

AWARENESS AND USAGE OF SUBSTANCES AMONG PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

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Abstract

The study examined the awareness and usage of drug among senior secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria. Four research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted in the conduct of the study. A sample of 1580 senior secondary students was selected through multi stage sampling procedure from a population of 16517 students. A researcher developed instrument was used to collect data. The instrument was validated by three experts and reliability was determined using KR-20 and Cronbach Alpha statistics for sections B and C respectively. Mean scores, frequency and percentage tables were used to answer research questions while 2x4 contingency Chi-square independent test was used to test the hypothesis at .05 level of significance. Findings from the study include; that both male and female students are aware of many drugs, the most commonly used substances are alcohol, antimalarial drugs, paracetamol and cigarettes. There is no significant difference in the usage of drugs among male and female students. Based on the findings recommendations made include; that the government should put measures to control the sale of drugs off counter and collaborate with the school Administrators to create awareness through health education.

Keywords: Substances, School Administrator, Secondary School.

Introduction

Substance in the context of the study include drugs and other consumables other than food that by their chemical nature alter the structure or function of the body in human beings. The substances are mainly drugs which are physical or psychoactive in nature. Payne and Hahn (2007) defined drugs as any substance other than food that by its chemical or physical nature alters the structure or function in the living organisms. Psychoactive substances alter the users behaviours, perceptions, feelings and often bring about changes in consciousness and mood that the user may find in rewarding and pleasant (Anene, 2017). Body changes occur mostly when these drugs are taken in excess dosage and when one gets addicted to them. They affect the overall functioning of the

central nervous system. Such substances include depressants example is alcohol, stimulant such as cocaine, caffeine, cannabis example is marijuana, narcotics like morphine and inhalant like chloroform. Reports show that students and adolescents globally are getting involved in drug use which in most cases lead to drug abuse.

Drug use means taking drug which include self-medication or self-treatment for physiological and physical issues (Anene, 2017). While drug addiction is the deliberate use of chemical substances for reasons other than intended medical purposes and which occasioned physical, mental, emotional or social impairment to the users, Carrol (1989). Lahhapal and Agininotri (2017) explain that it is the taking of drug for purposes other than it is intended purpose without supervision of a physician. Drug abuse simply means use of illicit drugs or abuse of prescription. It entails patterned use of a substance in which the user consumes the substance in amount or with method which are harmful to themselves (DSM 2014). Oluremi (2012) opines that it is the harmful use of mind altering drugs. Consistent abuse of drugs would likely lead to dependency syndrome or drug addiction.

Drug addiction is the long term compulsive use of drug. It is the level at which the body is dependent on particular drugs that withdrawal becomes difficult. Drug dependency sets in when the body has begun to require the drug in higher dose to have same effect and avoid withdrawal. It is a chronic relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite harmful consequences. Addiction stage in drug use is when the user resist urge to use despite adverse effect. Anene (2017) says that psychoactive substances which are rewarding and positively reinforcing, have the potential to induce a state of addiction. Illicit use of drugs and addiction among students is becoming a worrisome global issue and Nigeria is not an exception.

Substance abuse among school children appears to be spreading widely in Nigeria. National Food and Drug Administration Commission (NAFDAC) (2008), reported that abuse of drug is becoming a student subculture in Nigeria. Similarly, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA 2012 and 2019) statistics showed that school children and youths constitute the high risk group for drug trafficking and abuse. Drug abuse in most cases leads to addiction among the students which will gradually results in poor academic performance and misconducts both in the school and society at large. Negative effects of drug abuse and addiction have been widely observed and reported in Nigeria.

Male and female students have been found to be engaged in drug use. The level of awareness and usage seems to vary in male and female adolescents. Survey reports on drug use indicated that males use drug at higher rates than females. However, use of painkillers, tranquilizers and sedatives are more prevalent in females than in males (SAMHSA, 2014). It also reported that males use almost all types of illicit drugs more than females. On the contrary, Malbergier (2012) reported that girls and boys used drugs at an equal rate.

Louw(2011) observed that most psychoactive drugs affect the decision making process of students, their creative thinking and the development of necessary life and social skills. Drugs also interfere with an individual's awareness of their unique potential and thus their interest in their career development.

United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) 2005, reported that the increasing availability of a variety of drugs to an ever widening socio-economic spectrum of consumer is disconcerting. It seems that the more the relevant agencies fight and make preventive policies on the usage of existing psychoactive substances, the more new ones are produced, discovered and used by the youths. In Nigeria there is a huge outcry on the high rate of consumption of Tramadol which is a painkiller that has been used extensively for medical treatment but was of late widely being used by the youths as stimulants. The overall effects of drug used among adolescent is threatening the very foundation of national security and social life of the nation. There is therefore an urgent need to expose the risk factors that expose the youths to harmful substances in order to achieve effective control of the menace.

