NATIONWIDE STUDY REVEALS WE ARE A NATION OF ADDICTS

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Nearly three quarters of UK population admits to at least one compulsive habit

THE human mind comes under increased scrutiny today as initial findings from a study 'A Nation of Addicts' is published, which looks at unwanted habits and addictive behavior.

Just as millions of us begin to give up on our New Year's Resolutions to make improvements in our lives, initial data from the report shows a staggering 71 per cent of Britons admit to having at least one compulsive bad habit.

These bad 'habits' include serious issues such as illegal drug use, which Government figures say affect around one in ten UK adults, rising to one in five adults under the age of 25*.

But the 'Nation of Addicts' report also looks specifically at more benign behavior such as using shopping or eating to improve mood – one-in-five (22 per cent) and one-in-three (29 per cent) respectively.

All are affected –young and old, men and women – although some stark contrasts are revealed:

- Four in five (80 per cent) young people (18-34yr olds) consider themselves to have at least one bad habit, dropping to three in five (63 per cent) of the older population (55yrs +).
- Most regions show an average of just under three quarters of the population admitting to an addictive habit, but this rises to 84 per cent in the North East.

Shopping to make yourself feel happier is a habit displayed across all demographics, but is worst in women – 30 per cent of women versus 13 per cent of men.And is more common amongst the younger generation affecting 30 per cent 18-34yr olds against just 14 per cent of 55yrs+.

"There is no clear medical definition for when a habit becomes an addiction, but generally speaking it is when a person experiences negative emotional or physical effects as a result of a behavior," explains Tim Smale, a performance coach who uses his 'Stop Switch' approach to beat the psychological side of addiction.

One in three (33 per cent) respondents to the research said they considered their 'habit' to reduce their enjoyment of life, with 12 per cent specifically citing money problems as a negative knock-on effect.

One in six (16 per cent) said it caused tension with family or friends.Londoners reported the worst negative effects with nearly a quarter (23 per cent) saying their 'habit' caused arguments.

"The harmful and life threatening impact of addictions to drugs and alcohol are well documented, and we are also becoming more aware of the effects of other compulsive behavior dealing with shopping, food and mobile phones" explains Tim Smale.

"What the study also shows however, is the negative impact of all types of addiction.I treat people with these types of addictions and habits every day, but I was shocked by the sheer numbers admitting to obsessive, unwanted, habitual behavior.

"It reveals a worrying propensity in human nature for self destructive habit exploding the popular myth of the 'addictive personality' and showing that all of us are prone to addictive behavior of some sort.

"It is possible for all of us to become psychologically addicted to anything if it gives us an instant gratification.When an individual's life is negatively affected by a behavior of any sort, this is the time they need help to overcome it," Tim Smale concludes.

- Ends –

About the study

The full report 'A Nation of Addicts' is scheduled for publication in February 2015.

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It includes both primary and secondary quantitative data from omnibus survey(s) as well as qualitative information taken from a series of one-to-one interviews with addicts and those seeking help to change undesirable, habitual behaviour.

Data in this news release is taken from the quantitative survey undertaken by Opinium Research (www.opinium.co.uk) on 8th December 2014.It was an online survey amongst 2002 UK adults (all figures used have been weighted to nationally representative criteria) by Opinium Research.Data tables, further information or requests to speak to Opinium Research can be provided upon request.

About Tim Smale

Tim has been a behaviour coach since 2003. He re-trained as a clinical hypnotherapist after 20 years of corporate life following a chance encounter with a hypnotist when his son was undergoing treatment for cancer. The hypnotherapy experience gave him a new perspective on life and helped him cope with the family crisis. It also inspired him to change career. Since then he has grown a busy practice in Trafalgar Square treating performance issues, fears and addictions of a wide variety of clients.

More than ten years later and Tim has worked with thousands of people from all walks of life to help overcome unwanted habits and behaviours in the first instance by helping them change the way they think and why. This form of rapid change process using cognitive behavioural therapy, simple neuroscience, hypnosis and nlp techniques gave him the inspiration to create The Stop Switch brand. The Stop Switch represents the part of our unconscious we need to access to rewire our thinking to stop doing stuff we don't want to do.

Tim believes we all have the innate ability to change any number of unwanted behaviours using this approach and his first ***free App*** for smart phones and tablets for ***quitting smoking*** is now available via the Apple store and Google Play

***Additional Sources:**

http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Professionals - government data on alcoholism

https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/reducing-drugs-misuse-and-dependence - latest government figures on illegal drug use

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