

## AWARENESS OF DRUG ABUSE EFFECTS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MAKURDI, BENUE STATE

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### Abstract

*This study investigates awareness of drug abuse effects among secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis adopting an ex post facto survey . A total of 200 students ,including 104 males and 96 females with mean age of 16 years from four secondary schools (One girls 'school ,one boys 'school and two co - educational schools )completed a self-developed measure of drug abuse effect knowledge. Three hypotheses were tested using a two way ANOVA (Amos SPSS 21) analysis ,results showed significant differences on the main effect of type of school ( $F(3, 194) = 3.68, p = .01$  ) but not for gender ( $F(1, 194) = 3.37, p = .06$  ) and interaction effect ( $F(3, 194) = .07, p = .79$  )at the significant level of  $p \leq 0.05$ . It is concluded that type of school is a good determinant of drug abuse effect knowledge through awareness. Recommendations are made to education stakeholders of young people to intensify drug abuse effects awareness in order to prevent onset of drug use.*

**Keywords:** Drug abuse awareness, Drug abuse effect knowledge, Secondary school students, Adolescents' health

## INTRODUCTION

The problem of drug abuse is a significant one among adolescents in our societies as the problem is increasing day by day due to various factors like easy availability and rapid socioeconomic and demographic changes (WHO, 1999). This view is highly corroborated by United Nations Organizations on Drug Council (UNODC) (2005) that drug abuse is a major public health problem all over the world. National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA's) (1997) earlier position that the use and abuse of drugs by adolescents have become one of the most disturbing health related phenomena in Nigeria and other parts of the world clearly justify the extent to which drug abuse affects younger people and by extension the society in general. Many researchers (Ubom, 2004); Obiamaka, (2004), Okorodudu and Okorodudu, (2004) have indicated that the problem of drug abuse know no boundaries or social class, it affects all and sundry. It impedes the development of any society as it is a threat to life, health, dignity and prosperity of all individuals.

Drug abuse is associated with a variety of negative consequences, including school failure and consequent dropout, poor judgment which may put adolescents at risk for accidents, violence, unplanned and unsafe sex. These dangerous consequences of drug abuse on human life intensify the need for the prevention of drug abuse. Several school going adolescents experience mental health problems, either temporarily or for a long period of time. Some become insane, maladjusted to school situations and eventually drop out of school (Fareo, 2012).

In developing countries, 80 percent of young people are enrolled in schools (WHO/SEARO, 2000). Children spend their important time period in school. They can learn and develop own belief, value and vision from the information received and the activities they get involved in school. Therefore, the risk behaviours like drug abuse can be prevented by the necessary education at school (WHO, 1999). To emphasize the immediate consequences of drug abuse to students, Odebunmi (1994) was quoted in Osa-Edoh and Egbochukwu, (2012) to have found out those students who take drugs exhibit among others the following behaviours: 1. Rioting in schools, destruction of property, arson in schools, stabbing of fellow students and looting of schools; 2. Increased truancy among students such as absenteeism in schools; 3. Deviant activities in schools and 4. Poor academic performance is seen among these students in spite of the employment of professional and specialized teachers.

These exhibitory factors are specifically expounded for the benefits of school

administrators and parents to aid understanding and to identify when children or wards are using or abusing drugs. Osa-Edoh and Egbochukwu's (2012) study further observe that among students, cigarettes smoking rate is the highest. Alcohol comes next, followed closely by Marijuana. It is interesting to note that the highest rated drugs patronized by students are found everywhere within the environment and easily accessible. But the question is how many students are really aware of the dangers of some of these socially accepted and illicit but common drugs of abuse? Suffice to state that some psychoactive substances may be used ignorantly without knowing that it contains intoxicating chemicals. One may assume that the increase in the use of psychoactive substances by students is due to lack of knowledge of the negative health effects.

Stressing the importance of health in learning Basch (2010), opined that no matter how well teachers are prepared to teach, no matter what accountability measures are put in place, no matter what governing structures are established for schools, educational progress will be profoundly limited if students are not motivated and able to learn. Health-related problems, of which drug abuse is one play major role in limiting the motivation and ability to learn of secondary students, while interventions to address those problems does improve educational as well as health outcomes. Drug abuse awareness through preventive education is an essential primary intervention aimed at providing knowledge about drug abuse effects to diminish experimentation with drugs thereby enhancing healthy and educational outcomes. This is why reducing these health compromising habits among students must be a fundamental part of school reform.

Odebunmi, (1994) has linked the problem of indiscipline in schools to drug abuse when he stated that the current trend of indiscipline among secondary school students and Nigerian youths in general has become so rampant that successive governments have sought for ways of combating its problems. As a result of this unwholesome trend, school Boards, University Communities and Non-governmental Organization (NGOS) such as Youth Clubs, Philanthropic Organizations, Federal and State Governments and their parastatals, particularly the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) have organized programmes to create awareness about the dangers of drugs and drug abuse.

