

**KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE ON ABUSE OF DRUGS AMONG YOUTHS (15-26YEARS) IN UMULOGHO OBOWO, IMO STATE.****<sup>1</sup>Nwosu U. M.\* and Ezejindu C. N.<sup>1</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research work was carried out on the knowledge and attitude of the youths in Umulogho Obowo towards drug abuse. The objectives were to ascertain the level of knowledge of the youths towards drug abuse, to ascertain the drugs that are commonly abused and to know the factors that are triggering the abuse of drugs among the youths in Umulogho Obowo. The researcher used descriptive study design to carry out the study. Instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The researcher analysed the data collected from the respondents using descriptive statistics and presented with tables. Results revealed that the respondents had poor knowledge of drug abuse and good attitude towards drug abuse. The drugs commonly abused were the opioids, stimulants, amphetamines and methamphetamine. Based on the findings, it was recommended that there should be implementation of policies to prevent drug trafficking and dealing. Health education to children and young people about the health risk, dangers of illicit drugs and self-medication, provision of job opportunities to the youths especially drop-outs to avoid idleness should be made by the government.

**KEYWORDS:** Knowledge, Attitude, Drug Abuse, Youth.

**INTRODUCTION**

Drug abuse can be defined as a state of periodic or chronic intoxication produced by repeated consumption of a drug, characterized by: (a) an overwhelming desire or need (compulsion) to continue use of drugs and to obtain it by any means; (b) a tendency to increase the dosage; (c) a psychological and usually a physical dependence on its effects; and (d) a detrimental effect on the individual and on the society.<sup>[13]</sup>

Drug abuse can also be defined as the use of and usually self-administration of any drug in the manner that deviates from the prescribed pattern. Drug abuse also was defined as the use of drugs for non-medical purposes almost always for altering consciousness in other words, he has the view that drug abuse refers to use of drugs for the wrong medication, wrong dosage or for a long time without doctor's prescription.<sup>[7]</sup> Drug abuse in general is regarded as ranging from excessive and persistent use of drugs or self-medication regarded to medicine to occasional use of drugs or substance for social reasons other than medical reasons, often in excessive quantities.<sup>[8]</sup> Drug abuse was also defined as self-medication or self-administration of drugs in chronically excessive quantities resulting in psychic and dependency, function impairment and the deviation from approved, moral and social norms.<sup>[14]</sup>

Opines addiction as a chronic relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and abuse, despite harmful consequences. It is considered a brain disease because drugs change the brain, the change its structure and how it works.<sup>[6]</sup> National Institute for Drug Addiction (NIDA) explains that addiction is similar to heart disease. Both disrupt the normal, healthy functioning of the underlying organs, have serious harmful consequences are preventable, treatable and if left untreated can last a life time. At first, people may perceive what seems to be a positive effect with drug use. They also may believe that they can control their use; however, drugs quickly take over their lives. Drug abusers reach a point where they seek and take drugs, despite the tremendous problems caused for themselves and their loved ones. Some individuals may start to feel the need to take higher or more frequent doses, even in the early stages of drug use.<sup>[9]</sup> A survey in Czech Republic conducted in high schools showed that 37% of the new drug users were teenagers between 15 and 19 years old.<sup>[11]</sup>

The global initiative on primary prevention of substance abuse (Global Initiative) is jointly executed by the United Nation International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) implementation began in June, 1997. The global initiative aims to prevent the use and abuse of all illicit

and illicit psychoactive substances by young people. Drug abuse is a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to chemically significant impairment or distress as manifested by one or more of the following occurring within a period of 12 months; recurrent substance use resulting in failure to fulfil major roles like obligation at work, school or in the home, recent substance use in situation in which it is physically hazardous.<sup>[12]</sup>

Certain sets of people are particularly vulnerable to drug abuse which includes abused or neglected youths, the homeless, the physically or mentally handicapped, school drop outs, children of drug abusers. Every year, thousands of drug addicts die as a result of over dose; while many die due to human immune virus/Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS). Some drug abusers consider it to be relaxing and pleasurable social activity.<sup>[4]</sup>

According to a study carried out by Organization of African Unity (O.A.U) it was found out that 48% of youths between 15-26 years of age have already tried some kind of drugs. The Nigerian drug law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) (2009) reports that almost 1 out of 10 has at least tried marijuana. The commonly abused drugs are Indian hemp, cocaine heroin etc. and abuse of these drugs can lead to anti-social activities like rape and armed robbery. The researcher also observed that many of them due to poor knowledge on complications and adverse effects of these abused drugs have become victims of their own actions. It is on the basis that the researcher decided to carry out this study on knowledge and attitude on abuse of drugs among youths in Umulogho Obowo.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The research design used in this study was a descriptive method. This method describes the knowledge and attitude on abuse of drugs among youths in Umulogho Obowo. The descriptive method was used by Falco and Sambo (2008) on the relationship.

