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Research Article

Evaluation of Substance Abuse Among In-School and Out-of-School Youths in Sokoto State, Northwestern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to investigate Substance abuse among in school and Out-of-school youth in Sokoto State, northwestern Nigeria, the commonly use substances, causes, effects, and protection. Cross-sectional descriptive survey was used to cover some selected schools and Out-of-school groups, key informants and selling points in Sokoto. The obtained data was analyzed using content analysis. The results of the study show that, most of the respondents are males (93%), only few are females (6.7%). All the respondents are Muslims. Most of the Out-of-School Youth (OSY) are married (80%) and only 6.7% are married among in school youth (ISY). The respondent's age was within 18-22 years in most cases. Most (80%) of ISY are at senior secondary classes, 46.7% of OSY left school after primary education, 26.7% never attended school. Most of the respondents have more than 2 kids (93.3%), only 6.7% have about 10 kids. Commonly submitted drugs/substances are: cigarette, cannabis, alcohol, inhalants, tranquilizers, opiates, and hallucinogens. Therein, reasons for substance abuse were: social/ peer pressure, rebellion, overwork/learning, shyness, fear, parental influence, fun and lack of role model. It also revealed that ISY started drug use earlier than the OSY. Friends, drug pushers, curiosity introduced youth to drugs. There are several effects of substance abuse on the individual, friends, and Community. At individual level there are: bad temper, disturbed sleep, ill-health, depression, anxiety, tiredness, disrespect, failure at workplace/school. At family level the effects include: disgrace, breakdown of relationship, loss of confidence in child, and ill-health. At friend's level, the effects include: breakdown of relationship, fear, anxiety. And at community or society levels, the effects listed were: crime, reduced productivity, violence, ill-health, high cost of treatment, accidents. To protect youth from substance abuse, the following measures were submitted by the respondents: parents should not expose children to drugs, parents should give them confidence and proper knowledge to make decisions, peer group educators should work, and there should be national campaign against drugs. Key informants (KIs) submitted similar assertions like the youth respondents. During observation of sell outlets, mostly, youth (18-25 years) patronize the sell outlets in Sokoto. The inhabitants exhibits calmness and peace during their transactions and it mostly occur in the night and it become peak during rainy seasons. Diverse efforts and interventions are required to prevent substance abuse in youth.

Keywords: *Substance abuse, drug, Out-of-school youth, in-school youth, key informants, public health*

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INTRODUCTION

Drugs/substances are helpful when they are properly utilized and destructive when they are misused or abused, but the abuse of substances or drugs is traversing the youth in large sense across the globe. Substance abuse is a harmful pattern of use of any substance (drug) for mood purposes, and

subsequently leading to frequent and serious problems. These problems can affect performance at school, work or home. In many instances, relationships with friends, parents, and households fade because of substance abuse (Nasiru *et al.*, 2019a).

Substance abuse can also be defined as the harmful or hazardous use of substances, including alcohol and other illicit

drugs. Drug substances use can lead to dependence syndrome, a cluster of behavioral, cognitive, and physiological phenomena that develops after repeated substance use and that typically includes a strong desire to take the drug, difficulties in controlling its use, persistence in its use despite harmful consequences (Lawal and Aliyu, 2020). All the organs of the body are prone to damages due Substance abuse. It causes respiratory, digestive, heart, liver and nervous diseases (Abubakar and Nasiru, 2019). Circa, quarter of a billion people, or around 5 per cent of the global adult population, use drugs at least once, more worrisome is the fact that about 29.5 million of those drug users, or 0.6 per cent of the global adult population, suffer from drug use problems leading to deaths and injuries. Substance abuse is a major universal health problem. It exposes the individuals to major socio-economic and health problems, and serves as a predisposing factor for crime in a society (Namadi and Haruna, 2019).