The medium through which NDLEA carries out their mandate is Drug Abuse Preventive Education (DAPE). Drug abuse preventive education is one of the measures put in place to avoid problems associated with drug abuse. It includes any pre-emptive measure taken to ensure that drug abuse does not occur. The goal

of prevention is to stop the occurrence of drug abuse and to minimize its effects if it has occurred. Thus, primary prevention can be seen as a proactive process intended to promote and protect good and healthy lifestyles, and reduce the need for remedial treatment of problems associated with drug abuse.

Drug abuse preventive education therefore entails the dissemination of factual information on drug related issues with the aim of imparting knowledge and skills to the individual. In essence, it is aimed that the beneficiary of such education will use the information to promote a drug free lifestyle for himself/herself as well as for those around him or her, children, wards, neighbours, friends, colleagues, co-workers, relatives, etc. In line with this, elements of drug abuse preventive education has been infused into the relevant subjects in the Basic Education and Senior Secondary School Curricula, Tertiary Institution Curricula as well as the Curriculum of Adult and Non-Formal Education Sector in Nigeria for the benefit of all and sundry.

Osa-Edoh and Egbochukwu (2012) stressed the effects of drugs on student abusers to include those of conduct and academic performance, and I reiterate that the physical and mental and social health of such students is at great risk. Recent studies have shown that the drug addicts registered for treatment and rehabilitation of various treatment centres are mostly adolescents and youth students (Dulay, 2001). In terms of drug abuse initiating behaviour, a significant percentage of drug abusers (83%) have started using drugs and other substances between 16-20 years followed by those under 15 years (Richmond Fellowship Nepal, 2003).

This concern led some researchers (Akindutire & Adegboyega, 2012) to investigate psychoactive substance consumption and awareness of health effects among students in Nigeria. Shresha (2008) in a related study, which probably complements the efforts of Akindutire and Adegboyega (2012) sought to understand the effects of educational intervention on awareness about drug abuse among school going adolescents in far away Nepal. In Shresha's (2008) study, a pre-test and post-test nonequivalent groups design and a semi structured, self administered questionnaire was used. The conclusion reached was that the educational intervention on signs and symptoms along with the consequences of drug abuse plays a significant role in increasing awareness of the adolescents regarding drug abuse.

In Akindutire and Adegboyega's (2012) study, a total of 480 students were

randomly sampled from three tertiary institutions in Ekiti State. They argued that the high rate of alcoholic consumers and cigarette smokers among the students may be attributable to the high level of general social acceptance and availability of alcohol and tobacco in Nigeria. However, Robertson, David and Yao, (2003) and Olaitan, (2006) were of the view that ignorance about harmful effects of alcohol and cigarettes on health may have been responsible for the high consumption rate noted among the students. The study findings seem particularly important as it provides useful information on the extent and types of psychoactive substances consumed by the students for health policy formulation and planning health education programmes to promote healthy lifestyles among tertiary students.

In the above studies, Akindutire and Adegboyega's (2012) study is not directly designed toward primary prevention or mainly have the objective of promoting health and well-being and of preventing the onset of drug use. Rather, it was concerned with prevalence and those who were already involved in drug use and abuse. However, Shresha's (2008) approach lends more credence to a primary preventive programme aimed at providing prior knowledge of drug abuse effects to prevent onset of drug use. Similarly, in a study to assess the effectiveness of an awareness program about the harmful effects of tobacco and alcohol on knowledge and self reported practice of adolescent students, so as to initiate a preventive action endeavor against the menace of tobacco and alcohol addiction, Kumar, Prakash, Prakash, and Muthuvenkatachalam (2012) adopted a one group pre-test post-test design. Awareness programme regarding harmful effects of alcohol and tobacco was provided to the study participants and they found that majority of the adolescents perceived that smoking was harmful to the health. The study concluded that the awareness program resulted in significant improvement of knowledge about harmful effects of tobacco and alcohol use. It is recommended that there should be continuous enforcement to change the lifestyle of adolescent students so as to prevent their addictive habit of tobacco and alcohol.

Kumar, Prakash, Prakash, and Muthuvenkatachalam's (2012) study supports the thesis that awareness programmes are effective instruments in enhancing knowledge about harmful effects of drug use, thereby preventing onset of drug use. Despite NDLEA's efforts to create awareness about the dangers of drugs and drug abuse and establishment of drug-free clubs, it is doubtful whether secondary school students' consciousness is actually alerted about those dangers to prevent drug use initiation, abuse or achieve the anticipated desirable health outcomes.

