

PERCEPTION OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG YOUTH AT DAWAKI WEST WARD OF DAWAKIN TOFA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KANO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the perception of drug abuse among youths in Dawaki west ward in Dawakin Tofa local government area, Kano state, Nigeria. Interview and questionnaires methods were used to obtain the responses from the sixty five (65) respondents. The result showed that most of the youths who abuse drugs were found between the ages of 15-30 years. Significant number of youths do not have knowledge of the effects of drug abuse. This paper concludes that drug abuse has become a human tragedy affecting virtually society. It's recommended that more awareness should be made on drug abuse, parents should spend enough time to attend to the needs of their children and guide them properly as they grow. Parents should also monitor the kind of friends their children keep, so that they can guide them against bad company.

Keywords: *Drug abuse, drug use, perception, youth.*

INTRODUCTION

According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary 6th edition said "A drug is a substance used as medicine or used in a medicine". It could also be an illegal substance that people smoke, inject and taken to give them pleasant or exciting feeling.

Broadly defined a drug is any chemical substance other than food or water that affects the mind or body (A. Gold Stein, 1994). For thousands of years, people have used various natural substances to cause changes in the human body. Today, thousands of synthetic substances have been called added to the list of available drugs. In fact most people use a number of drugs, from the caffeine in their morning coffee that helps them wake up to the aspirin that causes a headache at the end of the day. Drug is a substance used for medical purposes that change the state or function of the body or is any substance which upon entering the body can change either the function or structure of the organism.

Drug abuse is a persistent or even sporadic excessive use of drug not conforming with or unrelated to accepted medical practice. Drug abuse according to Wikipedia, is a "pattern use of drug in which the user consumes the substance in the substance amounts or with methods which are harmful to themselves or others. It is the inappropriate use of substances including alcohol, prescription medication, illegal drugs for purposes such as pleasure, to feel or perform better in certain situations, or to change one's perception of reality.

Drug abuse and addiction has a universal phenomenon that extends across socioeconomic, cultural, religious and ethnic boundaries and despite the efforts of various Nigerian tiers of government and National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) to stem its tide in the country there has been inconsistent rapid rise in number of the cases especially among the young adolescent (10-24 years). This growth has resulted in an increase in the number of cases of cultism, violent disorders, as well as mental disorders among Nigerian youths. Drug abuse is a global health and social problem with conditions and problems that vary locally the use of psychoactive substance among adolescents and young adults has become a subject of public concern worldwide partly because of its potential to contribute to unintentional and international injury.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The 21st century is characterized by drug and substance abuse as a global public health challenge (Owoaje and Bello, 2010). United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimated that between 3.6 and 6.9% of the global adult population aged 15 to 64 years has ever used an illicit substance (WHO, 2004). Opiates are among the commonly used substances in Europe, USA and Asia; cocaine in southern America and cannabis in Africa (UNODC, 2013a). With respect to drug abuse, drugs are substances that have detrimental effects on the user including physical, mental, and emotional as well as behavioral (Whichstrom and Hegna, 2003, Galea et al, 2004, UNODC 2013b). Drug abuse is now generally defined as excessive or inappropriate use of psychoactive substance by a person; such user being

considered or judged to be illegal (immoral) by the culture and resulting in harm to person or society (Pela and Ebie, 1982)

Drug abuse refers to the use of any illegal substance such as prescription drug in a way that violates accepted medical practice (Abadinsky, 1989). There is another way to think about the difference between use and abuse, with an eye toward the effect of drug. From this point of view people who use drug may manage to function well in everyday life, but people who abuse a drug suffer physical mental or social harm (Weil & Rosen 1983, J.M. White, 1991). Notice that using this approach, any drug legal as well as illegal can be abused.

Smith (1959), "defined drug abuse as the use of any drug to point where is interfering with an individual health or with his economic or social adjustment." Drug abuse is considered being the illegal or improper use narcotic substance, including the illegal possession, transfer, and a sale of drugs. Drug abuse is an extreme desire to obtain, and use increasing amount of one or more substances. Drug abuse is general term for the abuse of any drug, including alcohol and cigarettes.