Youths are very vital for growth and development of any society. They are the greatest assets any nation can use to achieve development and economic growth. They remain the leaders of tomorrow. The youths are a particular portion of the national population that is meant to be sensitive, energetic, and active and the most productive among the citizens. The youths are also most volatile and yet the most vulnerable segment of the population (Nasiru *et al.*, 2019a). Substance abuse have been reported to cause a diverse array of negative consequences such as health problems on primary users and secondary users, academic failure, increase in crime rate, reduced productivity, and increase healthcare cost among others (Nasiru *et al.*, 2019a). No comprehensive data is available on the estimated number of use of drug substances in Nigeria or in Sokoto which was drawn from large and diverse actors (in school youth, Out-of-school youth, key informants, sellers). Most of the studies are hospital- based and retrospective, making prediction of trends rather difficult and to curtail this problem there is need to comprehend the cause, effect and source of these drugs to individuals, family, and community (Fareo, 2012; Nasiru, 2015; Lawal and Aliyu, 2020). The objective of this study was to investigate substance abuse among in school and Out-of-school youth in Sokoto State, northwestern Nigeria, the commonly use substances, causes, effects, and protection.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design and location: Cross-sectional, descriptive survey was used to cover some selected schools and Out-of-school groups, key informants and selling points in Sokoto, Nigeria. Purposive, snowballing, and convenience sampling methods were used.

Nigeria as a nation in Africa lies between 50°N equator and 30° and 40°East of the green which meridian. Nigeria composed of 36 states, with federal capital territory Abuja. There are seven hundred and seventy-four local government areas. Sokoto is one of the 36 states of the federal Republic of Nigeria, with a total population of 4,427,760 based on 2006 census report. Sokoto is located in the northwest part of the country; it formed boarders with Kebbi, Zamfara, and Niger republic (Sarkingobir and Abbas, 2017).

Target population: Targeted population in this study was the youths (age range of 18-25) who use substances in Sokoto state. The study was carried when they are calm. Selected key informants were interviewed using questionnaire and sell outlets were visually inspected.

Sample size: The sample size in this study was 60 youth drawn (30 in school youth, and 30 Out-of-school youth) from the three senatorial zones of the state. 10 key informants and 10 drug sellers were enrolled (MacDougall and Fudge, 2001; Hodgeet *al.*, 2011; Sarkingobir and Abbas, 2017).

Data collection methods and tools and management

A questionnaire was used to collect data with the help of voluntary research assistants after a pilot study. The data was analyzed using content analysis. The questionnaire utilized in this study was derived from Nasiru (2015), Nasiru *et al.*, (2018), Nasiru *et al.*, (2019) and other literatures. The questionnaire sought to determine the followings (among others): Demographic characteristics of the respondents (Sokoto youths), reasons for substance use among youths in the state, how youths get into substance use?, ways of convincing youths to drugs, effects of substance abuse on individuals, friends, families, and communities, types of substances used by the youths.

RESULTS

Demographics data: (28) 93% of the respondents were male, Only 2(6.7%) were females. 26(43.33%) of the respondents were 18-21, 22(36.7%) were 17-22, whereas 2(3.3%) failed to indicate their age. Out-of-school respondents (OSR) had 24(80%) are single, 12(40%) are leaving together, and 2(6.7%) were divorced. In school respondents (ISR) 18 were single, 2 were married and 2 did not indicate their status. All 60 respondents were Muslims. ISR, there were 24(80%) in SS, 2 in JSS 2 in primary, 2 not indicated. OSR, 14(46.7%) were primary school leavers, 4(13%) left school at SSS, 2 left school at JSS, 8(26.7%) never attended school. Commonly used drugs are cigarette, tranquilizers, cannabis, volatile inhalants, hallucinogens and opiates.