This study aims to find out the extent to which awareness about the dangers of drug abuse among secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis has translated to knowledge in order to prevent onset of drug use. In other words, to what extent does the knowledge of drug abuse effects significantly differ among students in relation to school and gender as well determine if there is a difference in the effect of type of school on drug abuse knowledge for males and females. The hypotheses that guide this study are 1. There is a significant difference among schools on students' drug abuse effects knowledge; 2. Knowledge of drug abuse effects will significantly differ among male and female students; and 3. There is a significant interaction effect of both type of school and gender on students' drug abuse effect knowledge.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

A cross sectional ex post facto survey was adopted to collect data from the students. This research design was considered most appropriate because cross sectional surveys enable researchers to study a phenomenon at one time or to gather data from multiple groups at the same time and the ex post facto is a nonexperimental design that is used to investigate causal relationships by examining whether one or more pre-existing conditions could possibly have caused subsequent differences in groups of subjects without manipulation of conditions.

Especially in a study like this where drug abuse preventive education is already infused in relevant curricula at secondary school level and the students mostly within adolescent age, these characteristics uphold the assumption of pre-existing conditions which warrants the choice of ex post facto design. This enables the researcher to discover whether differences between groups have resulted in an observed difference in the independent variable.

### **Participants**

The participants in this study include 200 senior students all drawn from a population of 400 senior secondary students in the four schools (Our Lady of Mount Camel =100, Anglican Secondary School =110, Government College =100 and Aveco Model College =90) respectively, using a stratified sampling technique. These four secondary schools include one single girl and one single boy schools and two co-education schools in Makurdi metropolis. Descriptive statistics shows 48% (96) for girls and 52% (104) for the boys with age range

between 11 – 20 years and a mean age of 15 and half years. Among the schools that participated, Our Lady of Mount Camel had 55 (27.5%) students (girls only), Anglican Secondary School had 45(22.5%) students (both boys and girls), Government College had 50(25%) students (boys only), and Aveco Model College had mixed student sample of 50(25%).

### **Instruments / Measures**

The research instrument was a self developed questionnaire designed to assess students' drug abuse effect knowledge regarding possible causes and effects of youth drug behaviour. The first part consisted of information on demography, while the second part of the survey had 8 items, (four questions probing the causes of drug abuse among young people and the other four on drug abuse effect on work life, health, school dropout rate and eventual death) measured on a five-point Likert scale, with response categories ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. As a self developed questionnaire, the researcher subjected it to a reliability test and obtained an above average Chronbach's alpha level of .62.

### **Procedure for Data Collection**

The surveys were conducted among students after official consent was obtained from the principals of the schools. Administration of the surveys was coordinated with the help of class teachers who instructed the students on how to complete the questionnaire and also assured of confidentiality. It took students less than 5 minutes to complete the questionnaire which was collected by the teachers for the researcher.

**Dependent variable.** Drug abuse effect knowledge was measured using the 8 item, five-point Likert scale developed for the study. A high score on the measure indicate higher knowledge about drug abuse effects and vice versa.

**Independent variables.** The categorical demographic variable of school (1=Our Lady of Mount Camel, 2=Anglican Secondary School, 3=Government College and 4=Aveco Model College) and gender (1=Male, 2=Female) constitute the two independent variables.

## **RESULTS**

### **Data Analysis**

For the purpose of this study, various statistical methods were used to analyze the data that was collected from the respondents, such as descriptive analysis



(frequency distribution) and two-way ANOVA. The researchers used 'The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences' (SPSS, version 16.0) for the analysis of data.

Table 1: Means, standard deviations of drug abuse effect knowledge for schools and gender

Descriptive Statistics				
Dependent Variable: Total drug abuse knowledge				
Name of respondent's school	Gender of respondent	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Our lady of Mount Camel College, Makurdi	Female	33.6545	2.96409	55
	Total	33.6545	2.96409	55
Anglican Secondary School Makurdi	Female	33.5263	3.54915	19
	Male	32.1154	4.32968	26
	Total	32.7111	4.03745	45
Government College, Makurdi	Male	29.1000	5.49675	50
	Total	29.1000	5.49675	50
Aveco Model College, Makurdi	Female	31.8182	5.75397	22
	Male	29.9286	3.27650	28
	Total	30.7600	4.58284	50
Total	Female	33.2083	3.90928	96
	Male	30.0769	4.82246	104
	Total	31.5800	4.66825	200

Table 1 summarizes the mean and standard deviation scores of drug abuse effect knowledge among students in the various schools according to gender. Our Lady of Mount Camel, a girl school had a mean of 33.65 and standard deviation of 2.96 representing a sample of 55 (27.5%) while Anglican secondary School had a male mean of 32.11 and standard deviation of 4.32, female mean of 33.52 and standard deviation of 3.54 representing a sample of 26 and 19 respectively, totalling 45(22.5%). Government College, a boys' school had a total male mean of 29.10 and standard deviation of 5.49 in a sample of 50(25%), while Aveco Model College had a combined male and female mean of 30.76 and standard deviation of 4.58 representing another sample of 50(25%). The summary of the means and standard deviations are meant to indicate the variance that will be interpreted in analysis.



