

Extent of Substance Abuse among Secondary School Students In Nsukka Local Government Area, Enugu State

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Abstract

The study aimed at investigating the extent of substance abuse among secondary school students in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. Cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample of 391 students was drawn using multi-stage sampling procedure from a population of 10,513 secondary school students in 21 public secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area. A 29-item scale titled 'Extent of Substance Abuse Questionnaire' (ESAQ) developed by the researcher was the instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by three experts, and Cronbach's Alpha statistic was used to ascertain reliability of the instrument which yielded a co-efficient value of 0.75 adjudged reliable for the study. Mean and percentages were used to analyse and answer the research questions while the hypothesis was tested using t-test at .05 level of significance. Results among others showed, that the substances students commonly abused are alcohol, tobacco and marijuana, Male and female students highly abused alcohol while male students only highly abused tobacco and marijuana, and that, peer pressure and to keep awake are the major factors that contribute to substance abuse. Findings also showed that substance abuse is dependent on gender. Based on the findings, recommendations were made among which is, qualified health educators should be employed in every secondary school in Enugu State to teach health education with emphasis on substance abuse and its implications.

Keywords: Substance, Substance abuse, Secondary school students

Introduction

Substance abuse is one of the major public health challenges in the 21st century. Substance abuse constitutes myriads of health problems for man especially secondary school students (adolescents) as they transit from childhood to adulthood. It has been considered global epidemics (Mc Cube, Boyd & Teler, 2009). The increasing prevalence of substance abuse has attracted both international and local concerns because of their contribution to disease burden. In reaction to this concern, the General Assembly of the United Nation in September 2011 at New York held a high meeting on substance abuse. Back home in Nigeria, alarm has been raised by the Federal Ministry of health (2010) over the increasing prevalence of substance abuse which have adverse effect on health and wellbeing of people. Substance abuse are more in adolescents, which the secondary school students belong, because of their characteristic nature of confusion, exuberance, desire for independence, zealousness, radicalism, curiosity, rebellion and a penchant for experimentation (especially with drug, alcohol and sex). (Kendal & Chen, 2008). Long term studies of substance abuse have observed that the sequence of use runs from tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and to other substance.

Substance abuse is seen as the use of any chemical substance without medical consultation or supervision that may lead to lose of productivity or damage to the body (NFDAC, 2010). Substance abuse can be described as wrong use of a substance for medical purposes either alone or in a mixture that changes the state or function of cell organs or organism. Purris and Mach-Innis (2009) views substance abuse as a residual category for patients whose substance use produces problems that does fulfil the more rigorous criteria for substance dependence. World Health Organization (WHO)(2015) refers to substance abuse as harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Continuing, WHO stated that psychoactive substances can lead to dependence-cluster of behavioral, cognitive and physiological phenomena that develop after repeated substance use, and typically include a strong desire to take the drug.

According to Udofia (2014), drug abuse does not mean taking over dose of drug alone, but it includes buying and using drugs for treating self without the doctor's prescription. According to the author, drug abuse also includes the use of legal medicine by the healthy or social convenience or personal pleasure and the use of typically non-drug substance such as gasoline, to produce drug -like effects. Law enforcement officials see substance abuse as the use of illicit drug (Punch,2016). Substance abuse is therefore, the indiscriminate use, abuse and dependence on drugs of various types such as alcohol, tobacco, clinical medicine, cocaine and heroin.

There are many substances or drug that people abuse. These substance according to Kandel and Chen (2008), include alcohol (beer), tobacco, narcotics (opium, morphine, Heroin), cannabis (marijuana), hallucinogen, inhalants, stimulants (cocaine), mescaline among others.

People abuse substance such as alcohol, tobacco, and other substance for varied reasons, but it is clear that our society pays a signification cost. The toll for this abuse can be seen in our hospitals and emergency departments both through direct damage to health by substance abuse and its link to physical trauma. Substance abuse has tremendous consequences on the abuser, the family, the society and the nation at large. For instance, Laza (2014) reported that alcohol or tobacco smoking is the primary preventive cause of death in the United State, and majority of all American adult deaths result from cardiovascular diseases and cancer with many associated risk factors being initiated during adolescence. Substance abuse and misuse drastically reduce quality of life; and demand substantial economic cost to remedy such abnormality on the part of the individuals, family and government. According to Ugwuozor (2015), substance abuse is a psychological problem that affects the society and threatens the future of the young people. The author further stated that substance abuse has turned many of its victims into psychopaths, zombies and criminals, hence the interest of the researchers in this study.

