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INFLUENCES OF PEER GROUP PRESSURE ON DRUG ABUSE USAGE IN KATSINA STATE: THE ROLE OF INFORMATION LITERACY IN CURBING THE MENACE

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Abstract

This study is on Influence of Peer group on drug abuse in Katsina State and the role of Information Literacy in curbing the Menace. This study used questionnaire and interviews to generate data from 50 drug addicts themselves, 40 parents and 20 personnel from the drug law enforcement agency and secondary schools principals. Also, secondary data was used for this study. A total sampled population of one hundred and ten (110) respondents derived from the three senatorial districts of Katsina state were chosen. The data was analysed using thematic analysis, tables and percentages. The result of the study revealed that there is indeed high usage of various types of drugs among youth in the state. The study found that drug use and abuse among youth is increasing despite the control mechanisms that have been put in place. The study recommends that as a first step to prevent and control drug abuse, parents should be sensitised on the dangers of drug abuse, the attendant problems and their function as role models; schools should have a drug prevention curriculum from Kindergarten onwards. Finally there is the need for wider information dissemination through various channels to sensitise the general public about the dangers of drug abuse.

Key Terms: Addiction, Drug abuse, Effects, Information literacy, juvenile delinquency

INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse is one of the top problems confronting the nation today especially among the youth. Incidences of drug and related anti-social behaviour have tremendously increased in recent years. This has become a matter of concern to the government, parents, teachers, Non-governmental organisations and all other relevant agencies. The Nigerian government has recognised the seriousness of the drug problem and initiated the National Campaign against Drug Abuse (NACADA) in early 1990s. This organisation is charged with the responsibility of coordinating activities of individuals and organisations in the campaign against drug abuse. Its mandate is to initiate public education campaign and develop an action plan aimed at curbing drug abuse by the youth.

Concern over drug abuse has become an international problem, almost every part of the world is experiencing it and unfortunately it is the younger generation that abuses drugs more. Most of the youth in high school are at adolescent age ; adolescence is a sensitive stage where teenagers are willing to explore and experience the world, peers and peer relationships have been cited frequently as major factors involved in drug abuse and drug use (Bayever, 2009).

Drug abuse has no single cause. It is important to examine and consider the different theories about possible causes of the problems. Peer influence is one of the causes of drug abuse among the youth in Africa including Nigeria. Many youngsters are pulled into drugs by those they associate with. From a preliminary studies carried out it is learned from those already involved in the practise that young adolescent are involved in drug abuse due to peer influence . According to a study by Chesang in Kenya (2013), Drug abuse as a form of anti-social behaviour can be learned through the mass media such as movies, television, radios and newspapers. There is however no scientific fact to show the extent to which these agencies have influenced the youth into drug uses. The study became paramount because of the growing concern by parents, communities, schools, government and the Drug law enforcement agency over the menace of drugs intake in Katsina State.

Objectives of the study

- ✓ The objectives of the study were to explore the menace of drug/substance abuse.
- ✓ To find out the major causes and effects of drug abuse.

- ✓ To identify types of drugs and substances used by Adolescents.
- ✓ To find out the strategies to use to help our youth come out from this menace.

Methodology

The study employed the survey design and it used both qualitative and quantitative research methods which aimed at collecting data from the respondents featured in the study. A total sampled population of one hundred and ten (110) respondent derived from the three senatorial district of Katsina state were chosen. Data collection involved primary way of collecting data, which included various research tools and instruments such as questionnaires, interview guides, observations, etc. Whereas secondary data was obtained through books, journals, and articles among others.

The concept of Drug abuse

Drug addiction is a chronic, often relapsing brain disease that causes compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences to the drug addict and those around them. Drug addiction is a brain disease because the abuse of drugs leads to changes in the structure and function of the brain. Although it is true that for most people the initial decision to take drugs is voluntary, over time the changes in the brain caused by repeated drug abuse can impair a person's self-control and ability to make sound decisions, and at the same time create an intense impulse to take drugs.

