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The effect of drug abuse among adolescents in Nigeria: A case study of Gwagwalada, Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract

With a focus on drug addiction in teenagers, this study explores the prevalence, causes, and effects of drug addiction in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria. It provides a thorough understanding of the factors that influence drug misuse among adolescents in the area. The project intends to determine the precise chemicals being misused and investigate the social and environmental factors that contribute to drug use by looking over previous studies, consulting with experts, and gathering information from local stakeholders. Peer pressure, broken families, easy access to drugs, and a lack of opportunities are major contributing factors. The study also looks at how interpersonal violence, criminality, and economic instability are made worse in

communities by teen drug use. An extensive literature review, qualitative interviews, and statistical tools like trend analysis and frequency distribution were all combined in a mixed-methods approach to determine the degree of substance abuse. The results show that drug addiction severely compromises the physical, psychological, and social well-being of youth; the main initiators of this damage are peer pressure, familial problems, and financial difficulty. The report recommends quick, comprehensive efforts to reduce drug availability, such as drug education, public awareness campaigns, and increased law enforcement. It also places a strong emphasis on improving preventative measures, addressing underlying socioeconomic issues, and giving young people the tools they need to resist peer pressure and make better decisions in life. The report urges the development of a comprehensive plan to lower drug usage among teenagers and ensure that Nigerian kids have a better future.

Keywords: Drug; Drug misuse; Peer group; Adolescents; Gwagwalada; Nigeria

1. Introduction

Addiction to drugs among adolescents in Abuja has escalated to concerning levels, carrying significant ramifications for both people and the community. This widespread problem affects every element of young people's lives, seriously impairing their relationships, scholastic aspirations, and physical and emotional health [1]. Teenagers are frequently enticed to experiment with substances by the promise of pleasure and escape that drugs typically provide. But soon after, this temporary high devolves into a harmful addiction cycle that worsens both physically and psychologically [2]. Drug misuse negatively impacts families, communities, and individuals, causing emotional upheaval, financial burden, and long-lasting emotional and financial damage. It can lead to neglect of education, criminal behavior, and criminal activities, putting a heavy burden on families, individuals, and society [3]. Addiction-related teens frequently disregard

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their education, which results in scholastic deterioration and lost learning chances. Addiction to drugs can also lead people to engage in violent crimes, thievery, and other deviant behavior. The costs associated with solving these problems are high and take money away from important social services and programs that help communities [4]. The drug trade is supported by corruption and insufficient enforcement, which enables it to thrive despite efforts by law enforcement organizations. It gets harder to escape the cycle of addiction and the related social evils since drugs are still readily available, which exacerbates the issue [5].

In the Gwagwalada district council of Abuja, drug addiction among teenagers is a widespread problem that requires thorough investigation to be addressed. Researchers can learn a great deal about the unique difficulties that young people experience by exploring the scope and effects of this problem. Examining the most often used drug kinds can reveal current trends and patterns in substance addiction. It is equally important to determine the underlying reasons for addiction because doing so will make it possible to create focused preventative measures [6]. Additionally, evaluating how drug addiction affects people as individuals, families, and communities will show how big of an issue it is and help guide interventions based on solid data. The results of this study will be extremely helpful to schools, government agencies, healthcare experts, and the public. They will lay a strong basis for creating prevention, treatment, and policy efforts that will effectively fight drug addiction and advance the welfare of Abuja's youth.

1.1. Statement of problem

Drug abuse, particularly among adolescents, is a significant social issue that hinders learning and physical well-being. It leads to physical, psychological, and social deterioration, disrupting relationships, and causing financial and social costs. The study aims to examine the effects of drug addiction among teenagers in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, addressing the issue through insufficient security measures and corruption.

1.2. Study Purpose or Objectives

Drug abuse, particularly among adolescents, is a significant social issue that hinders learning and physical well-being. It leads to physical, psychological, and social deterioration, disrupting relationships, and causing financial and social costs. The study aims to examine the effects of drug addiction among teenagers in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, addressing the issue through insufficient security measures and corruption.

1.3. Significance of Study

Determining the impacts of substance abuse among adolescents in Abuja, with a specific specialize in Gwagwalada Area Council within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), is that the main goal of this study. The study's specific objectives are to work out which substances are most often abused by local teenagers, check out the causes of their drug usage, and assess the consequences of teenage drug use. The study also aims to form suggestions for possible remedies to assist end the difficulty of drug usage among teenagers within the Gwagwalada Area Council.

