Predictors of drug abuse among students of selected tertiary educational institutions in Imo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Increase in the number of youths involved in drug abuse in Nigeria, portends a negative trend for the future of the country. This study investigated the factors that influence drug abuse among undergraduates in Owerri. The respondents were 2322 (858 males and 1464 females) students selected from five tertiary institutions in Owerri capital territory, Imo State, Nigeria. Some of the factors assessed were types of residence, sponsor of education, drug availability, cost of drugs and personality traits. A researcher developed questionnaire was used to gather data from respondents. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey design while data was analyzed with frequency and binary logistic regression model statistics using SPSS version 21. The findings showed that tramadol was the most abused drug and Polytechnique students were the most involved in drug abuse. The result of the analysis also showed that gender, sponsor of education, drug availability, cost of drugs and peer group significantly predicted drug abuse. Based on the findings, this study recommends that government and the management of tertiary institutions in Imo, should develop strategies to control availability of drugs on campuses and around school environs, restrict undergraduate students' access to psychoactive substances and increase advocacy against substance use especially within the Polytechnique institutions.

Keywords: Binary logistic regression, Drug Abuse, Imo, Nigeria, Students, Tertiary Educational Institution

Introduction

Drug or substance abuse has become a global problem, whose acuity varies with regions and countries of the world. World Drug Report of 2017 revealed that the number of people who use drug was on a steady annual increase from 210 million in 2009 to 255 million in 2015 (United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, 2017). This showed an annual average of 7.5 million. What is even more disturbing about the problem is that its deleterious effects transcend regional, national, religious, cultural, gender, ethnic, class and age boundaries. According to World Health Organization (WHO), as cited by Salous and Omar (2010), "substance abuse is a public health problem with global dimension: worldwide psychoactive substance use is estimated at two billion alcohol users, 1.3 billion smokers and 185 million drug users". Although drug abuse is known to cut across all age brackets from teenagers to the aged, it is reported to be common among youths than among adults (Hassan, Csemy, Rappo & Knight, 2009) and among the male folk than the female folk (Adamson, *et al.* 2015).

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2017) defines youth as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community. In Nigeria, youth is described as young people between the age brackets of 18 – 30 years. The lower limit of 18years is derived from the national age of political maturity and the statutory age of admission into tertiary institutions in Nigeria. On the other hand, the upper limit of 30 years is derived from age limit of youths, as defined by National Youths Service Corp (NYSC) (Pulse.ng, 2015). It is a period of vigour and risk taking and a time when one will like to explore one's opportunities.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, no less a person than the former Director General of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Mr. Otunba Ipinmisho, emotionally decried the high rate of drug use among Nigerian youths. He described the situation where about 40 percent of the youth abuse drugs as "very frightening" (This Day Newspaper, 2016). One does not have to look far away to see how pervasive drug abuse has become in terms of the sale and consumption of drugs in the country. The sale and consumption of various forms of drugs, and particularly hot drinks, popularly called *"Kai Kai"* or *"Ogogoro"*, are common features of the neighbourhoods of many tertiary institutions, parks, recreation centers, some classes of restaurants and hotels, our cities, street corners, campus "joints" and "bukas", hostels, uncompleted buildings, 'big-boys parties', secondary schools, some private homes, toilets, underneath fly-overs and bridges, nearby bushes and other isolated places. A comprehensive study of drug use in Nigeria by Adamson *et al.*, (2015), indicated higher prevalence rate among the male than among the female and in urban areas than in rural communities. The drugs, under study, were cannabis, cocaine, heroin, codeine, morphine, hashish, crack, sky, ice, felvin20, alcohol, tobacco, opium, tramadol etc.

Apart from the fore-going problems that necessitated this study of drug abuse in Nigeria, there is also the fact that no previous scientific study of the problem in the area and institutions of focus in this research was found.

Objectives of the Study

Against the back-drop of the highlighted problems of high rate of drug abuse among Nigerian youths, and the fact that no research work has been carried out on the subject in the area and institutions under study, this work has, as its main objective, to study the factors influencing drug abuse among youths in tertiary educational institutions in Owerri Imo State of Nigeria.

The specific objectives include to:

i. Examine the socio-demographic profile of the target students.
ii. Determine the drugs that are commonly abused by the students in the studied institutions.
iii. Determine the factors that influence drug abuse by students in the studied institutions.