It is because of these changes in the brain that it is so challenging for a person to stop abusing drugs. Fortunately, there are treatments that help people to counteract addiction's powerful disruptive effects and regain control of their lives. Research shows that combining addiction treatment medications, when appropriate, with behavioral therapy is the best way to ensure success for most patients. Treatment approaches that are tailored to each patient's drug abuse patterns and any concurrent medical, psychiatric, and social problems can help achieve sustained recovery and a life without drugs.

As with other chronic diseases, such as diabetes, asthma, or heart disease, drug addiction can be managed effectively. Yet, it is not uncommon for a person to relapse and begin abusing drugs again. Relapse does not signal failure; rather, it indicates that treatment should be reinstated or adjusted, or that alternate

treatment is needed to help the person regain control and recover. Therefore, the habitual taking of illegal drugs is often referred to as drug abuse. It can also be conceived as a situation in which a user consumes the substance in an amount that exceeds limits or with method which are harmful to themselves or others and is a form of substance disorder (Cheseng, 2013).

Causes of Drug Abuse:

A study on the Causes and Effects of Drug Abuse among Secondary School Adolescents in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State Nigeria by Ifeoma et al. (2012) revealed that majority of adolescent students were influenced by peer group (51.3%) on the use of drugs and (48.6%) were influenced by parents. Similarly, Chesang (2013) observed that drug abuse to some have been influenced by this media into the habits actually copy them from their peers and parents.

A wide margin also showed environmental factors and communities having an influence and effect on adolescent behaviour on drug abuse where there was a statistical difference between adolescent students in urban (58.6%) and rural (41.3%) communities (Ifeoma et al. 2012, and Chasang, 2013). Nyambura (2013) has a contrary view on what causes drug abuse among peers. In their opinion it was caused by economic retardation and un-employment. In this context, it can be said that, an ideal mind is a devil workshop. If a youth of 15-25 years doesn't have employment and he has nothing to spend, his next move is to find solace in drugs.

However, studies by Ifeoma, et al., (2012), Chesang (2013) and Nyambura (2013) all indicated that four major factors causes drug abuse in any society. These are, Social, economic, political and environmental. Hence, these are termed as general factors that influence, drug abuse by peers.

Effect of Drug Abuse

The following analysis is related to the objective of this study, where it seek to answer the following question: What are the effects of drug abuse among peer groups? In an effort to answer this question various literatures were review and critique. For example, Nyambura (2013) provided some of the effects of drug abuse among peers in Kenya to be among others; there were also effects of drug and substance abuse as the youth revealed to be; health complications, family break-ups, poor performance in schools as well as contributor of social

evils in the community, increased school dropouts, diseases like cancer, HIV and AIDs, sexual transmitted diseases due to the influence of the drugs and substances they use, for instance alcohol, injecting drugs among others. Other effects included increases in crime rates, mental disability and disorders, social evils like immoral decadency such as rape which leads to unwanted pregnancies among young girls. Increase in poverty due to financial breakdown and economic retardation, loss of focus in life full of regrets, indiscipline, loss of jobs for those working, low self-esteem, lack of development, both physical and spiritual, insecurity, violence, hostility and confusion in everything the victim of drug abuse does.

Similarly, Chesang (2013) also writing on the effect of drug abuse, especially Alcohol is of the view that, alcohol is contained in drinks such as beer, wine, brandy, spirits and whisky. It is an extremely potent drug. It acts on their body primarily as a depressant and lowers down the brain activity. However, in low doses it can be a stimulant. If used in excess, it will damage or even kill body tissues, including muscles and brain cells.

Sherman(2007) highlighted that Drugs abuse alter the way people think, feel, and behave by disrupting neurotransmission, the process of communication between brain cells. Hence, on a general outline, drug abuse has four (4) effects, according to the WHO (2014) report on alcohol. These are; Health effect, socioeconomic effect, harm or effect to other people and effect to the society at large. Therefore, it can be observed that, there is no contrary view among all the authors on the effects of drug abuse among peers in the whole world.

