

Effects And Implications of Drug Abuse on Students' Attitude to Learning in Federal College of Education Technical, Gombe, Nigeria

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Abstract

Drug Abuse is a physical and physiological disorder often resulted from persistent and excessive self administration of drugs without regards to medically and culturally acceptable patterns. This research tries to focus on the effects and implication of drug abuse on students attitude to learning in Federal College of Education Technical, Gombe. The resultant effects of this menace could be physical, social, psychological and mental, while the implication reflects mostly on the students' cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains of learning. The most commonly abused drugs by students are; Amphetamines; example Tramadol popularly known as Tramol, Inhalants, example; solution etc. The effect is more pervasive among adolescent and middle-late childhood youth. The common causes of this menace includes peer group, lack of proper parental care and supervision, others are "to make me cope with the pressure of life" "to make me forget my problems" etc. While some of the signs and symptoms are- unusual use of dark glasses, use of odour nutrilizers such as perfume, air freshners, chewing gum etc. There exists a significant relationship between drug abuse and students attitude to learning. This paper therefore recommends that periodic or routine seminars and workshops be organized to students on campus by the college authorities which should include health education and counseling among others and to request Government to impose heavy tax on any industry involved in the production of such illicit drugs.

Keywords: drug, drug abuse, effects, implication, attitude, student, learning

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INTRODUCTION

The illegal use of cannabins and other psychoactive drugs seem to become a passion among most students of higher institutions of today, just like the way it hits the larger societies. Drugs are being taken indiscriminately by students particularly those in higher institutions against medical and pharmaceutical advice, or without due consultation with qualified or registered health personnel or medical practitioner. However, the most affected age group among Nigerian populations is the youth group including students and the larger societies.

In one of the World Health Organization and World Health Foundations' data (2009), it was reported that, in Nigeria today almost 22.1% of school youth aged between 12-17yrs use tobacco. Although the age range of this report indicated middle and late childhood age, but it could be the same group that would enter the youthful age as habitual drug users. Youth in Nigeria are becoming drug dependents while the country is transiting from the status of a drug consuming nation to that of a drug producing one, or from farming to pharming. Young ones who are mainly from well-to-do families are those who are increasingly identified as big boys that practice the use of drugs or substances like heroine, cocaine, Indian hemp, etc which are frequently produced in Nigeria. The substances includes Methamphetamine, tablets and syrups with codeine capable of intoxicating the body and the mind are mostly found in schools (Staff K, 2012).

The use of hard drugs by students in Nigerian tertiary institutions is getting pathetic and embarrassing hence becoming a major problem in schools, colleges and universities in Nigeria (NDLEA,2013). This is indeed a problem to the students because it affects their psychomotor cognitive and affective domains of learning. It equally distablizes their physical and social wellbeing, it throws them into temptations and makes them nefarious and bold to commit social vices such as; examination malpractice, rudeness to teachers, dishonesty, lack of concentration, nudity, cultism, rape, robbery and even suicide. Intake of hard drugs affect both the body and the mind by depression and stimulation of the central nervous system, hence setting the central nervous system into some extra ordinary actions such as; abnormal behaviour, auditory and visual halluciations, false sensory perceptions and several other minor mental disorders that could compromise individual's state of mental health.

Illicit drugs are injurious to adolescent students in their academic performance. There are estimated 1.5 million adolescents students drug users in Nigerian higher institutions, there is no academic

institution in Nigeria that is immuned and there is no student that is really immuned (Alabi, 2012). This monster is indeed disasterous and devastating to the teeming youth of today. Ajayi and Ekundayo (2010) posit that drug has been identified as a serious constraint to effective teaching, administration and management of schools and learning process in the Nigerian educational system. Furthermore, Oshodi, Aina and Onajole, (2010) explained that marijuana is the most commonly used substances followed by tobacco.

Drug- is any substance or chemical which when taken or introduced into the body will cause certain changes; positive or negative, or a substance that could bring a change in the biological function through its chemical actions (Okoye, 2001) while Balogun, (2006) considered drug as a substance that modifies perception, cognition, mood, behavior and general body functions, while drug abuse is a disorder characterized by excessive use of the habit-forming drugs and misuse of over the counter medicines. In another development, drug abuse is the excessive and persistent self-administration of a drug without regard to the medically or culturally accepted patterns (Haladu, 2003). Therefore it is considered abuse whenever it is used in a manner that deviates from medically approved and socially acceptable patterns within the society.