United Nations disclosed that drug abuse had escalated drastically, and that most drug abusers were young, poor or both. In particular, there has an upsurge in crime and corruption, draining of human financial and other resources among Nations which would have otherwise been used for socio-economic development. This he concluded, has resulted in destruction of individuals, families, communities and Nations, as well as in the spread of HIV and AIDS (United Nations, 1922).

There is an evidence of the existence of substance abuse among secondary school students. For instance, Ghayed, Mohammed and Rifai (2013) stated that drug use is a growing concern and madeit specific that there are about 10,000 and 15,000 registered drug abusers in the West Bank East Jerusalem and Gaza respectively. Also, World Health Organization (2015) estimated that the global death toll from tobacco-related diseases had reached over three million. Out of this, two million had been dying annually from the predominantly industrial countries, whereas one million was from the developing States. In the industrialized countries, the number of deaths attributed to smoking had risen from 700,000 in 2010 to 1.5 million in 2015 for males and from 100,000 to 500,000 for females. In developing countries, the per capita cigarette consumption has risen on overage by 70% in about 25 years, an indication of over 7 million deaths per year (WHO,2015). Alcohol is not left out. Okojie (2014) expressed that alcohol consumption rate among men and women especially adolescents is no longer gender-related issue. Continuing, the author observed that present adolescent girls compete with their male counterpart in alcohol consumption.

In Nigeria substance abuse has become an issue of great concern just like the rest of the countries in the world. A country-wide assessment study undertaken in the past by the Government of Nigeria and the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) revealed that drug abuse especially tobacco, alcohol and marijuana has permeated all strata of Nigeria society, the youth and young adults being the most affected group (Nwenesi, 2015). Guthumbi (2010) in a study of substance abuse among the youth in Nigeria observed that 20% of adolescents aged 12 and 22 years smoked cigarettes, 9% had tried to smoke bhang, while some 23% drank commercial beer and spirit, gender Notwithstanding. This corresponds to the age of youths in secondary schools.

The intake of substance by this group might be influenced by certain socio-economic variables such as location gender, peer groups, easy accessibility among others. Ngesi, Ndika, and Masess (2008) observed that peer group influence is a recognizable factor in the behaviour of adolescents, more especially drug taking. According to the authors, some other factors such as parental background, availability of the substance, availability of money, failure at school, and to keep awake at night are also responsible for substance abuse by students.

Considering the fact that adolescents especially that of secondary school students are assets, hope and future to their families, society and nation at large, also considering the fact that they are leaders of tomorrow, that whatever affect them affect the future of their families, society and nation, hence, the need to examine the extent of substance abuse among them becomes pertinent and crucial. This is even so important as it was reported that substance abuse threatens the future of the young people and has turned many into psychopaths, zombies and criminals (Ugwuozor, 2013).

Despite the huge burden that substance abuse exacts on global burden of disease, it still remains a neglected area of research especially in developing countries where greater emphasis and effort is directed towards infectious diseases such as T B, Malaria and HIV and AIDS. Moreover, where there are studies on substance abuse among secondary school students in the developed countries, data from the developing countries include Nigeria and Nsukka Local Government Area in particular are limited or lacking. This situation is worrisome and the researcher is motivated to carry out this study to investigate substance abuse among secondary school students in Nsukka Local Government Area in Enugu State.

Purpose of the study.

The purpose of the study was to ascertain exact of substance abuse among secondary school students in Nsukka LGA, Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. determine various substances commonly abused by secondary school students.
2. find out the extent of substance abuse among secondary school students.
3. find out the extent of substance abuse among t secondary school students according to gender.
4. Determine the factors that contribute to substance abuse among secondary school students.

Research questions.