### Study Area

This study was carried out in Umulogho Obowo, Local Government Area in Imo State.

### Target Population

The target population comprises of all the youths from the five villages in Umulogho Obowo, both males and females ages 15-26 years of age. At the time of the study, their number was 100.

### Sample/Sampling Technique

The sample comprised of youths 15-26 years both male and females in Umulogho Obowo. The researcher made use of stratified and simple random technique. The community was stratified into five (5) groups. Simple random method was used to select from each group the

number required balloting with replacement was used to determine the number regimen.

### Instrument for data collection

The instrument used for data collection by the researcher was open ended and close ended questions based on the research objectives. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A explored the demographic information of the respondents. Section B comprises of information on the knowledge and attitude on the abuse of drugs among youths aged (15-26years) in Umulogho Obowo, section B question were organised in liker scale.

### Reliability

The reliability of the instrument for data collection was pretested using a test-retest technique, where 7 questionnaires were issued out to the youths in Ahiazu Mbaise and this was repeated within an interval of one week. A Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.82 was obtained which shows that the instrument was reliable.

### Method of data collection

Data was collected using a well-structured questionnaire; it was distributed face to face by the researcher with the help of 2 young community members. Who were trained on how to carry out the distribution and collection of the questionnaire from the youths. This was done after a village meeting of which the instructions were read out, necessary explanations were given as people asked questions and their questions were answered accordingly. The questionnaires were completed within a stipulated time of which they were retrieved by the researcher and the two trained young community members, data collection lasted for few weeks.

### Method of data analysis

The data collected were retrieved and were analysed using descriptive statistics and presented in tables and percentage.

### Ethical consideration

Approval to conduct the study was sought and obtained from the Leader of the community. Before embarking upon this project, personal consent of the individuals interviewed were sought and obtained before administering the questionnaire. Data collected were held in strict confidence.

**RESULTS****Table 1: Socio-Demographic data of respondents**

Socio-demographic characteristics	Option	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>			
	Male	40	57.1
	Female	50	42.9
<b>Age of respondents</b>			
	15years	10	14.3
	19years	10	14.3
	23years	25	35.7
	26years	25	35.7
<b>Educational qualification</b>			
	Secondary	10	14.3
	Tertiary	40	57.1
	Drop-out	20	28.6
<b>Villages</b>			
	Umuohuo	15	21.4
	Umuokpa	15	21.4
	Umunnem	15	21.4
	Umuadara	10	14.3
	Umunze	15	21.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 2: Shows the Knowledge of the Youths towards Drug Abuse**

Characteristics	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Grade	1. Drug abuse is a chronic
1. Drug abuse is a chronic intoxicated Produced by repeated use of drugs.	-	10	20	40	70	1.57		Poor
2. Drug abuse is the excessive intake of drugs.		10	10	20	30	70	2.10	Poor
3. Drug abuse is a total rejection of drug when prescribed.		20	20	10	20	70	2.57	Good
4. Drug abuse is the abnormal use of drugs to boost performance.	-		20	20	30	70	1.85	Poor
5. Drug abuse is the complete dependence on drug in order to function normally.	-	-	20	50	70	1.28		Poor
6. Consuming of drugs not prescribed by a doctor is abuse of drug.		10	10	10	40	70	1.85	Poor

Legend: SA = Strongly agree, A=Agree, D = Disagree, N = Number.

**Table 3: Shows the attitude of the youths towards Drug Abuse**

Characteristics	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Grade
1. I feel a sense of euphoria after taken cocaine.	50	-	10	10	70	3.7	Good
2. I feel excited after taking marijuana	40	10	10	10	70	3.14	Good
3. Drugs help me deal with sleepless days and nights.		40	20	10	-	70	3.24 Good
4. Smoking is a way of raising emotional awareness.	40	20	10	-	70	3.14	Good
5. Taking alcohol helps me overcome difficulty challenges.	50	20	-	-	70	3.7	Good
6. I will feel bad if I risk to stop taking Substances.	50	10	10	-	70	3.57	Good

Legend: SA = Strongly agree, A=Agree, D = Disagree, N = Number.

