An Analysis of the Effects of Drug Abuse Among Secondary School Students in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State

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ABSTRACT
This study examined the effects of drug abuse on the academic performance of secondary school students in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State. It is a survey study. A sample of 300 respondents from five public secondary schools in Emohua Local Government Area participated in the study. Three research questions guided the work. The findings of the study revealed that: students commonly abused drugs such as alcohol and hot drinks, tobacco, Indian hemp, marijuana; peer group influence contributed to abuse of drugs by students and students who abused drugs recorded poor academic performance. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that students should be educated and enlightened about the dangers of drug abuse.

Key words: Drug, addiction, behaviour

INTRODUCTION
The issue of drug abuse is a well known phenomenon being condemned by all and sundry including the federal, state and local government. It is a common thing among adolescents and even adults to abuse drugs of various types. The consequences of drug abuse pose a great concern because the chief culprits and victims are the youths who are the future leaders of the nation. People generally misuse or abuse drugs because the substance alter the mode of behaviour of an individual. Over the years, the use of hard drugs like alcohol, sedatives, cocaine, cocoa leaves, heroin, Indian hemp, tobacco, morphine and others have drastically been on increase especially among secondary school students in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The society of doctors and pharmacists frowned at the uncontrollable ways and manners in which the drugs are sold to the public in our markets and medical stores which are contributory factors to drug abuse. The use of drugs in a manner that deviates from medically approved way or method constitutes an abuse. It seems that not only the uses of drugs that create problems but their misuse and until strictest preventive measures are employed or adopted things would get worsen. The students today are the leaders of tomorrow and they deserve good education in the right direction. The constant abuse of drugs among this group of persons can cause psycho-social problems in society. One may hope that this obnoxious practice and its associated problems would not lead to the breeding of deranged generation of youths. This fear is not unfounded because of what happens to be the frequent and rampant drug crises in many secondary schools in Nigeria.
METHODS
This research adopted the descriptive survey research design. A sample of 300 respondents from five public secondary schools in Emohua Local Government Area participated in the study. Three research questions guided the work.

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS
Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of secondary school students in Emohua Local Government Area on what drug abuse is?
Table 1: Responses on what drug abuse is.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Question Items</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Drug abuse is improper use of drugs to the detriment of the abuser.</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Drug abuse deals with the use of prohibited drugs.</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Drug abuse is the excessive intake of drugs that interfere with a healthy and productive life.</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Drug abuse involves the use drugs beyond the prescription of a qualified physician.</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the arithmetic in table 1 and the analysis, all the four mean were accepted with the mean value 3.36, 3.20, 3.02 and 3.03 in line with the research question. A total mean value of 12.61 was arrived at and a grand mean value of 3.15 was arrived at from the analysis. The indication is that the students know what is drug abuse as all the sub-questions were accepted with the total mean value of 12.61 and grand mean agreeing with the rating with a mean value of 3.15 which is above 2.50.

Research Question 2: What are the classes of drugs commonly abused by secondary school students in Emohua Local Government Area?
Table 2: Responses on the classes of drugs commonly abused by students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Question Items</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Students often take alcohol and hot drinks.</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students majorly smoke Indian hemp.</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Students always smoke tobacco.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Students regularly consume marijuana.</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In table 2 above and the analysis, all the four mean were accepted with the mean value 3.33, 3.10, 3.21 and 3.04 in line with the research question. A total mean value of 12.68 was arrived at and a grand mean value of 3.17 was arrived at from the analysis. The indication is that those drugs were commonly abused by students as all the sub-questions were accepted with the total mean value of 12.68 and grand mean agreeing with the rating with a mean value of 3.17 which is above 2.50.
Research Question 3: What are the reasons given by secondary school students in Emohua Local Government for abusing drugs?

Table 3: Responses on the reasons why students abuse drugs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Question Items</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Students learn drug abuse right from their homes.</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students abuse drugs to maintain emotional needs and balance.</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Students engage in drug abuse to test the reaction on their body system.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Students take to drug abuse in order face to be active and awake to their academic work.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Mean: 10.29
Grand Mean: 2.57

In table 3 and from the analysis, three mean were accepted with the mean value 2.91, 2.74, 2.58 and one was rejected in line with the research question with mean value of 2.06. A total mean value of 10.29 was arrived at and a grand mean value of 2.57 was arrived at from the analysis. The indication is that students abuse drugs for the stated reasons even though one sub-question was rejected with the mean value of 2.06 as stated above. The grand mean agreeing with the rating with a mean value of 2.57 which is above 2.50.

