

DRUG ABUSE AND ADDICTION AMONG THE YOUTHS IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract:

This paper investigates the spate of drug abuse and addiction among the youths in South East Nigeria. It adopted a descriptive survey design with a sample population of 1100 male (youths) who have tasted substance like; marijuana, drug and alcohol made up of 220 from Abia State, 220 Anambra State, 220 Ebonyi State, 220 Enugu State and 220 Imo State. Further more from the 220 in each State 110 males were drawn from the artisans while the other 110 were selected from the undergraduates of tertiary institution using purposive and strata sampling technique. Three research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. Findings from the study showed that most youth engage in drug abuse and become addicted due to social connection, fame and sometimes health related issues. The paper recommended that Government at all levels should set up effective monitoring or surveillance against the use of all forms of drugs, substances and alcohol drinks. Also the law enforcement Agents, such as the police force should carry out periodic raid on the sale points of marijuana and Drugs among other things.

Keywords: Drug Abuse, Drug Addiction, the youths and South East Nigeria.

Introduction

Drug can be defined as a substance used as a medicine, and illegal substance taken for its stimulating and other effects. Also alcohol, marijuana, and nicotine are considered as drugs. Drug abuse is the habitual illegal drugs. Also it is a patterned use of drug in which the user consumes the substance in much quantity, or with methods which are harmful to themselves or others. It is a form of substance disorder. According to medical dictionary (2015), drug abuse is the use of drug whether over the counter or prescription, for the purposes other than those prescribed on the product label, often for recreational reasons. On the other hand the American

business dictionary (2014) defined Drug abuse as a compulsive, excessive and self damaging use of habit forming drugs or substance, leading to addiction or dependence, serious physical injury such as; damage to kidney, liver, heart and or psychological harm, such as dysfunctional behaviour pattern, hallucinations, memory loss or even death.

Drug abuse goes with drug addiction. Drug addiction is also known as substance use disorder. It is defined as a disease that affects a person 's brain and behaviour and leads to an inability to control the use of illegal and legal drugs or medication. Substances, such as alcohol, marijuana and nicotine are also considered as drugs (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2017). The Institute further viewed drug addiction as a chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences. It is regarded as a brain disease because, drugs change the brain structure and how it works. The changes in the brain can last for a long time, and can lead to much other harmful self-destructive behaviour. According to World Health Organization (2005) Drug abuse remains the major health challenge all over the world. Theoretical this study was guided by social cognitive theory by Albert Bandura (1986) who stated that behaviour is determine by the person's thought process and the environment itself. This means that individual determines their behaviour when being influenced by the environmental factors and their own behaviours. In other words, those that stay around and live within the environment where drugs and substance/alcohol are easily available and accessible are definitely influence by it

Understanding drug use, drug abuse, and addiction

People experiment with drugs for many different reasons. Many first use drugs out of curiosity, to have a good time, because friends are doing it, in an effort to improve may be, athletic performance or ease another problem, such as stress, anxiety, or depression. Use doesn't automatically lead to abuse, and there is no specific point at which drug use moves from casual to problematic. Drug abuse and addiction is more about the amount of substance consumed or the frequency, and also about the reasons people turn to drugs in the first place as well as the consequences of their drug use. If your drug use is causing problems in your life at work, school, home, or in your relationships it is likely to be a drug abuse or addiction problem.

As with many other conditions and diseases, vulnerability to addiction differs from person to person. Your genes, mental health, family and social environment all play a role in addiction. Risk factors that increase your vulnerability include:

- Family history of addiction

- Abuse, neglect, or other traumatic experiences

- Mental disorders such as depression and anxiety

- Early use of drugs

- Method of administration smoking or injecting a drug may increase its addictive

potential

Addiction is a complex disorder characterized by compulsive drug use. While each drug produces different physical effects, all abused substances share one thing in common: repeated use can alter the way the brain functions.

Taking a recreational drug causes a rush of the hormone dopamine in your brain, which triggers feelings of pleasure. Your brain remembers these feelings and wants them repeated. When you become addicted, the substance takes on the same significance as other survival behaviors, such as eating and drinking changes in your brain interfere with your ability to think clearly, exercise good judgment, control your behavior, and feel normal without drugs.

No matter which drug you're addicted to, the uncontrollable craving to use grows more important than anything else, including family, friends, career, and even your own health and happiness.

The urge to use is so strong that your mind finds many ways to deny or rationalize the addiction. You may drastically underestimate the quantity of drugs you're taking, how-much it impacts your life, and the level of control you have over your drug use.

