ASSESSING FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG YOUTHS: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
The main purpose of the study was to examine the factors associated with substance abuse among youths in Pankshin Local Government Area, Plateau State**.** To achieve the purpose of the study, four specific objectives with corresponding research questions were postulated. The study was conducted using a descriptive survey research design. A Simple random sampling procedure was used to select 66 youths from six wards out of the twelve existing wards of Pankshin LGA, from a target population of 38,337 youths within the age bracket of 15-35 years in Pankshin LGA.The required information was gathered using the questionnaire. The data generated was analysed using frequency and percentages with SPSS (version 21). The findings of the study showed that youths who are within the age group of 12-21years are the majority to be associated with substance abuse. Males are more associated with substance abuse than their female counterparts. Those who are single are more associated with substance abuse than those who are married and those who are divorced. Those with secondary education are more associated with substance abuse. Majority of the respondents which are Christians are more associated with substance abuse. Majority of youths consume alcohol more than other substances. Majority of the respondents are students compared to other occupations. In line with the findings, it wasrecommended above all that the federal government in collaboration with National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) should ensure that the abuse of substances is regulated among the Nigerian population.

Keywords: Substance abuse, Associated Factors, Youths, Assessment.

Introduction

Substance abuse causes a significant burden to individuals and societies throughout the world. Substance abuse is a major health problem to many countries in the world. The World Health Organization (2019)reported that over 200 million people abuse drugs. This figure is growing each day, because modern method of transportation and communication have increased and facilitated the distribution of these drugs. Recent studies indicated that theburden of different diseases comes from the use of substances (Fagbe, 2019: Idowu, Arema& Olumide, 2018: WHO,2015). TheWHO (2019)reported that tobacco accounted for 4.1 per cent, alcohol 4 per cent and illicit drugs 0.8per cent of the burden of disease in 2010. Much of the burden attributable to substance use and dependence is the result of a wide variety of health and social problems. According to Achulu (2014), it is estimated that 9 percent of the global population aged 12 or older are classified with dependence on psychoactive substances such as alcohol and hard drugs.A study has shown that the highest risk of substances abuse in adolescents is in their late teenage and early twenties. It is estimated that over 3 million adolescent are affected with problems associated with drugs abuse worldwide (NAFDAC, 2020). The author also added that about 230 million people, or 5 percent of the world's adult population, are estimated to have used an illegal drug at least once in life. Data from the World Health Organization (2019) show large-scale seizures of cocaine, heroin, cannabis and amphetamine-type stimulants in different parts of the world. Nigeria has accounted for many records of substance abuse among African countries.

In Nigeria, the situation regarding substance abuse, particularly among adolescents, may not be too different, since the country is still developing and its sub-settings such as Ajaokuta, receiving the greatest impact. According to Abiodun etal. (2010), substance abuse among youth in both rural and urban areas is common. Ajaokuta is known for its unique features in rapid development and

adoption of innovations including technologies, lifestyle, modeling and habits. Based on the researcher's closer observation, there is an indication that the prevailing case of substance abuse is common in the country including Ajaokuta region. However, the consequences of increased cases of substance abuse and misuse by individuals especially adolescents are felt on the poor economic and social development of the nation, resulting in increased ratesof crime, instability, insecurity, gross indiscipline, corruption, teenage pregnancy and wide spread of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV and AIDS.In Nigeria, according to Fagbe(2015), the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) report indicated that adolescents and youths between 15-30 years constitute the high risk group with female getting more involved than they use to. Another group of abusers are the so called young executives, prostitutes, drivers, conductors, graduates, Civil Servants and artistes. Ajayi and Somefum (2020) asserted that within the last decades, consumption of hard drugs has risen drastically in Nigeria, where heroin and cocaine are now abused along with traditional drugs such as alcohol, cannabis, amphetamines and other dependence producing drugs and substances. This shows that substance abuse has taken another dimension that needs urgent attention of public health experts globally.

Substance abuse also known as drug abuse is viewed by different authorities in various forms. Neeraja (2011) defined substance abuse as the dependence on a drug or other chemical substances leading to the effects that are detrimental to the individual's physical and mental health or the welfare of others. For the purpose of this study, substance abuse will be seen as the maladaptive use of one or more drugs with the intention to alter the way one feels, thinks or behaves which results in physical and or emotional harm to the person. Friends and family may be among the first to recognize the signs of substance abuse. Early recognition increases the chances for successful treatment. Signs to watch for include the following; giving up past activities such as sports, homework or hanging out with new friends and declining grades in school (UNODC, 2018).Use of psychoactive substances is inimical to the survival and effective functioning of human societies (Rochie& Roger, 2018). From different literature reviewed, there is a significant number of untimely deaths and accident linked to the activities of persons under the influence of one psychoactive drug or the other (Ibiyemi, 2020: Shelly, 2010). This shows that the abuse of drugs and substances increases both morbidity and mortality rates.