Olaye Homte (1982) affirms that drug abuse has been defined persistent or sporadic excessive drug use inconsistent with or unrelated to accepted medical practice. This definition does not separated legally and accepted drug like alcohol from illegal group like Indian hemp. In other words social acceptability does not necessarily extract a drug like alcohol and tobacco from being drug of abuse. However, often a culture accept drug use problem that is associated with high degree of health injury and social definition while in penalize patterns that appear be less harmful.

According to the Solival health Journal (Volume 23, 1993), drug abuse is defined as a substances or chemical abused in substance usually the deliberate and an international use of chemical substance usually for reason other their legitimate medical purpose that result in any degree of physical, mental, emotional, social Impairment of the users, the uses family or knowing that drug a capable of producing about good and bad effect. It became necessary for one to seek expert advice as far as using and drug in concerned, anything contrary with this amount to drug abuse. In other words, one can correctly say that drug abuse is a selection where drugs are indiscriminately, used without an expert advice.

Drug abuse in Nigeria in the contemporary time has become one issue that casts a gloomy shadow to the entire Nigerian society especially among the youths. The drug trafficking in Nigeria was witnessed in 1985 under the military regime. The abuse of drug is spread in the society where excessive consumption of substance is the order of the day. Study has shown that substances like alcohol, tobacco and marijuana become commonly abused by youth (Idowu and Abolarin, 1996). Research finding also indicated that these substances negatively affect the health and behavior of the users. It also worthy of mention that substance abuse cut across ages, socio economic status, race, religion and gender, though recent finding indicate that the user of substance is higher among the male. Study has also shown that under the influence of drug abuse, many youth embark on criminal behaviors and bad activities. No wonder, Annan (2003), noted that "drugs are tearing apart our societies, spawning crime spreading disease such as HIV and killing our youth and their future." This is probably the reason 20th June of every year is declared as United Nations International Day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking while 31st May, of every year is declared as "**No Tobacco smoking day worldwide**". This probably informed the warning by the Federal Ministry of Health, Nigeria that smokers are liable to die young (Nigerian Tribune, 2007)

FORMS OF DRUG ABUSE

Experts classify drug abuse into various types according to the effects; they have on the body and brain. Here we briefly examine six types of drugs: Hallucinogens, Cannabis, Steroid, Prescription Drugs, Stimulant and Depressants:

1. Hallucinogen is stimulants, generally taken in pill or capsule forms, which cause hallucinations.
2. Cannabis, Marijuana and hashish are drugs produce a sense of euphoria, help people relax and increase appetite.
3. Steroids: The full name for this class of drug is quite a mouthful, androgenic (promoting muscles characteristics), anabolic (building) steroids. Many professional and amateur athletes use steroids, although athletic programs ban their use.
4. Prescription drugs, physicians prescribe a wide range of drugs to patients.
5. Stimulants are drugs that increase a changing a person's mood by increasing energy, such as: Caffeine, Nicotine, Ritalin, Cocaine and Crack Amphetamine
 - i. Caffeine probably the most popular drug in Nigeria is a caffeine, which is available in many products, including coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate, and "stay alert" pills. Just about everybody from long distance truck drivers to college students facing an exam to anyone trying to wake up fully before getting to work depends on caffeine for alertness.

