

**PREVALENCE OF DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG
UNDERGRADUATES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS: IMPLICATION FOR
CAMPUS-WIDE COUNSELLING**

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Abstract

The study investigated the prevalence of drug and substance abuse among undergraduates in the University of Lagos and its counselling implication. The survey design method was adopted for the study. The population of the study was all undergraduates in the 12 Faculties of the University. Three research questions and one hypothesis were raised to guide the study. The sample size was purposively selected from the population and a total of 196 female and 190 male students. A 22-item questionnaire titled "Drug Use and Abuse among Undergraduates Questionnaire" (DUAAUQ) was used for the study. To determine the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach alpha was used and a reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. A total of 386 copies of questionnaire were administered, however only the 308 that were returned and properly filled were used for analysis. Rank order, simple percentages and mean score were used to answer the research questions while the t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The finding of the study revealed that the following drugs and substances alcohol, cough syrups, Indian hemp (Igbo or weed), pain killers, coffee, tobacco, kolanuts, inhalants, cocaine, cannabis were abused by the students. The study also showed that there are many reasons why the students abuse drugs, which include to stay awake to study, to fight depression and anxiety, influence from peers and acquaintances, to win in sports, among others. The study also showed that the students understand the dangers of drug and substance abuse. The study found out that there was significant difference based on gender ($t_{cal} -3.493, P = 0.05$) in drug and substance abuse among the students. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that drug education should be incorporated into the curriculum of the University and that alcohol and other substances should be prohibited on campus.

Introduction

Drug and substance abuse have recently become a serious social and psychological health issues in the society. Drugs and indeed all substances have the uses for which they are available in the society. Some drugs and substances are used for medical and pharmacological reasons, while some are used as cleaning or general-purpose chemicals and agents in homes and offices. When drugs are used for their right purposes, there is no abuse. However, when any drug or substance is used for any other purpose rather than what it is meant for, then such a drug or substance has been abused. World Health Organization (WHO, 2014) say that substance abuse is the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Abdullahi (2005) reveals that the term substance or drug abuse is a broad name that is not restricted

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to oral therapy such as injection, capsules or tablet, but it includes the use of alcohol, cocaine, heroin and marijuana and other. Chukwu, Pius, Fiase, Haruna, Terkuma and Achukwu (2017) opined that substance or drug abuse encompasses medical, social, cultural and other variables and is not merely medical or moral problem. Substance and drug abuse is a global phenomenon and it is growing problem all over the world (Ani 2014; Al-Alawi & Shaikh 2018). It is of a great concern to educational stakeholders, medical practitioners, sociologists, religious leaders, counsellors and parents (Abdu-Raheem 2013).

Nigeria is currently highest consumer of cannabis and amphetamine in Africa (United Nations office on Drugs and crime, UNODC, 2011). This problem is not limited to only the adult population as it has been discovered by different studies, Ani (2014); Ekpeyoung and Aakpege (2014); Adeyemo et al (2016); Adekeye et al (2015); Oshikoya and Alli (2006) and Chukwu et al (2017) revealed that young people in the secondary and tertiary institutions are getting hooked on substances and drugs for various reasons. Oshodi, Aina and Onajole (2010) reported a steady increase in drug abuse and its attendant consequences in the last thirty years. There are a lot of factors that contribute to drug use and abuse. Haladu (2003) mentioned the following factors experimental curiosity, peer group influence, lack of parental control and supervision, personality problems due to socio-economic conditions. Others include the need for energy to work for long hours, availability of drugs and the need to prevent the occurrence of withdrawal symptoms.

Drug abuse is becoming an increased problem in Nigeria, Adeyemo, Ohaeri, Okpala and Ogodo (2016). It is a global health challenge UNODC (2005), it affects the individual, the family and the society at large, Iman (2004), agreed that it can also interfere with an individual's academic, social and psychological well-being. Drugs also has immediate, short term and long-term effects (Chassin, Hussong, Barrera, Brooke, Trim, and Ritter, 2004). This means that a student who abuses drugs may begin to witness drawbacks and failures in his or her academic activities and may even get involved in other unruly behaviours. This may pose threats to lives and properties on campus.