Significance of/Justification for the Study

This study is significant in two major respects, namely: academic and practical. From the academic perspective, the study adds to the corpus of knowledge available on the subject and, by implication, to the volume of literature available to scholars and researchers on the problem of drug abuse by youths. A study of this type, as was noted by Hassan, *et al.*, (2009), facilitates the sharing of knowledge on the subject across countries and cultures and enhances understanding of patterns of youth substance use and the related problems and the therapeutic strategies. From the practical perspective, the study will provide social and youth development officers, government agencies, NGOs, international agencies and other organizations concerned with youth problems with scientific basis for informed decision and effective policy on youth and drug abuse.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Drug is a chemical compound or substance which, when taken or administered in any form into the body, alters the behaviour of an individual. Drug may be inhaled, smoked, injected, eaten or inserted. The World Health Organization refers to drug as any psychoactive substance which, when taken or administered into one's system, affects mental processes such as cognition and emotion (World Health Organization, 2016).

Drugs can be categorized into licit and illicit. Licit drugs, also known as legal drugs, because they are used legally, include alcohol, tobacco and caffeine. Legally used drugs also include

medicines used for illnesses, over-the-counter drugs used as directed and prescribed medicines used by intended persons. Illicit drugs are so referred, because they are dangerous drugs which are often used in an illegal or improper manner and pose a serious threat to health and life. Such drugs include cocaine, cannabis('wewe'), opium, heroin, methamphetamine ('nkpurummiri') and psilocybin. However, whether licit or illicit, drug is as good as it can be dangerous, depending on usage.

Drug abuse is the use of any drug in a manner that is either socially or medically disapproved. It is regarded as an unfortunate situation, because of its deleterious consequences on both individuals and society. Quoting Wolfing, Nwoba (2011) stated that drug without medical advice or direction could be injurious to the health of the consumer(s) and the entire society. He further stated that drug abuse includes the indiscriminate sale of drugs by unlicensed medicine dealers, drug addiction, drug trafficking or peddling, self-medication, taking expired drugs, over dose or under dose, etc.

People abuse drugs in many ways. There are those who take it before they eat because they feel it stimulates their appetite. Some take it before they go into the field of play. It is alleged that some celebrities also take drugs before coming out to perform on stage. To Haladu (2016), drug abuse is excessive and persistent self-administration of drug without regard to medically or culturally acceptable patterns.

As a global problem, drug abuse has caught up with campus students across the globe. In United Kingdom for example, studies have shown that two out of five students are drug users (Coughlan, 2018). The same source revealed that types of drug commonly abused vary from country to country, depending on availability, cost and legal implications.

Substances reported to have been commonly abused in Nigeria include, among others, antibiotics, anti-diarrhoeal, laxatives and pain-relieving drugs. In the study by Idowu, Aremu, Olumide and Ogunlaja (2018), tramadol was reported as the most commonly abused substance

in Nigeria. Again, Madukwe and Klein (2020) stated that both male and female emerging adults in Nigeria were involved in tramadol use, and this is particularly linked to poverty as they used it to either enhance physical performance or deal with hunger.

Causes of Drug Abuse among Students in Nigeria Higher Institutions

There are many reasons why students in Nigerian tertiary institutions indulge in illicit drugs. These reasons range from ignorance, poverty, family background or broken homes to the desire "to belong" or to be what is regarded as "big boys". Ogbolu, in Nwoba (2011) noted that free access to drugs by everybody and unrealistic code and sale of dangerous drugs by the local chemist shops promote drug abuse. Urbanization is also a contributing factor because of accessibility of illicit drugs in urban areas. However, this does not rule out the accessibility of hard drugs in Nigerian rural areas, where the police and other law enforcement agencies hardly monitor. Agwogie (2016) identified five major predisposing factors to drug abuse among students as peer pressure, curiosity, ignorance, academic-induced frustration and lack of parental care. He added that, "where students are not well guided, either by the home or school, they choose wrong peers, which will lead them to experimenting with drugs".

To Gobir *et al.,* (2017), "majority of the youths ignorantly depend on one form of substance or the other for various daily activities such as social, educational and moral". It has been reported that for students to cope with challenges that they face in the course of their studies, they may resort to certain forms of drug use presumably to enhance both physical and cognitive performance. The study by Ihezue, in Babalola, Akinhanmi and Ogunwale (2014) revealed that in Enugu, South East Nigeria, a prevalence rate of 56% was reported among a sample of medical students.

