

## CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA, FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

The menace of drug abuse among students in Nigeria's higher institution of learning has been receiving increasing attention in recent time. However, the causes of drug abuse among them has not really been identified to the extent that it can offer suggestion to adequate policy measures. This is largely because of institutional or locational peculiarities, and to a large extent differential effects of drug on students' academic performance, health and social relationship, among others, are yet to be adequately interrogated. This study was therefore, conducted to ascertain the prevalence, causes and effects of drug abuse among students with special focus on students of the University of Abuja. Primary data was collected with the aid of structured questionnaires using simple random sampling method. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed and retrieved for the study. Data collected were analyzed using simple means and percentages. Respondents were made up of males and females, age between 16 and 40 years and spread across three faculties namely, Arts, Science and Social Science. Findings of the study revealed that drug abuse among students was common in the University of Abuja. The types of Drugs abused include marijuana, alcohol, codeine, cannabis, cocaine, inhalants, stimulants, hallucinogens, sedatives and narcotics. The consequences of drugs' abuse were found to include poor academic performance, criminality, mental disorder, violence, family problem/disharmony, low self-esteem, physical injury and death. Peer pressure, lack of parental guidance, frustration, availability of drugs, to increased alertness, self-satisfaction, possession of money for buying drugs, stress relief and self-medication, physical sensation and curiosity were identified as causes of drug abuse among the students. The study therefore recommended among others, effective educational awareness, effective parenting and guidance, counselling/rehabilitation, jailing of offenders, and capital punishment, as possible solutions to drug abuse.

**Keywords:** Drug abuse, Effect, Peer pressure, Students, University of Abuja

### Abstrait

La menace de la toxicomanie parmi les étudiants de la plus haute institution d'enseignement du Nigéria a fait l'objet d'une attention croissante ces derniers temps. Cependant, les causes de l'abus de drogues parmi eux n'ont pas vraiment été identifiées au point de permettre de suggérer des

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mesures politiques adéquates. C'est en grande partie à cause de particularités institutionnelles ou géographiques, et dans une large mesure, les effets différentiels de la drogue sur les résultats scolaires, la santé et les relations sociales des étudiants, entre autres, n'ont pas encore été suffisamment interrogés. Cette étude a donc été menée pour déterminer la prévalence, les causes et les effets de la toxicomanie chez les étudiants et plus particulièrement les étudiants de l'Université d'Abuja. Les données primaires ont été collectées à l'aide de questionnaires structurés utilisant une méthode simple d'échantillonnage aléatoire. Au total, 150 questionnaires ont été distribués et récupérés pour l'étude. Les données collectées ont été analysées à l'aide de moyennes et de pourcentages simples. Les répondants étaient des hommes et des femmes âgés de 16 à 40 ans et répartis dans trois facultés, à savoir les arts, les sciences et les sciences sociales. Les résultats de l'étude ont révélé que l'abus de drogues chez les étudiants était courant à l'Université d'Abuja. Parmi les types de drogues consommées, il y avait la marijuana, l'alcool, la codéine, le cannabis, la cocaïne, les inhalants, les stimulants, les hallucinogènes, les sédatifs et les stupéfiants. Les conséquences de l'abus de drogues se sont révélées être les suivantes: mauvais résultats scolaires, criminalité, troubles mentaux, violence, problème familial / désharmonie, faible estime de soi, blessures physiques et mort. La pression des pairs, le manque d'encadrement parental, la frustration, la disponibilité de drogues, une vigilance accrue, la satisfaction de soi, la possession d'argent pour acheter de la drogue, le soulagement du stress et l'automédication, la sensation physique et la curiosité ont été identifiés comme causes de l'abus de drogues chez les étudiants. L'étude a donc recommandé, entre autres, une sensibilisation efficace à l'éducation, une parentalité et une orientation efficaces, des conseils / réadaptation, des incarcérations de délinquants et la peine capitale, comme solutions possibles à la toxicomanie.