Adekeye (2012) gave another dimension to the factors associated with drug abuse among young people. He notes that youths who are exposed to or who observe adults drink and smoke may want to experiment to see how it feels. He also opined that sensation seeking and risk-taking tendencies which are normal developmental process for adolescents can trigger drug use and abuse. Drug abuse is never an intention of anybody at the onset of use. Usually, people take to drugs either because of sociological factors, psychological factors or financial issues. It can even be because of fear of the unknown or lack of personal coping strategies to deal with challenges and frustrations of life. Substances abuse and alcohol use is on the increase on university campuses.

Many authorities have studied the effects of drug abuse on the youth and young adults, its causes of drug abuse and consequences of drug abuse. Oshikoya and Alli (2006) in their study revealed that dependence and addiction are the major consequences

of drug abuse. Adeyemo, Ohaeri, Okpala and Oghale (2016) study revealed that 46.6% of their respondents have taken drugs for non-medical purposes. They discovered that coffee and alcohol were the two most abused drugs among the students. It was also discovered in their study that poor student-teacher relationship, improper parenting and peer influence were among the causes of drug abuse among students, and that the University environment contributes to students' use and abuse of drugs.

Adekeye, Adelusi Chenube, Ahmadu and Sholarin (2015) in their study revealed that cigarette smoking, alcohol, coffee, energy drinks and kolanuts are among the highly abused drugs among the students. They discovered that parental use and peer influence contributed to students' use and abuse of alcohol. Eze and Uzoeghe (2015) in their own study discovered that lifetime and current use of alcohol were high among male students, adolescents and young adults and students who are from dysfunctional homes. They also discovered that students know the harmful effects of alcohol and yet are not able to stop the use and abuse. Essien (2010) in his own study revealed that 1% of the students in the study abuse heroine, 17% abuse alcohol, 22.5% abuse cigarette, 14% abuse kolanut while 11% abuse cannabis.

Jalilian, Matin, Ahmadpanah, Motlagh, Mahboubi and Eslami (2014) studied substance abuse among college students. The study revealed that hopelessness was an independent risk factor for cigarette smoking and alcohol drinking. Onofe (2016) study revealed that alcohol was the mostly abused followed by tobacco, hypnotics and cannabis. The study also found out that drug abuse, among the students was high among male students, is connected to parental drug use, parental educational level and marital status. Ani (2014) in his own study discovered that 19.5% of his respondents had smoked cigarette one or more in their lifetime. It was discovered that alcohol has the highest usage rate followed by tranquilizers, marijuana and cocaine.

From the foregoing, it is clear that a lot of studies have been carried out on the prevalence of drug abuse among university students, however none of the study to the best of our knowledge has actually looked at the counselling implications and strategies that can be used effectively in helping university students in managing the issue of drug abuse in order to help them in achieving main goal of enrolling into the universities.

University or tertiary education is the kind of education that prepares an individual, trains the mind and intellect through studies and researches for the development of any nation. Young people after secondary education proceed to the university to acquire the necessary training and education that would enable them to contribute effectively to the development of their nation and to compete favourably with their peers all over the world. According to Eze and Uzoeghe (2015) university students are vital to every nation and therefore their health is very essential to national development.

Statement of Problem

Despite that students in the university are to engage in rigorous academic and research activities that would prepare them adequately to contribute their quota to

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national development and also to compete favourably with their peers globally. Yet many university students ignorantly engage in the use and abuse of drug and other substances. Drug and substance abuse has a lot of consequences for the users. Some of these consequences include threat to their academic and social lives, health issues, risky sexual behaviour and violent behaviour such as fighting, stealing, bullying and other crimes associated to drug abuse. It can ultimately lead to death especially when there is serious overdose or over indulgence.

A lot of studies have been conducted on the prevalence of drug abuse among university students in Nigeria, however, little or no attention has been paid on the counselling implications and strategies that can be employed in helping students to desist from and or manage drug and substance abuse and addiction. Hence, the thrust of this study is the prevalence of drug and substance use and abuse among undergraduates in the University of Lagos: counselling implications and strategies.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the prevalence of drug use and abuse among undergraduates in the University of Lagos. Specifically, the study attempted to:

- identify the most commonly abused drugs among undergraduates in the University of Lagos;
- ascertain reasons for drug use and abuse among the undergraduates; and
- identify the perceived consequences of Drug abuse among the students.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the most commonly abused drugs and substances among undergraduates in the University of Lagos?
2. What are the reasons for drug abuse among the students?
3. What are the perceived consequences of drug abuse among the students?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was raised and tested;

1. There is no significant difference in the use and abuse of drugs and other substances among the undergraduates based on gender.