Substances abuse is one of the social health problems among the bankrupt, decadent and wasted generation that must be realized and collectively salvaged together in order to prevent the total degeneration and loss of our social values and ideals. Substance abuse among adolescents has been a major threat to the peaceful co-existence of all and sundry in Nigeria(Allen, 2020: Osman, 2016). The parental background of a child can also be affected by the over dependence rate on drug abuse. One of the various family problems like broken homes (divorce), polygamous family, abject poverty, cultural influence parental neglect, lack of parental affection and responsibility. A father who is drug addict may greatly influence and be carried away by any of his children, like father like son. Factors such as demographic factors (age, gender, levels of education, religion), social factors (peer-influence) and economic factors (employment status) are capable of influencing youth's association with substance abuse.

Age is a demographic factor that tends to be implicated in substance abuse among youths. Available epidemiological surveys showed that abuse of various types, substances especially of cannabis and stimulants in western Nigeria involved youths (Akande, Adisa &Ilesamni, 2019: Odejide& Sanda, 2016). Moreover, reports on substance abuse experimentation have shown that youths of 18-35 years of age have substance abused and experimented with one drug or another in the north (Ahmed, 2011; Nevadomsky, 2011). Furthermore, the age for cannabis, heroin and cocaine misuse and abuse in Lagos was 18 years and above (Osman, 2016: Omigbodun& Babalola, 2014). The above studies implicated various age groups in different places; however, the difference in age variations of substance abuse may be the same among students in Pankshin LGA, which this study aims to determine. Although various age groups have been implicated, the ages that have been implicated cannot be devoid of gender.

Gender is seen as a factor that appears to influence substance abuse and use of various types of drugs. National Survey on Drug Use and Health (WHO, 2019: NSDUH, 2016) in their study found that the lifetime nonmedical use of most specific pain relievers was significantly more prevalent among males than females. They further noted that there was a higher prevalence among males than females in specific pain relievers' misused. For instance, the misuse of codeine products was reported by 10.2 per cent of males compared with 7.6 per cent of females. However, NSDUH (2016) reported inhalant misuse and abuse by youths aged 18 – 22years and found males and females being equal in the misuse and abuse of such substances. Fagbe (2019) and Domingo and Marquez (2009) equally revealed that males are more likely to abuse alcohol, drugs and tobacco than females. Ibiyemi (2020)

and Corraro et al. (2010) opined that the tendency to use and/or abuse drug increases with age. Although there was inconsistency in the substance abuse by youths as reported, the actual situation of substances used by gender among youths in Pankshin North LGA will be verified by this study.

Level of education also seems to be a factor that was implicated in substance abuse among youths. Surveys of both in and out-of-school students revealed that substance abuse was a common problem especially for socially acceptable substances like alcohol and cigarettes. Studies have shown that there was increasing use of substance among the youths in Nigeria (Allen, 2020:Abiodun, Adelekan, Ogunremi, Oni &Obanya, 2014). The study anchored on health belief model (HBM), propounded by Godfrey Hockbaum, Stephen Kegeles, Howard Leventhal and Urwin Rosenstock in 1950. The key assumption of the model is on the prevention of diseases rather than its treatment and focuses on six key concept which include: perceived susceptibility which entails in-school adolescents belief that they can easily abuse substance; perceived severity which is the believe that the consequences of abusing substance are significant enough and they try to avoid it; perceived benefit which is the believe that the high rate of substance abuse would jeopardize their academic goals, life ambition and health; perceived barriers which is the identification of obvious barriers to avoiding substance abuse; cues to action which is the reception of sensitization in the form of health education or newsletters and; self-efficacy which is the reception of quality information on the positive outcome of avoiding substance abuse. The model provides a framework for motivating individuals to take positive actions especially on substance abuse.This model was explored in examining thefactors associated with substance abuse among youths in Pankshin LGA, Plateau State.

