
**DRUG ABUSE AND ALCOHOL USAGE AMONG YOUTHS IN KANO
METROPOLITAN AREA: A PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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ABSTRACT

This paper is in attempt to offer a better understanding of Drug abuse and Alcohol consumption among youths and its consequences, as well as the need to better understand social and cultural influences on the usage. As drug abuse and Alcohol usage among youths is a global health and social problem with distinct conditions and problems that vary locally. The use of psychoactive substances among youths has become a subject of public concern worldwide due to the fact that it contributes potentially to deliberate or undeliberate harm/injury. This misuse of substance in the northern Nigeria has recently become rampant which call for a serious concern both nationally and internationally, despite the efforts of the Nigerian tiers of Government and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) to stem to its tide in Nigeria, there has been a consistent spate in the number of cases especially among youths. Thus, substance use affects developing brain by increasing the risk of addiction, mood disorders, lowered impulse control, increased risk for adverse consequences, confusion, cognitive impairment, and medical morbidity, which can contribute to hospitalizations and health care costs, as well as loss of independence and has been known to increase risky sexual activity, emphysema, lung cancer, heart disease, oral cancers, laryngeal carcinoma, and a number of other health issues in older age, decreased academic grades, and making poor decisions, that can be detrimental to the youths in using or to other crimes, militancy and violence behaviors etc. The paper will conclude by prescribing some ways of curbing the menace arising from drug abuse and alcohol usage among youths.

KEYWORDS:Alcohol Usage, Addiction, Drug abuse, Psycho-Social Effects, and Youths.

INTRODUCTION

In the first two decades after Nigeria gained its independence, drug trafficking activities were rare. Things began to change in the 1980s. Indian heroin began to be funneled through Nigeria on its way to Europe. The criminal groups handling these wares soon forged alliances with South American illicit drug manufacturers and added cocaine to the drugs they were distributing. In the 1990s, these criminal groups became more sophisticated. Cannabis began to be produced within Nigeria, and psychotropic drugs were added to the list of trafficked products. Trafficking channels became more complex and methods of moving drugs more diverse (Nnachi, 2007).

Drug abuse and alcohol usage is one of the health-related problems among Nigerian youth and has been a source of concern to national stakeholders (Abudu, 2008). Drug abuse and alcohol usage among Nigerian youth has been a scourge to the overall sustainable development of the nation (UNODC, 2007). Thus; substance abuse is a serious

issue; a global and international issue particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. Drug abuse and alcohol usage is also a major public health, social and individual problem and is seen as an aggravating factor for economic crises; hence, for Nigeria's poverty status. According to Giade, (2011), any nation being used by drug barons as a transit route has the potentials of becoming a drugs abuse consumer's country, drugs abuse threaten the security of every nation, tearing apart our societies, spawning crime, spreading diseases such as aids, and killing our youths and our future".

Drugs are everywhere in our cities in Nigeria, motor parks, Street corners, joints on campuses, uncompleted buildings, under flyovers. From a survey of SabonGari, France Road, Igbo Road, among others in Kano, Ring Road outlets in Benin City, Ajegule in Lagos, Mabushi in Abuja, under flyover in Onitsha will astonish you of the number of youths involved in the intake of cannabis and other drugs (Abudu 2008; Oshodi, Aina&Onajole, 2010).