The concept of Information

Information can be conceived to be anything that adds value to our existing knowledge, ideas, skills and experiences positively or negatively and that would enable person(s) to take decisions or react to situations immediately...(Morgan &Grube, 1991). Therefore, information can be viewed from so many directions, it could be the by-product of our conscious or unconscious actions, our ideals or ideas and our experiences. Any data, stimulus, facts, sign, opinions that enable a person to take a rational decision became useful information. Hence , this makes information to become a strategic resources and tool that all mortals regardless of their sex, educational status, community status or age must look for and utilized it for his/her life to be meaningful. In this study therefore, the maximum utilization of data, sign, opinions, ideas and experiences by peer groups in our society became

Peer pressure and drug abuse

The United State Department of Health (USDH, 2012), states that Peers play a large role in the social and emotional development of children and adolescents. Peer influence begins at an early age and increases through the teenage years, it is natural, healthy and important for children to have and rely on friends as they grow and mature. Peer influences have been found to be among the strongest predictors of drug use during adolescence (Botvin et al., 2011). This implied that most adolescents start using drugs through the encouragement of friends. Oetting and Beauvais (1986) argued that peers initiate youth into drugs, provide drugs, model drug-using behaviors, and shape attitudes about drugs. Drug-using youth not only have drug-using friends, but those friends also encourage drug use. Being part of the crowd and finding acceptance from other teens is an everyday struggle for most kids. If you are a teen struggling to make friends and find acceptance for your own individuality, it may be hard to turn down the temptations of drugs.

Results of the study

The result for this study is categorized into three, that is social, politico-economic and environmental factors that influences drug abuse among peers. However, the results were discussed and interpreted based on the objectives of the study.

Hypotheses

1. There is no difference between adolescent drug use and juvenile delinquency
2. There are no differences between adolescent drug use and poor commitment to education and attachment to school.

Demographic data

1. Sex

Males	73	66.4%
Females	37	33.6%

The table above described the demographic data for sex of the respondent. The table indicated that majority (66.4%) of the respondents were males and 33.6% of the other respondents were females. This also shows that females were not left behind in juvenile delinquency and use of various types of drugs. While the table below, provides the age of the respondents. This also indicated that

majority of them fall under the peer group age of 25-30 years. Followed by those within the age bracket of 20-25 years. By virtue of being within the ages 20-30 years, it implied that majority were supposed to be schooling. The involvement of under aged in drug abuse is a very serious issue and these groups of people were likely to be leaders of tomorrow.

2. Age

15-20	20	18.2%
20-25	22	20%
25-30	35	31.8%
30-35	13	11.8%
35-40	10	9.1%
40-45	07	6.4%
45-50	03	2.7%
Total	110	100%

3. Level of Education

University	15	13.6%
Polytechnics	25	22.7%
Colleges of Education	23	20.9%
Secondary	32	29.1%
Primary	09	8.2%
Non-formal schools	06	5.5%
Total	110	100%

The above table shows that majority (29.1%) of the respondents are students from secondary schools. Others who followed them are studying at the colleges and polytechnics which constitute 23% and 25%. While 13.6% are studying at the university. The result of this study implied that students were the worst hit by drug abuse and it is a matter of serious concern to the Government, school authority and parents. It also indicated that peer group influences drugs and Marijuana taking at schools. Such types of drugs as explain by the officers of the drug law enforcement agency include among others, Tramadol, Rochie, Bingi drinks, Cough syrup, etc.

