

Illicit Drug Use and Dependency Among Youths In Bauchi Town, Nigeria

Umar Ibrahim, Ismail Farouk Umar, Mukthar Usman

¹Governance for Global Health Department, United Nations University-International Institute for Global Health (UNU-IIGH), UNU-IIGH Building, UKM Medical Centre, Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA; ²State Coordinator/NPO Routine Immunization, World Health Organization, WHO Taraba State Office-Jalingo, Taraba State-Nigeria, West Africa; ³Mukthar Usman, Department of Educational Foundations, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi, Nigeria
Email: umarsap@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the use of illicit drugs and dependency among youth in Bauchi town, Bauchi state Nigeria. The design used for the study was the survey. A sample of 140 youth was selected. A validated instrument was used to collect relevant data. The data collected was analyzed using a descriptive and inferential statistic. The findings show a significant difference between the adolescence drug abuser Findings reveal that a lot of persons within this group have in one way or the other been involved in the use of illicit drugs. Strong dependence on psychoactive drugs like marijuana, and nicotine which has negative effects following repeated use, is weighing much on the individual drug user, the family, friends and the society at large. It is necessary therefore that the right steps be taken by the government and other relevant stakeholders to stem this destructive tide in Bauchi state in particular and the Nigerian society at large.

Key words: Illicit-Drug, Dependency, Youth, Town, Bauchi

1. Introduction

The use of illicit drugs is gradually becoming a norm in our society today. Illicit drugs are those drugs, whose purchase, use and possession are termed illegal, depending on the society's definition [1]. Illicit or illegal drugs can be highly addictive and cause serious health problems, such as addiction. Many illicit drugs are highly addictive and pose serious risks. Using these drugs usually begins as an experiment or because of curiosity. Other times, it may start from using prescription pain medication prescribed to treat an illness or injury. Addiction is a chronic disease. It causes a user to become hooked on the mental and physical effects of a drug [2].

The use of such drugs tends to undermine moral restraints and so lead to violent behaviors and other criminal acts. Illicit drug use is termed drug abuse. According to Weller and Wells [3], abuse is misuse; excessive use of illegal drugs, misuse of prescribed drugs. The use of drugs in manners that deviate from medical norms or socially acceptable pattern within a given society and culture is also referred to as drug abuse. Simply, it is inappropriate use of drugs for a purpose other than its legitimate purpose. The use of illicit drugs and over the counter (OTC) drugs have

been on the increase as people seek to bar their minds from pressures around them by engaging in the act of drug abuse. Some youth, including students have resorted to the use of drugs to show open rebellion against constituted authority. Today more Nigerian youths are becoming drug dependants; drug dependence by parent/guardian contribute to drug abuse among dependants and minors [4]. Young ones who are mainly from well-to-do homes are increasingly identifying with the "big boys" sub-culture that practice the use of substances like heroin and cocaine. Others substances like Indian hemp, which is frequently produced in Nigeria and other substances like cough syrups and codeine capable of intoxicating are mostly found in schools, motor parks, military barracks and even with local traders that sell provisions in kiosks or retail outlets [5].

Despite the government's concern and heightened campaigns against illicit drug use among the youth there still exist, a large number of youths who are illicit drug users. Illicit drug use appears to be a well-entrenched behavior among youth. Given the availability, consequences and increasing use of illicit drugs in Nigeria, it is important to analyze illicit drug use and dependency among the youths. Determination of the youths' perception of drugs and substance abuse

and how these perceptions influence their behavior is very important. It is against this background that the current study was undertaken. This study seeks to establish youth perceptions of the drug problem and to critically analyze strategies that could be used to address the problem

2. Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used in this study. Data was collected through interviewing the sampled individuals, with the aim of studying their attitudes, opinion and habits. This study targets the youth population residing within Bauchi town engaged in illicit drug use. A total of one hundred and forty (140) respondents were selected for the study. Respondents for the study were selected via a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The content validity of the instrument was determined by experts in research at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU) Bauchi, Nigeria, who looked at the instrument and the objectives of the study. A pilot study was carried out to pretest the instrument among 20 students in a secondary school in Bauchi town. After that a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.86 was obtained which signified the instrument as reliable. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics like frequency distributions; percentages, averages, and chi square.