DISCUSSION

The findings of research question 1 revealed that majority of the students understood what drug abuse is. Drug abuse is seen from different perspectives: it is an improper use of chemical substance which has the capacity to change the functions of cells in the body; it is an excessive intake of drugs that interfere with a healthy and productive life; it deals with the use of drugs prohibited by the law of the land due to their harmful effects; it involves the use of drugs beyond the prescription of a qualified physician; it is also taking drugs that are intentionally or unintentionally detrimental to the well-being of the abuser. The findings support the definitions of drug abuse by Turner (2008) who defined drug abuse as taking of drugs without medical advice or direction; Abdullahi (2009) who viewed drug abuse as the use of drugs to the extent that interferes with the health and social function of an individual; Ajayi and Ayodele (2003) who saw it as the wrong use or inappropriate use of chemical substances that are capable of changing functions of cells in the body and also that of Ajayi and Ekundayo (2010) who defined drug abuse as over dependence and misuse of one particular drug with or without a prior medical diagnosis from qualified health practitioners.

The findings of research question 2 revealed that some of the drugs were commonly abused by the students. Alcohol and hot drinks were mostly abused drugs by the students as they were used indiscriminately in every gathering. The students smoke tobacco at any time as they always create opportunity to do so. Indian hemp is taken on a regular basis by students. The students were also involved in incessant consumption of marijuana to enable them engage in nefarious activities. This supports the positions of Adewuya (2005) who noted that alcohol is the most widely used among young people. West and Graham (2005) also agreed that students, as a subset of the youth population, consume large quantities of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Chinkere and Mayowa (2011) found that a number of school and college surveys in Nigeria, alcohol use as the most common among students. Oshodi, Aina and Onajole (2010) also explained in their study that marijuana is the most common used substance followed by tobacco. Oshodi, Aina and Onajole (2010) also discovered that alcohol stimulants were commonly abused substances with varying prevalence rates found for both overall and specific substance use.

The findings of research question 3 revealed that various reasons were given on why students abuse drugs. Students have learnt how to abuse drugs right from their homes and environment. So to such students, drug abuse is not a new practice in school. Students abuse drugs as a result of curiosity to test and experience the effect of drugs on their body system. Students abuse drugs so that they will not
face rejection, isolation and loneliness from their friends who are into drug abuse. Students abuse drugs to maintain or gain emotional needs and balance in order to withstand any situation; to gain morale and boldness in order to execute their determined deeds. Students abuse drugs to please their school friends or associates. Students abuse drugs to remain active and awake to their academic work. Also, students abuse drugs due to tiredness, boredom and disinterest in their studies. The findings support the reasons given by Edward (2003) who stated that boredom with academic work or domestic activities, not doing very well in school, peer group influence drive students to drug abuse. Fuhrman (1986) noted that children who come from homes where parents take drugs tend to imitate the behaviour of their parents by taking illegal drugs. Midigo (2002) stated that the attitudes of parents towards tobacco, alcohol and other drugs play a major role in children behaviour. Ajayi and Ekundayo (2010) stated that students abuse drugs as a result of the following reasons, to reduce pain, anxiety and tension, ignorance and misinformation, parental background, urge to commit crimes, peer group influence, isolation and loneliness. Linhadt (2001) also noted that students see the use of stimulants in positive terms for relief from pain and problems, elevation of mood, wakefulness, increased confidence, feeling and psychomotor activities and athletics, and feeling of euphoria. Oshodi, Aina and Oizimende (2010) also confirmed that students use drugs for relief of stress and for self-medication at night in order to study. Students have knowledge and understanding of what drug abuse is and they live with the memory of it because of its prevalence among the students. The different drugs commonly abused by students were identified as alcohol and hot drinks, Indian hemp, tobacco, marijuana. Peer group influence contributes to abuse of drugs by students as friends or associates either coerce or cajole one another to partake in drug abuse.

**CONCLUSION**

The unpleasant effects of drug abuse are so glaring and conspicuous that the students will only be advised not to think of venturing into it. Drug abuse among secondary school students portends highest level of rascality and unprecedented loopholes in our educational system. Consumption of hard drugs and illicit drugs is on the increase among students; the improper use of drugs and intake of unprescribed drugs are also common, and has brought woes and ruined so many dreams and future. If this trend persists unchecked, it will spell doom even to the general public.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Parents and guardians should not directly or indirectly show or teach their children and wards that taking drugs is a way of life, and should endeavour to shield them from any environment prone to drugs.
2. Parents and guardians should as much as possible find out the personality and identity of friends to their children.
3. The school authority should regulate and prohibit the activities of students around bush paths and environs.
4. Parents and guardians should painstakingly advise and warn their children and wards about the dangers of drug abuse and the consequences involved in associating with those engaged in drug abuse.
5. There should be proper monitoring of the students who play along with the identified drug abusers in school and community.
6. Staff professional development should be organized for teachers to enhance their effort in understanding the activities of the students.
7. The members of the communities should see it as a task to report any student involved in any incident of drug abuse to the parents or school authority.

**Educational implications**

Drug abuse is likely to create chaotic situation in education system because of its cancerous spread among the students. The students’ thought is drifted away from academic work as they concentrate more on where and how to engage in drug abuse. This creates physical and psychological dependency on drugs. They become uneasy and uncomfortable even in classrooms.

REFERENCES