Nigeria's post-independence development objectives were intended to provide stability, material prosperity, peace and social progress (Galtung, 1990). These objectives, however, have not been satisfactorily achieved due to a number of factors, including poor governance, systemic inequalities related to structural and cultural violence, unequal representation among decision-makers, and violent resolution of disputes due to poor conflict management mechanisms (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2016). Both individual and group grievances are presented to a weak system of governance with institutions often dictated by a system of patronage politics and corruption (Jerome, 2015). Drug is any chemical substance which when taking into the body interact with tissues to modify the biochemical process of the body (Global Burden of Disease Study, 2013). Some of the drug exerts major effect on the body or brain causing (sleeping) stimulation which results in change of mode and behavior (Mosby's Medical, Nursing & Allied Health Dictionary, 2002). Substance abuse is widespread with an estimated 120 million users of hard drugs such as cocaine, heroin, and other synthetic drugs. Therefore, drugs which exert their major effects on the brain and psychological functioning, resulting in such effects like sedation, stimulation, or change in mood or behaviour are called psychoactive substances. The maladaptive use of such substances such as when they are not medically necessary, when they are used against legal prohibition or when there is a maladaptive or excessive use of socially acceptable drugs, resulting in significant impairment in personal, social and occupational functioning constitute the phenomenon of drug abuse (Burns, 1988). (Odejide and Morakinyo (2004).

Similarly, the fact that drug use is related to crime, cultist and militancy behaviours especially in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, the importance of mental health during the adolescent period is critical (Abdulraheem, Olalekan, &Abasiekong, 2018). The knowledge about substance use and its devastating consequences should be highlighted. Tackling the underage substance abuse problem is indeed extremely complex, but it seems education and creation of green jobs for adolescents may play a key role (Funmilayo, Robert, Olalekan, Okoyen, &Tuebi, 2019). Also, Nigeria may need to borrow a leaf from other countries with severe penalties against illicit drug peddling to check imminent catastrophe looming on the nation. This truth is bitter considering the consequences of the societal

hazard as we are beginning to experience in Yenagoa and its environs. As such, alcohol-related problems can be divided into the problems caused by individual occasions of drinking and those due to prolonged consumption. Intoxication acutely weakens the ability to think, observe and react and decreases inhibitions and judgement. It can lead to dangerous situations such as unprotected sex, dangerous behaviour causing injuries, being raped or assaulted, and committing various crimes. Long term problems include, in addition to the above mentioned serious health hazards, detrimental social and psychological consequences. Relationships with family and friends can suffer as well as hobbies, studies, careers and finances (Mäkelä et. al., 2010).

In view of the above, the paper examines young people who persistently abuse substances, alcohol usage and often experience an array of problems in developed and developing countries.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Drug

This can be defined as a substance that could bring about a change in the biological function through its chemical actions (Okoye, 2001). It is also considered as a substance that modifies perceptions, cognition, mood, behavior and general body functions (Balogun, 2006).

According to Fawa (2003), "Drug is defined as any substance, which is used for treatment or prevention of a disease in man and animals. Drug alters the body functions either positively or otherwise depending on the body composition of the user, the type of drug used, the amount used and whether used singly or with other drugs at the same time".

Drug Abuse

On the one hand, drug has been defined as any chemical substance which affects a living organism; such substance may be used to fight infections and illness or minimize pain, fatigue, anxiety or at times to achieve certain level of euphoria. (Oluremi, 2012), Drug Abuse is the harmful use of mind altering drugs. It added that the term usually refers to problem with illegal drugs, which also include harmful use of legal prescription drugs, Such as in self-medication.

Alcohol Usage

This is a clear liquid that has a strong smell, which is used in some medicines and other products. Alcohol is regarded as the most widely abused substance and early alcohol use is the leading factor in heavy and abusive use of alcohol, and it has been the third leading cause of death within the United States and third world countries. Hornby (2000:26), "Drinks such as beer, wine, etc that can make people drunk or that colorless liquid that is found in drinks such as beer, wine etc and is used in medicines, cleaning product, etc".

Youth

Summer (2003:1920), defines youth as "the period of time when someone is young especially the period when someone is a teenager". From Hornby (2000:1389), "youth is

the time of life when a person is young, especially the time before a child becomes an adult”.

Issues on Drug Abuse and Alcohol usage among Youths: A Global Review

An estimated quarter of a billion people, or around 5 per cent of the global adult population, use drugs at least once, more worrisome is the fact that about 29.5 million of those drug users, or 0.6 per cent of the global adult population, suffer from drug use disorders (UNODC, 2017). Globally, deaths directly caused by the use of drugs increased by 60 per cent from 2000 to 2015 World drug report (UNODC, 2018).

