

Administration of Drug Abuse among Secondary School Students in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study focuses on the administration of drug abuse among secondary school students in Nigeria. Drugs having been labelled as the enemy within, it is noted as a major national and world wide problem by the general population through appropriate education, drug abuse can be reduced drastically through the radio, television, commercials and other channels of sending out information. 1,000 questionnaires were administered to students in the five public schools of the five state capitals of Nigeria namely, Benin, Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu and Jos. Out of 1,000 questionnaires only 75 (7.5%) were badly filled while 925 (92.5%) were properly completed. The analysis of the questionnaires indicated that secondary school students know of the existence of certain drugs and their effect if abused, mostly through all the available channels of information (education, radio, television, newspaper, magazines and others). The study indicates that many students are seriously involved in drug abuse but with effective administration and planning in schools the bad habits can be reduced drastically. Recommendations are made to both students, parents and guardians as well as to the government to organize health talk in line with drug and drug abuse regularly. Government and educational administrators to design more programmes for youth that can serve as inspiration to the students to avoid drug abuse.

Keyword: Administration, Drug abuse, secondary school student, Nigeria.

Introduction

Recent interest in the graceful movements of the human body, holistic health care, physical fitness and natural foods seem to be making people to be more aware of the need for improving their health status and preventing health problem. Although, individual's role and governmental effort in promoting health and preventing disease is becoming more of a daily message, yet it should be noted that people make personal life-style choices within the society on how best they can live glamorizing many hazardous behaviours through education, advertisement and mass media. Social influences involving peer groups pressure and the encouragement of risk-taking ventures have a greater impact, especially among secondary school students.

Drugs have been labeled as "the enemy within". Drug abuse is recognized as a major national and worldwide problem by the general population. The drug problem is obviously concerning more people these days. Most of the adults who are upset about drugs have young people and the so-called dangerous drugs in mind. To attest to the global problem of drug abuse, Carol (1983) said "... in recent years, the American people have annually consumed nearly 2.5million gallons of vitamins, nearly 3million pounds of tranquillizers and barbiturates- and the medicine cabinets in American homes have never been as full"

All formal instituted organization exist to achieve specific objectives, and the task of educational administration, therefore, is to plan strategies for their effective attainment. These strategies include working out details of what needs to be done and the method of doing them. The details so worked out should include the setting up of a formal structure which permits the hierarchical allocation of responsibilities and a communication flow, for accomplishing the purposes of an enterprise (Edem, 1998).

The radio and television commercials and other channels of disseminating information in form of advertisements do not even help in checking the menace of drug abuse, rather the populace are constantly bombarded with series of commercial promising people instant relief from even minor pain, as if brief discomfort were somehow abnormal.

Fort (1973) said that in a drug-prone nation... the average "straight" adult consume three to five mind-altering drugs a day, beginning with the stimulant caffeine in coffee, tea, and coca cola, going on to include alcohol and nicotine, often a tranquilizer, not uncommonly a sleeping pill at night and sometimes an amphetamine the next morning.

As a government and business leaders promote a drug-free work environment, education and mass media

continue to report “drug bursts” in which law-enforcement officers arrest those who deal with drug marketing. Many parents, however are concerned about the increasing number of elementary and junior secondary school students who smoke “crack” cocaine and those unusual looking tobacco cigarettes and pre-teens, who inhale “whippits” of nitrous oxide to get high on their way to school.

Many people are surprised to hear that aspirin, coffee, tobacco and whisky could be described in the same context as marijuana or cocaine. The way people conceived the meaning of a drug varies since users differ. To a pharmacologist: a drug is any substance that changes body form or function. In a narrower medical sense, a drug is a substance used to diagnose, treat or prevent illness. And from a philosophical perspective, drugs in modern society seek to enhance your freedom of choice in terms of drug use or non use.