4. Persons at home		20.9%
Single parent (Mother)	23	4.5%
Fathers only	05	52.7%
Mother and father	58	10.9%
Siblings	12	10.9%
Others	12	100%
Total	110	

Person at home here refers to who shoulder the responsibility of the respondents. From the table above it shows that majority (52.7%) of the respondents came from a family house where both the father and mother are staying together. Yet the respondents were engaged in juvenile delinquency. Respondents who were brought up by single parent especially the mother followed in order of sequence (20.9%). This may be associated with the fact that majority of single mothers are very weak to manage children due to so many factors among which was struggling with work place, paying school fees as well as shouldering the moral upbringing of the children. In this circumstances peer group and broken home may contribute toward drug abuse. This also means that parents contribute towards drug abuse by giving their children money and freedom to do whatever they like. This was attested by some of the parents, the addict themselves and officers of the NDLEA.

5 Religious Background

Muslims	92	83.6%
Christians	18	16.4%
Pagans	0	0%

The above table indicated that majority of the respondents are Muslims constituting 83.6% while the rest are Christians. Despite coming from largely a Muslim community, yet, the respondents were engaged in drug abuse.

6 Peer Influence on the Use of Substances

Use of Substance	Frequency	Percentages
Never	6	5.5%
Alone	24	21.8%
Close friend	62	56.4%
Others	18	16.4%
No response	0	0%

Table four above indicated that majority (56.4%) of the respondents were influenced in to drug abuse through close friends, while (21.8%) of the respondents indicated they started and are using drugs alone. This indicated that nobody influences them. It may be that they saw their parents, brothers or sisters using illicit drugs and they decided to taste it and found leisure in it.

5. Type of Substance Used and Frequency

Delinquent influence	Frequency	Percentages
Assorted drugs & Syrups	57 (Always)	51.8%
Marijuana	23 (frequently)	20.9%
Lizard dung and pit latrin	13 (frequently)	11.8%
Beer and other alcoholic	12 (always)	10.9%
Cocaine and Heroine	05 (frequent but Mix with Syrup)	4.5%

The table above shows the type and frequency of drugs the respondents used and are still using. Majority of the respondents 51.8% indicated they used assorted drugs and codeine syrups. These assorted drugs are Tramadol, Rochie, white and a host of others. When they were asked where they got these drugs, they maintained that most of them got it through friends who in turn got supply from medicine stores/chemist and a time from those that hawk and sell medicine on the road. However, an interview conducted with staff of NDLEA reveals that, drug hawkers are outlawed and therefore, they no longer hawk using basket but now they used Motorcycles and cars to designated junctions and supply in large quantity to middle men who finally sold to the youth and other users. On syrup (codeine) in particular, females were not left behind. Checks from both respondents indicated that, females and particularly House wives were involved in the use of syrups. It was reported in the National dailies that about 80% of syrups users are house wives. The other substance after drugs and codeine is Marijuana (Hashish, Ganja, We-wee). 20.9% of the respondents responded by indicating they used it only and their source were youth in various locations within the community. Here community leaders were asked about the menace and their response was pathetic. This is because they knew who are selling the substance and failed to report them because they are their blood brothers. Parents also contributed to these problems because

they refused to report their wards who are engaged in the use of illicit drugs and Marijuana. This assertion was buttressed by the staff of the NDLEA, who attested that, when they raid and arrested users and sellers of substances, their parents used to come and claimed that their children's were innocent. This also indicated that parents and community leaders aided and abetted drug abuse in the society. These problems may not be unconnected with the lack of proper information which is discussed below.

6. Peer Group Beliefs Towards Information

Information usage	Frequency	Percentages
Frequent users	11	10%
Occasional users	11	10%
Low user	58	52.7%
No usage	20	18.2
No response	10	9.1%

The above table discusses the responses with regards to peer belief in information. From the table, it can be seen that 52.7% of the respondents indicated that their usage to information banning selling and consumption of substances was very low. Though, they know the dangers inherent in drugs abuse but yet they continue to use it despite rigorous sensitisation campaign's carried out by the NDLEA officials through the Radio and Television. In addition, 18.2% of the respondents indicated that they have access to information but they have never cared to use it because to them information on the dangers of drug abuse is a distraction. Others in order of sequence are frequent users and occasional users of information which constitutes 10% respectively. These are the type of users who utilise the information emanating from various agencies and through various medium but yet they continued to use the substances though with little significance (drastic reduction in usage of the substance due to the effect of information dissemination. The lack of proper utilization of information could also be attributed to so many factors among which are; one is lack of proper information dissemination channels, two is lack of reading culture among people, three is the lack guidance from parents on reading and watching daily news from television and other international media houses among others. These factors could be linked to environment which the society found itself in which is discussed below.