**Mots-clés:** Abus de drogues, Effet, Pression des pairs, Etudiants, Université d'Abuja

### Introduction

Drug abuse is defined as the improper use of drugs to the degree that the consequences are defined as detrimental to the user and, or the society (Laver, 1978). According to Njeru and Ngesu (2014), a substance is considered abused if it is deliberately used to induce physiological or psychological effects or both for purposes other than therapeutic ones and when the use contributed to health risks or some combinations of these. Haladu (2003) as quoted by Adeyemo *et al.* (2016) described drug abuse as excessive and persistent self-administration of a drug without regard to medically or culturally acceptable patterns. Although drug abuse affects the general population, the youths are more involved than other age groups (Njeru and Ngesu, 2014). Patterns of drug abuse among youths include indicators such as the kind of drug being used, where it is used, who is misusing it and the circumstances leading to its misuse. Drugs enter into the body through different ways such as by chewing, inhaling, smoking, drinking, by topical application and by injection (Tuwei 2014).

The problem of drug abuse appears to transcend particular races, tribe or geographical locations as it has been reported by researchers in different parts of the world. Cases of drug abuse have been reported in countries such as The United States of America and New Zealand (Warner, 2005), Pakistan (Khattak *et al.*, 2012), South Africa (Jordan, 2013), Tanzania (The Drug Control Commission Report, 2011 as quoted by Tuwei, 2014), Kenya (Odek-Ogunde *et al.*, 2004; Kuria, 1996; Kwamanga *et al.*, 2003) and many

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other countries. In Nigeria, several studies have reported substance and drug abuse among different populations within the country. A study by Igwe *et al.* (2009) among secondary school students in Enugu state reported that 33.8% of respondents were current users of psychoactive substances. A review of drug abuse among adolescents by Fareo (2012) also collated reports of drug abuse in different parts of Nigeria. There are evidences to show that youths in Nigerian tertiary institutions and secondary schools also abuse various kinds of drugs and substances (Oshodi *et al.*, 2010; Oshikoya & -Alli, 2006; Adeyemo *et al.*, 2016).

Abuse of drugs by students have been shown to affect academic performance. In addition to this, drug abuse affects the behavior of students negatively and destroys their physical, social and psychological stability. Thuggery, stealing/armed robbery, rape and other social vices seem to be very predominant among drug users as has been shown by various reports and studies. Students involved in abuse of drugs and substances also tend to experience financial difficulties as the little money that could be used for other important things are channeled towards purchase of more and more drugs (Tulu & Keskis, 2015). Drug use also exposes the user to the risk of indiscriminate sexual involvements (Oshikoya & Alli, 2006) leading to a high risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases such as the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Hence, the seeming increase in drug use and abuse in many parts of the world including Nigeria is a country to worry about and call for concerns.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The abuse of drugs and substances is becoming a world-wide problem and Nigeria as a country is not exempted from this. Despite the effort of government and concerned authorities at curbing the problem, it appears to be increasing in Nigeria. The numerous problems and vices associated with this habit makes it important for the society to pay close attention to efforts that can stamp out this habit from the general population.

The trend observed in drug abuse tend to be more predominant among the youths (Agwogie, 2016), not only in the general society but also in the higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. It then means that if this problem is not solved as quickly as possible, the future of the Nigeria society could be threatened, as these students will graduate to become key players in the nation. Elsewhere, Adeyemo, Ohaeriz, Okpala and Oghale (2016) have explained the impact of drug abuse among students in the University of Benin. The scholars had examined the social and health implications of drug abuse among the students, leaving out the impact on educational attainment, and the possible negative effect of relationships in the larger society. Equally, Akanbi, Anyio, Muhammad and Ajiboye (2014) observed the negative effect of drugs on the behaviours of students of the College of Education in Kwara State, Nigeria, particularly on criminality and mental behavior. The study did not look at the causative factors that enhances drug abuse. The University of Abuja is located in the federal capital of Nigeria, and attract student from all over the country and the West African Sub-region. It is filled with students within the vulnerable age group linked with abuse of drugs. It is therefore important to examine the possible presence of the habit of drug abuse. Emphasis will be placed on not only the causes but also the effects of drug abuse so as to find ways of curbing the problem in the University of Abuja in Gwagwalada.