3. Result & Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to Age

Age (Years)	Frequency	Percentage
15-20	45	30
21-25	60	40
26-30	30	20
Above 30	15	10
Total	150	100

Source: 2015 Field Survey

Table 1 show that respondents are within the teenage and early adulthood stages in life.30% of the respondents are between the ages of 15-20. While those within the ages of 21-25 made up 40%. Only 10% of the respondents were above 30 years. The findings of this study concurs with the findings of Haladu (2003) who conducted a study on drug abuse in northern part of Nigeria had participants aged between 10 to 14 from Secondary Schools who were already smoking cannabis. Swendsen et al report that, abuse of illicit drugs was slightly more common than the abuse of alcohol, ranging from 3.4% of youth in

the 13- to 14-year [6]. Haladu [7] concluded that Substance use and abuse has been found to start as early as when students are in secondary school. Aderinto, [8]“ reported that most senior secondary school students in Nigeria are usually within the adolescent age range of 10-25 years Adolescence is a period of experimental exploration and curiosity in which students are prone to toying with various high risk social activities including the disruptive effect (physical and psychosocial) of drug and alcohol abuse. According to the Centre for Disease Control, more than 15% of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 already smoked cigarette regularly and 11% of high school students have smoked a whole cigarette before age 13 [9]. The findings of this study conforms with the findings of Oshikoya and Alli [10],who stated that experimentation with drugs during adolescence (10-25 Years) is common. At this age the young generations try so many new things. They use drugs for so many reasons, including curiosity, because it feels good, to reduce stress, or to feel grown up. They further argued that using alcohol and tobacco at a young age increase the risk of using other drugs later.

Table2: Respondents Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
No Formal Education	15	10
Primary School	45	30
Secondary School	75	50
Post Secondary School	15	10
Total	150	100

Source: 2015 Field Survey

Table 2 above indicated that 10% of the respondents had no formal education. While 30% are graduates of primary school. It can also be observed from the table that 50% of respondents are secondary school graduates. While only 10% of the respondents had post secondary school qualifications. The findings of this study is in line with the findings of Fatoye and Morakinyo [11] who reported the use of analgesics, stimulants, antibiotics, alcohol, hypno-sedatives and tobacco among secondary school students in urban and rural areas of Nigeria. Majority of their respondents reported being daily users of tobacco.

Hence, it could be inferred that secondary school students in urban Nigeria use and abuse substances as much as their counterparts in rural Nigeria. A report by NAFDAC [12] noted that the abuse of licit and illicit drugs is forming a student sub-culture in Nigeria. This development is a significant concern for Nigerian society and immediate attention is required. When a drug is abused it causes injury to the brain and often irreversible alterations in the central nervous systems. When psychoactive substances destroy several thousand neurons, the consequences are fatal and a number of students have died from drug overdoses. Studies carried out among secondary school students in Benin City by Omage and Oshiloya, [13] found out that students and youth of easy virtue in the community are involved in cannabis abuse and stimulants such as amphetamines and cannabis. The consensus of opinion therefore seems to be that youths

started illicit drug use due to friends influence. While 65% of the respondent revealed that they turn in to illicit use of drugs out of anger. Only 20% of the respondents reported using drugs illicitly to keep calm. The findings of this study is similar to the findings of Merki [14] who reported that when the students are feeling bad about themselves or are feeling unworthy, unloved or rejected, they turn to drugs. Students are affected more by these emotions and their inability to cope given their adolescent stage of development. During this stage, identity formation is important and self-concept plays a major role. Addiction can develop when students' insecurities combine with the influence of peers and the media. Drugs then become the social and emotional focus at the expense of other interests and activities. This gradually leads to social, emotional and physical problems and new feelings of guilt, despair and helplessness. In a study by Yang et al., [15] peer influence, social pressure, smoking parents and lower class were found to be other important factors in beginning smoking in adolescents

Table 4: Respondents Perception of illicit drug use
Source: 2015 Field Survey

Majority of the respondents 75% agreed that use of prescription drugs without prescription is wrong. It can also be observed from the table that 45% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that overdose of drugs has no problem. Oshikoya and Alli [10] in their studies on perception of Drug Abuse amongst Nigerian undergraduates identified dependence and addiction as one of the major consequence of drug abuse, characterized by compulsive drug craving seeking behaviour, are use that persist even in the face of negative consequences.