Theoretical Review

This work is anchored on two theories: the social learning theory and the symbolic interaction theory of drug abuse. The social learning theory is associated with Albert Bandura (1969). The theory states that behaviour is a function of consequences of that behaviour. It equally states that observing behaviour can have as much impact as directly experiencing it. It emphasizes the importance of observation in learning and that most people do not just observe the actions of others, but, most times, copy the behaviours or actions of others, especially those that are "rewarding" and "beneficial" to them. This kind of observational learning is called imitation or modelling. It allows people to learn important skills from others which help them function well in society. The human ability to model or imitate the behaviours of others is necessary for their survival. When people imitate others, they copy both positive and negative behaviours. From this understanding of social learning theory and negative behaviour, drug use and abuse are seen as socially learned behaviour which is the interplay of social environment and personal factors. Learning by imitation or modelling seriously plays a part in why people use drugs and subsequently abuse them. In the words of Philippe (2012), "if a person observes that others are getting "enjoyment" from the use of drugs, it can lure him/her to be involved in it".

Symbolic interaction theory is associated with George Herbert Mead, Charles Horton Cooley and Herbert Blumer (Obasi, 2014). It focuses on the interaction of individuals and how they interpret their interactions. The "symbolic" represents the meaning and belief people attach to behaviour. Social behaviour, which could be both acceptable and unacceptable (problem behaviours) is a product of interaction between individuals. The theory then states that social problem is a product of interaction of individuals. Relating this theory to drug abuse, it sees drug use and abuse (problem behaviour), as a product of someone interacting with those who use and abuse drugs, that through such interaction and the belief/meaning (feeling

high/wellness) the person attaches to it he/she learns to use and abuse drugs too, without recourse to the facts surrounding the behaviour (drug use/abuse). In other words, people use/abuse drugs because the meaning they attach to drugs is more than the facts they know about them.

The two theories are closely related and used to explain why people use/abuse drugs; both perceive drug use/abuse as a product of learning through interaction and observation. While social learning theory says that during observation/ interaction the behaviour that makes positive impacts on the individual is likely to be repeated, the symbolic interaction theory says that during interaction, the behaviour that gives acceptable meaning to the individual is likely to be repeated. Hence, behavioural conformity is a product of its consequences.

Consequences of Drug Abuse

It is no longer in doubt that drug abuse has been on the increase among Nigerian students in tertiary institutions in particular, and youths in general. Its prevalence has given government, non-governmental organizations and individuals great concern, considering its negative impact on the victims, on the educational system and, indeed, on the society. It is as a result of this concern to save the Nigerian youth and the society, that the Nigerian government in 1987 established the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA).

One may support the argument that the agency has made an impact in carrying out its functions; yet, there has been high rate of drug abuse among students in Nigeria tertiary institutions.

Drug abuse is injurious to the health of the person who abuses it, affects his academic performance and retards society's progress. The effects of drugs on the body vary from person to person, depending on the person's characteristics (such as physical size, gender, mood, diet, fitness, age, expectations and health, the drug itself such as the amount used, and its purity), how it is taken and the environment a person is when using the drug (Drug aware, nd). The

misuse of codeine products, for example, contributes to severe health outcomes, including liver damage, stomach ulceration, respiratory depression, coma and death" (Adeyeye, 2017).

Quoting Morkey, in Adenike, Suraki, Adegboyega, and Senuga, (2014) agree that students who use substances are usually lethargic and have low energy while in school. They develop unhealthy eating and sleeping habits, tend to socialize with other youths who use substances as well. Also, Lodge (2021) opines that drug/substances abuse touches every aspect of one's life ranging from lifestyle to relationships, it disrupts home and family life, hurts relationships with parents, children, spouse and friends.

METHOD

Scope of the Study: The thematic scope of this study is limited to drug abuse among students and the geographical scope to five tertiary institutions in Imo State of Nigeria.

Area of the Study: The five tertiary institutions studied by the researchers are located within Owerri Capital Territory of Imo state of Nigeria. They include Federal University of Technology in Ihiagwa, Owerri; Federal Polytechnic, Nekede, Owerri; Imo state University, Owerri; Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, in Owerri Metropolis and Imo State College of Agriculture, Umuagwo, Owerri.

Population of Study: The population of study spanned undergraduate and post-graduate students, covering 100-600 levels. The age-bracket of the population ranged from 18-30 years. The lower limit of 18years was derived from the national age of political maturity in Nigeria and the upper limit of 30 years from the age limit of youths as defined by the National Youths Service Corps (NYSC) (Pulse.ng, 2015).