Pankshin is a Local Government Area in Plateau State, Nigeria. Its headquarters are in the town of Pankshin. It has an area of 1,524 km² and a population of 191,685 at the 2006 census. Pankshin is popularly known for its trade hub as most of the people are farmers growing a vast range of food crops such as millet, guinea corn, maize, tomatoes, rice, onions, cabbage, carrot and collections of fruits. Mondays in Pankshin is specifically for trading, buying and selling, hence the name "Monday market" as traders, merchants and people in the environs and as far as away as Bauchi come to buy and sell. This study was carried out in this area because the North of Nigeria has been known with the highest life time prevalence of substance use. Alcohol is still the most used drugs. Newer drugs such as codeine syrup and tramadol have displayed Cigarette and bcannabis down to the fourth and fifth position. More women are now engaging in substance use and prefer odorless substance to alcohol and Cigarettes (Health Wise and Knowledge Base, 2014). The occurrence of substance abuse among youths in many parts of the world including Pankshin LGA, Plateau State, where the current study was conducted had been a thing of great concern. This concern was due to lack of documented data especially on youths' abuse in the area which necessitated the researcher to carry out this study.

Ideally, substances are not meant to be used or administered without prescription, and are not to be misused or abused. Drug were manufactured in order to treat some ailment and not meant for indiscriminate use. In an attempt to eradicate substance abuse among individuals particularly the youths, the federal government of Nigeria established a body known as National Drug Law EnforcementAgency with the major function of apprehending substance abusers.Substances abuse has a prolong effect on the individual and the socio economic dynamism of the society, though, several effort should be made by various government bodies to curtail this scourge.

Regrettably, the above notable effort by the federal government has not successfully achieved it expected targets. This has resulted to numerous academic problems especially in the current study location. The increased cases of substance abuse are evidenced on the high rates of school dropouts, rapes, sexual abuse, bulling and indiscipline. These qualities are never good attributes of youths in a country of this kind, popularity known as the giant of Africa. Substances abuse has cause death and disaster, misuse is no more the problem of the developed world only the home however is where drugs do the most damage like causing dysfunctional family life style.

The above worrisome situation motivated the researchers to critically look into the situation of substance abuse inPankshin LGA, Plateau State. Therefore, the present study tends to examine the factors (age, sex, gender and levels of education) associated with substance abuse among youths in Pankshin LGA, Plateau State. This is the main focus of the present study.

Methods

In order to accomplish the purpose of this study, the descriptive survey research design was employed.The population for this study consists of youths in Pankshin LGA. There are twelve wards in Pankshin LGA, Plateau State with a total population of one hundred and ninety-one thousand, six hundred and eighty-five youths (191,685) (National Population Commission-NPC, 2006). The target

population includes the youths within the age bracket of 15-35 years in Pankshin LGA, with a population of 38,337..The sample for this study consists of three hundred and ninety-six (396) youths 15-35 years. This was calculated using Nwanna (2001) rule of thumb stated that, when the population of the study is more than twenty thousand (20,000), 1-10 per cent should be used as sample size. The sampling procedure for this study wasa simple random sampling technique, to select 66 youths from six wards out of the twelve existing wards of Pankshin LGA, Plateau State. Data were collected using a researcher-structured questionnaire titled "Factors Associated with Substance Abuse Questionnaire (FASAQ)". The face validity of the instrument was established by three experts, two came from the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, and one from the Department of Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation), all from University of Nigeria, Nsukka. In order to determine the internal consistency of the instrument, product moment correlation coefficient was used. Reliability index of .61 was obtained, which was in line as specified Okpala andOgbazi (2012). The data generated was analyzed using frequency and percentages.

Results

Table 1: Percentage Analysis of the Demographic Factors (Age) Associated with Substance Abuse in PankshinLocal Government Area, Plateau State (n= 380)

S/N	Age	F	%
1.	12-21 years	171	45
2.	22-31 years	142	37
3	32 years and above	67	18
	Overall	**380**	**100**

Data in Table 1 shows that youths who are within the age group of 12-21years are the majority to be associated with substance abuse (45%). The table further revealed that (37%) are within the age group of 22-31years while (18%) are within the age group of 32years and above.

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Table 2: Percentage Analysis of the Demographic Factors (Gender) Associated with Substance Abuse in PankshinLocal Government Area, Plateau State (n= 380)

S/N	Sex	F	%
1.	Male	194	51
2.	Female	186	49
	Overall	**380**	**100**

Data in Table 2 shows that males (51%) are more associated with substance abuse than their female counterparts (49%). Therefore, this indicates that majority of the respondents were males. This implies that the male populations are more associated with substance abuse among youths in Pankshin local government, Plateau State.

