

## ADOLESCENT AND DRUG ABUSE IN TERTIARY INSTITUTION IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELLING

**Dr. Oliha Josephine A.**

Educational Psychology & Curriculum Studies, University of Benin, Benin City

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study investigated adolescence drug abuse among university undergraduates in university of Benin Edo State of Nigeria. The design used for the study was the survey. A sample of 200 students was randomly selected from five faculties which were made up of 100 male and 100 female. A validated instrument, Drug Habit Inventory (DHI, Fayombo, 1998) was used to collect relevant data. The data collected was analyzed using a t-test descriptive statistic. The findings show a significant difference between the adolescence drug abuser and non-drug abuser and also there was a difference between the male abuser and female abuser but there was no statistical significant difference between the academic performance of adolescence drug abuser and non-drug abuser. Based on the findings, recommendations were made on how to reduce drug abuse among the university undergraduate.*

**KEYWORDS:** Drug, Drug Abuse, Adolescence, Undergraduates Institution, Causes and Consequences.

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### INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood and this critical developmental period is marked by several physical, psychological and social changes. Adolescents are a segment of population with age range between 14-25years. Most undergraduates in the university in Nigeria are usually within the adolescent age range of 14-25 years (Olugbenga-Bello; Adebipe; Abodurin, 2009). Adolescence is a time of experimentation, exploration, curiosity and identity search. Part of such a quest involves some risk-taking, including the use and abuse of psychoactive substances, which are the drugs that exert their major effects on the brain resulting in sedation, stimulation or change in mood of an individual. Adolescents are faced with the huge task of establishing a sense of identity. The new cognitive skills of maturing adolescents give them the ability to reflect on who they are and what makes them unique. Identity is made up of two components, self-concept and self-esteem (American Psychological Association, 2002). Self-concept is a set of beliefs about oneself, including attributes, roles, goals, interests, values, religious and political beliefs, while self-esteem is how one feels about one's self-concept. All of the developmental changes that adolescents experience prepare them to experiment with new behaviours. This experimentation results in risk-taking, which is a normal part of adolescent development (Sue, *et al*, 2009). Engaging in risk-taking behaviour helps adolescents to shape their identities, try out their new decision-making skills and gain peer acceptance and respect (Ponton, 2009).

Unfortunately, some of the risk that adolescents pursue may pose a real threat to their health and well being. These include pregnancy, cigarette smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and

drug abuse. Odejide (2000) posited that drug is said to be abused when its use is not pharmacologically necessary especially when used in the face of legal prohibition or when a socially acceptable beverage is used excessively. Sambo, (2008) viewed that chronic use of substances can cause serious and sometimes irreversible damage to adolescent's physical and psychological development.

A drug refers to a substance that could bring about a change in the biological function through its chemical actions (Okoye, 2001). It is also considered as a substance that modifies perceptions, cognition, mood, behaviour and general body functions (Balogun, 2006). This could thus be considered as chemical modifiers of the living tissues that could bring about psychological and behavioural changes (Nnachi, 2007).

Drug abuse is a major public health problem all over the world (UNODC, 2005). The use and abuse of drugs by adolescents have become one of the most disturbing health related phenomena in Nigeria and other parts of the world (NDLEA, 1997). Several school going adolescents 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. NAFDAC, (2004) as cited by Haladu (2003) explained the term drug abuse as excessive and persistent self-administration of a drug without regard to the medically or culturally accepted patterns. It could also be viewed as the use of a drug to the extent that it interferes with the health and social function of an individual. Odejide, (2000) warned that drug abusers who exhibit symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression, behavior changes, fatigue and loss or increase in appetite should be treated by medical experts and counsellors to save them from deadly diseases.

The alarming evidence in the prevalence of drug abuse, the effects and consequences of substance abuse among students has called for concern and challenge to all helping professions to mount strategies of equipping youths with skills of living devoid of substance abuse. In Nigeria today, the consequences of substance use 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 adolescent milestones, yet these adolescents 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 youth 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 youths are also seriously involved in substance abuse. Drug abuse has become such a problem of great concern to all well meaning Nigerian and particularly the Federal Government to the extent that an Agency has been established to combat the social disease with a view to reducing the spread of drug abuse to the barest minimum or eradicating it totally.

The Nigerian National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has stated that drug abuse is a major problem in schools (NDLEA, 1997). For instance, about 20% of the school population in Edo state, Nigeria have taken a psychoactive drug once in their lives (Alemika, 1998). Many of these behaviors are heavily tied to the peer culture, as children learn from and imitate the peers

they like and admire. Wanting to be attractive to others becomes very important in adolescence, and this factor is significant in the development of eating disorders, alcohol consumption, tobacco and drug use, tanning, not practicing safe sex, and vulnerability to injury, among other behaviour. These adolescent who get involved in such risky behaviour often have high levels of conflict with their parents and poor self control, suggesting that they engage in such behaviour to manage a stressful life. Adolescents who abused substances typically do more poorly in school, and family problems, deviance, and low self esteem appear to explain this relationship. Parents and peers influence adolescent drinking by influencing attitude about alcohol and by acting as role models (Taylor, 2003). On the other hand, parental deprivation due to deaths, divorces, separation or discord has also been strongly associated with drug abuse (Odejide, 1997).