The word “Drug” is from the French word “Droque” and is formally identified as any ingredient used in chemistry of pharmacy. Drugs are as useful to man as food, clothing and shelter. Turner (1971) said, “Drug is a chemical that influences or modifies the action of the body’s own chemistry. It is also defined as any substance or chemical agent that affects the structure or functioning of a living organism”.

Poison and Pharmacy Act of Nigeria (1979 chapter 152) defined drug as “as substance or vegetable, animal or mineral origin or any preparation or mixture thereof which is used for internal or external application to human in the treatment of disease”. While World Health Organization (W.H.O) says, “Drug is any substance that when taken into the living organism (body) may modify one or more of its functions”. Drug, therefore, can be regarded as any chemical substance other than food which has a significant and strong effect upon the body system.

The word abuse means wrong or bad use. Pairing these words, Drug Abuse could be seen as making bad use of drugs, wrong usage of drugs; violation of laid down pharmacological use of drugs; or using a drugs in a manner that deviates from the approved medical or social pattern.

It must be noted that any substance capable of altering man’s mood has the tendency of being abuse. Most drugs are medicinal, hence prevent, heal, and relieve pain and so on. As a result people in an attempt to achieve the above, use drugs and as the use become excessive, we start having problems and cases of misuse which finally lead to abuse.

“Drug abuse” does not mean taking overdose of drugs alone, but it includes buying and using drugs for treating self without the doctor’s prescription. “Drugs”, it also involve using legal and illegal “Recreational drugs”, it also includes the use of legal medicines by the healthy or social convenience or personal pleasure and the use of typically non-drug substances such as gasoline, to produce drug-like effects. As since drug abuse has become the focus of public concern and government’s action, it has been identified almost exclusively with the psychoactive or psychotropic drugs that primarily affect the human mind.

Law enforcement official say “drug abuse is the use of illicit drug” (Punch, 2012). And the medical authorities see drug abuse as the failure of the people or patient to comply with directions for using prescribed medicines, engaging in dangerous self medication, or the recreational use of psychoactive drugs.

Kenneth et al (1978) said “Drug abuse is the use of mood modifying substances in dosages, many time in excess damage of both individual and the society at large”. And the social scientists say that drug abuse is the use of any drug that is harmful to the individual or to society.

The term “Drug abuse” is an epithet as well as social concept. Many people see drug abuse as the use of some drugs (illegal or illicit) that are more favoured by a minority and disfavoured by the majority. Drug abuse refers to the use of other abusable drugs that are socially acceptable. For some, drug abuse means ill effect or acceptable behavior accompanying certain drug use, as reported by the popular press. The concept of drug abuse is partly myth and partly hysteria, obscuring any real understanding of a serious social or medical problem.

Today’s illegal drugs are sold openly in street corners in almost all the big cities like Lagos, Ibadan, Kanu and other urban centres in Nigeria. No longer is drug abuse confined to the underworld and pop stars, addicts now cut across the spectrum of the Nigerian society from secondary school students to those in tertiary institutions, highly skilled professionals and people holding key government posts.

Asuni, (1988), said that in 1986, the Federal Government of Nigeria spent N26million in her three Neuro-psychiatric clinics at Lagos, Abeokuta and Benin City to cater for drug victims who represent 95% of all mental in-mates, mostly young people.

“So far, the Nigerian drug debate has been confined some what to its political and moral planes, the argument, so far, has reached a ‘T’ junction of morality, but my opinion, the junction is more than just a ‘T’ ”, (Ekpu, 1988).

Drug abuse has grown into a angry national problem has gone more than fermenting. From records available so

far, the interministerial Committee for the Centre of Narcotics and Drug Abuse indicated that during the first quarter of 1987, security agents seized 44 packages containing 13.4kilogrammes of hard drugs and arrested 51 persons in connection with attempts to export drugs. In May, 1988, World Health Organization (W.H.O) representative in Nigeria revealed that there were over 2,000 Nigerians, especially youths in various prisons in America and Europe as a result of their involvement in drug trafficking.