According to 2012 International Narcotics Control Board Report INCB, 2013) the prevalence of drug abuse is as a result of increase in drug trafficking people had easy accessibility to these drugs. Drug trafficking is a global phenomenon. The report further states that in the last 10 years, West Africa has become the new transit hub for cocaine enroute Latin America and Europe, with Nigeria's commercial capital Lagos emerging as the most active center for air trafficking of cocaine.

A person who allows himself/herself to be controlled by a psychoactive substance is called a 'drug abuser' (Mahmoud & Jospeh, 2020). A drug abuser brings forth a condition called neurological functions and his/her moods, perception, consciousness, and energy levels change and the drugs can take over his/her normal functioning and well-being (Aminu, & Ahmed, 2019). The negligent use of any substance, mostly the ones that have effects on one's consciousness like alcohol, cocaine, codeine, and methamphetamines results in discomfort and malfunction (Mahmoud & Jospeh, 2020).

The extent of worldwide psychoactive substance use is estimated at 2 billion alcohol users, 1.3 billion smokers and 185 million drug users (WHO, 2002). In an initial estimate of factors responsible for the global burden of disease, tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs contributed together 12.4% of all deaths worldwide in the year 2000 (WHO, 2002). Globally, it is estimated that in 2010 between 153 million and 300 million people aged 15-64 (3.4-6.6 per cent of the world's population in that age group) had used an illicit substance at least once in the previous year (UNODC, 2012).

According to the research article published by the United Nations in 2012, the extent of illicit drug use has thus remained stable, but the estimated 15.5 million-38.6 million problem drug users (almost 12 per cent of illicit drug users), including those with drug dependence and drug-use disorders, remain a particular concern. It is also estimated that there were between 99,000 and 253,000 deaths globally in 2010 as a result of illicit drug use, with drug-related deaths accounting for between 0.5 and 1.3 per cent of all-cause mortality among those aged 15-64 according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime World Drug Report of 2012 (UNODC, 2012).

Reports all over the world have shown increasing trends in substance abuse among teenagers, youths, commercial bus drivers and other categories of people and with the antecedent public health problems associated with the abuse of these substances (Cherpitel et al., 2003; Welcome and Pereverzev, 2010; UNODC, 2012).

In essence, the issues of drug abuse and alcohol usage is a huge global health and critical problems which has made it a matter of significant public health importance in

most countries and it is associated with several social and economic consequences such as failure to meet work, family, or school obligations, interpersonal conflicts, legal problems, addiction and HIV/AIDS which are serious consequences in this our contemporary era.

Trends of Drug Abuse and Alcohol usage among Youths in Third World Countries

The prevalence and consequences of drug abuse and alcohol usage among youths in third world countries including Nigeria should be a matter of concern to all stakeholders, such as governments, scholars, policy makers, law enforcement agencies, non-governmental organizations and among others relevant agencies to curb this menace or new trend. Thus; the magnitude of drug criminal business and its internationalization places like Nigeria at the very center of one of the most dynamic drug routes in the world. This worrisome issue is no comprehensive data is available on the estimated number of illicit drug user in Nigeria.

Many adolescents who are into drugs do not actually understand the effects while others do not consider the consequences because of the satisfaction they derive from it. Steve, Nadra and Mark (2011) revealed drug abuse has become a social problem in Nigeria while Osunde (2006) noted that drug abuse causes brain and liver damage, depression, family disintegration, and can lead to criminal offences.