Signs and symptoms of drug abuse and drug addiction

Although different drugs have different physical effects, the symptoms of addiction are similar. .

Some Common signs and symptoms of drug abuse

You're neglecting your responsibilities at school, work, or home (e.g. flunking classes, skipping work, neglecting your children) because of your drug use.

You're using drugs under dangerous conditions or taking risks while high, such as driving while on drugs, using dirty needles, or having unprotected sex.

Your drug use is getting you into legal trouble, such as arrests for disorderly conduct, driving under the influence, or stealing to support a drug habit.

Your drug use is causing problems in your relationships, such as fights with your partner or family members, an unhappy boss, or the loss of friends.

How drug abuse and addiction can develop or Start

There is boundary between regular use and drug abuse and addiction. Very few addicts are able to recognize when they have crossed that boundary. While frequency or the amount of drugs consumed do not necessarily constitute drug abuse or addiction, they can often be indicators of drug-related problems.

Drug abuse may start as a way to socially connect. Commonly, people try drugs for the first time in social situations with friends and acquaintances. A strong desire to fit in to the group can make it feel like doing the drugs with them is the only option.

Problems can sometimes sneak up on you, as your drug use gradually increases over time. Smoking at joint with friends over the weekend, or

taking or cocaine at an occasional party, for example, can change from using drugs a couple of days a week to using them every day. Gradually, getting and using the drug becomes more and more important to you.

If the drug fulfills a valuable need, you may find yourself increasingly relying on it. You may take drugs to calm or energize yourself, or make you more confident. You may start using prescription drugs to cope with panic, attacks or relieve chronic pain. Until you find alternative, healthier methods for overcoming these problems, your drug use will likely continue. If you are using drug? to fill a void in your life, you're more at risk of crossing the line from casual use to drug abuse and addiction. To maintain a healthy balance in your life, you need to have positive experiences and feel good about your life without any drug use.

As drug abuse takes hold, you may miss or frequently be late to work or school, your job performance may progressively deteriorate, and you may start to neglect social or family responsibilities. Your ability to stop using is eventually compromised. What began as a voluntary choice has turned into a physical and psychological need.

Eventually drug abuse can consume your life, stopping social and intellectual development.

Purpose of the study

Generally, the purpose of the study was to investigate the drug abuse and addiction among the youths in South East Nigeria, its causes, consequences and remedial measures. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the major causes of drug abuse and addiction.
2. Identify the type of drug and substance abuse.
3. Find out the consequences of drug abuse, and
4. Remedial measures to help the youths come out of drug abuse and addiction.

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the major courses of drug abuse and addiction.
2. Which type of drugs that are abused.
3. What are the consequences of drug abuse.
4. What are the remedial measures to help the youths come out of drug abuse and addiction.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of Undergraduates and Artisans in the South East on the remedial measures to help them come out of drug abuse and addiction.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was used for the study because it seeks to find out and describe the drug abuse and addiction among the youths of the South East Nigeria. The population of the study consist all the undergraduates in the Universities and all the young artisans in the South East States of Nigeria; namely: Abia state, Anambra State, Ebonyi State, Enugu State and Imo State. A sample size of one thousand (1000) respondents were used. It is made of 500 undergraduates draw from the 10 Universities (Federal and State) of the South East. Fifty (50) persons were selected from each University. Also 500 artisans were selected from cross-sections of artisans in the 5 states of the South East, Nigeria. Both samples adopted purposive sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection was developed by the researcher titled; drug abuse and addiction questionnaire (DAAQ) which had 21 items. It was a modified likert scale with four sections addressing the research questions, developed on a four point rating scale of strongly agree (SA) 4 points, agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (D) 2 points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point. The instrument was face and content validated by three experts in the Department of Medical Health Science Ebonyi State University. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through test re-test method and scores analyzed using pearson correlation (Pearson) which yielded a coefficient index of 0.78 adjudged to be high 10 lecturers from the sampled Universities where used for data collection for both the undergraduates and the artisans. The data of the study was analyzed using mean and, standard deviation. A mean of 2.5 and above was accepted while a mean below 2.5 was rejected. The hypothesis was tested using t-test of independent sample mean at 0.05 significant levels.

Result : The results of the analyzed data are presented in the table below, according to the research questions.