### **Research Questions**

Four research questions guided the study:

1. Do students of university of Abuja abuse drugs?
2. What are the major drugs abused by students of the University of Abuja?
3. What are the possible causes of drug abuse by students of the University of Abuja?
4. What are the likely effects of drug abuse on students of the University of Abuja?

#### **Aim and Objectives**

1. To examine if students of the University of Abuja abuse drugs.
2. To investigate the kind of drugs commonly abused by students of the University of Abuja
3. To ascertain the possible causes of drug abuse by students of the University of Abuja
4. To investigate the possible effects of commonly abused drugs on students of the University of Abuja.

#### **Significance of the Study**

Results of this study may provide information on the trend of drug abuse among students of the University of Abuja. It will also create awareness on the possible causes and effects of drug abuse on students of the University. This information may help authorities in the Federal capital who are concerned with controlling the problem of drug abuse, on policy decisions, and how to educate the larger society on how to help prevent abuse of drugs by the youths. The findings of the study will add to existing literature, and as well serve as relevant document for future researchers in this field. The management of the institution will also find the report useful for policies to tackle the problem in the institution.

#### **Literature Review**

##### **Concept of Drug Abuse**

A drug refers to a substance whose chemical activity or function can cause a change in normal biological functions (Okoye, 2001). A drug also refers to a substance that has the ability to modify or alter a person's perceptions, cognition, mood, behaviour and general body functions (Balogun, 2006). In the opinion of Nnachi (2007), a drug is a chemical modifiers of the living tissues that could bring about physiological and behavioural changes. Drugs can be broadly classified as legally approved or legally disapproved. Drugs that are legally approved are those whose use is allowed by law while the opposite is the case with legally disapproved drugs (Essien, 2010).

To abuse means to use something to bad effect or for a bad purpose. It also refers to the usage of drugs against medical advice. The Microsoft Encarta (2009) defined drug abuse as the illegal, improper, or harmful use of something. In relation to drug use, it also defined abuse to mean the harmful use of drugs or alcohol.

Drug abuse has been defined in many ways by different authors and researchers. According to Haladu (2003) as cited by Fareo (2012), drug abuse refers to excessive and persistent self-administration of drug without regard to medically or culturally acceptable patterns of its use. It thus follows that if a person persistently uses a legally allowed drug without medical prescription, that particular drug is being abused. Carroll (1989) further defined drug abuse as the deliberate use of chemical substances for reasons other than intended medical purposes and which results in physical, mental, emotional or social impairment of the user. The use and abuse of substances that alter the mood of users have been reported to be prevalent among Nigeria students (Lambo, 1960). The negative effects of these drugs arise from their action on the brain of their user (Moronkola,

2003). According to (Essien, 2010), reports of several studies around the world points to early use of drugs as a probable indicator of continued future use and dependence.

Ahire (1990) opined that personality disorders and socio-economic environment are the major determinants of the victim's involvement in drug abuse. Other reasons adduced for drug use and abuse are to reduce stress, build self-esteem, drug availability, peer pressure and the desire to be sociable. As a matter of fact, vulnerability may be inherited in the form of heightened susceptibility to a certain type of drug.

### **Predisposing Factors to Drug Abuse Among Students**

According to Agwogie (2016), five major predisposing factors of drug abuse are peer pressure, curiosity, ignorance, academic induced frustration and lack of parental care.