Male and female respondents did not differ in their perceptions. This is because drug use is no longer gender stereotyped and an adolescent's current style of using drug has changed over the decades. Brewer and Potenza (2008) explained that currently, recreational drugs are used for various reasons such as modifying emotions or inducing a state of alertness. Carla (2002) discovered that the consumption of substance use among women has increased over the centuries and that the use of drugs has taken on a new dimension from what it used to be in the past. This might be as results of the fact that people believe that men and women use drugs for different reasons. Culturally, females are not expected to abuse drugs but this trend has changed over time. Ahmed (2013) study has clearly revealed that the high rate of drug use among females has resulted in a lot of damage.

The current trend in the use of drugs among adolescents in secondary school is not an unusual phenomenon. The drugs that are in vogue among students are coffee, inhalant substances, analgesics such as Tramadol while Indian hemp, alcohol and cigarettes are abused sparingly (Adebowale et al, 2013). Also, Muazu and Aliyu (2008) noted that drug abuse can lead to psychiatric problems such as schizophrenia. So the drug and alcohol problem has a different impact on the different communities. For instance, in the northern part of Sudan is predominantly Arab Muslims, and alcohol is considered a vice and rejected by Muslim society. Alcohol drinking is not practiced in public rather in hidden way because a drunken person is sometimes considered as an outcast especially in the countryside. Restrepo (2006) is said that the spread of cannabis abuse in the last few years is partially due to the fact that cannabis is preferred because it has not much smell when smoked, whereas alcohol is detectable by the smell. Alcohol is sold in bars, groceries and hotels without restriction (Bremmer, 2009). "Marissa", the native beer, is sold and drunk in "in days" (native bars) in all town and villages. "Marissa", is the drink of the lower class. In

some cases, communities consider “Marissa” “Haram”, i.e. prohibited by Islam, although it is known that it intoxicates when drunk in excess.

According to NAFDAC (2000), the following drugs were used and misused in almost every part of Nigeria. They are stimulants, hallucinogens, sedatives, miscellaneous and tranquilizers.

Narcotics

These drugs relieve pain, induce sleep and are addictive. They are found in heroin, codeine, opium, etc.

Sedatives

These drugs are among the most widely used and abused because of the belief that they relieve stress and anxiety. Some of them induce sleep, ease tension, cause relaxation or help users to forget their problems. They are sourced from valium, alcohol, promethazine, and chloroform.

Miscellaneous

This is a group of volatile solvents or inhalants that provide euphoria, emotional disinhibiting and ever-lasting distortion of thought to the user. The main sources are glues, spot removers, tube repair, perfumes, chemicals, etc.

Tranquilizers

Tranquilizers are believed to produce calmness without bringing drowsiness. They are chiefly derived from Librium, Valium among others.

Stimulants

These are substances that act and stimulate the central nervous system directly. The users of these substances at the initial stage experience pleasant effects such as energy increases. The major source of these comes from caffeine substances.

Hallucinogens

These are drugs that alter the sensory processing unit in the brain. They produce distorted perception, feelings of anxiety and euphoria, sadness and inner joy. They normally come from marijuana, LSD, etc.

In nutshell, the abuse of psychoactive drugs among youths is an issue of national importance. Concerns have focused not only on the physiologic and behavioral impact of substance abuse on the youths but also on the public health hazards. Substance abuse is increasing at an alarming rate, causing serious threats to every nation, by deteriorating health, increasing crimes, and hampering productivity, destroying relationships, eroding social and moral values and impeding the overall progress of societies.

Consequences of Drug Abuse and Alcohol Usage

Drug abuse and alcohol usage disorders are associated with a wide range of short- and long-term health effects. They can vary depending on the type of drug, how much and how often it's taken and the person's general health. Overall, the effects of drug abuse and dependence can be far-reaching. They can impact almost every organ in the human body. Thus;

*A weakened immune system, increasing the risk of illness and infection;
Heart conditions ranging from abnormal heart rates to heart attacks and collapsed veins and blood vessel infections from injected drugs;
Nausea and abdominal pain, which can also lead to changes in appetite and weight loss;
Increased strain on the liver, which puts the person at risk of significant liver damage or liver failure;
Seizures, stroke, mental confusion and brain damage;
Lung disease;
Problems with memory, attention and decision-making, which make daily living more difficult;
Global effects of drugs on the body, such as breast development in men and increases in body temperature, which can lead to other health problems.*

PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK

The importance of theory, in any criminological discourse, cannot be over-emphasized, as it helps in broadening and integrating our view about any social phenomenon. Thus, sociological theory is a set of ideas which claims to explain how society or aspects of society work (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008).