Research question 1

What are the major causes of drug abuse and addiction

Table 1: Mean rating of respondents on the causes of drug abuse and addiction.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	UNDERGRADUATES			ARTISANS		
		X	SD	RMK	X	SD	REMARK
1	To socialize with peers and friends	3.02	0.62	A	2.56	1.00	A
2	To be brave and fearless	3.85	0.37	A	2.87	0.60	A
3	Frequently use to relieve cyronic pains	2.22	1.05	D	3.36	0.46	A
4	Causal use of drugs always	2.80	1.18	A	2.55	1.40	A
5	Imitating a family member who uses drug	3.56	0.53	A	3.00	0.69	A
6	Poor parenting	1.25	0.38	D	2.83	0.51	A
7	Easy availability of drug and substance	2.55	1.40	A	2.80	1.18	A
8	Lack of school role model	2.38	0.78	D	2.47	1.03	D
9	Wayward life, due to conflict with parents	3.43	1.01	A	3.20	1.43	A
10	For agility and strength to	1.50	0.40	D	3.44	0.33	A
	Total Average	2.65	0.42	A	2.81	0.54	A

A= Agree, and D = Disagree

From table 1 above showed that out of the 10 items the undergraduates agreed with 6 items with mean range of 2.55 to 3.8 and SD 0.37 to 1.40 while the disagreed with 4 items with mean range of 1.25 to 2.38 and SD 0.38 to 1.05. on the other hand the Artisans agreed with 9 items out of 10 items with means range of 2.66 to 3.44 and SD 0.33 to 1.43, while they disagreed with one, items 8 which has a mean of 2.47 and SD 1.03. However, the average mean for undergraduates is 2.65 and SD 0.42 while that of the Artisan is 2.81 and SD 0.54. Implying that all the listed items are accepted as the causes of drug abuse and addiction.

Research question 2

Which type of drugs are abused

Table 2: Mean ratings of the respondents on the type of drugs that are abused

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	UNDERGRADUATES			ARTISANS		
		\bar{X}	SD	RMK	\bar{X}	SD	REMARK
1	Codein syrup or substance	3.72	0.48	A	3.66	0.56	A
2	Alcohol (ethanol)	3.86	0.38	A	3.94	0.25	A
3	Cannabis	2.80	1.18	A	2.56	1.00	A
4	Cocaine	3.44	0.53	A	3.61	0.58	A
5	Tobacco	2.30	1.40	D	2.55	1.02	A
6	Cigarette	3.92	0.27	A	3.93	0.26	A
7	Heroin	2.55	1.21	A	2.58	1.23	A
	Total Average	3.26	0.86	A	3.28	0.71	A

A= Agree D= Disagree

The data in table 2; show that all the drugs and substances listed are all abused, except for tobacco which the undergraduates rated a mean of 2.30 with SD of 1.40. meaning that they disagree with the item because the mean is not up to 2.50.

However, based on the average 3.26 for undergraduates and 3.28 for Artisans all the drugs listed are abused.

Research question 3

What are the consequence of drug abuse and addiction

Table 3: Mean ratings of the respondents on the consequence of drug abuse and addiction.

N=1000

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	UNDERGRADUATES			ARTISANS		
		\bar{X}	SD	RMK	\bar{X}	SD	REMARK
1	Consequences of drug abuse/addiction It alters the brain and proper reasoning	3.02	0.70	A	3.10	0.67	A
2	It causes mental disorder	3.72	0.47	A	3.70	0.49	A
3	Craving for continuous intake	2.86	1.14	A	2.56	1.22	A
4	Poor performance in school and in work place and business	3.85	0.37	A	3.34	0.53	A
5	Engage in evils and crime	2.64	1.17	A	2.52	1.20	A
6	Increased school drop outs	3.08	0.68	A	2.60	1.18	A
7	Promote diseases like cancer, cardia problems	2.55	1.21	A	2.60	1.18	A
8	Indulges in sexual abuse/assault	2.61	1.19	A	2.58	1.21	A
9	Can contact HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases	2.72	1.16	A	3.86	0.36	A
10	Family break up/divorce	2.58	1.22	A	3.03	0.69	A
11	Roaming about the street/village without working	2.81	1.15	A	2.55	1.21	A
12	May lead to isolated life and eventual death	3.33	0.52	A	3.51	0.48	A
	Grand Mena	3.01	0.86	A	3.00	0.84	A

A= Agree, D= Disagree

Data in table 3 reveal that all the 12 item statements were agreed as the consequences of drug abuse and addiction by both the undergraduates and the artisans, with a mean range of 2.55 to 3.85 for undergraduates and 2.52 to 3.86 for the artisans. While their grand means are 3.01 and 3.00 respectively.

Research question 4

What are the remedial measures to help the youths (undergraduates and artisans) come out of drug abuse and addiction.