Methods

The survey design method was adopted for the study. This enabled the researcher to collect information through the use of questionnaire from the sample. The population of the study was all undergraduates in the 12 Faculties of the University. Three research questions and one hypothesis were raised to guide the study. To get a good representative of the population, the Taro Yameni formula for sample size selection was used to determine the sample size for the study. A total of 386 sample was involved for the study. The sample size was purposively selected from the population and a total of 196 female

and 190 male learners were selected. Purposive Sampling was adopted because drug and substance abuse are prevalent among university students. A 22-item questionnaire titled ‘Drug Use and Abuse among Undergraduates Questionnaire’ (DUAAUQ) was designed and used for the study. The questionnaire had three sections in line with the research questions raised. The instrument had a 4-point response scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree with the weights of 4,3,2,1 respectively. The instrument was validated by 2 experts in Guidance and Counselling and 1 expert in Mathematics in the University of Lagos. Their suggestions and corrections were used in modifying the questionnaire to suit the study. To determine the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach alpha method was used, a reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. This was taken as high enough to consider the questionnaire reliable to be used for the study. A total of 386 copies of the questionnaire were administered, however only 308 copies that were returned and properly filled were used for analysis. Rank order, simple percentages and mean score were used to answer the research questions while the t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the most commonly abused drugs and substances among undergraduates in the University of Lagos?

Table 1: Ranking of the drugs and substances commonly abused by students

| S/N | What are the most commonly abused drugs/substances among students | No. of Students who ticked against each drug/substance | Rank |
|------------|--|---|-------------|
| i. | Alcohol | 303 | 1 |
| ii. | Cough syrup that contains codeine | 302 | 2 |
| iii. | Indian Hemp (Igbo or weed) | 300 | 3 |
| iv. | Pain Medications e.g Tramadol | 289 | 4 |
| v. | Coffee | 287 | 5 |
| vi. | Tobacco/Cigarettes | 274 | 6 |
| vii. | Kolanuts | 245 | 7 |
| viii. | Inhalants e.g Glue | 90 | 8 |
| ix. | Cannabis | 27 | 9 |
| x. | Cocaine | 15 | 10 |
| xi. | Heroin | - | |
| xii. | Hashish | - | |
| xii. | Others; name them. | - | |

From table 1, it can be observed that the widely abused drugs by students are Alcohol, Cough syrups, Indian hemp (Igbo or weed), Pain Killers, Coffee, Tobacco, kolanuts. Inhalants, Cocaine, cannabis among others.

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Research question 2: What are the reasons for drug abuse among the students?

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Reasons for Drug Abuse among Students

| S/N | Reasons for drug and substance abuse among Students | SA | A | D | SD | Decision |
|-----|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------|
| 1. | I take drugs or other substance to stay awake to study and do assignments | 110 (35.7%) | 98 (31.8%) | 68 (22.1%) | 32 (10.4%) | Agree |
| 2. | I take drugs/ Substances to fight depression and anxiety | 145 (47.1%) | 100 (32.5%) | 34 (11.0%) | 29 (9.4%) | Agree |
| 3. | I am influenced to use drugs by my friends and acquaintances | 188 (61%) | 77 (25.0%) | 21 (6.8%) | 22 (7.1%) | Agree |
| 4. | I use drugs/ substances to win sports or other games I engage in. | 145 (47.1%) | 113 (36.7%) | 13 (4.2%) | 37 (12%) | Agree |
| 5. | I use drugs and substances to feel good and lively in my mood. | 206 (66.9%) | 81 (26.3%) | 10 (3.3%) | 11 (3.6%) | Agree |
| 6. | Curiosity makes me to take drugs and other substances | 114 (37%) | 108 (35.1%) | 70 (22.7%) | 16 (5.2%) | Agree |
| 7. | I use drugs/ other substances to forget pains and sorrows in my life. | 132 (42.9%) | 98 (31.8%) | 65 (21.1%) | 13 (4.2%) | Agree |
| 8. | I use drugs/ substances to feel bold before an opposite sex. | 164 (53.3%) | 76 (24.7%) | 30 (9.7%) | 38 (12.3%) | Agree |
| 9. | I belong to a group that makes it mandatory for members to take drugs and stuffs to be high during our meetings. | 69 (22%) | 112 (36.4%) | 53 (17.2%) | 72 (23.4%) | Agree |
| 10. | I started using drugs because my parents are not caring and are giving me too much stress. | 117 (38%) | 84 (27.3%) | 76 (24.7%) | 31 (10.1%) | Agree |
| 11. | Lecturers' harshness and inhuman attitude exposed me to the use of drugs and substances. | 48 (15.6%) | 65 (21.1%) | 134 (43.5%) | 61 (19.8%) | Disagree |
| 12. | I take drugs/ substances to prove I am a big boy/girl now | 56 (18.2%) | 63 (20.5%) | 128 (41.6%) | 61 (19.8%) | Disagree |
| 13. | Not being able to adjust to the life on campus exposed me to drug/substance use. | 133 (43.2%) | 89 (28.9%) | 52 (16.9%) | 34 (11.0%) | Agree |
| 14. | Poor performance in my academics pushed me to drug/ substance use | 127 (41.2%) | 73 (23.7%) | 56 (18.2%) | 52 (16.9%) | Agree |