Research Design: The study, which is a cross-sectional survey one, used the affected institutions as clusters and drew the participants from across faculties and departments. It obtained data from primary and secondary sources.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques: The sample size of 2,400 participants was determined by the use of Kothari (2004) formula;

$$n = \left(\frac{Z_{\alpha}}{e} \right)^2 p(1-p) \qquad (1)$$

Where,

n = Sample size

Z = Value of standard variate corresponding to α

e = Acceptance error in a given situation

p = Estimated proportion or incidence of cases in the population.

Using the above formula with 95 percent confidence, e = 0.02 and p = 0.5, we obtained n = 2400.

The study therefore employed a sample size of 2,400 students, although 2,322, representing 96.75% participated fully and successfully. Multistage sampling method was adopted with the selected institutions as the first stage, faculties as the second stage and departments as the third stage.

Data Collection Techniques: The study relied mainly on primary data, which were complimented with secondary data. The primary data were collected by the use of Researcher's-Made Questionnaire (RMQ). The questionnaire had two sections: A and B. Section A collected personal/socio-demographic data, and B, topic-related data/responses. The questions bordered essentially on topics of the study.

Validity of the Research Instruments: The jury method of face and content validity was employed to ascertain how well the instruments captured and measured what they were

designed and intended to measure. Beyond this, superior and more experienced collegues also validated the instruments.

Reliability of the Research Instruments: Consistency in the result of the instruments was established by the use of test re-test method.The coefficient of correlation between the two sets of responses, which was 0.78, was determined by the use of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) model. The coefficient revealed a positive correlation.

Categorization and Measurement of Variables:

a. Dependent Variable: 'Abuse of drugs'- The participants were categorized into the responses: 'Yes' for those who abuse drugs and 'No' for those who do not; with the intensity of drug usage measured in terms of frequency.
b. Independent Variables:
    I. Age of Participants calculated in terms of years
    II. Gender Categories: Male and Female students
    III. Educational Categories: Levels of study from 100-600
    IV. Availability of Drugs: Available and Non-available
    V. Cost of Drugs/Affordability: Affordable and Non-affordable
    VI. Peer Influence:Persuation/pressure to use drugs- Determined through frequency of interaction with drug abusers and degree of pressure experienced during the interaction
    VII. Types of Residence: On-campus, off-campus, family house
    VIII. Sponsorship Type: Self-sponsored, family-sponsored, government and others (scholarships)
    IX. Personality Traits: Introversion,extroversion, frustration, curiosity, ignorance, etc.

Techniques of Data Analysis: Objectives 1 and 2 were analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics. Considering the fact that the generated data were mainly frequency (categorical) data, and that our main interest was to predict membership of two categorical outcomes: 'abuse drugs' and 'does not abuse drugs', a binary logistic regression model was adopted to t objective test 3, using SPSS Version 21. The binary logistic regression model is used for a dependent variable that takes the value of 0 and 1. The categories of the dependent variable was assigned '0' for 'non-abuse of drugs' and '1' for 'abuse of drugs' by the studied students. The dependent vaiable was 'abuse of drugs', while the independent variables were age, gender,educational level, type of residence, sponsorship type, drug avalaibility, cost of drugs, peer influence and personality traits.

Due to general evasion associated with direct questions on abuse of drugs, because of the legal implications surrounding drugs/substances (Nkonge, 2017), and to avoid getting false responses, the researchers considered it appropriate to use indirect questions regarding these variables.

RESULTS

Table 1: Distribution of Drug Types used by Institutions

Type of Drugs	Location					Total
	IMSU	Nekede	FUTO	Umuagwo	Alvan	
Cocaine	16	40	14	6	31	107
Codeine	19	58	14	1	31	123
Crack	8	17	2	6	16	49
E	0	2	0	1	0	3
E and F	0	2	0	1	0	3
Felvin20	0	0	2	0	0	2
Hashish	1	1	4	0	0	6
Heroine	1	5	5	1	15	27
Ice	1	1	2	0	0	4
Marijuana	141	281	83	42	31	578
Morphine	0	4	0	0	0	4
None	20	180	78	29	0	307
Opium	0	2	1	0	0	3
Others	0	2	2	0	0	4
Paraceta	0	9	3	2	0	14
Sky	4	17	1	3	0	25
Tramadol	106	612	176	76	127	1097
Total	317	1233	387	168	251	2356

The result in Table 1 above shows that the most commonly used drug in the studied institutions was tramadol followed by marijuana, codeine, and crack cocaine. Felvin 20 was least abused drug and 307 students reported no drug use. Again, the result shows that the highest involvement in drug abuse was reported among students of Federal Polytechnique Nekede, Federal University of Technology and Imo state University in that order.