Types of Drugs

There are various types of drugs, but in general terms drugs are of two types; (1) Legal and licit drugs (2) Illegal and illicit drugs

1. Legal drugs are those conventional drugs that are permitted by law to be taken by everyone based on need, example; analgesics or pain relievers such as; Paracetamol, Aspirin, etc these are referred to as non- control drugs. However, drugs such as Diazepam, Pentazocine etc. as are classified as control drugs.
2. Illegal drugs- these are drugs that are not permitted to be used by everyone without prior prescription by the physician. Example; Morphine, Cocaine, Vallium five, Diazepam five, Indian hemp and other cannabins which are otherwise called control drugs.

Furthermore, physicians have for long recognized that drugs are produced according to the work they elicit to the human systems and the purpose for which they are administered, hence they categorized them into seven:

1. Central Nervous System Depressants - these are drugs that slow down the operation of the brain and the body. Example; alcohol, antianxiety and tranquilizers (valium, lexotan etc)
2. Central Nervous System Stimulants - these drugs accelerate the heart rate and elevate the blood pressure, hence increase body activities, example; cocaine, amphetamines etc
3. Hallucinogens - these are substances that when taken could cause the person to perceive things differently that they actually are. These substances can equally cause false sensory perception without real stimuli. Example lysergic acid, diethylamide etc
4. Dissociative Anaesthetics - these are substances that inhibit pain by cutting off the brain's perception of the pain. Example; dioxtromethoraphen
5. Narcotic Analgesics - these are substances that relief pain and which induces euphoria and create mood changes in the user. Example; opium, codeine, heroine, morphine etc
6. Inhalants - these are substances that are organic compounds or solvents which are being sniffed for their stimulating effects. Example; toluene, petrol, glue etc.
7. Cannabins- cannabis such as; Indian hemp-are drugs that have both stimulating and depressing effects, example; cannabinoids which if taken frequently may eventually leads to what psychiatrists referred to as cannabins –induced –psychosis

Causes of Drug Abuse

There are many factors responsible for drug abuse by students of higher institutions Chukwu et.al (2017) revealed that the causes of drug abuse in schools are; Curiosity, Peer group, Lack of parental care and supervision, Personality problem due to socioeconomic conditions, Need for energy to work for a long time or hours, Availability of the drugs. Other causes are; Emotional and psychological stress, unemployment, economic frustration, loneliness and other related social problems.

However, the responses heard from many users of these drugs among students as to why are they using drugs have always been the following; I want to cope with the pressure of life, Drugs help me forget my problems, Some of my friends do take the drugs why me not?, I want to be strong and courageous, Because my parents do not want me to be what I wanted to be.

Most Common Drugs Abused by Students

There are most common drugs being used or taken by students which are mostly available incampus, on the streets and in open markets. In a research carried out by Chukwu et al.(2017) the common substances abused by students are:-

1. Human and lizard feces
2. Stagnant gutter residue
3. Sedative; example; burkutu, pito, alcohol etc
4. Amphetamines; example; Tramol or Tramadol
5. Narcotics; example; cocaine, codeine,, morphine heroine etc
6. Inhalants; example; chemical in gasoline, petroleum, glue, solution including that of pit latrin inhalation
7. Marijuana and cigarette, i.e morocco ganye, stone, wee-wee, legbo, wrap cigar etc
8. Cough syrup with codeine, example; Parkalin, Coughlin, benyllin tutolin etc

Sign and Symptoms of Drug Abuse

Students who are involved in this menace seem to manifest the following signs;

1. Possession of the drug itself, such as plants' seed butt or powdery
2. Possession of drug related paraphernalia such as pipes example; shi-sha, rolling papers, syringes, lighters, matches, bottle openers, ash trays and decongestant bottles
3. Unusual use of perfumes, air freshners, incense, mosquito coil, insecticides, chewing gum, licking of sweets etc, all of which are used as odour nutilizers against smells
4. Staying in isolation sometimes
5. Uusual use of dark pair of glasses
6. Redness of eyes with mild dilation of eye pupil
7. Deviation behaviours example; stealing, lying, trouble making, fighting school management etc
8. Health deterioration
9. Difficulty or total lack of concentration
10. Incoherent speech
11. Rudness to teachers etc

Effects and Implication of Drugs Abuse

The resultant effects of drug abuse can be broadly categorized into physical, social, psychological and mental effects;

1. Physical effects- the user is exposed to having a serious health problems that affect his /her delicate or vital organs and the general anatomy and physiology of the body. This includes damage to the brain, liver, heart, kidney and lungs which eventually results into irregular heart beat, high blood pressure, hepatitis, HIV Aids, lung cancer, nervous breakdown, low blood circulation and maternal problems.
2. Social effects- this refers to the resulting effects of drugs abuse on the user regarding his individual habit and how the habit affects others in the society. Example; expulsion from school, failure in the examination, examination malpractice, truancy and deviant behaviour, criminal activities, destitution, prostitution in case of female students, family disintegration, industrial and traffic accidents etc
3. Psychological effects- this includes; insomnia (sleeplessness), restlessness, anxiety, depression, psychosis, work difficulties, crimes such as stealing, armed robbery, murder, school dropout, unprotected sexual behavior, irreligiosity, loss of sense of responsibility, disregard to occupational duties etc