Table 2: Two-Way ANOVA of type of school and gender on drug abuse effect knowledge.

Tests of Between -Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Total drug abuse knowledge						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	701.263	5	140.253	7.484	.000	.162
Intercept	190072.562	1	190072.562	10142.900	.000	.981
Nofschool	207.319	3	69.106	3.688	.013	.054
Gender	63.238	1	63.238	3.375	.068	.017
Nofschool * Gender	1.330	1	1.330	.071	.790	.000
Error	3635.457	194	18.739			
Total	203796.000	200				
Corrected Total	4336.720	199				

a. R Squared = .162 (Adjusted R Squared = .140)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

A two-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of gender and type of school on levels of drug abuse effect knowledge, as measured by a self developed questionnaire. Participants were divided into four groups according to their schools (1: Our Lady of Mount Camel; 2: Anglican Secondary School; 3: Government College; and 4: Aveco Model College). The interaction effect between gender and type of school was not statistically significant,  $F(3, 194) = .07, p = .79$ . There was a statistically significant main effect for type of school,  $F(3, 194) = 3.68, p = .01$ ; the effect size was actually large (partial eta squared = .05). Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for our Lady of Mount Camel ( $M = 33.65, SD = 2.96$ ) was significantly different from of Government College ( $M = 29.10, SD = 5.49$ ) and Aveco Model College ( $M = 30.76, SD = 4.58$ ), but did not differ significantly with Anglican Secondary School ( $M = 32.11, SD = 4.32$ ). The main effect for gender,  $F(1, 194) = 3.37, p = .06$ , did not reach statistical significance.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) Table 2 above showing test of between subject effects of type of school and gender on drug abuse effect knowledge indicates a significant difference of the main effect for type of school, but not for gender and interaction effect at the significant level of  $p = 0.05$ . The implication of this result to the study is that the researcher accepts the first hypothesis; rejects the second and third hypotheses.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study investigated the awareness (knowledge) of drug abuse effect among secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis. Results from this study provide strong support for hypothesis 1 which proposes that students will differ in their knowledge about drug abuse effects among schools. However, the results did not support hypotheses 2 and 3, refuting the moderation effect of gender or the combined effects of gender and type of school for accounting for the differences in drug abuse effect knowledge among students. Students with higher awareness of knowledge of drug abuse effects came from Our Lady of Mount Camel College and Anglican Secondary School, followed by Aveco Model College and the lowest being Government College. This implies that all the sampled students in the various schools were aware of drug abuse effects to some degree, but the differences may be attributable to preventive awareness programmes adopted by individual schools. That is to say, regardless of whether one is male or female, if a particular school provides or integrates necessary drug abuse awareness programmes, students will gain enough knowledge to prevent onset of use and consequent abuse.

This study is tandem with the position of Kumar, Prakash, Prakash, and Muthuvenkatachalam's (2012) study, which supports the thesis that awareness programmes are effective instruments in enhancing knowledge about harmful effects of drug use. The study results also agrees with Shresha (2008) who maintained that educational intervention on signs and symptoms along with the consequences of drug abuse plays a significant role in increasing awareness of the adolescents regarding drug abuse.

Based on the above result, it is concluded that type of school is a good determinant of drug abuse effect knowledge through awareness. It is also plausible to add that there exist effective school based preventive awareness programmes, which could lead to significant improvement in knowledge (Kumar, Prakash, Prakash, & Muthuvenkatachalam, 2012) regarding harmful effects of drug use. Schools, therefore still remain veritable tools through which drug abuse effect awareness can be disseminated to young people alongside family, religious institutions and community.

Young people in general and students in particular must understand that drug abuse is a choice and they cannot blame anybody or problem but self for indulging in drug abuse behaviour. There is always an alternative way to respond to any problem and resorting to drug abuse is always a negative and unprofitable

behaviour.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Considering the importance of the study results to students, parents, school administrators and NDLEA, I make the following recommendations. Students should be made to understand the need and benefits of consulting with teachers, guidance counselors, parents or religious leaders and experts for assistance to make informed decisions when faced with life challenges than turning to peers who are almost as naïve as themselves. Parents should monitor and spend quality time with their children as well as live an exemplary drug free lifestyle. When this obtains, children feel loved, their self-esteem is boosted and are protected from external negative influences. Schools must live up to their expectation to build analytical children who can think critically and make right decisions without relying on unfounded reasoning. A functional guidance programme in school is one of such essential elements required to mould young people into such rational human beings. NDLEA should collaborate with schools in evaluative research to assess the impact of awareness programmes on drug use initiation behaviour among students to foster improvement.

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