

The Psycho-Social and Health Effect of Substance Abuse on Lafia Youths

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ABSTRACT: *The psychological, physical and social effect of substance abuse is enormous and can be detrimental to the productive years of a youth. Researches have demonstrated that substance use often lead to negative psychological, physical and social impairment. This study using correlational survey method, analyzed the research with Pearson moment correlation and discovered that in Lafia, the physical health of youths had a negative correlation ($r = -.11$, $p < .05$), while, it also affected psychological health negatively ($r = -.09$, $p < .05$) and a significant negative relationship between social wellbeing ($r = -.16$, $p < .05$) and substance abuse. It was concluded that substance use negatively affect the physical, psychological and social wellbeing of Lafia Youths. The research recommended that there should be a serious sensitization among Lafia youths on the negative effects of substance abuse on their psycho-social wellbeing.*

KEYWORDS: substance-abuse, psycho-social health, physical health, youths, drug.

INTRODUCTION

The detriment that emanates from substance misuse are disparaging and often immeasurable, but one keeps wondering, why its prevalence? The economic and human resources being lost to the wasteful hands of substance abuse in our society is alarming. Drug abuse has often led to detrimental social consequences such as road accident, loss of jobs, poor academic and job performances, instability in family set-up, etc. (Sharma, 2009; Aspen Ridge Recovery Centers, 2022). Other scholars have attributed Substance abuse to High-risk sexual behavior, Reckless behavior, and unemployment (Nyaga, Mwaura, Mutundu, Njeru, Juma, & Were, 2021). The level of drug abuse is predominated among Africa girls, and have taken different shapes, the common names given to drugs that youths abuse in northern Nigeria abuse include but not limited to Lalakula, Ice, AZ, Loud, Jimonkawye to mention but few.

Alcohol abuse is by far the most widespread form of drug abuse in our society, because it is humanity's oldest and most widely known drug of abuse, such as gin, beer, table wine and palm wine. Albenze (2020) pointed out the effects of alcohol is predominantly seen in the brain, where alcohol restricts a number of brain functions by depressing the central nervous system. (Alhassan, 2021). Physical health also known as medical health is the medical condition of an individual that has to do with their biological health conditions (Albenze, 2020; Alhadi, 2019). Generally, substance abuse has be linked to physical health conditions like changes in coordination, high blood pressure and heart rate changes, feelings of being more awake or sleepy, at chronic stage it could lead to death (John, 2022; Amati, Meggiolaro, Rivellini, & Zaccarin, 2018).

Traditionally, physical health has been defined as the absence of disease or serious illness. However, in recent years, modern medicine has changed this viewpoint. World Health Organization (2021) defines health in the sense of the overall well-being of a person, physically, mentally, and socially. These aspects are intricately linked, and the health of an individual encompasses all of them. Physical and mental health have a very close connection. Poor mental health puts a person at a greater risk of chronic physical conditions (Klostermann & O'Farrell, 2013). Additionally, chronic physical conditions are linked with an increased risk of poor mental health. studies have linked poor physical health to substance abuse and illicit drug use both in Nigerian and other countries (Amati, Meggiolaro, Rivellini, & Zaccarin, 2018; Lomas, Waters, Williams, Oades, & Kern, 2020; NIDA, 2022).

Other studies have linked substance abuse to poor psychological wellbeing and impaired social functioning (UN Drugs Crime, 2016; Abubakar, Abubakar, Kabiru, Zayyana, Garba, Abubakar, Abubakar, & Mohammed,2021). Data have demonstrated high rates of comorbid substance use disorders and anxiety disorders—which include generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Wenzel, Liese, Beck, et al., 2012; NIDA, 2003). There is an undeniable link between substance abuse and delinquency. Arrest, adjudication, and intervention by the juvenile justice system are eventual consequences for many youths engaged in alcohol and other drug use. This study focuses on establishing the relationship between substance abuse and the psycho-social and physical wellbeing of Lafia Youths.

METHOD

A correlational survey method was used for the study; a correlational survey is the type of analysis that tries to find the relationship between two or more variables in survey analysis. Lafia is a town in North Central Nigeria, it is the capital city of Nasarawa State. The study covers the youths of the Lafia Local Government area, who matches the research criteria, which were substance abusers. The study used snowballing to get participants, since it was easier to get people who abuse substance, helping to talk to other substance abusers, so they could respond to the scales used for the study. All ethical guides as regards to this study were duly followed, participants were given the choice to participate and were told they can withdraw at any point. No participant was forced into participating in the research.