Table 4: Mean ratings of the respondents on the remedial measures to be adopted to help the youths come out of drug abuse and addiction.

N= 1000

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	UNDERGRADUATES			ARTISANS		
		X	SD	RMK	X	SD	REMARK
	Remedial measures						
1	Quarantine the victim, where he will not get the drug or substance	3.85	0.37	A	3.92	0.26	A
2	Banning the use of Codeine, cannabis, cocaine, heroin	3.50	0.52	A	3.45	0.56	A
3	Campaign against drug abuse.	3.92	0.26	A	3.85	0.37	A
4	Mass education, workshop and seminar on the danger of drug abuse.	3.83	0.30	A	3.82	0.33	A
5	Establishing community town hall meeting on drug abuse.	2.53	1.18	A	2.56	1.00	A
6	Inclusion of drug abuse and the dangers in the curriculum of primary 6 pupils and jss1 to sss3 students.	2.87	0.60	A	2.55	1.40	A
7	Building and equipping rehabilitation centers for victim	3.95	0.22	A	3.96	0.20	A
8	Provision of counselling centers in communities and schools.	3.00	0.69	A	2.86	0.63	A
9	Taking the victim to psychiatrist.	3.96	0.20	A	3.95	0.22	A
10	Banning the importation and sale of such drugs and growing of the substance	3.43	0.60	A	3.20	0.63	A
	Grand mean	3.50	0.51	A	3.40	0.54	A

From table 4 all the items have a mean of 2.50 and above, implying that all the items are unanimously accepted as a remedial measures to be used to help the victims out of the menace.

Hypothesis

Ho1: there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Undergraduate and the Artisans on the remedial measures to help the victims come out of drug abuse and addiction.

Table 5: t-test analysis of Undergraduates and Artisans of South East Nigeria, on the remedial measures to help them come out of the menace

S/N	Category	N	\bar{X}	SD	DF	T-cal	T-crit	Decision
1	Undergraduate	500	3.50	0.51	998	0.03	1.96	Ho1 accepted
2	Artisans	500	3.40	0.54				

Data in Table 5, reveal that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Undergraduates and Artisans on the remedial measures to help them out of drug abuse and addiction. This is because the t-calculated of 0.03 is less than the t-critical of 1.96. Implying that the null hypothesis will be accepted.

Result and discussions.

The discussion is made under the following headings.

- The major causes of drug abuse and addiction.
 - The type of drugs that are abused.
 - Consequences of drug abuse and addiction, and
 - Remedial measures to use in helping the victim and youths out of drug abuse and addiction.

The findings of the study show that in table 1 drug abuse and addiction are caused by socializing with peers and friend, to become brave and fearless, to relieve chronic pains and sometimes imitating a family member who uses drug. Other causes include, poor parenting, easy availability of drugs and substance, lack of school role model, living a wayward lives and for agility and strength to fight and work.

These findings are in agreement with Muchemi (2010), who said that drug and substance abuse are determined by the existence of risk and protective factors such as, lack of family and school role models, peer pressure, conflict between the young people and their parents among other things.

Equally it was observed that the types of drug/substance abused include, codeine, alcohol, cannabis, cocaine, tobacco, cigarette and heroin. However, the ones that are mostly abused are, cigarette, codeine, alcohol and cocaine. These findings are in line with Haladu (2003), who lamented that the above drugs or substances are highly abused.

Also table 3, captured the consequences of drug abuse to include, alternation of brain and proper reasoning, strip up mental disorder, craving for more intake, causes poor

performance in school and workplaces, increase school drop outs, evil and crimes lead to risk diseases as cancer, HIV/AIDs, cardials problems and sexually transmitted diseases. Sometime it may lead to family break up/divorce, isolation and death.

On the other hand, all the remedial measures outlined in table 4 are accepted by the respondents as a measure to be adopted to help the victims out of its which include: quarantining the victims where they will not have access to the drug or substances, banning the sale of codeine, cannabis, cocaine, heroin. Also campaign should be mounted against drug abuse and mass education, building and equipping rehabilitation centre, referring the victims to apsychiatrist among other things.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study investigated drug abuse and addiction among the youths (Undergraduates and Artisans in the South-East Nigeria. It is like a cancer worm destroying the youths, due to its dangerous consequence. The study found out some of the causes, the drugs and substance that are involved, its damaging consequences and the remedial measures. Therefore, it is recommended that the findings of this study be adopted and utilized through workshops, seminars, campaigns and establishment of rehabilitation centres in other to save our youths from the mess of drug abuse and addiction.

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