Mental effects this leads to minor mental disorders such as; mania, paranoid delusion, hallucination etc. However, it was also revealed by other researchers in the past that users of such substances are found to have poor academic performance, proneness to anger, violence and truancy were some of the major effects of drug abuse among students Attah et al. (2016) and Agbonghale and Okaka (2014) in a related development, a research carried out by Okwonkwo et al. (2012) mentioned that human feces and stagnant gutter residue were among the substances abused by adolescents.

Drug abuse and students' attitude to learning

There exists a significant relationship between drug abuse and students' attitude to learning. Students attitude to learning refers to the zeal, courage and enthusiasm being possessed by a student towards learning. It is being stimulated by some factors and the factors are important on the learner's level of goal setting, problem solving abilities, personal beliefs towards learning, inner and outer motivation in the process of learning and all the academic performances they perform. Furthermore, it is equally the way students' attitudes and approaches in their studies are been assessed and monitored. This is done by descriptors that are used to each teacher, they assess students in their classes and these attitudes are reported three times a year.

Keys to Developing a Learning Attitude

1. Utilize the most important hours of your day judiciously and wisely
2. Prioritize your goals and duties and do not misplace priorities, do things based on their order of importance
3. Open for learning,
4. Upgrade yourself intellectually, emotionally and spiritually
5. Nourish your mind and soul

A positive attitude to learning would let the learner relax, remember, concentrate and focus, while negative attitude limits performance, saps motivation and inhibits learning. Drug abuse has an adverse effect or negative impact on students as it affects their attitude to learning and brings about change in their brain perception. Moreover, students who attain such tertiary level and who

got indulged in such menace feel absolutely dissatisfied with life, lack concentration and can hardly attend or comprehend any lecture, his mood and disposition always show a sign of anger, confusion and or even frustration. This can invariably affects their attitude to learning and consequently their academic performance. Therefore, the hours that ought to be allotted to rehearsal, must be utilized in absolute bedrest. (Alan, 2003).

Preventive and Control Measures

1. Health Education to students on the effects and implication of drug abuse; This should be intensified by the school health/medical services using all available medium of communication including social media
2. Counselling unit should be established and be give support by the school authorities/management
3. Students should be encouraged to seek clarification from the Students' Affairs unit before joining any union, club or association on campus
4. Drug-free clubs and societies should be established on campuses to help in discouraging the menace at door-step
5. Parents at home should substantiate the school authorities' efforts towards strict monitoring of their children, particularly at adolescent stages
6. Early detection of the problem and proper treatment institution
7. Rehabilitation of the affected person
8. Routine checking of students by the security unit at all times, including stop and search of students' luggage and school bags before hostel entrance
9. Immediate notification of suspected victims to the authorities concerned

Recommendations

1. Government should enforce strict laws through its regulatory agencies such as; National Drugs law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON), Consumer Protection Unit (CPU) etc, against cultivation, importation, exportation, sales and consumption of
2. Cultivation of any plant or herb that could serve as a raw material to the production of such drugs of abuse by any company in the country should attract heavy tax, sanction or penalty
3. Periodic or routine symposia, seminars, workshops and lectures should be organized to students on campus by the school authorities, where relevant stakeholders from outside campus would be involved
4. 3. Government should impose heavy tax on any pharmacological company that are found to be involved in the production of such drugs
5. Periodic screening of local patent medicine stores, vendors and all retail outlets in and outside the school environment
6. Expulsion from school of any student found to be involved in such heinous acts
7. The school environment should be made secure and fenced properly to forstal unwarranted hideout for such students

CONCLUSION

Use of drugs heavily by students may directly affect their academic performance and abilities, This may consequently affect their educational goal attainment. This poor academic performance may lead to offences and crimes in the life of a student of high institution. Example; involvement in examination malpractice, lateness, absenteeism and many other forms of criminality both within and outside the school environment. Therefore to curtail this menace, school authorizes in various institutions must liaise with Government regulatory agencies and other relevant stakeholders, such as security units within their institutions thus making it a collaborative effort. Furthermore, tudents should be made to understand that drug abuse is not a skill but a negative habit that has been formed over a long period of time. They should be wise, warned and be halt to stay away from experimenting it because they may not be lucky.

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