- ii. Nicotine although is legal in Nigeria and almost everywhere else in the world, this stimulant is both toxic and highly addictive. The most common way people ingest nicotine is through smoking cigarettes, a practice that become popular among the men in Nigeria.
 - iii. Ritalin or methylphenidate, hydrochloride, is a legal drug prescribed by doctors to treat children with attention deficit disorder (ADHD) or attention deficit disorder (ADD). These are disorder in which children are hyperactive, have trouble concentrating, or cannot pay attention to the teacher or another adult. This widespread use of Ritalin has sparked controversy is an abuse.
 - iv. Cocaine and Crack are powerful stimulants that heighten alertness as they raise blood pressure and pulse rate. The drug keep user awake, reduce appetite, and cause many people to become agitated and perhaps even violent. In powder form, cocaine can be snored (inhaled through the nose). Cocaine is very addictive, and its use leads to about 3,500 deaths each year in The United State and including Nigeria.
 - v. Amphetamine was first developed for the medical treatment of personality disorder and obesity. This drugs increase alertness, cause an excited sense of well-being, and reduce the desire to sleep and eat. Amphetamine use as the most serious drug problem not only because there are so many “meth labs” in operation but also because use of this drug often encourages people to engage in other serious crime.
6. Depressants are drugs that slow the operation of the central nervous system in short; depressants have an effect opposite to stimulants. Analgesic, Sedatives, Hypnotic, Alcohol and Antipsychotic
- i. Analgesics one class of depressants in analgesics drugs that dull pain. The most widely used analgesics include familiar over the counter pain relievers such aspirin, ibuprofen (Motrin), and acetaminophen (Tylenol). Although these drugs can be abused, they present little problem when abuse according to directions. More problematic are naturally occurring narcotics, or opiates, such as opium and drugs derived from opium, including morphine, codeine, and heroin. In all are dangerous drugs that are highly addictive, and they are capable of disrupting the lives of abusers.
 - ii. Sedatives, Hypnotics, and Alcohol other depressants with a wider ranging effect on the central nervous system are sedative and hypnotics. These drugs help people relax and, at higher dosages, cause drowsiness and sleep. Examples of sedatives and hypnotics include barbiturates, such as secobarbital (seconal) and pentobarbital, and tranquilizers, including alprazolam (xanax), diazepam (Valium) and triazolam (Halcion). Over use of these drugs, available by prescription, is dangerous, and when combined with alcohol or other drugs, they can be fatal.
 - iii. Antipsychotics including lithium and haloperidol (Haldol) are powerful drugs that doctors prescribe to people with serious personality disorder such as schizophrenia. Although these substances are dangerous if they are abused, they are effective in reducing psychotic symptoms such as paronia, visual hallucinations, and hearing voices.

CAUSES OF DRUG ABUSE

1. Experimental curiosity.
2. Peer influence.
3. Parental influence.
4. Socio-economic condition
5. Extra energy requirements by youths engaged in hard prolonged labour at early ages.
6. Drug availability (ease of access) and the pain of withdrawal (withdrawal syndrome) which motives further abuse.

EFFECTS OF DRUG ABUSE

1. It deadness the nervous system.
2. Cardio-vascular disorder
3. It causes the blood vessels to dilate.
4. Distortion of memory
5. It reduces physical and psychological sensitivity.

6. Brain damage.
7. Mental disorder.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nevertheless, the usage of drug among the youth or other members of a larger society in its entire ramification appear to be a social problem. Such problems are cultism, violence, armed robbery, kidnapping, rape, assassination, etc. This problem is widely spread and it affects all and sundry. In other words, this wide spread use entice people from all walks of life and beyond the human destruction caused by drugs dependence is the damage to traditional values and life styles. Studies have also shown that drug abuse wrecks individual, shatter families and weakens entire society with its burden of economic losses, health cost and increased lawlessness and crime. Drug abuse also experience problems of interaction and this interactional problem is encountered both inside his immediate family and stress invariably is created in the family situation of drug abuse (Hoffman, 1990).

To add to this, drug abuse may entail a lot of social problems ranging from moral decadence, family neglect, deviant behaviours, involvement in crime etc. (Earl, 2000), in this terms of economic cost, it include the more money required to deal with undesirable effects of the drugs abuse, the less money for service and programs that enhance the quality of life (Earl 2000).