Table 2 revealed that 208(67.5%) of the respondents agree that they use drugs to stay awake to study and do assignments, 245 (79.6%) agree that they use drugs to fight depression and anxiety, 265 (86%) agree that they are influenced by their friends and acquaintances to take drugs, 258 (83.8%) of the respondents agree they take drugs to win sports and games, 287(93.2%) agree that they use drugs just to feel good and lively, 222(72.1%) agree they take drugs just for curiosity sake, 230(74.7%) use drugs to forget their pains and sorrows, 240(78%) agree they use drugs to feel bold before the opposite sex, 181(58.4%) belong to groups that make them take drugs, 201(65.3%) agree that they

take drugs because of parents' lack of care and stress, 202(72.1%) agree that inadequate and improper adjustment to life on campus make them take to drugs, 200(64.9%) agree that they take drugs because of poor academic performance. On the other hand, 195(63.3%) disagree that they take drugs due to lecturers' harshness and inhuman attitude, 189(61.4%) disagree that they take drugs to feel they are big boys and girls.

Research Question 3: What are the perceived consequences of drug abuse among the students?

Table 3: Mean Score of the Perceived Consequences of Drug Abuse among the Students

| | Perceived Consequences of Drugs / Substance Abuse among Students | SA | A | D | SD | Mean | std | Decision |
|-----|---|-----|----|-----|----|--------|-------------|----------|
| 15 | Drugs/ Substance abuse can expose a young person to accidents eg.Motor accident and injuries | 151 | 78 | 45 | 34 | 3.1234 | 1.0325 5 | Agree |
| 16. | Drugs/substance abuse can expose one to physical and sexual abuse. | 149 | 72 | 48 | 39 | 3.0747 | 1.0696 9 | Agree |
| 17. | Health problems such as liver problems, respiratory problems, asthma and so on can occur due to abusing drugs and substances. | 77 | 68 | 78 | 85 | 2.4448 | 1.1415 5 | Disagree |
| 18. | One can be infected with sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDs, Hepatitis and others through drug abuse | 130 | 89 | 58 | 24 | 3.0325 | 1.0075 9 | Agree |
| 19. | Some drugs and substances abused can cause sleeplessness or insomnia | 64 | 55 | 101 | 88 | 2.3084 | 1.0973 7 | Disagree |
| 10. | Drugs /substance abuse exposes me to stealing and other inappropriate behaviours | 104 | 83 | 67 | 54 | 2.7695 | 1.0987 6 | Agree |
| 21. | Death can occur from poisoning and overdose of drugs / substances | 152 | 77 | 46 | 33 | 3.1364 | 1.0309 1 | Agree |

Criterion: Mean ≥ 2.5

From table three, it can be observed that students agree that drugs and substance abuse can expose them to accidents (\bar{x} 3.12), that drugs can expose one to physical and sexual abuse (\bar{x} 3.07), that drugs can expose one to sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS (\bar{x} 3.03), that drugs/ substance abuse can expose one to stealing and other inappropriate behaviours (\bar{x} 2.76) and that death can occur from poisoning and overdose of drugs or substances. They however disagree that drugs and substance abuse can cause health problems such as liver problems (\bar{X} 2.44) and that drugs and substance abuse can cause sleeplessness or insomnia.

Research Hypothesis1: There is no significant difference in the use and abuse of drugs and other substances among the undergraduates based on gender.