Majority of the Nigerian youths ignorantly depend on one form of drug or the other for their various daily activities such as social, educational, political, moral etc. such drug include tobacco, Indian hemp, cocaine, morphine, Heroine, Alcohol, Ephedrine, Madras, caffeine, Glue, Barbiturates, Amphetamines etc. Oshikoya and Alli (2006) in their studies on perception of Drug Abuse amongst Nigerian undergraduates identified dependence and addiction as one of the major consequence of drug abuse, characterized by compulsive drug craving seeking behaviour, are use that persist even in the face of negative consequences. These changes are maladaptive and inappropriate to the social or environmental setting therefore may place the individual at risk of harm. Experiment with drugs during adolescence (11 – 25 years) is common. At this age, they use drugs for new things. They use drugs for many reasons including curiosity, because it feels good, to reduce stress, or to feel grown up. Using alcohol and tobacco at a young age increase the risk of using other drugs later.

In one of the WHO's and the world heart foundation's data, posit that in Nigeria, 22.1% of school youth age between 12 to 17 years use tobacco. In South Africa, it is 19.4%, 15.1% in Ghana and 16.2% in Kenya. The government of Nigeria seems to lose sight of its responsibilities though it claims that tobacco should be regulated in a market oriented framework, which strikes an optimal balance and the need to ensure healthy work force. Some teens will experiment and stop, or continue to use occasionally with significant problems. Others will develop addiction, moving on to more dangerous drugs and causing significant harm to themselves and the society at large.

Today, more Nigerian youths are becoming drug dependants, while Nigeria gradually transits from the status of a drug-consuming nation to that of a drug-producing one. Young ones who are mainly from well-to-do homes are increasingly identifying with the 'big boys' that practice the use of substance like heroin and cocaine. Others substances like Indian hemp, which is frequently produced in Nigeria and other substances like Methamphetamine and tablet with codeine capable of intoxicating are mostly found in schools (Staff, 2012).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Illicit drug use is injurious to both individuals and the society, spawning crimes, spreading diseases like AIDS, killing our youths and future leaders. Today, there are estimated 90 million drug users around the world and no country alone can stem the drug trade within its borders. No country is immune and no person really is (Awake, July 8, 2001). 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). The arrest by police, NDLEA and the news reports revealed that illicit drug use is on the increase. The major concern of this study therefore is to identify the level of awareness of adolescent in our tertiary institutions about the dangers.

Despite the effect of many concerned bodies to curb this menace, many firms and individuals still present these drugs as though they are harmless. They give them slogan such as “for greatness”, “for taste” etc which often lure irrational youths into drugs and alcoholism and long term effects of the abuse of drug on themselves, their families and the society at large. The implications of counselling in reducing drug abuse to barest minimum among our adolescents were also examined.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to examine the use of drug among undergraduates in University of Benin and its implication for counselling. It tends:

1. To investigate the level of awareness of the consequences of the long term effect of the abuse of drug;
2. To determine which gender abuses drugs more;
3. To determine the effect of drug abuse on academic performance.

### **Methodology**

The sample for the study was 200 adolescent undergraduates from the University of Benin. 100 male and 100 female were randomly selected. Their ages ranged between 16 and 21 years with a mean age of 18 years. The design for the study is survey instrumentation.

The instrument used for the collection of data is the Drug Habit Inventory (DHI, Fayombo, 1998) to find out the attitudes and level of awareness of the adolescent towards substance abuse. It contains 30 items based on the rating 4, 3, 2, and 1 with a test – retest reliability of 0.73

### **Procedure**

The researcher distributed the questionnaire randomly to the selected sample for five faculties in the university, namely Faculties of Education, Environmental Science, Art and Social Sciences (40 students from each of the five faculties). The students were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and names were not required on the questionnaire. They were expected to indicate whether they abuse drugs (of any kind or not).

### **Hypothesis**

The following null hypotheses was tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference between the behaviour of students who take drugs and those who do not;
2. There is no significant difference between adolescent boys and girls involvement in drug abuse;
3. There is no significant difference between academic performance of students who abuse drugs and those who do not.

## Results

The results of the study are presented thus:

### Hypothesis 1

It states that there is no statistical significance difference between the behaviour of students who take drugs and those who do not.