To this end and judging from the problems outline, this research aims at perception of drug abuse among the youths at Dawaki west ward in Dawakin Tofa local government area, Kano State.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- i. To provide necessary information and awareness on the extent of drug use among the youths.
- ii. To help parents, teachers and stakeholders to plan intervention programs that will help to solve the problems of drug use in the society.
- iii. To educate youths on the implications of drugs use.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. Why do youths abuse drugs?
- ii. What are the factors that influence the use of drugs among the youths?
- iii. Does youths have awareness of health risk associated with drug abuse?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To examine the use and abuse of drugs among the youths at Dawaki west ward in Dawakin Tofa Local Government Kano State.
- ii. To identify the most commonly abused substances.
- iii. To identify the factors that contribute the use of substances.
- iv. To enlighten the health risk and other implications of drug use among the youths.

METHODOLOGY

The research design used for this study was the survey design. According to Aina and Ajiferuke (2002), survey research involves a systematic and comprehensive collection of information about the opinion, attitudes, feeling, belief and behavior of people. Survey research is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group (Akuezullo,1993).

POPULATION SAMPLING OF THE STUDY AREA

The population sampling comprised of sixty five (65) abusers at Dawaki west ward in Dawakin Tofa Local Government in Kano State. Simple random sampling was used in selecting the abusers. The essence of using random sampling is to ensure fairness, balance and objectivity in selection. The data collection instrument using structured interview was developed by the researchers and it included variables, such as abusers ages, forms of drugs, causes of drug abuse and health risk associated with drug abuse.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Four (4) set of questionnaires were distributed to sixty five (65) respondents at Dawaki west ward and they were successfully completed and collected for analysis.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

In order to achieve the objectives of this research descriptive statistical analysis which involves the use of frequency counts, tables and percentages was applied on the data analysis. The data obtained from the questionnaires was computed to determine the frequencies and percentages.

RESULTS

Table 1: Ages of the respondents

Ages	Respondents Frequency	Percentage
15-20	21.00	32.31
25-30	36.00	55.38
35-50	8.00	12.31
Total	65.00	100.00

Source: Ward Survey, (2023)

Table 2: Why do you use drug abuse?

Causes of Drug Abuse	Respondents Frequency	Percentage
Peer influence	12.00	18.46
Parental influence	8.00	12.31
Socio-economic condition	13.00	20.00
Extra energy requirements	32.00	49.23
Total	65.00	100.00

Source: Ward Survey, (2023)

Table 3: What forms of drugs do you prefer best?

Forms of Drug	Respondents Frequency	Percentage
Hallucinogens	7.00	10.77
Cannabis	23.00	35.38
Steroid	10.00	15.38
Stimulant	16.00	24.62
Depressants	9.00	13.85
Total	65.00	100.00

Source: Ward Survey, (2023)

Table 4: Do you know the health risk associated with drug abuse

Forms of Drug	Respondents Frequency	Percentage
YES	23.00	35.38
NO	42.00	64.62

Total	65.00	100.00
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Source: Ward Survey, (2023)

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Result indicated that 55.38% of the most of the respondents were found between 25-30 years of ages while 32.31% between the age of 15-20 and only 12.31% were between the ages of 35-50 (Table 1).

Result in table 2 showed that 49.23% of the respondents were using drugs to get extra energy requirements, while 18.46% due to peer influence and 20% due to socio-economic condition and only 12.31% due to parental influence. The result in Table 3 of this research revealed that 35.38% of the respondents used marijuana, Cannabis and hashish, 24.62% used stimulant such as Caffeine, Nicotine, Ritalin, and Crack Amphetamine, 13.85% used depressants and 15.38% used Steroid substances while 10.77% used Hallucinogens substances which is common abuse among the youths at Dawaki west ward in Dawakin Tofa local government, the interviewee said that when they took drugs its make them feel happy/ high, to get them out of depression, to cope with life problem and to reduce stress, which are the problems of the youth. This finding supports the work of Abadinsky (1989). There is another way to think about the difference between use and abuse, with an eye toward the effect of drug. From this point of view, people who use drug manage to function well in everyday life but people who abuse a drug supper physical mental or social harm (Weil and Rosen 1983; J.M White, 1991) Noted that using this approach, any drug legal as well as illegal can be abused.