Four research questions were formulated to guide the study

1. What are the various substances commonly abused by secondary school students?
2. What is the extent of substance abuse among secondary school students?
3. What is the extent of substance abuse among secondary school students according to gender?
4. What are the factors that contribute to substance abuse among secondary school students?

Hypothesis.

HO; There is no statistically significant difference in mean response of male and female secondary school teachers in their extent of substance abuse (P .05)

Method

Cross-sectional survey research design was used for the study. The population for the study was 10,513 secondary school students in the 21 public secondary schools in the area. The sample for the study was 391 students. Multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to draw the sample. Firstly, the schools were stratified into exclusively girls, exclusively boys, and co-educational. Secondly, purposive sampling technique was used to select one school from one of exclusively boys, exclusively girls; and 6 from co-educational, making a total of 8 schools all together. Thirdly, simple random sampling technique was used to drawn 391 students (181 males, 210 females).

A structured questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire comprised of 2 selections, A and B. Selection A sought information on demographic data of the respondents such as gender and the name of school while section B comprised of a 4-point rating scale that sought information on extend of substance abuse. The instrument was validated by 3 experts and a reliability co-efficient value of 0.75 was established using Cronbach Alpha statistic. The 391copies of questionnaires were administered to the respondents with the help of three trained research assistants. At the end of the administration, a total of 365 copies of the questionnaire (168 males &197females) were correctly filled out and returned, giving a return rate of 94.5%.

Data were analyzed using mean statistic while t-test statistic was employed in testing the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance. Means with 2.5 and above were regarded as “high extent” while those below 2.5 were regarded as “low extent” of substance abuse.

Results

Table 1:
Secondary School Students' Responses on Various Commonly Abused Substances

S/N	Substance	Frequencies	%	Decision
	Alcohol	275	75.3	C A
	Tobacco	257	70.4	CA
	Heroin	112	30.7	NCA
	Marijuana	251	63.3	C A
	Hallucinogen	113	30.9	NA
	Inhalants	105	28.8	NA
	cocaine	02	0.59	N

Key =CA = Commonly abused, NA = Not abused

Table 1 above showed that alcohol, tobacco and marijuana are the class of substances the students commonly abused. This is shown by the percentage value of 75.3%, 70.4 % and 63.3% for alcohol, tobacco and marijuana respectively (items 1,2 and 4).

Table 2: **Mean and Percentage responses of students on the extent of Substance Abuse According to Gender**

Male = 168		Female = 197					
No	Substance	\bar{x}	%	Extent	\bar{x}	%	Extent
1	Alcohol	3.12	67.1	HA	2.56	56.7	HA
2	Tobacco	2.65	61.3	HA	1.10	21.9	LA
3	Heroin	1.08	22.5	LA	1.01	15.5	LA
4	Marijuana	3.10	65.3	HA	1.12	16.1	LA
5	Hallucinogen	2.10	21.7	LA	1.12	16.1	LA
6	Inhalants	1.62	19.4	LA	1.68	18.7	LA

KEY: HA = Highly Abuse, LA = Lowly Abused, % = Percentage \bar{x} = Mean

The result in table 2 revealed the extent of students' consumption of substances according to gender. Male students (67.1%) and in this study reported high consumption of alcohol and female students (56.7%) reported high consumption of alcohol. Also male students (61.3%) and (65.3%) reported high consumption of tobacco and marijuana respectively.

Table 3: **Responses of Students on the Factors That Contribute to Substance Abuse**

S/no	Factors	Frequency	%	Decision
1	Peer Pressure	275	75.3	FA
2	Family also back ground parent also abuse drugs	115	30.9	NF
3	Availability of substance	113	30.9	NF
4	Availability of money	105	28.8	NF
5	Failure at school	112	30.7	NF
6	Frustration and Stress at home	125	34.2	NF
7	Influenced by mass media	135	37.9	NF
8	To keep awake so as to more read	251	63.3	FA

Key: FA= Factor for Abuse, NF = No Factor for Abuse.

The result in table 3 revealed the factors that contribute to substance abuse among students. From the table it was indicated that 75.3% of the student had peer pressure as factors (reason) for substance abuse. Also the table indicated that 63.3% of the students showed that to keep awake so as to read more is the factor that contribute to substance abuse.