Table 3:Percentage Analysis of the Demographic Factors (Level of Education) Associated with Substance Abuse in PankshinLocal Government Area, Plateau State (n= 380)

S/N	Educational qualification	F	%
1.	No education	20	5
2.	Primary education	42	11
3.	Secondary education	162	43
4.	Tertiary education	156	41
	Overall	**380**	**100**

Data in Table 3 shows that those with secondary education (43%) are more associated with substance abuse than those with tertiary education (41%), those with primary education (11%) and those with no education (5%).

Table 4: Percentage Analysis of the Substances that are Commonly Abused in PankshinLocal Government Area, Plateau State (n= 380)

S/N	Substance abuse	Yes	
		F	**%**
1.	Alcohol	62	16
2.	Tramadol	30	8
3.	Marijuana (Igbo, weed)	11	3
4.	Valium	0	0
5.	Sukur die	2	0.5
6.	Glue (solution)	3	0.8
7.	Codeine (Benelyn cough syrup)	30	8
8.	Tobacco (such as snuff, cigarette)	33	9
9.	Cocaine	0	0
10.	Pentoxocine	0	0
11.	Non substances abuse	209	55
	Overall	**380**	**100**

Data in Table 4 shows that majority of youths consume alcohol than other substances (16%). The table further showed that (9%) of smoke cigarettes, (8%) consume codeine syrup, (3%) smoke marijuana, (0.5%) consumes surkur die, (0.8) inhale glue solution, (55%) do not involve in substances abuse while the table revealed that there some number of substance abuse that there are no responses toward the

Discussion

The findings of the studyin Table 1a showed that youths within the age group of 12-21years are the majority to be associated with substance abuse. This finding was expected and therefore not surprising because youth within these age groups are more influenced easily. This finding was in contrast with that of Ajayi andSomefun, (2020) and OkozaandAluede (2009)who found out that majority of youth who are associated with substance abuse are within the age range of 21-25years. Oshikoya and Alli (2006)reported that those associated with substance abuse are older youths. This implies that among the youths, the older ones abuse drugs, and also influence the younger youths who learn how to abuse drugs.

The findings of the study showed that males are more associated with substance abuse than their female counterparts. This finding is in line with the reports of Akande, Adisa and Ilesammni (2019), who conducted a research and the finding indicated that males are more prone to substance abuse than females. Thus, it validated the finding of this study, though the areas of the different studies are not the same. However, this finding was expected and therefore not surprising because in ghetto and slump areas, males are mostly known forcraving for hard substances as criteria for assuming adulthood. This finding was also in agreement with that of Alexander, Watson and Fleming (2011) who reported in their study that males abuse hard substances than females.

The findings of the study showed that those with secondary education are more associated with substance abuse than those with tertiary education, primary education and those with no education. This study was in line with the findings of Fagbe (2019) who also in his study find out that youths in secondary education abuse drugs more. Meanwhile, this finding was not expected and therefore surprising because it is expected that youths with no education qualifications are the youths that abuse substances because poor exposure and lack of knowledge of the harmful effect of substance abuse. This finding was in contrast with that of Chen and Kendel (2011) who reported that substances are majorly abused by those in no education.

The Findings of the study showed that the majority of youths consumed alcohol than other substances. This finding was expected and therefore not surprising because it is believed that alcohol can be easily accessed by everyone and can be purchased at any price rate. This finding was in agreement with that of Ibiyemi (2020), Idowu, Arema& Olumide, 2018 and Ellickson & Bell (2013) who reported alcohol to be the most abused substances among young individuals.

Conclusions

This study concluded that youths who are within the age group of 12-21years are the majority to be associated with substance abuse.Males are more associated with substance abuse than their female counterparts.Those who are single are more associated with substance abuse than those who are married and those who are divorced.Those with secondary education are more associated with

substance abuse than those with tertiary education, primary education and those with no education.Majority of the respondents which are Christians are more associated with substance abuse.Majority of youths consume alcohol than other substances.Majority of the respondent are students who were the highest group of friends.Others were the highest to be influenced into substance abuse.Majority of the respondents are students compared to other occupation.Those who earns less than N5,000 monthly income are higher than others and are mostly affected.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:
1. The federal government in collaboration with National Drug Law Enforcement agency (NDLEA) should ensure that the abuse of substances is regulated among the Nigerian population.
2. There should be efforts by drug agencies to track down the importation of hard drugs into the country.
3. All institutions in the country (primary, secondary or tertiary institutions) should develop courses that will educate students about the harmful effects of substance abuse.

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