Education against drug abuse has been completely feeble, more so, it is just confusing. A television “doctor” tells a teacher which drug to take so as to relax after a hard day. But at school, the teacher lectures about the dangers of drugs. It is no different with parents. And there is the matter of adolescent rebellion.

It is prudent to get expert advice before taking any drug so that you do not end up ruining your health or destroying your personality. Ironically, the greatest number of people see no sense in the doctor’s prescription and abuse drugs at will and expose themselves to health hazards.

To reduce the ambiguity in the meaning of drug and drug abuse, it is classified according to the purposes for which they are used and their likely effect if over used or abused. We have drugs for medical, socio-cultural and non-medical purposes. Those drugs under medical use are those that are used for medicinal purposes and prescribed by doctors. They serve the purpose of pain-killing, antibiotics and curative drugs. The socio-cultural drugs are used for traditional engagement, social festivities, religious purposes, such as tea, coffee, cateine, kolanut, cigarette, alcohol and local gin-Ogogoro. The non-medical drugs are those not meant for either medicinal or socio-cultural purposes but can be seen and unaccepted as drugs. These includes; marijuana, cocaine, heroine, opium delirants and others.

Awani (1990), established that drug abuse has risen sharply among our secondary school students in recent years and it is due to the act of imitation. The Medical Record Department, in some states and the Neuro-psychiatric Hospitals, there are high occurrence of drug abuse in the past few years, in the community, particularly among secondary school students. There was a total of 139 cases of Narcotic drug abusers records, over 76 of whom were secondary school students.

Another study done at college of Medicine, University of Lagos between the ages of eleven and eighteen indicated an extensive use of hard drugs such as cannabis, alcohol, cocaine, marijuana etc as well as non-hard drugs such as panadol, daga, anti-biotics by these students. This particular study was carried out by (Ajayi, 1976).

Whenever one reflects on the gravity of the problem of drug abuse, one momentarily doubts the wisdom of a disagreement with those people complaining against it and the seriousness of the Nigerian government. And this problem lingers.

Historical records and present day survey indicated that man has a desire and need to practice self-medication. Man insists that self medication is an inherent right, and he guarded this right from time immemorial.

Methodology and data collection

To administer the questionnaire in the schools selected, a letter seeking permission from the principals was first sent to the schools. While personal visitation was made to NDLEA (National Drug Law Enforcements Agency) offices, in Benin, Lagos, Ibadan and Jos. Primary Health Programme Offices in these states Specialist Hospitals, and psychiatric hospital in some stated areas. On the questionnaire, similar instructions were passed on to the students after distributing the questionnaire in all the schools selected with the assistance of the School Health Masters.

To make the recovery of the questionnaire worthwhile, the researcher visited some states. And some people returned the questionnaire back to the researcher. The questionnaire were distributed and collected back from the students and this made the recovery of all the questionnaire possible. But seventy five (75) questionnaires were not properly filled by some students. For the purpose of this research, the researcher considered the nine hundred and twenty five (925) that were properly filled, as being sufficient for the generalization and conclusion about the problem studied.

Table 1. The response of the students in each school from different states.

Name of state capitals	No issued	No collected	No correctly filled	No badly filled	No not returned
Benin	204	204	186	28	-
Lagos	204	204	189	15	-
Ibadan	204	204	186	18	-
Enugu	194	194	182	12	-
Jos	194	194	182	12	-
Total	1,000	1,000	925	75	-

The data collected were analysed using different tables, numbers and percentages to test the hypothesis and from the reactions to the various areas of interview, necessary inferences were drawn.

The purpose of this research is to find out the channels of educating and disseminating information on drug abuse and its acceptability among secondary school students in Nigeria. The sampled schools in each state are randomly selected among the secondary schools in some selected states in Nigeria. All administered questionnaires in these schools were combined and treated together as a sum total.