Table 5: Consequences of Illicit Drug Use

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. Use of prescription drugs use without prescription is wrong	30	45	5	15	5
2. Use of over dose of drugs has no problem.	25	10	20	40	5
3. Illicit use of drugs can lead to comfortable life	10	30	20	30	10

are also seriously involved in substance abuse. Drug abuse has become such a problem of great concern to all well meaning Nigerian and particularly the Federal Government to the extent that an Agency has been established to combat the social disease with a view to reducing the spread of drug abuse to the barest minimum or eradicating it totally.

Table 3: Reasons for Illicit Use of Drugs

Statement	Yes (%)	No (%)
Out of anger	65	35
To feel elevated	64	36
For enjoyment	60	40
Friends influence	77	23
To ease disturbance	20	80
To find out how it is	61	39

Source: 2015 Field Survey

Majority of the respondents (77%) agreed that they

Problems/Side Effect	Yes (%)	No (%)
Psychological	60	40
Diseases	45	55
Major Organs Problem	45	55
Anxiety	30	70
Emaciation	40	60
Lawlessness	50	50
Absenteeism	40	60
Reckless Spending of money	61	41
Non-industrious	39	61
Disrespectful	65	35

Table 5 above indicated that loss of respect among other things is a major problem resulting from drug dependence (65%), Psychological issue is reported by

(60%) of the respondents as a problem. Being non-industrious to one's family and friends is reported by (39%) of the respondents as a problem associated with drugs. Notwithstanding, dependence on drugs can also cause a reckless spending and property (61%), yet it can lead a case with the laws of the land (50%). Diseases are reported by 45% of the respondents as a problem, weight loss, nervousness had 40 and 30% respectively. The findings of Louw [15] is in line with the findings of this study where it was reported that drugs can affect a student's concentration and thus interest in school and extracurricular activities. This leads to increased absenteeism and drop outs. Most psychoactive drugs affect the decision making process of students, their creative thinking and the development of necessary life and social skills. Drugs also interfere with an individual's awareness of their unique potential and thus their interest in their career development.

Table 6: Respondents reasons for drug dependency

Reason	Yes (%)	No (%)
1.It regulates behavior	65	35
2.It elevates mood	86	14
3. it creates boldness	80	20
4. It leads to calmness	56	44

Source: 2015 Field Survey

Majority of the respondents (86%) indicated that they depend on drugs because it elevates their mood. While 80% of the respondents indicated they depend on drugs because it creates boldness in them. Table 6 indicated that 56% of the respondents depend on drugs because it makes them calm. Oshodin [16] reported that youths including teens and young adult in Nigeria, use drugs ignorantly not knowing the consequences of using them. Findings of previous researches show that many respondents don't know the adverse effects of drugs like analgesics (pain-relievers) on human beings and many at one time or the other have tried one or more type of drug which exposes them to the risk of becoming drug abusers and dependants. This concurs with the findings of this study.

4. Conclusion

In this study, an undertaking has been made to examine the consequences, and panacea for illicit drug use among youth in Bauchi. Drug abuse, and its detrimental personal and social consequences, is rampant among youth today. Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that most students have a negative perception of drug abuse. Students'

perceptions about drugs had an impact on their behaviour when it came to drug use. The drugs which were most often used include alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana and valium. The use of these drugs had detrimental effects on the youth's academic and vocational progress and their interpersonal relationships.