Today's world is very dynamic and complex, with advances in technology and science that most parents and other care givers would find it extremely difficult to raise drug free children. Information, communication and Technology have been identified as major factor that give wider and easy access and knowledge to dangerous substances among the youths. NDLEA (2012) revealed that friends and school mates accounted for about ninety percent (90%) of the source of influence of the use and abuse of psychoactive substances. Peers most often influence the way of thinking and decision making among adolescents. Odejide (2014) observed that the reasons students advanced for taking drugs include: to feel good, to get excited, be like friends and stars. Environmental factors that may affect drug use among school children include: family, school and the community. The risk factor in drug use among adolescents are many and complex and this would make control of the menace very difficult.

Drug use among adolescents should be a matter of concern to all well-meaning citizens especially school administrators. Drug prevention programs to be successful, must be targeted at school children and youths. Students and adolescent should be guided to avoid drug abuse and addiction which are presently among the worrisome issues in Nigeria. The role of school and school administrators therefore cannot be over emphasized. Tupper 2008 observed that teaching students early in life about the dangers of drug can enhance prevention. Early preventive measures should be encouraged to save the children from the harmful effects of drug and ensure bright future for the country. Educators at all levels should be involved in the fight against drug abuse and addiction.

Effective drug education creates awareness which is very important in the fight against drug abuse. Education according to United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO 2000) is the total process of developing human ability

and behaviours. It is an organized and sustained instruction designed to communicate a combination of knowledge, skills and understanding value for all activities of life. School administrators are at the vintage point of implementing the goals of education. They should manage schools properly by using available human and material resources for the realization of the education goals. School managers therefore need relevant knowledge and skills to tackle the issue of drug abuse among school children.

Emphasis should be on preventive measures, hence school administrators should be familiar with early signs and symptoms of drug and substance use and abuse. Lopez; Compton and Volkow (2009) outlined such early symptoms in adolescents to include; change of friends, withdrawal from usual activities slurring of speech, poor morale, apathy, aggressive behavior, poor turn out, depression mood instability, loss of interest, sudden weight loss, weight gain and poor oral hygiene. A careful school administrator would observe these early signs and symptoms as soon as they set in and apply adequate and prompt preventive measures. One of the most effective measures to be adopted by the school administrators is to create awareness among the students. Male and female students, parents inclusive should be aware of the effects of drug use because the harmful effects of drug use and abuse spare no gender nor group.

Awareness is the ability to be cognizant of an issue or event. It means being conscious of something. In most cases, the level of awareness one has of anything depends highly on one's environment. The family and the school should provide relevant and useful information to the young ones on the dangers of substance abuse. Indeed, checking drug abuse should be the concern of all stakeholders in the upbringing and education of the children since drug free society will ensure productive and sustainable development. Establishing the level of awareness and drug use among school children should be one of the first measures to be adopted in any drug control program. It was against this background that the study was undertaken to determine the awareness and usage of substances among senior secondary school students in Anambra state Nigeria.

PURPOSE

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain the awareness and usage of substances among secondary school students in Anambra state public secondary schools. Specifically the study sought to;

1. Determine students awareness to substances
2. Find out the frequency of usage of substances among the students
3. Ascertain the substances mostly used by the students
4. Determine the awareness and usage of substances among male and female students

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Are students in Anambra state public secondary schools aware of substances?

2. How often do senior secondary school students use substances in Anambra state?
3. What substances are commonly used by the students?
4. Determine the awareness and usage of substances among male and female students.

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the usage of substances in Anambra state public secondary schools.

Method

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. It is the type of design where the population is studied by collecting and analyzing data collected from a representative few (Agu 2003; Nwankwo 2010 & Nworgu 2015). Descriptive survey design is considered appropriate for the study since the whole population was studied through a representative sample. By using the survey design, the researcher collected information from senior secondary school students in Anambra state, Nigeria to determine the extent of their awareness and usage of drugs. Senior secondary students were preferred for the study because they are more matured than the junior students and are within the target group.

The population of the study comprised 16517 (6989 males and 9528 females) senior secondary three students (SS3) in all the 261 public secondary schools in the six education zones of Anambra State (Post Primary Schools Service Commission Students Analysis 2018) Anambra State, Nigeria is divided into six education zones namely; Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha and Otuocha. The sample of the study was 1600 students selected using multi-stage sampling procedure. At the first stage, four education zones were randomly selected from the six zones which included, Onitsha, Aguata, Awka and Ogidi zones. The purposive stratified random sampling technique was used to select 20 mixed gender schools from each of the four zones, giving a total of 80 schools. Stratification was based on location to reflect the local government areas in the zones. Each zone has three or four local government areas. In each of the selected zones, 20 SS3 students (10 females and 10 males) were randomly selected giving a total of 1600 senior secondary three students.