Result in table 4 showed that 64.62% of the respondents don't know the health risk associated with drug abuse, while only 35.38% of the respondents knows the health risk associated with drug abuse. From the finding of this study its discovered that the respondents at Dawaki west ward consume a drugs such as marijuana, Cannabis, stimulant, steroid and Depressants and they feel it produce a sense of euphoria, relaxation, overzealous, blackout, such as temporarily loss of consciousness and too much of abstract reasoning, distortion of memory, isolation from people without coordination. This research found that the respondents are consumed codeine and diazepam are felt operational slow of the central nervous system, too much of feeling high/ happiness, body relaxation and dysfunction very well and feel hallucination are detrimental to health. This finding has support by Africa (UNODC, 2013) with respect to drug abuse drugs are substance that have detrimental effect on the user including physical, mental, and emotional as well as behavioral transformation.

From this finding the abusers have name and place where they used illicit substance which is called ('yan shaye-shaye, 'yan chaku, 'yan wanke ido, 'yan magani, and place where they assembled translate into Tanti). From this finding being discovered that majority used of illicit at Dawaki west ward in Dawakin Tofa are adolescent and young adult, were found between 15-30 years of the age, who are very vulnerable to experimentation and using drug abuse. This finding support the work of research by Ohikoye and Alli (2006) found that majority of students were aged 19-30 years (that is adolescents and young adults who are very vulnerable to experimentation and using drug abuse).

The finding of this study has cordial relationship between electoral violence and drug use, sharing a common perception that some candidates distribute drugs to street enforcers during election for the purpose of enabling them to intimidate rival voting blocks. Respondents at Dawaki west ward in Dawakin Tofa local government said they had been given drug and money by politicians, to "snatch ballot box" while this perception may relate primarily to events that have taken place in the past, it was not solely shared between community member and drug users, also cited by law enforcement officials, community leaders vigilante group and others. The finding this research were interviewed abusers said that people including family and friends often rejecting their social network, primarily to other users due to embarrassment to their families. In Nigeria it was reported recently that about three million codeine cough syrup preparations are consume daily in Kano and about six (6) million bottles in the Northwest. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) report of 2010 showed that over 11% of people in the Northwest zone use drugs. In May 2016, the NDLEA Director-General reported that 40% of Nigerian youths engage in drug abuse. Therefore, the finding of this research has cordial relationship with the literature review. It was conclude from this study that the awareness, knowledge, practices and attitudes of youths at Dawaki west ward toward drug abuse is very poor.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that drug abuse has become a human tragedy affecting virtually all segments of people. Drug abuse and dependence now cut across all social classes especially among the ages of 15-30 years. The youths that abuse both licit and illicit drug substances, the social implications of this in view of Nigeria's youthful population is a catastrophe for the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding of this research it is recommended that;

1. Parents should create enough time to attend the needs of their childrens and guide them properly to adulthood.
2. Parents should monitor the kinds of friends their children interact with and guide against bad company.
3. Government must ensure that the drug distribution system is sanitized and access to dangerous drugs is severely restricted.
4. Government should provide jobs for the unemployed youth
5. Professional trade groups must involve in the efforts to educate the youths and limit the availability of drugs professional only.
6. Government should also include in educational curriculum the course that teach the effect of drug abuse in public and private schools.
7. Continuous campaign against the use of hard drugs at the Federal, State and Local level.
8. Aggressive extinction of all the sources of these hard drugs including the farms were they are planted.
9. To positively use peer pressure to move their colleagues away from drug abuse and prevent new cases from occurring.
10. The religious/community leaders should take active part in resolving the crises at hand and help to prevent further occurrences through their utterance and actions.
11. Draw on the expertise of health professionals, cultural anthropologist and law enforcement officers to design public awareness raising campaigns about drug abuse that inform the public about risks that drugs pose on health and human interaction, which may become more violent with drug use.
12. Strengthen the regulation of dangerous prescription drugs such as tramadol, codeine and Exol, and levy stiff penalties on pharmacies and manufactures who sell to minors and anyone without a prescription from doctor.
13. Government should investigate and prosecute politicians who distribute drugs to the youth during campaign and general election.

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