**Table 4; Shows the Drugs that are commonly abused**

Characteristics	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Grade
1. Sedatives such as diazepam, lorazepam and bromazepam are among abused drugs.	-	-	20	50	70	1.28	Poor
2. Opioids like cocaine and morphine are among the drugs commonly abused because it gives us the required energy to carry daily activities.	40	5	5	20	70	2.5	Good
3. Designer drugs like amphetamine methamphetamines are among drugs which cause hypertension.	50	10	10	-	70	3.57	Good
4. Bromazepam, diazepam, and lorazepam are not regarded as abused drugs.	50	10	10	-	70	3.57	Good
5. Stimulants like caffeine, nicotine, amphetamines are not among the abused drugs because they make it possible for us to remain strong and active through out the day and night.		50	10	5	5	70	3.57 Good

Legend: SA = Strongly agree, A=Agree, D = Disagree, N = Number.

**Table 5: Factors that trigger abuse of drugs among the youths**

Characteristics	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Grade
1. Neglected youth, school dropout and homeless youths are more vulnerable to drug abuse.	30	20	10	10	70	3.0	Good
2. Poor parental upbringing is one of the factors that triggers drug abuse.	50	20	-	-	70	3.7	Good

3. Growing up in a family the emphasizes getting high from illegal substances can cause adolescents to think drug use is acceptable.	50	20	-	-	70	3.7	Good		
4. Child abuse, past or present can create the level of stress that triggers some some terms to abuse drugs.	30	20	10	10	70	3.0	Good		
5. Consuming drugs in order to boost academic performance is a triggering factor to drug abuse.			20	10	20	20	70	2.9	Poor
6. Peer pressure is one of the influential factors in drug abuse which results to dangerous lifestyle changes.	30	20	10	10	70	3.0	Good		

Legend: SA = Strongly agree, A=Agree, D = Disagree, N = Number.

## DISCUSSION

The knowledge of the youths towards drug abuse is poor according to the result of the findings in table 2. The mean value on the level of knowledge of youths on drug abuse was 1.57, 2.10, 1.85, 1.28 and 1.85 respectively. The weighted mean of 1.57 was derived which is below the critical value of 2.5, this signifies poor knowledge. This may be as a result of lack of parental guidance. This result is in line with a similar study carried out on the level of knowledge on abuse of drugs among youths in Ibadan.<sup>[1]</sup>

Attitude of youths in Umulogho towards drug abuse shows a good outcome. The attitude of the youths revealed mean scores of 3.7, 3.14, 3.24, 3.14, 3.7 and 3.57 respectively (table 3). The weighted mean of 3.5 was derived which is above the critical value of 2.5. This signifies good knowledge. This is in line with the study carried out by a researcher on the attitude of youths in Oyo state towards drug abuse.<sup>[2]</sup>

The commonly abused drugs among Umulogho youths, according to the result of the finding in table 4. Shows that the following drugs were commonly abused namely Opioids (codeine), designers drugs (Amphetamine and methamphetamines) and stimulants (cocaine, caffeine etc.) with mean value of 2.9, 3.57, 3.57 and 3.57 respectively while 20 and 50 respondents disagreed with the statement that sedatives are among abused drugs with mean value 1.28. This finding corresponds with previous report that substances that are commonly abused are alcohol, caffeine, marijuana, morphine and others.<sup>[3,5]</sup>

The factors that triggers abuse of drugs among youths in Umulogho according to the findings in table 5, were neglected youths, poor parental upbringing, growing up in families that emphasis getting high from illegal substances, child abuse both past and present, consuming drugs in order to boost performance and peer pressure, with the mean value of 3.0, 3.7, 3.7, 3.0, 2.9 and 3.0 respectively. This in line with other findings from

researchers, who stated that in her research that the factors that triggers abuse of drugs are peer group, stress, family pressure and quest for social influence.<sup>[4,5]</sup>

## RECOMMENDATION

- Based on the findings, the researcher made the following recommendations.
- There should be implementation of political measures in form of policies to prevent drug trafficking and dealing by the government.
- Health education to the young people about the health risk, dangers of illicit drugs and self-medications and effects of various drugs should be made.
- Supervision of all medical stores should be made.
- Mass media campaign in schools and colleges should be done.
- Provision of job opportunities to youth especially drop outs to avoid idleness should be done by the government.
- Care should be made by doctors in prescribing tranquillizers, sedatives and analgesics.
- Doctors should avoid prescription for long duration on all drugs for addiction or which can be repeated.
- Caution should be taken in prescribing new compounds for analgesic or sliming, they may turn to be addictive on the long run.

## SUMMARY

The study was carried out to ascertain the knowledge and practice of drug abuse among youths in Umulogho Obowo. The data used for the study were obtained from the target population with 70 respondents in the sample size. The instrument used for the study was a structured questionnaire of 26 questions base on the research objectives. The researcher analysed the information gathered which helped him to make necessary discussion and reliable suggestion based on the findings of the research.

**CONCLUSION**

It was concluded that youths from the five villages in Umulogho Obowo have poor knowledge on drug abuse and also some factors that triggers drug abuse.

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