and irregular sleep. These non-auditory waves influence the subconscious to regulate the marital state (Abdul Rahman, 2010).

To make as much money as they can, some companies, people, or even dishonest vendors advertise worthless goods and commit crimes. But like all other fields, this is an exception rather than a rule, and if it is abused, the intended outcome will not be met (Baker, 2008, 4-7).

According to a study by one of the websites that sells digital drugs, over 80% of users who followed the instructions in the guide were able to achieve the intended outcome. This indicates that digital drugs give users a written guide that outlines the steps that must be taken step-by-step to achieve the desired effectiveness (Shams El-Din, 2019).

### **Reasons for the spread of digital drugs**

#### **First: Psychological and social reasons:**



A. Psychological reasons, which are:

1. Curiosity, Experimentation, and Peer Influence: Many teenagers experiment with binaural beats to see if they can induce altered states of consciousness, relaxation, or a desire to blend in with their social group when adolescence is stigmatized as a period of exploration (2024, Loepky).
2. Reduce anxiety and stress: Due to the demands of school, social life, and future planning, many young people experience high levels of anxiety and stress as well as increased sleep issues. As a result, they use pulsatility as a tool to help manage these feelings in order to promote relaxation and reduce stress (since studies have shown that pulsatility can reduce pain and anxiety in medical contexts, and it is marketed as giving users similar sensations and mind-altering psychedelic effects) (2022, Barratt).
3. Mood enhancement: Pulses are used by some teenagers and even adults to lift their spirits or get rid of bad emotions. It may be appealing if the pulsations produce a feeling of serenity or perhaps moderate exhilaration.
4. Look for safe substitutes: For people who understand the dangers of substance usage, binary pulses could be seen as a less harmful way to get the same results without running the risk of legal or health issues

**B. Social causes, including:** (RMIT University, 2022)

1. Accessibility and Popularity: Drugs are becoming more and more popular and accessible due to their ease of access through websites like YouTube and Spotify, which appeals to people in general, particularly youth and teenagers.
2. Cultural trends: Psychedelics fall into this trend, appealing to people seeking out unusual methods to get high, the advent of internet culture has also increased the popularity of disciplines like mindfulness, meditation, and alternative therapies.
3. Impact of Media and Technology: It is impossible to overstate the impact of media and technology. Young individuals may become interested in and start experimenting with drugs after being exposed to drug-related content on social media, blogs, and videos.
4. Exploring Self and Identity: Identity formation and self-discovery occur during adolescence. They can use dual impulses to explore various facets of their emotions, consciousness, and personality (Barratt, Maddox, Smith, 2007).

### **Second: Technical reasons**

The following are some technical explanations for why teenagers and young adults might use dioptr as a digital drug:

- A. Personal devices: Teenagers can listen to binary pulses in private and at any time thanks to the widespread usage of personal gadgets like cellphones, tablets, and headphones.
- B. Technology integration: Numerous gadgets and applications have been created to improve the pulsation experience, providing functions like timers, adjustable frequencies, and integration with additional wellbeing resources (Bassino et al., 2024).
- C. Digital Culture: Adolescents who grew up with technology are more inclined to look into digital ways to decompress, concentrate, and feel better (and dual pulses go hand in hand with this digital tendency) (Anderson, 2022).



D. Social media influence: Testimonials and suggestions from influencers are frequently included in articles concerning binary pulses on social media sites. Interest and experimentation may be sparked by this exposure (Anderson, 2022.)

E. Creative Applications: High-quality dual-beat songs that may be tailored for particular effects, including promoting focus, relaxation, or better sleep, are now possible because to advancements in audio technology.

### **The risks and negative effects of digital drugs**

Like non-digital drugs, digital drugs have detrimental impacts on people's health and interactive systems, and their risks may be boiled down to two key areas:

#### **First: the dangers of digital drugs on the nervous system**

1. Digital drugs cause neurological and psychological effects because they use ear-tapping technology, which causes the brain to produce fast waves like beta waves, which are linked to alertness and concentration, and slow waves like alpha waves, which are linked to relaxation. Here, the user experiences hallucinations, a loss of mental, emotional, and physical equilibrium, and a condition of unconsciousness. Like the use of stimulants in some pathological circumstances as a psychological treatment, excessive usage of stimulant sounds can eventually result in anxiety or sleep disturbances (Abu Duh, 2016).

2. According to some experts in 1992, digital drugs have an impact on children's and adolescents' normal nervous system development as well as their cognitive function, and their health effects are comparable to those of natural and synthetic drugs.

3. Because the noises aimed at the ears are approximately 400 Hz, not following the guidelines for tapping on the ears at various frequencies can cause major harm to the neurological and auditory systems, particularly with repeated use (Sahafan, 2017).

