

PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF DRUG ABUSE ON THE HEALTH STATUS OF YOUTHS

By

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Abstract

This paper examines the influence of drug abuse on the health status of youths in Odeda Local Government Area, Ogun State. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select three hundred respondents who are youths in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State. Three null research hypotheses were constructed to guide the study and all the three hypotheses were rejected in favour of the alternative hypotheses. It was discovered that the common incidence that happens in the society today is the influence of stimulants among youths which could lead to increase in mental disorder among this category of people in the society. Among recommendations given was that parents who cannot do without taking drugs should take appropriate measure to see that their children should not engage themselves in this same habit. So also Government should enforce the law by apprehending anybody who is found taking drugs without concrete medical report for the selected drug.

Key Words: *Drug, Drug Abuse, Health Status, Illicit Drug, Mental Disorder*

Introduction

Drug is any chemical substance which when used has the ability to change the structure and functions of the body of the user, whether the drug is prescribed medicine, medicinal herb non-prescribed medicine, tobacco, alcohol or caffeinated drug (Moronkola, 2020). Drug abuse is the unlawful use of a drug without prescription or in any way other than as prescribed, for the experience or feelings elicited (Anyanwu, 2022). Drug abuse is a major public health problem all over the world (UNODC, 2005). The abuse of drugs by youths in the society have become one of the most disturbing health related phenomena in Nigeria and other parts of the world (NDLEA, 1997). Many youths experience mental health problem, either temporarily or for a long period of time. Some become insane, maladjusted to school situations and eventually drop out of school. The alarming evidence in the prevalence of drug abuse, the effects and consequences of substance abuse among

youths has called for concern and challenge to all helping professions to mount strategies of equipping youths with skills of living devoid of drug abuse. In Nigeria today, the consequences of drug abuse are diverse, including acute and chronic health, social as well as psychological problem. There is disruption of interpersonal relationships particularly within the family, marginalization, criminal behaviour, school failure, vocational problems and failure to achieve normal milestones, yet these youths are expected to be the leaders of the country in the future when they do not even have any focus for the future. Several studies carried out among the secondary school students in Benin City by Omage and Oshiloya (2006), Nwagwu (1999), Fayombo (2000) and Obianwu (2005) found out that students and youths 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 a worrisome percentage of youths in the society are actively involved in the menace of drug abuse inspite of the dangerous effects it has on their health status.

Statement of the Problem

There is no doubt that Drug abuse has a deleterious effect on both individuals and the society at large. Today, there are estimated 90 million drug users around the world and no country alone can stem the drug trade within its borders. Some people are involved in the use of illicit drugs because they want to reduce regular pressures around them. It symbolizes a protest against set rules, and to explore basic to self (Omage, 2005). Various reports from law enforcement agencies and dailies revealed that illicit drug use is on the increase. It has been observed that drug abuse is a common phenomenon among categories of youths in the Nigerian society. It has also been noted that parents, peer groups, and society at large contribute to the alarming rate of drug abuse among the youths. The major interest of this study therefore is to examine the influence of drug abuse on the health status of youths in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to carry out investigation on the influence of drug abuse on the health status of youths in Odeda Local Government Area, Ogun State.

HYPOTHESES

The listed below are hypotheses for better outcome of the research work:

Ho₁ There is no significant difference between the level of awareness and consequence of drug abuse on health status of youths in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Ho₂ There is no significant difference between the frequency of abused drugs and health status of youths in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State

Ho₃ There is no significant relationship between causes of drug abuse and health status of youths in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Methodology

The research design was a descriptive survey method. The sample for the study was three hundred youths in Odeda Local Government Area, Ogun State selected at random with a purposive simple random sampling technique.

Research Instrument

The research instrument use to collect the data for the study was a modified likert scale questionnaire. It required the respondents to answer strongly agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Strongly Disagreed (SD), Disagreed (D) to the statement contained in the questionnaire. The questionnaire items were drawn from variable contained in the research hypotheses with reliability value of 0.84.

Administration Of Research Instrument

Three hundred copies of the questionnaire forms were produced and administered to the respondents with the help of two research assistance and all the three hundred questionnaire forms were returned and used for the analysis of data for the study.

Data Analysis

The chi-square statistical analysis with the alpha level at 0.05 were used to test the hypotheses formulated for the study.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the level of awareness and consequences of drug abuse on health status of youths in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Table 1: Contingency table on the level of awareness and consequences of drug abuse on health status

Respondents	N	Cal. Val. (χ ²)	Df	Table Val (χ ²)	L.S	Decision
SA – 550	1200	99.7	3	7.812	0.05	rejecced
A – 375						
D – 175						
SD – 100						

Observed value = 99.7

Critical value (at 0.05) = 7.812

Df = 3

Ho = rejected

The result from table 1 showed that the calculated value of 99.7 at a degree of freedom of 3 is greater than the critical value of 7.812 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Based on this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between the level of awareness and consequences of drug abuse on health status of youths in Odeda Local Government Area, Ogun State was rejected.