5. Recommendations

1. Parent should be vigilant on the type of company their ward keeps as well as the attitudes and behaviours of their children.
2. The fact that majority of drug abusers are found in educational institution effort should be made to educate the youth about the danger of drug abuse. This could be achieved by introduction of Drug education.
3. The NDLEA should as a matter of urgency intensify its efforts by monitoring drug distribution within the country as well as dealing with chemists and pharmacies that disregard its directives on controlled drugs.
4. Considering the magnitude of the problem Government should establish special Drug Rehabilitation Centers so as to attend to victims of drug abuse.
5. NAFDAC and NDLEA should embark on grassroots awareness creation and sensitization campaign to warn the public of the risks of abuse/misuse of codeine containing medicinal products.

REFERENCES

- [1] Omage, B.O.(2005) "The increasing rate of drug abuse among teenagers and young adults in Oredo Local Government Area. A study of Ihogbe College and Institute of Continuing Education (ICE)".School of Psychiatric Nursing. Benin Unpublished Case Studies.2003.
- [2] Mara T, & Jaime H, (2016). Illicit Drug Addiction. Medically Reviewed by Timothy JL, Health Line Media; <http://www.healthline.com/health/addiction/illlicit-drugs>
- [3] Weller, B.F. and Wells, R.T. (1990) Nurses Dictionary: Twenty-first edition. London: BailliereTindall Limited. 1990.
- [4] Omage E.I and Omage M.I (2012). Illicit Drugs Use And Dependency Among Teenagers And Young Adults In Oredo Local

Government Area, Benin City, Nigeria;
European Scientific Journal September edition
vol. 8, No.20

- [5] Staff, K. (2012). "Drug use on the rise among Nigerian youths". *Online Nigeria News*.<http://news2.onlinenigeria.com/news/top-stories/144286-drug-use-on-the-rise-among-nigerian-youths.html>.
- [6] Swendsen J, Burstein M, Case B, Conway, KP, Dierker L, Jianping HE, and Merikangas KR, (2012): Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Illicit Drugs in US Adolescents Results of the National Comorbidity Survey–Adolescent Supplement
- [7] Haladu, A.A. 2003. "Outreach strategies for curbing drug abuse among out-of-school youth in Nigeria: A challenge for community Based Organization (CBOS)." In Youth and drug abuse in Nigeria: Strategies for counseling, management and control, edited by A. Garba. Kano: Matosa Press.
- [8] Aderinto, A.A. (2007) "The concept of social problem". In U.C. Isiugo-Abanihe, A.N. Isamah and J.O. Adesina. (Eds.) *Currents and perspectives in sociology*.Ikeja: Malthouse Press Limited. 2002. Chapter 19: 335–348.
- [9] CDC (2007) Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (Internet), Tobacco Use and the Health of Young People, cited May 7 (2007), Available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/tobacco/facts.htm>.
- [10] Oshikoya, K. A. and Alli, A. (2006) Perception of drug abuse amongst Nigerian Undergraduates. *World Journal of Medical Sciences*. Vol.1. No.2. P133-139.
- [11] Fatoye, F. O. & Morakinyo, O. 2002. "Substance Use among secondary School Students in Rural and Urban Communities in South Western Nigeria." *Journal of East Africa Medicine* 7(6): 299–305.
- [12] NAFDAC (2008). Do Drugs Control Your Life? Know the Risks.
- [13] Omage, E. I., & Oshioloya (2006) Perception of Drug Abuse Amongst Nigerian Undergraduates Published by World Journal of Medical Science
- [14] Merki, B. (1993). Teen Health, Decision for Healthy Living. New York: McGraw-Hill
- [15] Yang, M.S., Yang, M.J and Liu, Y.H. (1998). Prevalence and related risk factors of illicit and licit substance use by adolescent student in southern Taiwan, *J. Public Health*, 112(5), 347-52.
- [16] Louw, D.A. (2001). Human Development. Tertiary: Cape Town
- [17] Oshodin, O.G. "Are you not also guilty of drug abuse? Health education and cultural strategies to the rescue".Inaugural lecture series 72. Benin: University of Benin Press.2004.