1.4. Scope of the Study

The impacts of drug misuse on teenagers within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja's Gwagwalada Area Council, are the topic of this study. Since they need to be chosen because of the case study, adolescents in this area are going to be the subject of the study.

2. Literature Review

Teenage drug abuse has become a serious problem that has to be addressed right now by experts committed to helping young people lead drug-free, healthy lives. This growing issue highlights the critical need for all-encompassing programs that provide youth with the necessary life skills to withstand the lure of drug use. According to Odejide [7], drug abusers who show indicators of stress, concern, unhappiness, behavioral changes, exhaustion, and a loss or increase in appetite should be seen by medical professionals and counselors to avoid dangerous diseases. Odejide [7], asserts that Drug abuse involves excessive use of socially acceptable substances, such as alcohol, beyond normative boundaries, causing significant negative effects on a person's social and physical well-being. Teen drug addiction is particularly dangerous, affecting social interactions, academic performance, and personal growth. To prevent drug abuse and help those affected, tailored interventions like counseling and educational programs are essential.

Sambo [8], provides an engaging analysis of the significant effects that drug misuse has on teenagers, emphasizing the long-term consequences of drug use on a person's physical and mental health. Since people's bodies and minds are still evolving at this crucial stage of development, adolescence makes them more susceptible to the negative effects of drug misuse. Long-term substance abuse in early years can cause irreversible harm, including physical and mental health

issues, cognitive impairment, and social integration. Peer pressure, family dynamics, and socioeconomic pressures contribute to drug misuse among teenagers. Some use substances as a short-term solution, while others seek instant relief. Early interventions and preventative measures are crucial to protect teenagers from substance misuse risks.

To tackle substance misuse in Africa, a comprehensive approach is needed. This includes family education programs, specialized counseling facilities, and media campaigns. These programs educate parents on drug misuse risks and provide tools to mentor and protect their children. They also help identify early warning signs of drug abuse. These efforts aim to reach a large target audience and achieve health awareness on drugs by 2030.

According to Farhadinasab, Bashirian & Mahjoub [9]. Drug abuse among students is influenced by peer interactions, substance availability, cultural influences, parental behavior, and restrictive legislation. Adolescence is a sensitive period, with factors like lack of knowledge, peer pressure, curiosity, self-confidence, and stress relief. Media campaigns and community outreach can educate and integrate drug awareness programs to reduce misuse.

3. Research Methodology

In the Gwagwalada Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, this study attempts to assess the impacts of substance misuse on teenagers. To experimentally evaluate the effects of substance addiction on this population, the study uses a quasi-experimental research approach, also known as a survey. The goals of this study are well-suited for quasi-experimental designs, which are especially helpful when analyzing intricate interactions between variables. Surveys are a common research approach because they make it possible to collect data in an organized way that may be used to forecast or comprehend the opinions, responses, and perspectives of a wide population on certain subjects, including the impacts of teen substance usage. For this study, a set of uniform questions was created and given to participants, usually utilizing surveys or interviews.

3.1. Research Design

The survey approach is a quantitative, objective, and methodological method that enhances the validity and reliability of results in research projects like examining the impacts of teen substance misuse. It allows for thorough and specific information gathering, capturing subtleties in respondent responses. This dual skill is crucial for evaluating complex effects on adolescents in the Gwagwalada Area Council.

3.2. Population of the study

The adolescents in the Gwagwalada Area Council of Abuja, specifically those between the ages of 13 and 19, comprise the study's target population. This group which includes both students and non-students represents a wide range of the adolescent demographic in the area. The focus on this age group is especially pertinent because adolescents are particularly vulnerable to several social challenges, including substance abuse, which is often made worse by the rapid moral decline that is seen in modern society.

3.3. Sample size and sampling procedures

A probability sampling design was used in this study to guarantee that every member of the population had an equal chance of being chosen. Probability sampling, according to Nachmias [10], is a technique in which each sample unit in the population has an equal chance of being included in the research. Four main categories of probability sampling were also recognized by Nachmias [10]: cluster, stratified, plain random, and systematic sampling. Due to the comparatively high number of teenagers in Gwagwalada, Abuja, the study's location, simple random selection was selected. Because it ensures fairness and minimizes selection bias by giving every member of the population an equal chance of being included in the sample, simple random sampling was deemed the most suitable technique.