Frequency of reasons for substance use among youths in Sokoto and how they get substances: ISR, social/peer pressure (28), then rebellion (16), overwork/learning (14), parental influence was the least (2). OSR, social/peer pressure (26), rebellion, parental influence, lack of role model in school/society, and for fun; scored (4). The least was shyness and fear. Most of OSR started drugs at 13-18 (26), few started at 19-21(4). ISR, mostly started at (20)10-15. Others at 16-20. ISR echoed that Drug use is practiced at home (22), school (14), or both. OSR indicated that it was practiced both at home or school (24), then home (6). Who introduced youth to drugs? OSR said friends (38). ISR said drug pushers (22), then friends (16), and the least was curiosity.

On how people relate with drug abusers and drug addicts, 32 OSY said they mostly had bad interaction with people. 6 of them felt they experience fair relationship. Whereas, 2 think they had very good relationship with people. From ISY, 24 experienced fair relations with people, 12 said people relates

with them badly. Whereas, 2 felt that people relate to them excellently. Among OSY, 32 respondents agreed that drug abuse is increasing, while, 6 OSY were of the view that drug abuse is not rising. Moreover, 32 ISY agreed that drug abuse is not increasing, 8 were of the view that drug abuse is on the rise.

To protect youth from substance abuse, the following submissions were made by the respondents:

Table 1:
Ways of convincing youths to drug abuse

Item	OSR(f)	ISR(f)
Make brilliant	10	32
Happier	24	32
Stronger	0	2
Work for long	30	4
Brave	6	2
Confidence	26	2
Boost appetite	2	4

Key informants’ interview

Types of substances and their uses: Generally, they described that substance abuse as the act of taking any drug (substance) which modifies sense without medical advice or behavior of taking intoxicating substances. Common substances asserted by them include: cough syrup, cannabis, cigarette, tea and tablets. Most of the key informants (KIs) said substance abuse is increasing as explained by shops and sell outlets along the streets. Only few of them believed that substance abuse is decreasing. KIs said youth buy substances from markets, home, garage, chemists and vendors. The youth called substances with names like medicine, stimulants, and materials.

To protect youth from substance abuse there is need to make them knowledgeable, organized, guided, counseled, and monitored. Causes of substance abuse among youth are: Bad

friends, accessibility, lack of proper parental care, and lack of education.

Policies by government (Banning of imports of substances), drug education in school,extensive campaign against drugs, proper parental care and substance abusers’ treatment through rehabilitation and counseling were all identified as factors that could prevent substance abuse.

Observations on sale outlets: Both males and females patronize their supplies. The buyers are mostly 18-25 years. Most of the transactions take place in the night and it is peak during rainy season. No security outbreak was observed around the premises of drug outlets. The method of buying is open, direct and money is used.

DISCUSSIONS

In this study most of the respondents are male (93%), only few are females (6.7%). This might be because the practice among females was accorded less attention (Namadi and Haruna, 2019). All the respondents are Muslims. Religion should have deterred them. Most of the OSY are married (80%) and only 6.7% are married among ISY. Normally, people who go to school tend to stay longer before getting married. The respondent’s age was within 18-22 years in most cases. Most (80%) of ISY were at senior secondary classes, 46.7% of OSY left school after primary education, 26.7% never attended school.

Most of the respondents have more than 2 kids (93.3%), only 6.7% have about 10 kids. Commonly cited drugs are: cigarette, cannabis, alcohol, inhalants, tranquilizers, opiates, and hallucinogens. Similar to the findings of Fareo (2012) , Omage and Omage (2012), Nasiruet *al* (2019). Therein, reasons for substance abuse were: social/ peer pressure, rebellion, overwork/learning, shyness, fear, parental influence, fun and lack of role model. It also revealed that ISY started drug use earlier than the OSY.