Williamson (2009) stressed that people with higher levels of education are more likely to avoid the abuse of drug than the less educated. This may be due to their awareness of its negative effect on health of an individual. Odejide (2005) posited that drug is said to be abused when its use is not pharmacologically necessary. This often occur among individual group in the society who are not usually aware of the consequence of the abuse, especially when it is in the face of legal prohibition or when a socially acceptable beverage is used excessively.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the frequency of abused drugs and health status of youths in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State

Table 2: Contingency table on the frequently of abused drugs and health status of youths

Respondents	N	Cal. Val. ()	Df	Table Val (²)	L.S	Decision
SA – 650	1200	119.8	3	7.812	0.05	Rejected
A – 305						
D – 150						
SD – 95						

Observed Value = 119.8

Critical Value (at 0.005)

Df = 3

Ho = rejected

The result from table 2 showed that the calculated value of 119.8 at a degree of freedom of 3 is greater than the critical value of 7.812 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Based on this result, the null hypotheses which stated that there is no

significant difference between the frequency of abused drugs and health status of youths in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State was rejected.

World Drug Report (2005) supported that, the use of illicit drugs is injurious to both individuals and the society notwithstanding the frequency but Anyanwu (2022) supported that drug abuse involved continues consumption of drug to get high. This confirms the findings that there is correlation between frequency of drug abused and health status of the abuser.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between causes of drug abuse and health status of youths in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Table 3: Contingency table on the causes of drug abuse and health status of youths

Respondents	N	Cal. Val. ()	Df	Table Val (χ ²)	L.S	Decision
SA – 502	1200	86.9	3	7.812	0.05	Rejected
A – 303						
D – 194						
SD – 201						

Observed Value 86.9

Critical Value (at 0.05) = 7.812

Df = 3

Ho = rejected

The result from table 3 showed that the calculated value of 86.9 at a degree of freedom of 3 is greater than the critical value of 7.812 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Based on this result, the null hypotheses which stated that there is no significant relationship between causes of drug abuse and health status of youths in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State was rejected.

Oshikoya and Alli (2006) in their studies on perception of Drug Abuse amongst Nigerian undergraduates identified dependence and addiction as one of the major consequences of drug abuse, characterized by compulsive drug craving seeking behavior. Omage and Oshiloya (2006), also affirmed that the consequences of substance use are diverse, including acute and chronic health problem. There is disruption of interpersonal relationships particularly within the family, marginalization, criminal behavior school failure, vocational problems and failure to achieve normal milestones. Odejide (1998) discovered that a good number of youths engaged in drug abuse today due to timidity and anxiety. For instance, the

difficulty in talking to a mammoth crowd and the concern of how to achieve their ambition lead many of them into drug abuse which had a significant health effect on their health status.

Conclusion

In conclusion, abuse of drugs among youths to a large extent negatively influence their health status and thereby leading to a complex health problem ranging from adverse physical, social and mental condition. Drug abuse could lead to complete breakdown of the central nervous system, depression, withdrawal symptoms, thinking disorder and confusion including hallucination, distorted perception and panic attack. It promotes loss of self esteem and character disintegration. It also promotes violence in the society, anxiety, sleeplessness, euphoria, staggering and drunken behaviour among others. Most youths abuse drugs today as a performance enhancer due to anxiety, timidity, emotional and psychological stress emanating from loss of loved ones, retrenchment, loss of property to fire disaster, business failure and marital disappointment. The pressure of Peer group like friends school mates and social groups have led many youths into drug addiction. Hence, they take to drugs to assist them to commit crimes that they would have been timid to commit in their real sense. The eradication of this menace among the youths is the responsibility of all and should not be left in the hand of the government alone.

Recommendations

Based on the research conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents who cannot do without taking drugs should take appropriate measure to see that their children should not engaged themselves in this same habit.
2. Government should enforce the law by giving appropriate sanction to anyone found taking drugs without concrete medical prescription for the selected drug.
3. Government must enact measures on people that are selling drugs indiscriminately and should be supervising the target area at a considerable interval.
4. Parents should endeavour to constantly screen friends and peers that interact with their children.
5. Government should endeavour to provide job opportunities and employment scheme to prevent them from idleness that can encourage engagement in nefarious activity that associated to abuse of drug in the society.

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