Socio-cultural theory grew from the work of seminal psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), who believed that parents, caregivers, peers, and the culture at large were responsible for developing higher-order functions, as socio-cultural theory focuses not only how adults and peers influence individual learning, but also on how cultural beliefs and attitudes affect how learning takes place. Therefore, socio-cultural theory is the philosophical framework for the theme discussed. According to Vygotsky, learning has its basis in interacting with other people. Thus, the theory maintains that abuse is determined by socio-cultural values of the people. For instance, while certain cultures permit the consumption of alcohol and marijuana, other cultures do not. For instance, the Urhobo, Ijaw, Ibibio, Edo, Igbo, Yoruba and Itsekiri, alcohol i.e. Ogogoro is used in cultural activities. In Northern Nigeria, alcohol is forbidden due to Sharia law. However, the sharing law does not forbid cigarette consumption and thus nicotine dependence. It should be noted, however that no theory fully explains the etiology of drug abuse. This is due to individual differences. It then becomes obvious that the disorder (drug abuse) is an acquired one. The acquisition then is dependent on a host of personal inclinations and environmental factors, a situation explained suggestively by Bandura (1986) social cognitive theory, i.e the triadic reciprocity involving behavior, environment and the person.

CONCLUSION

People around the world since prehistoric times have turned to drugs to lessen physical pain or alter their state of consciousness. Drug use was generally limited to people who had reached maturity or in very particular situations. Currently, drug use and abuse is a very serious social and public health problem that generates great social concern of the present times. This is due to the widespread drug consumption in many sectors of the population, the decline in the age of usage, initiation and the severity of the individual and

community consequences of the phenomenon on the three levels considered in the current concept of health, physical, psychological and social. A society that has lost her youths is a hopeless society and thus, drug abuse will be a problem to such society. Also, the chapter is of view that continued use of substances could cause cancer, diminish life expectancy or even result to death, chronic pain and other health challenges. In spite of the adverse effects associated with substance abuse, a significant number of people, including females, are still engaging in substance abuse and alcohol usage, affecting all segments of society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The government should put more effort in strengthening the existing enforce laws to regulate the production and consumption of the Cigarrete, cough syrup (codeine) and planting of marijuana (indium hemp)The NDLEA should partner with religious organizations and other community-based organizations to have regular counselling sessions with members of the public in order to keep them away from engaging in substance abuse. This may provide insights to substance abusers and enable them to realize that substance abuse is an irresponsible act and as such must be avoided;

Government should establish laws that will entails serious fine and grievous punishments for those found guilty such would address the wider availability of drugs in the society;

Drug enforcement agents should be empowered with adequate resources to be effective in the fight against drug use and misuse in the societies;

Building community coalitions within the housing developments that include the community police force, which will see the coalitions as working towards mutually agreeable ways to deal with the social issues confronting the metropolis as these coalitions will bring the elders, youth and police together to foster a better understanding of youth role in the society;

Drug control counseling centers should be established in every community and qualified health counselors should be employed in helping drug addicts by giving them special advice on how to go about the withdrawal system;

Drugs and Administration and Control (NAFDAC) need to introduce more punitive measures to check drug abuse, and by working hard to reduce the ease of buying and selling drugs. All that is needed to get rid of this menace in our society is the right attitude and the will. State governors must also join the fight. Like the efforts of some states, particularly Kano, to tackle the problem by banning the production and distribution of cough syrups containing codeine and tramadol, are a good start should be encouraged.

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