A questionnaire titled "Students Awareness and usage of substance" (SAUS) was used for data collection. The instrument had three sections, A, B and C. Section A contained personal information of Name, location of school, Age and Sex of the students. Section B has 16 items on students' awareness of substances and Section C has 16 items on students usage of drugs structured on a 4 point rating scale of always seldomly, rarely and never. The instruments was face validated by three Senior lecturers, two in educational management and one in measurement and evaluation from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Anambra State, Nigeria. The reliability of the instrument was determined using KR-20 and cronback Alpha Statistics respectively. Reliability

coefficient of 78 and 0.82 were obtained respectively for sections B and C which were considered high enough for the study. Four research assistants were briefed and used in the administration and collection of the instrument out of the 1600 questionnaires administered to SS3 Students, 1580 valid copies were retrieved and used for data analysis. Data collected were analysed using frequency count, percentages and means to answer research questions. 2x4 contingency Chi-square independent test was used to test the hypothesis at .05 level of significance.

RESULTS

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Are Senior Secondary Students in Anambra State Public schools Aware of Substances

Table 1: Frequency and percentages of secondary school students' awareness of substances.

MALE: N = 782

FEMALE: N = 798

S/ N	ITEM	AWARE						UNAWARE			
		FREQUENCY 792						MAL	FEMAL	TOTA	%
		MAL E	%	FEMAL E	%	TOTA L	%	MAL E	FEMAL E	TOTA L	%
1	ALCOHOL	782	10 0	798	10 0	1580	10 0	00	00	00	0 0
2	MARIJUANA	376	48	97	12	473	30	406	701	1107	7 0
3	COCAINE	201	26	90	11	291	18	581	708	128	8 1
4	MORPHIN	42	5	05	.6	47	3	740	793	1533	9 7
5	LEXOTAN	72	9	61	7.6	33	8	710	737	1447	9 2
6	AMPHETAMI NE	04	.5	01	.13	05	0.3	778	787	1533	9 9
7	KOLANUT	778	99	791	99	1569	99	04	07	1447	.6
8	DIAZEPAIN	27	3.5	05	.63	32	2	755	793	1565	9 8
9	TETRACYCLI NE	370	47	420	53	790	50	412	378	11	5 0
10	AMPICILINE	427	55	302	38	729	46	355	496	1548	5 3
11	TRAMADOL	564	72	121	15	685	43	218	677	790	5 6
12	PARACETAM OL	782	10 0	798	10 0	1580	10 0	00	00	851	0
13	ANTI MALARIA DRUGS	782	10 0	798	10 0	1580	10 0	00	00	895	0
14	ASPIRIN	197	10 0	111	14	308	19	585	687	00	8 1
15	HEROINE	11	1.4	00	00	110	7	771	798	00	9 9
16	CIGARETTE	782	10	796	10	1578	10	600	02	1272	1

0 0 0

Table 1 above revealed that senior secondary students in Anambra state are 100% aware of items 1, 7, 12, 13 and 16. They are also aware of items 2, 9, 10 while they are unaware of items 4, 5, 6, 8 and 15.

Table 2: Frequency of male and female students’ usage of substances in Anambra state public secondary school.

MALE: N= 782 FEMALE: N = 798

S/N	ITEM	ALWAYS		SELDOMLY		RARELY		NEVER		MEAN	
		MA LE	FEMA LE	MA LE	FEMA LE	MA LE	FEMA LE	MA LE	FEMA LE	MALE \bar{X}_1	FEMALE \bar{X}_2
1	ALCOHOL	311	21	392	110	59	357	20	250	3.3	1.95
2	MARIJUANA	30	00	20	00	77	00	665	798	1.3	1.00
3	COCAINE	00	00	00	00	00	00	782	798	1.3	1.00
4	MORPHIN	00	00	00	00	00	00	782	798	1.00	1.00
5	LEXOTAN	00	00	00	11	15	27	767	760	1.11	1.06
6	Amphetamine	00	00	00	00	00	02	798	780	1.00	1.00
7	KOLANUT	20	02	52	21	113	65	597	710	1.35	1.14
8	DIAZEPAIN	00	00	00	03	02	00	777	793	1.01	1.0
9	TETRACYCLINE	00	00	275	101	176	350	505	382	1.48	2.39
10	AMPICILINE	00	02	320	291	175	123	287	416	1.66	1.93
11	TRAMADOL	51	03	113	11	254	74	364	710	1.81	1.13
12	PARACETAMOL	547	432	201	219	21	37	13	55	3.64	3.35
13	ANTI MALARIA DRUGS	523	5011	221	219	331	69	05	09	3.54	3.52
14	ASPRIN	11	02	45	31	66	72	670	693	1.23	1.18
15	HEROINE	00	00	00	00	00	00	782	798	1.00	1.00
16	CIGARETTE	97	07	132	219	63	32	740	499	1.80	1.80