Table 2:
Result showing effects of drug/substance use on individuals/friends/ community as submitted by respondents

	Individual(Frequency)	Family(frequency)	Friends(Frequency)	Community(Frequency)
Out-of-school youth	Bad temper (10)	Disgrace (12)	Breakdown of relationship (18)	Crime (12)
	Disturbed sleep (8)	Breakdown of relationship (10)	Anxiety/fear (2)	Reduce productivity (8)
	Il-health (6)	Loss of confidence in child (4)		Violence (6)
	Depression (2)			Ill health (4)
	Anxiety (2)			High cost of treatment (2) Breakdown in work (2)
In-school youth	Disturbed sleep (22)	Breakdown in family relationship (34)	Anxiety (26)	Crime (34) Violence (6)
	Ill health (10)	Disgrace (24)	Breakdown in relationship (8)	Accidents(2)
	Bad temper (10)	Ill health (6)		High cost of treatment (2)
	Bad temper (8)	Loss of confidence in child (4)		
	Anxiety/Fear(8)			
	Tiredness (4)			
	Depression (4)			
	Failure to do work/ school (4)			
Disrespect (2)				

Table 3:

Result showing the strategies/interventions that confers protection to youths against substance abuse

Strategy/intervention	Out-of-school youth(f)	In school youth(f)
Parents shall not expose children to drug abuse	38	10
Parents should give youth knowledge and confidence they needs to make decisions	28	32
Peer group educators	26	4
National campaign	14	44

Table 4:

Effects of substances on substance users as echoed by key informants (KIs)

Individual	Family	Community
Dark body	Stigmatization	Stigmatization
Mental problems	Lack of relationship	Suicides
Theft	Disgrace	Political thugs
Untidiness	Indiscipline	Rise in crime
Toxicity		Academic problems
		Rise in lack of sexual discipline

Friends, drug pushers, curiosity introduced youth to drugs. These are similar to findings of Okoshikoya and Alli (2006), Yusuf (2013), Nasiru (2015), Nasiru *et al* (2019), Nasiru and Musawa (2019). There are several effects of substance abuse on the individual, friends, and Community. At individual level there are: bad temper, disturbed sleep, ill-health, depression, anxiety, tiredness, disrespect, failure at workplace/school. At family level the effects include: disgrace, breakdown of relationship, loss of confidence in child, and ill-health. At friends' level, the effects include: breakdown of relationship, fear, anxiety. And at Community or society levels, the effects listed were: crime, reduced productivity, violence, ill-health, high cost of treatment, accidents. Similar effects were reported by Fareo (2012) Ahmed(2012), Yusuf(2013), Nasiru (2015), Tracy(2016), Nasiru *et al.*, (2019). To protect youths from substance, abuse the following measures were submitted by the respondents: parents should not expose children to drugs, parents should give them confidence and proper knowledge to make decisions, peer group educators should work, and there should be national campaign against drugs. Nasiru *et al.*, (2018) reported similar findings.

KIs cited cough syrup, cannabis, alcohol, cigarette, tea and tablets as commonly used drugs among youths. Most of the KIs encounter substance abusers among the youth populations of 10years. There is an increasing trend of substance abuse and substances are sourced from markets, garages, homes, chemists, and vendors. All the effects of substance abuse stated by youth were similar to those submitted by the KIs, they added mental problems, dark skin, accessibility, political thugs, stigmatization and lack of sexual discipline. They believed bad friends, accessibility, improper parental care, and illiteracy are the causes of substance abuse. They equally believed, organization, guidance and counseling, and

education, government interventions, campaign and rehabilitation prevents drug abuse among youth.

Our results show that drug abuse is all pervasive, it is found both in schooled and Out-of-school youth. Similar to past reports in the literature (Abdulmalik *et al.*, 2009, Cofie, 2010). Generally, drugs are useful when they are properly used. So many studies and trials are carried out to establish their safety. Therein, they are attached with adverse reactions or effects, let alone when misuse or abuse. They are destructive when they are misused or abused, but most youth care not. World over, the use of drug or substances is a major public health problem characterized with effects on individuals, friends, families and the communities. The abusers use a diverse array of substances and the menace requires diverse approaches for curtailments (Nasiru, 2015; Dikko *et al.*, 2020ab).

In conclusion, substance abuse in Sokoto is similar among in-school and Out-of-school youth. The practice is wide and mostly among males who consumed many drug substances. It is also associated with several effects on individuals, families, and communities.

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