The questions were analysed by the researcher, using percentages to explain the data as they are related to the statement of the problem. Questions in part one of the questionnaire deal with the personal data of the respondents and part two deals with:

- (1) Effects of all channels of disseminating information used to campaign against drug abuse and their effectiveness.
- (2) Effect of ignorance, peer group pressure, curiosity and assumed pleasure on drug abuse.
- (3) Does advertisement of drugs through channels of disseminating information influence further drug abuse?
- (4) Contribution of drug taking by students and its effect on their academic performance.
- (5) Extent of drug abuse and reasons for it among students. The overall response of the respondents are marked in tabular form: see Table II

Table 2. The overall results of the responses on general information on drugs

S/N	Summary of question	Yes	%	No	%
1.	I know alcohol, tobacco etc as drug	300	33	610	67
2.	I took narcotics without doctor's prescription	226	25	604	75
3.	How often? twice a week, once in two weeks	240	26	670	74
4.	I often take tranquilizers	635	69.8	275	30.2
5.	I derived satisfaction after taken drugs	701	86	129	14
6.	I take drugs to improve reading	610	67	300	33
7.	I give out prescribed drugs to friends	701	77	209	25
8.	Do students using drugs excel academically?	105	11.5	805	88.5
9.	I do increase recommended dose	202	22	708	78
10.	I take drugs without reading its literature	850	93.4	60	7.0
11.	My parents encouraged the use of drugs when I am ill	871	96	39	4.0
12.	I seek doctor's advice once I am ill	318	35	592	65
13.	I have taken: Alcohol	693	76	217	24
14.	Cigarette	210	23	700	77
15.	Marijuana	9	0.9	901	99
16.	Cocaine	-	-	-	-
17.	I have heard about drug abuse	880	97	30	3.0
18.	I have listened to debate or lectures on drug and drug abuse	201	23	700	77

Table 3. Table showing channels of disseminating information on drugs

Channel of Dissemination	No of Respondents	%
Education, radio and television	525	57.6
Newspaper & magazines	60	6.5
Postals and others	97	11
Medical personnel	8	0.9
Peer group and schools	150	16.4
Parents and relations	70	7.6

Effect of channels of Disseminating information on drug abuse

Corresponding questions Are: 16,17,18

CQN	Education, Radio & Television	%	Newspaper and Magazine	%	Postal and Other	%
16	754	83	60	6.5	96	10.5
17	675	74	174	19	61	7.0
18	860	95	35	3.0	15	2.0

From the above table it shows that majority of the respondents learnt about drugs through the education, Radio and Television; few of the respondents got their own information on drugs reading newspaper and magazine, while minority of the respondents indicated that they got their information through postals and other means.

From the result obtained, this analysis shows that secondary school students in most states got most of their information on the existence of certain drugs and their effects if abused through all the available channels of disseminating information (Education, Radio, Television, Newspaper, and Magazine etc).

Table 4. Effect of ignorance, peer groups pressure, and assumed pleasure on drug abuse
 Corresponding questions are: 1,2,3,4, & 12

CQN	No. of Yes	%	No. of No	%
1	300	33	610	67
2	226	25	684	75
3	240	26	670	74
4	635	69.8	275	30.2
12	318	35	592	65

Grand total of responses	-	4,550
Total No. of Yes	-	1,719
Total No. of No	-	2,831
Percentage of Yes	-	38%
Percentage of No	-	62%

The table above shows that the percentage of responses to YES is lesser than those of No, which is 38% and 62% respectively.

Analysing the table above, one could easily say that the larger number of the students were ignorant of what substance could be referred to as drugs, the importance of a physician and drug taking, and lacks relevant information on drug abuse. Hence it could be concluded that total ignorance is one of the major factors that leads to drug abuse among secondary school students in most states.

Table 5. Contribution of drug taking by students and its effect on their academic performance
 Corresponding questions are 5,6 & 8

CQN	No. of Yes	%	No. of No	%
5	781	86	129	14
6	610	67	300	33
8	105	11.5	805	88.5

Grand total of Response	-	2730
Total No. of Yes	-	1496
Total No. of No	-	1234
Percentage of Yes	-	54.8%
Percentage of No	-	45.2%

Considering the findings from the table above, 1496 or 54.8% respondents indicates YES to the idea that they derives satisfaction from taking drugs, while 1234 or 45.2% respondents did not derive any satisfaction after taking drugs and that it may not likely improve their lots in their academic programme.