3.4. Instrumentation

The study aimed to understand substance usage among teenagers in the Gwagwalada area by examining their substance usage. A sample of 150 teenagers was chosen at random from the Gwagwalada Area Council in Abuja. The research used questionnaires and interviews with adolescents without formal education, with structured, closed-ended questions. The questionnaire focused on substance consumption, abuse, and effects on adolescents' lives, while the interview guide collected bio-data. The researcher also conducted oral interviews in their native tongue to ensure all perspectives were captured during the inclusive data collection process. This ensured the validity and reliability of the findings.

3.5. Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The Adolescent Drug Abuse Scale (ADAS) was used to standardize questionnaire items, ensuring validity and reliability. Professionals with drug misuse knowledge improved the items, focusing on recent experiences. A pilot study was conducted to identify unclear sections and make necessary modifications. This process improved the instrument's reliability, accuracy, and data yield within the study context.

3.6. Data Collection and Analysis

The study used primary and secondary methods to gather data on drug misuse among teenagers in Gwagwalada, Nigeria. Primary data was obtained through oral interviews and questionnaires, while secondary data was gathered through books and articles. Analytical techniques were applied to interpret bio-data, calculate mean scores, and arrange survey data into horizontal grid frequency tables. 140 out of 150 surveys were returned, providing a comprehensive understanding of drug misuse among teenagers in Gwagwalada.

4. Analysis of Questionnaire on Demography

Table 1 Unreturned and Returned Questionnaire

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Returned	140	93.3
Not returned	10	6.7
Total	150	100

Source: Primary (Questionnaire), February, 2021.

As can be seen from the above table, 140 of the 150 questionnaires that were given to teenagers in Gwagwalada, Abuja, were returned. As a result, analysis was done using the quantity of completed surveys.

Table 2 Gender of Respondents

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Male	87	62.1
Female	53	37.9
Total	140	100

Source: Primary (Questionnaire), February, 2021.

According to the above table, of the 140 respondents, 37.9% (n = 53) were women and 62.1% (n = 87) were men. This suggested that a greater number of men than women participated in the study.

Table 3 Age Bracket of Respondents

Options	Respondents	Percentage
12-13	24	17.2
14-15	30	21.4
16-17	29	20.7
18-19	57	40.7
Total	140	100

Source: Primary (Questionnaire), February, 2021.

Table 3 above reveals that of the study participants, 17.2% (n = 24) are between the ages of 12 and 13; 21.4% (n = 30) are between the ages of 14 and 15; 20.7% (n = 29) are between the ages of 16 and 17; and 40.7% (n = 57) are between

the ages of 18 and 19. It follows that most responders are in their late adolescent years and may therefore react to the questions with greater comprehension.

Table 4 Education Background of Respondents

Options	Respondents	Percentage
None	18	12.9
Primary	36	25.7
Certificate	-	-
SSCE	69	49.3
OND/NCE	4	2.9
Others	13	9.2
Total	140	100

Source: Primary (Questionnaire), February, 2021.

Based on the data presented in the table above, 12.9% of the adolescents who took part in the study had no certificates at all, 25.7% had certificates of primary education, 49.3% had O' Level qualifications, 2.9% had OND/NCEs, and 9.2% had other certificates, primarily in technical education. This suggested that the bulk of respondents have the necessary education to complete the survey.

Table 5 Adolescence Drug Use History?

	Never Used	Tried But Quit	Several times a Year	Several times a Month	Week ends Only	Several times a Week	Daily	Several times a Day	TOTAL
Cigarettes	-	33	20	-	36	17	32	2	140
Alcohol (Beer, Palm wine, hot)	6	17	25	11	45	22	12	2	140
Codeine	60	37	21	-	22	-	-	-	140
Powder Cocaine	128	4	-	-	8	-	-	-	140
Shisha	79	18	2	-	41	-	-	-	140
Tramadol	127	5	-	-	8	-	-	-	140
Heroin	130	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	140
Inhalants (Solution)	60	37	21	-	22	-	-	-	140
Indian Hemp (Weed)	36	7	15	11	35	22	12	2	140
Marijuana	130	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	140
Others	-	134	-	-	6	-	-	-	140

Source: Primary (Questionnaire), February, 2021.

The outcome from this presentation indicates that the majority of the respondents have used or are still using one form of drug or the other frequently or occasionally. The table shows that Indian hemp is the major drug being abused by adolescents daily.