Table 1: Difference between the behaviour of drug abusers and non-abusers

Group	N	X	df	Critical t	t- cal	Sig
Drug Abusers	160	1.19	198	1.96	7.45	000
Non-abusers	40	6.25				

The result in table 1 shows a significant difference, since the obtained value of t is 7.45 which is greater than the critical t – value of 1.96. The first hypothesis is therefore rejected.

### Hypothesis 2

It states that there is no statistically significant difference between adolescent boys' and girls' involvement in drug abuse.

Table 2: Difference between boys and girls involvement in drug abuse

Sex	N	X	SD	df	Critical t	t- cal	ρ
Boys	95	1.25	9.39	186	1.96	6.24	000
	93	7.16	7.16				

The result shows a significant difference since the obtained value of t is 6.24 which is higher than the critical value of 1.96. The second hypothesis is therefore rejected.

### Hypothesis 3

It state that there is no significant difference between academic performance of students who abuse drug and those who do not

Table 3: Effect of drug abuse on academic achievement of adolescent students

Group	N	X	SD	df	Critical t	t- cal	ρ
Drug Abusers	160	0.98	10.0	199	1.96	0.49	000
Non-abusers	40	1.61	6.43				

The third hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the academic performance of students who abuse drugs and those who do not, is accepted as shown in this table. The obtained value of 0.49, which is lesser than the critical t of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significant, is accepted as stated by the null hypothesis.

## DISCUSSION

Substance use amongst youths worldwide is a major problem that has elicited concern from different individuals and groups. The average age (18 years) in the current study falls within the

adolescent period (the high risk age group for substance use) and is similar to data obtained in previous studies in Nigeria Egbonu, Ezechukwu, Chukwuka, Uwakwe (2004), Odejide (2000). The first hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the behaviour of students who take drugs and those who do not was rejected. The result according to table 1.0 shows a significant difference in the behaviour of students who take drugs and those who do not. The obtained value of 7.45 is much greater than the critical value of 1.96. The finding confirms that of Obiamaka (2004), Okorodudu and Okorodudu (2004) and Odejide (2000) in their research work indicated that the problem of drug abuse knows no boundaries or social class. It impedes the development of any society as it is a threat to life, health and dignity of the adolescent. The finding also supports the claim made by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (1989). According to the report, there are significant changes manifested in the behaviour of drugs abusers, and such behaviour include distinct downward performance in school, increased absenteeism, chronic dishonesty, hostility and reduced self-esteem.

The second hypothesis indicated a significant difference among the male and female of drug abuser. One reason that can be adduced for this difference is that probably male undergraduates want to be bold, hence they rely heavily on drugs more than their female counterparts. This confirms the report of Enakpoya, (2009) and National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA, 1997) on the signs, stages and effects of drug abuse. The report identifies adolescent and youths both male and female of between ages 15 – 25 years as constituting the high risk groups with male getting more involved than the female.

The third hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between academic performance of student who abuse drugs and those who do not is accepted. This confirms the finding of (Odejide,2000, Ogunremi and Rotimi, 1979, Agunlana, 1999, Ubom, 2004, Obiamaka, 2004 and Okorodudu and Okorodudu, 2004). In their research on the effect of drug abuse on educational performance of some adolescent drug abusers in Ibadan, Fayombo and Aremu (2000) found that the misuse of marijuana has reached an epidemic level in the present Nigeria society and the drug abuse could lead to reduced academic achievement or even halt one's entire academic process. Odejide point out that the desire to achieve success in a competitive world as a major factor is responsible for drug abuse among students.

## **CONCLUSION AND COUNSELLING IMPLICATION**

Drug abuse in adolescence constitutes one of the most deadly menaces faced by Nigerians today. It has been identified as a social vice that must be eradicated. Although the government has currently championed the campaign against drug abuse, drug abusers exhibit some aberrant behaviour due to their reliance on drugs. They can be helped by Counsellor to overcome their problem. Counsellors are also required to provide drug abuse education to the adolescent in our secondary school and tertiary institutions. Drug abuse counseling is therefore recommended as an integral part of school curriculum; a method of management which focuses on specific problems arising from the abuse of drug.

Finally, the researcher believes that there is an urgent need for tertiary institutions to introduce Parent – Teacher – Association (PTA) as a forum whereby parents and lecturers would interact

to identify the problems of the students with a view to finding lasting solutions to such. Counsellors attached to the various universities should monitor and identify drug abusers and provide counseling therapies for them to adjust to normal life.

## RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations are suggested:

- a) Preventive Drug Abuse Curriculum: There is need for a standard form of drug abuse curriculum to be added to the school curriculum.
- b) State and National Surveys on patterns of drug use and abuse should be carried out among youths. The survey should allow for identification of students who use drug.
- c) Establishment of Counselling Centres for Drug Control: Counselling centres should be established in every community by the government or private individuals. Qualified health counsellor should be employed in helping drug addicts or those dependent on drug by giving them counsel on how to go about the withdrawal.

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