It could be concluded that secondary school students in most states take drugs for satisfaction and not purposely

to improve their academic performances.

Table 6. Extent of drug abuse and reasons for it

Corresponding questions are: 7,9,10 & 11

CQN	No. of Yes	%	No. of No	%
7	701	77	209	23
9	202	22	708	78
10	850	94.3	60	7.0
11	871	96	39	4.0

Grand total of responses	-	3,640
Total No. of Yes	-	2,624
Total No. of No	-	1,016
Percentage of Yes	-	72%
Percentage of No	-	28%

The table above indicated that 2624 or 72% respondents abuse drugs freely without any consideration to medical doctor's advice, and many see their parent's advice as the best, hence abuse drugs. While 1016 or 28% respondents strictly obey experts advice on drug taking and parents influence on taking drug was not encouraged.

From all indications, and based on the result of the table above, secondary school students in most states totally violates medical doctor's instruction on drug taking and that their parents influenced their attitude towards abusing drugs particularly when they complain of illness.

Table 7. Other findings

Item	No. of Respondents	%
I have taken:		
Alcohol	691	76
cocaine	-	-
Cigarette	210	23
Marijuana	9	0.9

From the table above, it should be seen that majority of the students, 691 or 76% take and abuse alcohol, 210 or 23% respondents for cigarette while 9 or 0.9% respondents goes to marijuana and none for cocaine.

It is obvious that among the secondary school student in most states, alcohol consumption and cigarette smoking rank highest, while marijuana and cocaine seems to have no "fellowship".

Findings, discussion and recommendations

Any drug taken arbitrarily without the physician's advice may be seen or referred to as drug abuse. From all evidence got from the result of this research, it is clearly noted that an indiscriminate use and abuse of drugs by students could be confirmed.

The level of drug abuse among the students could be traced to their level of ignorance on the real meaning of drugs, substances that could be seen or accepted as drugs, and their lack of respect for medical personnel's instruction.

From the oral interviews conducted with some teaching, staff, they claimed to obtain their drugs mostly from chemist's shops and agreed that channels of disseminating information may encourage drug taking carelessly.

This is not strange since big bill or boarding were found in virtually all streets in Nigeria, advertising various drugs, the setting up of chemists shops by quacks and the sales of drugs in open places including motorparks are not being seen as an offence.

A situation report in Sunday Times, January, 17, 1988 “There are enough drugs in markets (Jankara market in Lagos Island especially) that could be used to equip our various hospital that is seen being displayed and peddled about”.

As to whether the schools were having counselors, majority of the students and the counselors cannot come together for good counseling rapour due to lack of necessary counseling equipment, though some schools have counselors, good counselling, have not been carried out. Furthermore, teachers see the day of school inter-house sports competition as another “feast day” for students in taking drugs, particularly alcohol.

The mass media and the parent jointly blamed by officials of the State National Drug Law Enforcement Agent (NDLEA) offices and primary health programme offices, for either misdirecting or miseducating their children at home on what actually drug abuse stand for in all ramifications.

From the result obtained by this researched, it is evident that all channels of disseminating information have influence on the students, thereby contributing to their high level of drug abuse. The research is of the opinion that government should take full control of drug advertisement since sellers only emphasize the selling points of their products neglecting the area of side effects.

There seems to be a general acceptance that taking of drugs might not even help improve academic work but just for mere satisfaction. It is well understood that secondary school students in most stated abused alcohol and cigarette more freely than marijuana and cocaine might not yet be ‘palling’ with them.