*Peer group influence and peer pressure:* A peer group refers to a social group consisting of people who are equal in such respects as age, education, or social class (Microsoft Encarta, 2009). Agwogie (2016) opined that adolescence and young adults are characterized by a desire for new identities or peer selection, adventurism, curiosity, excitement and role confusion. In the absence of proper guidance, either at home or school, these individuals end up choosing wrong peers which in turn lead them to experimenting with drugs. Since young people appear to be more comfortable and relaxed in the midst of their peers, they are most likely to do what their peers do. Also, the desire for peer acceptance and recognition also forces members of a peer group to do whatsoever others engage in within the peer group. A study by Kiiiru (2004) revealed that peer pressure was responsible for consumption of drugs by young people for the purpose of stimulating appetite for food. In another study by Ghasem and Azita (2014) it was reported that 46.7% of drug abuse in Isfahan City India by adolescents, was as a result of peer influence. A study among students in Benin City Nigeria reported that 84.7% of respondents strongly agreed that peer pressure influences the use and abuse of drugs (Adeyemo *et al.*, 2016).

*Curiosity and experimentation:* At various stages in life, people especially the adolescents and young adults tend to be attracted to attempting new things. From fashion to experience and company, the desire to learn or acquire new things and to flow with new trends predisposes people to the use of drugs.

According to Haladu (2003) as cited by Fareo (2012), curiosity to experiment the unknown facts about drugs thus motivates adolescents into drug use. The author is of the opinion that the first experience in drug use or abuse produces a state of arousal such as happiness and pleasure which in turn motivate the first time user to continue in the act. According to Sue *et al.* (2009) as cited by Akanbi *et al.* (2014), developmental changes experienced by adolescents prepare them to experiment with new behaviours, which results in risk-taking, which is a normal part of adolescent development. Engaging in risk-taking behaviour helps adolescents to shape their identities, try out their new decision-making skills and gain peer acceptance and respect (Ponton, (2009) as cited in Akanbi *et al.*, 2014). Ghasem and Azita (2014) also reported a 29.1% influence of experimental curiosity on drug use in India. In Benin City, Nigeria, Adeyemo *et al.* (2016) reported that 44.8% of respondents agreed that most students take drugs out of curiosity while 24.8% strongly agreed to same assertion. The foregoing show the influence of curiosity on drug use and the development of drug abuse among users of drugs.

### **Effects of Drug Abuse**

Several negative effects have been associated with the abuse of drugs. Some of the effects are health related while others result in social problems. According to Akers (1991), Ballas (2006) and

Akus (2010), abuse of drugs can cause deadening of the nervous system, increase in heartbeat, dilation of the blood vessels, interference with the power of judgment and poisoning of the higher brain and nerve center. According to the authors, drug abuse also cause bad digestion notably of vitamin B especially when taken on empty stomach. According to Agwogie (2016), the consequences of drug abuse by students include extreme violence, gang rape, drug induced suicide, paranoia, poor academic performance, larceny (to feed the habit), school dropout, poor health condition, indebtedness and waste of resources (money and material). Drug abuse is also associated with anti-social behaviours among students such as cultism, thuggery, racketeering, and armed robbery.

#### **Poor Academic Performance**

Abuse of drugs by students has been linked to poor academic performance. A study by Njeru and Ngesu (2014) indicated that 52% of students believed that drug abuse causes poor performance as 30% agreed that their colleagues who abused drugs develop aggressive behaviour. The findings of different other studies have shown that declining grades, absenteeism from class/other activities, and increased potential for dropping out of school or university are problems associated with adolescent alcohol and drug abuse (Didenko & Pankratz, 2007). Additionally, low level of commitment to education and higher absence rates appear to be related to alcohol and drug use among adolescents in the universities and colleges. According to Attah, Baba and Audu (2016), students who abused drugs spend much money on the purchase of these drugs at the detriment of purchasing their academic books. A study by Muhammad *et al.* (2012) reported that 70 (48.5%) out of 200 respondents agreed to have missed classes as a result of drug use. All these in turn lead to poor academic performance by the students.

#### **Mental Disorders**

Abuse of drugs also lead to the development of mental problems. Mental health problems such as depression, developmental lags, apathy, withdrawal and other psychosocial dysfunctions frequently are linked to alcohol and substance abuse among adolescents (Deressa & Azazh, 2011). According to Kebede (2002) substance-abusing youths are at higher risk of mental health problems than non-users, including depression, conduct problems, personality disorders and suicidal thoughts.