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the usage of substances in Anambra State public secondary schools

Table 3: 2x4 Contingency Table on Male and Female Students Usage of Substances

GENDE R	ALWAYS		SELDOMLY		RARELY		NEVER		TOTAL
	OBSER VED (f_o)	EXPEC TED (f_e)	OBSE RVED	EXPE CTED	OBSER VED	EXPE CTED	OBSER VED	EXPEC TED	
MALE	92	78.2	100	89.5	65	64.3	525	5499	784
FEMAL E	60	79.8	82	91.4	71	65.6	585	561.1	798
TOTAL	158		181		130		111		1580

Source: compiled from survey
Using Chi-Square Independent Test

$$\bar{X}_2 = \sum \left(\frac{F_o - F_e}{F_e} \right)^2$$

Where

F_o = observed frequency

F_e = Expected frequency

Table 3 showed the frequency of the usage of substances in senior secondary school in Anambra state public secondary schools. The calculated X^2 value is 3.60 at .05 alpha level with degree of freedom of 3 is less than the critical value of 7.815. The null hypothesis therefore is accepted. The result suggest that there is no significant difference between male and female student's usage of substances in Anambra State public secondary schools.

Summary of findings

The following findings were made:

1. Senior secondary school students in Anambra state public secondary school are aware of some substances and they use some of them.
2. Male students have more awareness of some of the substances.
3. Male students' usage of alcohol and cigarette is higher than females.
4. Generally, there was no significant difference between male and female students usage of substances.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that both male and female students were aware of some substances. The study showed that students are aware of substances such as alcohol, kolanuts, anti-malaria drugs, paracetamol. It revealed that the substances most commonly used are alcohol, paracetamol and anti-malaria drugs. Males were observed to use alcohol and cigarette more than females.

However, the findings also revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female students in the usage of substances. The finding is not in line with the findings of Anene (2017) who reported that drug usage is higher in male students. The finding agrees with the observation of Malbergier (2012), that girls and boys used drugs equally. The study however showed that usage of alcohol and cigarette is higher among male students. The findings showed that both male and female students use prescription drugs such as paracetamol, anti-malaria drugs which indicates that self-medication is prevalent among secondary school students in Anambra state.

Implications of the findings for school administrators

The findings have implications for school administrators. The school principals are the managers and chief supervisory executives whose leadership styles should contribute to the building of drug free society. The management practices should enthrone effective strategies for curbing usage of drugs among the students. The attitudes of the school administrators coupled with a positive atmosphere in the school can help greatly in minimizing the use of drugs among the students. As leaders and role models, the school administrators can achieve a lot in the area of drug use control by doing the following:

- Create awareness on the harmful effects of drugs through effective drug education. Teaching student early in life about the dangers of drug. Their leadership style should encourage the teachers to be effective partners in the war against drug use.
- Involving the parents and community in the struggle to minimize the usage of drug. There is need for the school administrators and parents to be familiar with the early signs and symptoms of drug and substance abuse to be able to apply preventive measures.
- Supervision of all school activities should be an important part of school administration. There is the need for regular observation of classroom activities, it will provide firsthand information on students' behaviours and teachers' efforts in detecting early signs and symptoms of drug and substance use among the students.

The implication is that the teachers should be motivated adequately to help in the overall management of the school towards achieving drug free community.

Finally the findings revealed that students engaged in the use of prescription drugs and the implication is that this could lead to addiction with fatal consequences. The school administrators should involve the parents in fighting the menace of self-medication.

CONCLUSION

The study has shown that male and female students were aware of some drugs and generally both use substances equally. It is therefore imperative that preventive measures to be adopted in curbing the use of drug among students should give equal attention to male and female students. In addition, the high usage of prescription drugs among the students implies that efforts of the school in preventing the use of drugs would not fetch

the expected results if the parents and all other care givers are not involved in campaign against drug abuse and addiction.

Recommendations

Based on the findings discussed above, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government should put measures to control the sale of drugs off counter
2. Emphasis on preventive measures should be adopted in the school and communities by exploring the risk factors that expose adolescents to harmful substances
3. The government in collaboration with the school administrators should encourage health education programs through workshops, seminars, symposia and aggressive advertisements.
4. School counselling units should be well equipped and made functional to assist in detecting early signs and symptoms of drug abuse.

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