Table 4: Independent Samples t-test on the mean responses of the respondents on the use of drugs and other substances among undergraduates based on gender

| Variable | Group | N | \bar{X} | Std Dev | Std Error | Df | T | P | Remark |
|----------------------------------|--------|-----|-----------|---------|-----------|-----|--------|--------|--------|
| Use of drug and other substances | male | 142 | 1.0714 | 0.5121 | .1876 | 306 | -3.493 | 0.4027 | NS |
| | female | 166 | 1.333 | 0.5000 | .1842 | | | | |

Table 4 revealed a significant difference in the use of drug and other substances among undergraduate based on gender. T-test value of -3.493 was obtained, P=0.4027 which was not significant at 0.05 level of probability. Hence, the hypothesis which state that there is no significant difference in the use and abuse of drugs and other substances among the undergraduates based on gender was not rejected. This implies the abuse or use of drug is not limited to a particular gender.

Discussion of Findings

The study was designed to investigate the prevalence of drug abuse among the undergraduate students in the University of Lagos. Findings from research question one revealed that the most abused drugs among the students are alcohol, cough syrups, Indian hemp (Igbo or weed), pain killers, coffee, tobacco, kolanuts. This finding is in line with the findings from other studies around the country (Adekeye,et al (2015, Essien (2010), Jalilian et al (2014), and Onofe (2016). The reason for this prevalence of drug and substance abuse among students on campus may be attribute to availability of these drugs on campus, peer influence and other social and personal characteristics of the students. The study also discovered that there are many reasons why students abuse drugs and some substances. Among these are to stay awake to study, to fight depression and anxiety, influence of their peers and acquaintances, to win sports and games, to feel good and lively in their mood and curiosity. Other reasons why the students abuse drugs include to forget pains and sorrows, to feel bold in the presence of an opposite sex, belonging to a cult or gang, parental problems and stress, lack of adjustment in the school and poor academic performance. The findings of this study is in line with that of Haladu (2003) and Adeyemo et al (2016).

This study also revealed that most of the students that engage on hard drug and substance abuse they are aware of the consequences to a large extent. They agree that drugs and substance abuse can expose an individual to accidents, sexual and physical abuse, sexually transmitted infections and ultimately death. This is in line with the findings of Eze and Uzoeghe (2015).

Finally, the study revealed a significant gender difference in the use and abuse of drugs among the students. This finding corroborates the findings of Onofe (2016) and Eze and Uzoeghe (2015), who in their different studies revealed that the male gender is more exposed to drug and substance abuse than the female gender.

Counselling Implications and Strategies

- Campus-wide Drug Education and Sensitization: The University of Lagos, other than the counselling unit needs to incorporate drug abuse resistance education into the University's curriculum. This can be introduced into a broad course such as Psychology of Adjustment which will go a long way in helping the students to learn how to adjust to life on campus, how to deal with peers, friends, course mates, lecturers and other members of the university community. Other strategies include:
- Prohibition of the sale of alcohol and drugs within students' environment. Sale of alcohol and other drugs should be prohibited in shops and eateries within the campus.
- Helping the students to learn the positive way of coping with challenges, pressures and failures would go a long way in avoiding the use of drugs and other substances as means of solving their problems.
- Students should be exposed to study habit training. This would help them to identify their areas of strength and weaknesses and would encourage them to study at their own pace rather than wait until examination time, and then look for drugs or substances to enhance their study.
- Family counselling and workshops should be considered by the university as a way to partner with parents in the fight against drug and substances abuse on campus. The Counselling unit and the campus-wide counselling committee should champion and sustain family counselling in order to help families cope with drug related cases of their wards.
- Alcohol and substances abuse anonymous groups (ASAAG) should be established and championed by the counselling unit of the University to train students alongside other students having similar problems on practical ways of withdrawing from addiction.
- Male students should be counselled and educated to adopt better ways of handling stress and challenges, other than taking to drugs.
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) should be incorporated into the counselling strategy for students who abuse drugs.

Conclusion

Drugs and substance abuse among students are escalating in institutions of learning, both at the secondary and tertiary level. Many reasons have been advanced as why students abuse different drugs and substances. The students are aware of the dangers of abusing drugs and substances; however, the dangers do not seem to scare them from engaging in abusing drugs and substances. Therefore, a lot needs to be done through

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counselling, education and enlightenment as well as advocacy to help students to refrain from abusing drugs and substances.

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