#### **Violence and Criminality**

Violent behavior and criminal tendencies are found to be associated with the abuse of drugs. According to Muhammad *et al.* (2012), people involved in drugs abuse are responsible for crimes such as drug trafficking and drug-related homicides. In addition, because of abusing drugs, many people become victims of violence, are injured, or engage in risky, unplanned sex. Drug abuse affects important and core values of life such as honesty, tolerance, peace and responsible living, leading to poor development of social skills. Aluede (2000) further stressed that abuse of drugs may lead to organized crimes and disruption of normal academic programmes and has also led to increased secret cult activities in secondary schools and most Nigerian universities; and thus become a source of threat to lives and properties.

It is a known fact that members of cult groups take one form of hard drug or the other before engaging in attacks. This view is also supported by Kithi (2007) who opined that individual beliefs and expectations of the effects of drugs (e.g increased confidence and aggression) may lead students into usage of some drugs in preparation for involvement in violent behavior. Also, drug

use and armed robbery have a close link as noted by Odejide (1989) and cited by Adeyemo *et al.* (2016). A number of research has shown that the effects of some drugs, including crack/cocaine, amphetamines and benzodiazepines have been found to increase aggressive and violent behavior (Kuhns, 2005).

**Theoretical Justification**

**Social Control Theory**

According to the social control theory, what causes drug use, like most or all deviant behavior, is the absence of social controls that encourage conformity to social norms. The theory posits that most people do not engage in deviant or criminal acts because they have strong bonds with or ties to conventional, mainstream persons, beliefs, activities, and social institutions. Deviation from normal, accepted behaviors surfaces when these bonds are weak or broken. According to this theory, drug users are attracted to drugs because of the absence of ties to the conforming, mainstream sectors of society. It is the absence of these bonds that explains illicit, recreational drug use. The theory further expresses that the more stakes or investment someone holds in the society with respect to time, emotion, energy, and money, the more conventional such a person’s behavior is likely to be. A “stake” could be anything of value, such as a loving relationship, good relations with parents, a family, children, an education, a satisfying job, and/or a career. Someone who has “invested” in these positively valued, reward-laden enterprises is less likely to engage in behavior such as drug abuse that threatens or undermines them than is someone who has no such investments. The theory also holds that the more attachment, commitment, involvement or belief people have in the norms of conventional institutions such as family, school, religion and occupation, the less likely they are to break society’s rules and use drugs. Drug use is “contained” by bonds with or adherence to conventional people, institutions, activities, and beliefs. If they are strong, recreational drug use is unlikely.

Most students of tertiary institutions who use drugs have links to either peer pressure influence, ailing family relationships or dwindling academic fortunes. Their involvement in drug use can thus be explained in the light of this theory; as arising from the absence of societal ties or stakes can restrain them from deviant behavior such as the use of drugs.

**Methodology**

To achieve the objectives of this study, the survey research design which allows for representative samples in the collection of data was adopted. Primary and secondary sources of data were relied on in the course of the research. Secondary sources of information were sourced from related literature, whereas primary data were sourced through questionnaire. A sample size of 160 from three faculties, Science, Social sciences, and Art. Out of the 160 questionnaire, 150 questionnaires admitted were retrieved for analysis.

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to sex**

| <b>Sex</b>   | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Male         | 83               | 55.3                  |
| Female       | 67               | 44.7                  |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>150</b>       | <b>100</b>            |

Source: Field survey report, 2019

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic variables of respondents according to sex. Majority of the respondents were males (55.3%). Females formed 44.7 % of the respondents. Male respondents were more in number than females respondents

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to age**

| Age          | Frequency  | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|------------|----------------|
| 16 – 25      | 82         | 54.7           |
| 26 – 30      | 50         | 33.3           |
| 31 – 40      | 18         | 12.0           |
| 41 – Above   | 0          | 0              |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>150</b> | <b>100</b>     |

Source: Field survey report, 2019

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents according to age. In terms of age, majority of respondents were within the age bracket of 16 – 25 years with a percentage of 57.4%. Respondents aged between 26 – 30 years formed 33.3% of total respondents while those aged between 31 – 40 years constituted 12.0% of respondents. None of the respondents was within the age range of 41 years and above. This shows that most of the respondents were young adults within the age range that is most associated with abuse of drugs.

**Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to faculty**

| Faculty        | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| Science        | 53        | 35.3           |
| Social Science | 58        | 38.7           |
| Arts           | 39        | 26.0           |
| Total          | 150       | 100            |

Source: Field survey report, 2019

All the respondents shown in Table 3 is a summary of the number of from the three Faculties that participated in the study. The largest number of respondents were from the Faculty of Social Science (38.7%), followed by respondents from the faculty of Science (35.3%). Faculty of arts had the least number of respondents (26.0%).

**Table 4: Existence of drug abuse among students of university of Abuja**

| Response     | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|-----------|----------------|
| Yes          | 117       | 78.0           |
| No           | 12        | 8.0            |
| I don't know | 21        | 14.0           |
| Total        | 150       | 100            |

Source: Field survey report, 2019

Table 4 shows the response of students to whether or not students of university of Abuja abuse drugs. Out of the 150 respondents, 78% agreed that drugs were being abused by students while only 8% disagreed. Some respondents (14.0%) did not agree or disagree that students of university of Abuja abuse drugs. This finding therefore shows that students of the University of Abuja are actually involved in the abused drugs as shown by the very high number of respondents who



agreed to this as against the very few respondents who either disagreed or were not sure if students of the University of Abuja actually abuse drugs.

**Table 5: Commonly abused drugs by students of university of Abuja**

| Drug          | Yes (%)    | No (%)    | I don't know (%) |
|---------------|------------|-----------|------------------|
| Marijuana     | 108 (72.0) | 23 (15.3) | 19 (12.7)        |
| Alcohol       | 104 (69.3) | 22 (14.7) | 38 (25.3)        |
| Codeine       | 98 (65.3)  | 28 (18.7) | 24 (16.0)        |
| Cannabis      | 80 (53.3)  | 26 (17.3) | 44 (29.3)        |
| Cocaine       | 74 (49.3)  | 33 (22.0) | 43 (28.7)        |
| Inhalants     | 68 (45.3)  | 41 (27.3) | 41 (27.3)        |
| Stimulants    | 51 (34.0)  | 41 (27.3) | 58 (38.7)        |
| Hallucinogens | 50 (33.3)  | 46 (30.7) | 54 (36.0)        |
| Sedatives     | 48 (32.0)  | 43 (28.7) | 60 (40.0)        |
| Narcotics     | 48 (32.0)  | 45 (30.0) | 57 (38.0)        |

Source: Field survey report, 2019

Table 5 indicates the response of students on drugs commonly abused by students of university of Abuja. According to respondents, the drugs commonly abused by students in university of Abuja include cannabis (53.3%), alcohol (69.3%), sedatives (32.0%), narcotics (32.0%), stimulants (34.0%), hallucinogens (33.3%), inhalants (45.3%), marijuana (72.0%), codeine (65.3%) and cocaine (49.3%). The responses show that marijuana (72.0%) is the most abused drug in the University of Abuja, closely followed by alcohol (69.3%) and codeine (65.3%). Of the 150 respondents, 32.0% opined that sedatives and narcotics were the least abused drugs among students in the University of Abuja.

A number of the respondents however disagreed with regards to the most commonly abused drugs by students in the University of Abuja. According to the responses of the respondents, narcotics, hallucinogens, sedatives, stimulants and cocaine has large number of respondents who disagreed that drugs listed are commonly abused among students of university of Abuja. The percentage of the respondents that disagreed were: cannabis (17.3%), alcohol (14.7%), sedatives (28.7%), narcotics (30.0%), stimulants (27.3%), hallucinogens (30.7%), inhalants (27.3%), marijuana (15.3%), codeine (18.7%) and cocaine (22.0%).