#### **Second: The dangers of digital drugs on the psychological and social state.**

1. Young people's capacity to adjust socially and at home is weakened as a result of their detachment from reality and pursuit of bliss for which there is no scientific proof.

2. Reduced productivity brought on by a person's disengagement from reality.

3. This kind of sound has a psychological addiction rather than a physical one (Sahafan, 2017).

### **Ways of prevention and protection**

**First:** at the level of the family: The following advice can assist parents in preventing their kids from becoming addicted to digital drugs (Alam et al., 2019; Marwa, 2024):

1. Keep an eye on the audio content kids spend a lot of time listening to online.
2. Strictly regulate minors and teach them about the risks associated with digital medicines.
3. Make the most of your leisure time by practicing practical skills like athletics or drawing.
4. Discuss concerns with kids and offer constructive answers to their issues.
5. Keep them under control, especially during adolescence, and avoid using violence or threats to deal with them.
6. Help kids become more self-assured and give them all the support they need to encounter life's adventures.

**Second:** the following preventive measures can be taken to lessen the effects of digital drugs and electronic device addiction, particularly in young children (Al-Khalidi, 2019; Ding and Li, 2023):



1. In collaboration with other pertinent authorities, government agencies, particularly the Ministries of Interior and Communications, as well as the National Security Agency, monitor and prohibit websites and audio snippets prior to their promotion and dissemination.
2. Putting into practice creative awareness campaigns and events by committees with expertise in psychological and educational counseling that align with youth perspectives and target educational institutions, athletic events, and artistic gatherings in collaboration with their administrations.
3. Educating families on how to enforce self-control on their children by fostering a cooperative relationship between the school counselor and the adolescent's family.
4. Computers and smartphones should not be placed in the juvenile rooms. When possible, it is better to limit the programs that the juvenile can access.
- Extending such a study to encompass the largest living area of the survey and an integrated multi-methodological survey, i.e., qualitative and quantitative, because statistics are crucial in demonstrating the gravity of the issue and its long-term effects on both individuals and society.
5. Because family breakdown was present in the great majority of diagnosed cases, special research on the connection between digital drug addiction and family disintegration should be conducted.
- In order to establish practical solutions to this issue, it is better to carry out a thorough investigation by a group of experts in the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, and psychology to determine the elements that contribute to and promote the creation and growth of this problem.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

From the above, a set of results can be drawn as follows:

1. The effects of digital drugs, a novel kind of drug used in virtual reality that consists of a series of tones or sounds thought to alter the brain's state of consciousness, are comparable to those of real drugs. This has become a significant issue for users, their families, and society at large.
2. Digital drugs target young people, taking advantage of their passion for virtual worlds and all of their applications and drawbacks.
3. Statistics from various nations demonstrate the extent of these drugs' danger and their rapid spread, as seen by their global dissemination.
4. The proliferation of websites that support the use of drugs and psychotropic substances and draw a lot of users from consumers.
5. The growing role of the dark web and deep web in drug sales and promotion.
6. The ease of accessing digital drugs, given the virtual world's poor legal monitoring, which contradicts thousands of people's rights to access this information network.
7. It's crucial to remember that this material is real, non-perishable, and can be stored on any device and used whenever you want without any kind of control or accountability. It can also be readily shared among thousands of people.

**Based on the aforementioned findings, we recommend the following:**



1. The necessity of making the sale and advertising of drugs or psychotropic substances illegal, as well as equipping law enforcement, the judiciary, and legislative bodies with the knowledge and resources they need to successfully tackle online drug offenses.
2. To drastically alter social behaviors in the digital age, it is necessary to strike a good balance between screen time and the social time it replaces.
3. Removing websites that encourage the marketing of psychotropic substances, including digital drugs, on a regular basis and using cutting-edge methods to monitor and disrupt online drug networks in all their manifestations.
4. For people with drug use disorders, smartphone applications can offer real-time monitoring and help, including coping mechanisms, reminders, and direct connection to support groups.
5. Making the sale and advertising of drugs or psychotropic substances illegal must entail.
6. Transparent strategies should be followed by drug enforcement organizations to routinely exchange resources and information on cutting-edge digital drug trafficking techniques.
7. Reduce the use of new technologies in the promotion and sale of psychotropic substances by focusing on improving collaboration between anti-drug agencies and corresponding anti-cybercrime units in adjacent nations and the rest of the globe.
8. Increasing family awareness in a variety of ways, the most crucial ones being:
  - a. Clearly define internet usage guidelines, such as time restrictions and permitted websites or applications.
  - b. To keep an eye on and limit access to unsuitable content, use parental control software.
  - c. To better grasp what youngsters might be dealing with, have a basic understanding of the most recent digital trends and potential threats.
  - d. Try to establish online groups and parent forums where people can exchange tips and experiences.

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