A total of 246 participants were used for the study, where 128 (52.0%) were males and 118 (48.0%) were females. The age of the respondents ranges from 18-40 years. Educational background of the respondents indicates that 147(59.8%) had SSCE, 47(16.7%) had NCE/ND, 41(16.7%) acquired university degree, and 11(4.5%) have postgraduate certificates. Drug Use Questionnaire (DAST-20) and General Health Questionnaire – 28 (GHQ-28) were used to collect data. The data was coded, entered, and cleaned before being analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-V-23).

RESULTS

Table 1 : Inter-variable correlations Result showing the correlation between physical health and substance abuse among youths in Lafia

S/No.	Variables	1	2	M	SD
1	Substance abuse			26.8	
			-.11	8	3.76
2	Physical health			13.8	
		-.11		1	2.73

Results in table 1 showed a negative relationship between substance abuse ($r = -.11, <.05$) and physical health ($r = .11, P <.05$). This implies that the higher the substance abuse the lower the physical health of Lafia Youths.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Showing Result for the Influence of substance abuse on psychological health of youths in Lafia

S/No	Variables	1	2	3	M	SD
1	Substance abuse				28.88	13.76
2	Anxiety Insomnia	-.09			8.40	2.37
	Severe		.68**			
3	Depression	-.11	.68**		19.10	4.54

Result in table 2 showed a negative relationship between substance abuse ($r = -.09, <.05$) and anxiety insomnia and a negative relationship between substance abuse ($r = -.11, P <.05$). This implies that the higher the substance abuse the lower the psychological health of Lafia Youths.

Table 3 :Pearson Correlation Showing Result for the Influence of substance abuse on psychological health of youths in Lafia

S/N.	Variables	1	2	M	SD
1	Substance abuse		-.16*	26.88	3.76
2	Social well-being	-.16*		9.45	2.60

Result in table 3 showed a significant negative relationship between substance abuse ($r = -.16$, $p < .05$) and social well-being among the participants. This implies that the higher the substance abuse the lower the social well-being of Lafia Youths.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the influence of substance abuse on the psycho-social and health wellbeing of the youths in Lafia. A total of 248 youths were participants who participated in the study. Result showed that youths who abuse drugs more were more liable to poor medical health condition. This shows that people who smoke Marijuana, high intake of alcohol and other related substances were liable of suffering from heart failure, heart attacks, and likely severe medical conditions. This is tandem with the studies of Amati, Meggiolaro, Rivellini, & Zaccarin, 2018; Lomas, Waters, Williams, Oades, & Kern, 2020 that discovered that substance abuse significantly affected human physical health.

Psychologically, result revealed a negative correlation between substance abuse and psychological health of the participates. This demonstrated that those who abuse substance were more predisposed to psychological conditions like depression, insomnia, anxiety, schizophrenia and delusion. The higher level of substance abusers the more likely the individual will be exposed to this risk psycho health conditions. The result of this hypothesis is in line with the studies of Abubakar, Abubakar, Kabiru, Zayyana, Garba, Abubakar, Abubakar, & Mohammed, (2021) that demonstrated the influence of substance abuse on psychological health of youths.

More so, it was revealed that substance abuse has a negative significant relationship with social well-being of youths in Lafia. This shows that youths who abused high substance are liable to poor social life and tend to lead a negative social lifestyle. They are liable to criminal acts like, stealing, burglary, violence, rape, become school dropouts and fail to maintain a health intimacy relationship. On a whole, this result implies that Lafia Youths` psycho-social well-being and physical health are affected by their levels of substance abuse. This finding is in line with the findings of (Aknin, Dunn, & Norton, 2012; Adeyeye, 2018) that discovered that social well-being can significantly be affected by substance abuse.

Summary

The present study has shown that substance abuse is a significant factor influencing the psycho-social well-being and physical health of Lafia Youths. It affects it such that the higher the level of substance abuse the higher the risk of having negative health and social conditions.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that substance abuse has significant influence on the psychological life of Lafia Youths. It also revealed that the social life of Lafia youths is affected negatively by substance abuse. The study further revealed that the physical health of the youths in the general area has a negative correlation with their level of substance abuse, hence the need to track the menace of substance abuse.

Recommendations

The following recommendations if followed will help to fight the menace of substance abuse in Lafia Metropolis

1. There should be a serious sensitization among Lafia youths on the negative effects of substance abuse on their psycho-social and medial health. The youths should be made to understand the dangers and possible effect of substance abuse.
2. Psychological tests should be made available to the youths and everyone who wishes to undergo it, free or affordable psychological interventions should be set up by the government.
3. At family levels, parents should try to bring up their child in a healthy environment, and monitor the people their children and wards interact with.

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