Some respondents were however, not sure which drugs are abused by students of the University of Abuja as represented by their response for cannabis (29.3%), alcohol (25.3%), sedatives (40.0%), narcotics (38.0%), stimulants (38.7%), hallucinogens (36.0%), inhalants (27.3%), marijuana (12.7%), codeine (16.0%) and cocaine (28.7%). Apart from marijuana and codeine, respondents who were not sure if the other drugs were being abused were more in number than those who responded in the negative for cannabis, alcohol, sedatives, narcotics, stimulants, hallucinogens, inhalants and cocaine.

**Table 6: The causes of drug abuse among students of university of Abuja**

| Causes                                 | Yes (%)    | No (%)    | I don't know (%) |
|--|------------|-----------|------------------|
| Peer pressure and peer group influence | 118 (78.7) | 21 (14.0) | 11 (7.3)         |
| Lack of parental guidance              | 103 (68.7) | 30 (20.0) | 17 (11.3)        |
| Frustration                            | 100 (66.7) | 30 (20.0) | 20 (13.3)        |
| Availability of drugs                  | 92 (61.3)  | 37 (24.7) | 21 (14.0)        |
| To increase alertness                  | 79 (52.7)  | 42 (28.0) | 29 (19.3)        |

|                     |           |           |           |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Self-satisfaction   | 76 (50.7) | 37 (24.7) | 37 (24.7) |
| Possession of money | 75 (50.0) | 49 (32.7) | 26 (17.3) |
| Stress relief       | 74 (49.3) | 47 (31.3) | 28 (18.7) |
| Self-medication     | 74 (49.3) | 46 (30.7) | 29 (19.3) |
| Physical sensation  | 71 (47.3) | 41 (27.3) | 38 (25.3) |
| Curiosity           | 70 (46.7) | 41 (27.3) | 39 (26.0) |

Source: Field survey report, 2019

Respondent's opinion on the causes of drug abuse is summarized in table 6. Out of the 150 respondents, 118 (78.7%) opined that peer pressure and peer group influence was the highest cause of drug abuse among students of the University of Abuja. This is closely followed by lack of parental guidance (68.7%), frustration (66.7%) and availability of drugs (61.3%). Responses regarding other causes of drug abuse showed that students abuse drugs to increase alertness (52.7%), for self-satisfaction (50.7%), due to possession of money for buying drugs (50.0%), for stress relief and self-medication (49.3%), for physical sensation (47.3%) and out of curiosity (46.7%). Also, some of the respondent's opinion regarding causes of drug abuse were in disagreement with Possession of money (32.7%), for Stress relief (31.3%), Self-medication (30.7%), to increase alertness (28.0%), Physical sensation and Curiosity (27.3%), Availability of drugs and Self-satisfaction (24.7%), Lack of parental guidance and Frustration (20.0%) and Peer pressure and peer group influence (14.0%). The number of respondents who did not know the causes of drug abuse was lesser as shown by their responses for Curiosity (26.0%), Physical sensation (25.3%), self-satisfaction (24.7%), To increase alertness and Self-medication (19.3%), stress relief (18.7%), possession of money (17.3%), availability of drugs (14.0%), frustration (13.3%), lack of parental guidance (11.3%), Peer pressure and peer group influence (7.3%). This goes to show that most of the respondents were certain about the causes of drug abuse in the university of Abuja and only a few were not sure about what the causes of drug abuse were.

Respondent's opinion on the effects of drug abuse are represented in table 7 (about here) revealed that majority of the respondents representing 116 (77.3%) agreed that drug abuse results in poor academic performance of students in the University of Abuja. Other responses showed that respondents agreed that drug abuse leads to Criminality (75.3%), mental disorder (71.3%), Violence (68.7%), Family problem/disharmony (64.7%), Low self-esteem (63.3%), Physical injury (57.3%) and Death (48.7%). Out of all the respondents, some did not agree with the effects drug abuse has on students as represented by Death (32.0%), Low self-esteem and Physical injury (24.0%), Violence (18.0%), Mental disorder (15.3%), Criminality (14.7%) and Poor academic performance (13.3%). Some respondents were however, not sure of the effects of drug abuse on students of university of Abuja as represented by responses for death (19.3), Family problem/disharmony (18.7), physical injury (18.0%), mental disorder (13.3%), low self-esteem (12.7%), criminality (10.0%) and Poor academic performance (9.3%). Most of the respondents opined that drug abuse has negative effect on students of university of Abuja