Table 2: Significance of the Variables in the Logistic Regression

		B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% CI	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1[a]	Age	-.326	.087	13.994	1	.000	.722	.608	.856
	Gender	-.598	.140	18.182	1	.000	.550	.418	.724
	Type of Residence	.034	.131	.068	1	.795	1.035	.800	1.338
	Sponsor of Education	.325	.099	10.699	1	.001	1.384	1.139	1.682
	Drugs Availability	.893	.166	28.875	1	.000	2.442	1.763	3.382
	Costs of Drugs	.459	.143	10.303	1	.001	1.583	1.196	2.095
	Peer Group	.505	.224	5.108	1	.024	1.657	1.069	2.569
	Personality Traits	-.041	.025	2.787	1	.095	.959	.914	1.007
	Educational Level	-.045	.057	.606	1	.436	.956	.855	1.070
	Constant	-2.991	.495	36.502	1	.000	.050		

Table 2 above shows that the coefficients (β) of predictor variables (age, gender, sponsor of education, drug availability, cost of drugs and peer group) were significantly different from zero since the significance of their Wald statistic is less than 0.05 at 1 degree of freedom. This means predictors', age, gender, sponsor of education, drug availability, cost of drugs and peer group made a significant contribution to the prediction of the outcome (drug abuse).

In addition, the odds ratio (Exp B) of predictor variables age and gender was less than 1, which indicates that as age increases and gender, changes the odds of drug abuse occurring

will decrease. Also, the odds ratio (Exp B) of each of predictor variables type of residence, sponsor of education, drug availability, cost of drugs and peer group influence was greater than 1, which means that as changes in drug availability, cost of drugs, source of finance and peer group influence increase the odds of drug abuse will increase.

Table 3: Model Fitting Information

Model	-2loglikelihood	χ^2	df	p-value
Intercept only	1559.478	105.523	9	0.000
Final	1453.955			

In Table 3, adding the 9 independent variables, reduced the -2loglikelihood statistic from 1559.478 (initial or intercept only) to 1453.953 final value. This gives 105.523 corresponding to a Chi-Square of 105.523 on 9 degrees of freedom; which is significant ($\alpha = 0.05$). The implication of this result is that the variables significantly improved the model's predictability. In other words, the model is a good-fit for our data.

DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows the logistic regression coefficients, Wald Test and Odds ratio for each of the predictors. Employing a 0.05 criterion of statistical significance age, gender, sponsor of education, drug availability, cost of drugs and peer group had significant partial effects. The odds ratio for each predictor variable revealed that there was lower likelihood of abuse of drugs for a change in age and gender. Conversely, an increase in finance for education, drug availability, cost of drugs and peer group increased the likelihood to abuse drugs by the targeted students. Nevertheless, other predictor variables – type of residence, personality traits and educational level did not contribute to the predictability of drug abuse among students of the tertiary institutions studied.

Consequently, drug availability plays a prominent role in influencing and predicting abuse of drugs by the studied students with highest odds ratio of 2.442, and this is followed by the peer group with odds ratio of 1.657. Thus, availability of drugs both inside and within tertiary institutions makes students highly vulnerable to drug abuse, which can as well be accentuated by serious pressure from peer group influences.

On the most commonly abused drug in the target population, this study revealed that it was tramadol; followed by cannabis, codeine, cocaine and opium as least abused drug. This finding disagreed with the report of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2019), on drug abuse in Nigeria, which revealed that cannabis was the most commonly abused drug in Nigeria, a finding that was corroborated by Jatau, *et al*., (2021). These variations may be reflections of the demographic and contextual differences of the studied populations and places.

With regards to age, this study showed significant association between the age of students and abuse of drugs. It also revealed that respondents aged 18 – 20 were more likely to abuse drugs.