Table 4: T-Test Statistics on the Extent of Substance Abuse among Students According to Gender

Gender	N	F	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	P	Decision
Male	16.8	2.44	0.77	26.3	1.960	0.317	10.5	Rejected
Female	1.17	2.46	0.78					

Since the t-calculated (1.960) is more than the critical value (0.317) the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that substance among secondary school students is dependent on gender.

Discussion

The study generated data on extent of substance abuse among secondary school students in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. The findings pertaining to table I revealed that alcohol, tobacco and marijuana are class of substances highly abused by the students. This finding is unexpected, considering the age of these students, and also considering the fact that they are students who depended on their parents for financial assistants. However, the finding is in line with that of Nwenesi (2015) who reported that a country-wide need assessment study undertaken in the past by the Government of Nigeria and the United Nations Drug Control Programme revealed that drug abuse especially tobacco, alcohol and marijuanahas permeated all strata of Nigeria, the youth and the adults being the most affected. Also, this finding is in agreement with that of Gathumbi (2010) who reported in a study of substance abuse among the youth in Nigeria that 20% of adolescents aged 12-22 years smoked cigarettes,9% had tried to smoke bhang while some 23% drank commercial beer and spirit

This finding has a far reaching implication. The students (adolescents) are said to be assets and hope to their families and nation at large and also leaders of tomorrow. Whatever happens to them will affect the future of their families and nation as well. Therefore, this group of people needs to be protected from any behaviour capable of endangering their health and life. This finding which showed that students abuse alcohol, tobacco and marijuana to a great extent is uninteresting considering the dangers of these substance on the health and life of individuals. As Ugwuozor (2013) reported, these substances have turned many youths into psychopaths, zombies and criminals. By this finding, it means that the health and life of these tomorrow leaders are at risk, and as such it calls for urgent comprehensive intervention programme to put a check to this health risk behaviour if the hope and future of our families and nation will be guaranteed

The findings pertaining to table 2 revealed that male and female students abuse alcohol to a high extent and only male's abuse tobacco and marijuana to a high extent. This finding is not expected bearing in mind that female students are weaker sex and fragile and should not engage in any drink that intoxicates. But the finding is in agreement with Okogie's (2014) report that alcohol consumption among men and women has reached an alarming proportion that it is no longer sex-related issues.

The finding pertaining to table 3 revealed that peer pressure and to keep awake are the factors associated with substance abuse. This result is not far from what is expected because the behaviour of this group of people (adolescents) are highly influenced by their peers. Their period (age) is a period of imitation. This finding is in line with Ngesi, Ndika, and Masese (2008) who reported that peer group influence is strong determinant of the behaviour of adolescents more especially what they wear, eat, or drink

The finding pertaining to table 4 showed that the students' extent of substance abuse is dependent on gender. This is expected as common sense shows that women should not have equal alcohol, equal tobacco (whether cigarettes or marijuana) consumption with men. Men supposed to consume these substances more than women. This finding disagreed with Okogie's (2014) report that alcohol consumption rate among men and women especially adolescents is no longer a gender-related issues.

The authority reported that present adolescent girls compete with their male counterpart in alcohol consumption. Also, this finding is in contrast with the finding of Guthumbi (2010) that 20% of Nigeria adolescents aged 12 and 22 years smoked cigarettes, 9% had tried to smoke bhang, while some 22% drank commercial beer and spirit, sex difference notwithstanding.

Conclusion

From the finding of the study, it was concluded that secondary school students abuse specific substances such as marijuana, alcohol and tobacco to a high extent while other substances were abused to a very low extent. Male and female students abuse alcohol to a high extent while only males abuse tobacco and marijuana to a high extent. Peer pressure and to keep awake were the factors that strongly contribute to substance abuse. Furthermore, gender of the students specifically affects substance abuse.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Qualified health educators should be employed in every secondary school in Enugu State to teach health education with emphasis on substance abuse and its implications.
2. Seminars and workshops should be organized termly for secondary school students on substance abuse so as to equip the students with the knowledge of substance abuse and its effects.
3. Drug/substance education should be included in secondary school curriculum.

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