7. Peer group attitudes towards environment

Environmental impact	Frequency	Percentages
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High	67	60.9%
Average	33	30%
Low	10	9.1%
No response	0	100%

Environment also play greater role in Peer group indulgence in drug abuse. For instance, if a person found himself in an environment which shows negligence toward drug abuse definitely almost everybody will either be an addict or a drug peddler. Also, peers will pay neither attention to reading nor listening to news discouraging use of substance. The result above indicated that the level of environmental influence towards use of drugs was very high (60.9), followed by average by (30%) and low (9.1%). Therefore, environment impact does affect drug abuse and peddling in our society.

8. Drug abuse by the independent Variable

Variable	Chi-square	DF	Significance	Ph1
Delinquency	0.12806	1	0.7205	.04340
Information	3.42253	1	0.0643	.24490

9. Effect of drug abuse among peer group

In this category, the respondents were derived from Parents, security agents, School Management, University management and hospital management. These are the stake holders in the society and this is their pathetic response.

As parents we observed with dismay that our children are engaged in serious drug abuse. Particularly, we are disturbed by the way our children are taking Cough syrup like water, smoking Indian hemp. For our females' children, the issue is pathetic, after taking syrups, like codeine and other drugs they are engaged in un-protected sex, unwanted pregnancy, leading to abortion and a time loss of life. The effect is unbearable on us. Where the children cannot get money to buy the drugs, they resort to telling all sort of lies and sometimes steal and commit other crimes, like arm robbery all in an effort to feel high. Responses from school management were that: Children (students) used to come to school organized but after or during break they will look unorganized, dizzy with red eyes and become very aggressive due to the influence of drugs. Sometimes, they can go to the extent of attacking their teachers. The major problem identified is that of lack of parental guide, broken homes, single

parenthood and environmental or peer group influence. These drug addicts were always sent home to come along with their parents. Also, we observed that they mostly take codeine or smoke weed.

Solutions to the Menace

While providing suggestions on the way forward to curb drug abuse, Chesang (2013) observed that the problem of anti-social behaviour is for the whole community and should not be left to a few institutions like schools, churches, police and courts and professionals like psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers. It should be recognised as their own problem by every individual in the community, even if their own children are not involved.

Also part of the suggested solutions to these problem from the literatures reviewed is that there should be a collaborative arrangement with parents, school boards, law enforcement officers, treatment organisations and non-governmental organisations. There is also need for the school to be in contact with social workers and counsellors. These trained personnel should be able to evaluate and relieve the pressure that often contribute to the child's failure. The government should train and procure teachers who have demonstrated their activities to work with the children. Education curriculum should not be too stressing. Schools should be able to offer education serves different needs, abilities and talents (Ifeoma, et al., 2012, Chesang, 2014, and WHO, 2014). While Nyambura (2012) was of the view that for drug abuse among peers to be reduced significantly, there is the need for:

- Guidance and counseling among these youth, which is highly required,
- Creating awareness,
- Forming forums and anti-drug campaigns,
- Imposing law enforcements on drug/substances,
- Empowering youth to come up with self-help youth groups and also,
- Enforce bans on misleading slogans or adverts on drugs/substances among others

These proposed ways to **curb and control** drug/ substance abuse imply that there is a need for team work by all stakeholders in addressing the issue, which has become a stark problem in reality. In this respect from the literature reviewed, all the authors were of the view that with rigorous campaign, information, counselling, empowering peers, provision of employment opportunities, the issue of drug abuse among peers will be reduced to the barest minimum.

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