This finding could be attributed to the fact that the age bracket 18-20 is marked with curiosity and adventurousness, and in the words of Akanbi, Augustina, Theophilus, Muritala, &Ajiboye (2015), "is a time of experimentation, exploration, curiosity and identity search". Risk taking is also an adolescent trait that predisposes them to the abuse of psychoactive substances (Mamman, Othman &Lian, 2014). However, it is not quite in consonance with the report of the UNODC (2019), that revealed that the highest levels of any past-year drug use was among those aged 25 – 39 years.

Furthermore, out of 858 (100%) male respondents, 732 (85.3%) agreed that something was wrong about abuse of drugs by students, while 126 (14.7%) disagreed. With regard to 1464 (100%) female respondents, 1325 (90.5%) agreed that there was something wrong about abuse of drugs by students, while 139 (9.5%) disagreed. This indicates that more male than female students were likely to abuse drugs. This finding agrees with that of the UNODC (2019) which reported that the male gender is more prone to the abuse of drugs than women (with annual prevalence of 7.0% or 3.4 million women) that reported past year drug use in Nigeria. This finding is also in line with Stolpe (2021), view to the effect that one in every ten drug users in Nigeria is a woman.

With regard to education, there is a significant association between sponsor of education of students and drug abuse among students, with those on scholarship appearing to abuse drugs more than the other students. This finding is in consonance with the findings of Mbuthia, Wanzala, Ngugi and Nyamogoba (2020), which revealed that availability of funds predisposes students to abuse of drugs. The finding may be linked to the fact that students on scholarship have more money at their disposal than the other students. With their relatively comfortable financial position, they are more likely to be involved in social activities where they may easily face and yield to the temptation of pressure to take and abuse alcohol and other forms of drugs.

For availability of drugs, a cross tabulation with abuse of drugs among students showed significant association between the two. This result supports the findings of Mbuthia *et al.*, (2020), and Ikoh, Smah and Okwanya (2019), that access to drugs due to its availability is a factor in drug use and abuse among students. The reason for the finding may be because students don't need to travel to distant places to seek and obtain drugs; they can easily access it in nearby kiosks. This may be true especially with regards to alcohol which is a socially accepted drug in Nigeria.

Also revealed in this study, was significant associations between cost of drugs, personality traits, and abuse of drugs among students. This finding corroborates those of Abadi, Bakhti, Nazemi, Sedighi and Toroghi, (2018). Similarly, Drug Aware (n. d.), revealed that the reason given on why they use drugs included among other psychological factors, weight control, fighting exhaustion, coping with pains, and self-treatment of mental health problems. Their result showed that personality trait influences drug abuse. Many students with low self-esteem may abuse drugs like alcohol and cannabis to boost their confidence, and as a coping mechanism to escape unpleasant realities.

Finally, there was a significant association between the peer group membership of students and abuse of drugs. This finding agrees with those of earlier researchers (Foo, Tam, & Lee, 2012., Mamman, *et al*., 2014). The significant association between peer group and drug abuse, as established in the study, can be theoretically explained in terms of social learning and symbolic interactionist theories, adopted as the framework of this study. Peer groups are social categories with their own sub-cultures which embrace their cognition, perception, and usage of drugs and other drug-related behaviours. These sub-cultures are usually shared by peer members through the process of formal and informal interactions. It also accounts for their behavioural similarities. However, the cross tabulation shows that there could be exemptions to this finding.

Those who do not agree that peer-group influences abuse of drugs and also said there was nothing wrong about students abuse of drugs representing 22.2% were more likely to abuse drugs than other groups. This implies that peer-group is not the only factor that influences youths in the abuse of drugs. In other words, some youths that take to drug do so out of self-volition and not necessarily as a result of peer influence.

CONCLUSION

This study considered the factors that influence drug abuse among students in selected tertiary educational institutions in Imo State, Nigeria. The study identified availability of drugs as most important factor influencing prediction of drug abuse by the studied students. It was also shown that tramadol was the most commonly abused drug in the studied institutions, followed by cannabis, codeine, cocaine etc. Finally, type of residence, personality traits and educational level did not contribute to the predictability of drug abuse among students of the tertiary institutions studied.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, this study recommends:

- Government and school authorities should develop strategies to control availability of drugs to students.
- Tertiary institutions should adopt peer group management by periodically evaluating the activities of clubs and associations within the schools.
- Parents and sponsors of students should be mindful of the amount of money they give to their wards as availability of fund predisposes some to abuse drugs.
- Government should continue with programmes that provide opportunities for youths to be meaningfully engaged so as to boost their self-worth.

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