Also from the result obtained from the comparative table compiled, it is evident that schools in the urban areas (Lagos, Ibadan, Kano, Jos and Enugu) are more prone to drug abuse than those from rural areas while boys are seen to be at the lead in drug abuse particularly with cigarette and alcohol and marijuana. Having critically carried out a thorough research of the topic and based on the analysis and interpretation of the results, it is then left for the researcher to conclude that:

The channels of disseminating information being used in the campaign on drug abuse among secondary school students have also been found as a means of indirect encouragement for drug abuse, based on the results obtained from the questionnaire, though it is not that the channels were not effective totally.

It has also been found from available results that most students had never attended any forum where the talks on drug abuse is being discussed and that their school counselor had never at one time or the other organized a meeting to discuss effects of drugs abuse in the school due to lack of necessary equipment.

The research further revealed that students generally abused depressant, sedatives and stimulants particularly alcohol, cigarette, kolanuts, Nescafe-coffee and analgesic without realizing that they are grouped or seen as drugs. To link the academic performance of the students with drug taking or drug abuse either positively or negatively was in conclusive since there were no much specific information gathered to validate or invalidate these that were actually involved in drug taking purposely because of examinations.

It was also revealed that self-medication which is the easiest route to drug abuse among secondary school students is very common since many just take drugs as directed by their parents when they are ill or weak instead of seeking medical doctor’s assistance. Many gave out their own medical doctor’s prescribed drugs without reading the instructions on drugs to check their effects if abused.

Many students were seriously involved in drug abuse since they are even ignorant as regards what and what should be seen as drugs. It is evident from all indications that students take lots of alcohol and engaged in smoking cigarette. It was revealed that information about effects of drug abuse through any channels of disseminating information were not adequate.

From further findings from the research, it is evident that schools in the urban centres are more prone to drug abuse than those in the rural areas. This might not be strange since students in urban centres are likely to be more exposed to many of these sophisticated social amenities. Also boys could be seen to be at the lead when it comes to drug taking and abuse, when compared with the response of girls.

Different organizations in different nations have taken steps of stamping out totally the issue of drug abuse in cities, organization and the nation have not stopped, their effect through many ways are still found to be a continuous exercise, hence the researcher is therefore obliged to make the following recommendations based on the findings from this research.

The government should both at the Federal, state and local level make it a priority in their yearly budgetary allocation to make certain fund available for proper harmonizing of all channels of disseminating information that are available to secondary schools students in fighting drug abuse with good campaign since the best means of educating the populace is the mass media, effect should be diversified to this areas so that the campaign against drug abuse could be properly channeled, using or showing some films of drug victims, acting of drama, composing of good and relevant songs to drive home the message on drug abuse properly.

The government should in addition make Drug Education compulsory at all levels of our educational programme. This will reduce the ignorance level of what actually constitute drugs, when do one seems abusing drugs and the likely causes.

Radio and Television houses should for the sake of national development in line with health promotion give more emphasis in terms of drama, using of jingles and discussion programmes on drug abuse. Television houses should show video film on drug abuse showing it effects, since students seems shifting their joy into watching video films than any other recreational means.

The school should as a matter of urgency set up a standard health unit with the school counselor having his/her office at the health unit within the school for proper administration and monitoring the use of drugs particularly when they are ill. This health unit in collaboration with the school authority can easily organize health talk in line with drug and drug abuse regularly and this will afford parents and guardians in participating and learning more about their children as regard drug abuse.

The role of health educators should not be abandoned, they should intensify more efforts as regard the enlightenment of people particularly students on the dangers and consequences of drug abuse.

The psychiatric hospitals should try as much as possible to make sure that mental cases related to drug abuse are updated and made available to schools to serve as warning to students rather than just sending warning signals through channels of disseminating information.

Students particularly those in secondary schools should see recreational activities as the best option for leisure hours rather than taking drugs to ward off some unpleasant moods. To see to the standard usage of the aforementioned programme, the government should as a matter of priority design youth programme in the national planning programme every year, while the aged that can serve as inspiration to the students should be adequately catered for.

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