5. Discussion of Findings

The results of this study show that the most often misused substances by teenagers within the Gwagwalada Area Council, Federal Capital Territory Abuja, are cigarettes, alcohol, and Indian hemp. Peer and parental pressure frequently plays a task in the everyday usage of those substances. Consistent with earlier research by Nwakwo, Abanobi, & Amadi [6], Peer influence significantly influences adolescent smoking habits, with drug abuse often starting in late teens due

to peer pressure and curiosity. Adolescents who abuse drugs are more likely to experience amnesia, emotional numbness, and health issues. Reducing unemployment and illiteracy in Gwagwalada could potentially reduce drug usage over time. Kobiowu [11] posits that Adolescent socialization is influenced by family, peers, school, and media, with divorced or separated teenagers more susceptible to drug abuse due to limited parental guidance.

In the words of Lambert [12] highlights the importance of family bonding and points out that family management techniques, such as parental engagement, support, and communication, are critical in reducing drug misuse and antisocial behavior. Also, Okatahi [13] provided more support for this, stating that children of single parents are more likely to consume drugs because they receive insufficient care and supervision. Teenage substance uses and drinking within the Gwagwalada area were highly correlated with a scarcity of parental supervision and communication.

6. Conclusion

Drug misuse among adolescents has become a serious worldwide health concern that affects people on an individual, family, and community level. The issue has reached concerning proportions in Abuja, Nigeria, and is having a serious negative influence on young people's general well-being, mental health, and academic achievement [3]. The growing incidence of drug use among teenagers in this area is particularly worrisome because of how susceptible this age group is. Teenagers are in a critical developmental stage where the decisions they make can have long-term effects. During this time, drug addiction can hinder cognitive development, interfere with schooling, and lower the likelihood that they will reach their full potential [14,15]. Substance misuse can have long-term effects such as addiction, mental health issues, and social marginalization, which makes these conditions more difficult for these people to deal with, teenage drug misuse is on the rise in most northern parts of Nigeria due to a number of psychological and socioeconomic variables [16]. When faced with disappointment and deprivation whether from personal, familial, or social problems many youths resort to drug use as a coping mechanism. Teenagers who do not have strong parental participation are more prone to participate in risky behaviors, such as drug use, which makes the situation worse when there is a lack of parental supervision and advice [17]. Teenagers are disproportionately affected by substance usage since they experiment with different substances out of curiosity and outside influences. Teenagers may feel alone and vulnerable as a result of these circumstances such as drug addiction influenced by peer pressure. Many teenagers fall prey to peer pressure because they view drug usage as a way to improve their social standing or win approval from their peers. Teens may see using drugs as a means of enhancing their self-worth, fitting in, or being like their friends who share their interests [18]. Adolescent identity formation is heavily influenced by socioeconomic problems like unemployment and poverty. Addressing gender-sensitive strategies and addressing underlying causes like peer pressure, poverty, and absentee parenting is crucial to preventing the rising epidemic of adolescent drug usage and improving teenage health and development.

Recommendations

Adolescent drug use in Gwagwalada, Abuja, is a significant issue that requires immediate attention. The study highlights the link between drug use susceptibility and unemployment, which can lead to boredom, annoyance, and hopelessness. To address this, creating meaningful work opportunities can help teens develop a sense of purpose and stability, reducing the likelihood of drug use as a coping mechanism. Employment offers a sense of worth and accomplishment, and funding vocational training, job placement services, and employment programs can provide alternative career paths. Expanding educational opportunities and encouraging leadership roles can also help reduce drug misuse risk.

In addition, Public awareness campaigns and community-driven initiatives are crucial in preventing drug abuse and social disintegration by improving community ties, promoting inclusion, and increasing awareness of drug risks.

In conclusion, a comprehensive strategy to combat teenage drug abuse in Gwagwalada, Abuja, includes creating jobs, improving educational opportunities, and promoting a supportive environment. Job opportunities provide a productive way for teens to spend their time and energy, reducing their propensity to consume drugs. High-quality education equips teens with the knowledge and skills to make wise decisions and defy peer pressure. Community-based programs, support groups, and mentorships can also encourage candid conversations about drug usage risks. Effective mass media campaigns and public health awareness organizations can strengthen these initiatives, promoting drug-free living and overall well-being.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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