Table 7: Effects of drug abuse on students of university of Abuja

| Effects                   | Yes (%)    | No (%)    | I don't know (%) |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------|------------------|
| Poor academic performance | 116 (77.3) | 20 (13.3) | 14 (9.3)         |
| Criminality               | 113 (75.3) | 22 (14.7) | 15 (10.0)        |
| Mental disorder           | 107 (71.3) | 23 (15.3) | 20 (13.3)        |
| Violence                  | 103 (68.7) | 27 (18.0) | 22 (14.7)        |
| Family problem/disharmony | 97 (64.7)  | 25 (16.7) | 28 (18.7)        |

|                 |           |           |           |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Low self-esteem | 95 (63.3) | 36 (24.0) | 19 (12.7) |
| Physical injury | 86 (57.3) | 36 (24.0) | 27 (18.0) |
| Death           | 73 (48.7) | 48 (32.0) | 29 (19.3) |

Source: Field survey report, 2019

Table 8: Solutions to drug abuse among students of university of Abuja

| Solution                     | Yes (%)    | No (%)    | I don't know (%) |
|------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------------|
| Educational awareness        | 121 (80.7) | 19 (12.7) | 10 (6.7)         |
| Effective parenting/guidance | 109 (72.7) | 25 (16.7) | 16 (10.7)        |
| Counselling/rehabilitation   | 98 (65.3)  | 26 (17.3) | 26 (17.3)        |
| Capital punishment           | 75 (50.0)  | 39 (26.0) | 36 (24.0)        |
| Jailing of offenders         | 76 (50.7)  | 38 (25.3) | 36 (24.0)        |

Source: Field survey report, 2019

Suggestions of respondents regarding solutions to drug abuse are as represented in table 8. Most of the respondents representing 80.7% were of the opinion that the problem of drug abuse could be solved by educational awareness. Effective parenting and guidance was suggested by 72.7% of respondents as a solution to drug abuse while others suggested Counselling/rehabilitation (65.3%), jailing of offenders (50.7%) and Capital punishment (50.0%). Some of the respondents however disagreed with capital punishment (26.0%), jailing of offenders (25.3%), counselling and rehabilitation (17.3%), effective parental guidance (16.7%) and educational awareness (12.7%) as solutions to drug abuse in university of Abuja . Responses also showed that some of the respondents were not sure about solutions to drug abuse as represented by capital punishment and jailing of offenders (24.0%), counselling and rehabilitation (17.3%), effective parenting and guidance (10.7%) and educational awareness (6.7%). These data shows that majority of respondents were opposed to options such as capital punishment and jailing of offenders but were more in support of educational awareness among students on the effects of drug abuse, effective parental guidance, counselling and rehabilitation.

### Results and Discussion

Findings of the present study has revealed the existence of drug abuse among students of the University of Abuja in Gwagwalada . This finding is supported by the report of Adeyemo *et al.* (2016) which revealed that a high number of students in a Nigerian higher institution used drugs for purposes other than medical reasons. Responses by majority of respondent agreed that students in the University of Abuja abuse different types of drugs.

Furthermore, findings of the present study revealed the commonly drugs abused by students of the University of Abuja . These include marijuana, alcohol, codeine, cannabis, cocaine, inhalants, stimulants, hallucinogens, sedatives and narcotics. This finding agrees with earlier reports by Adeyemo *et al.* (2016) and Muhammad *et al.* (2012) who conducted similar studies in Nigeria and Pakistan. In the present study, marijuana, alcohol and codeine ranked highest in sequential order among the drugs abused by students of the University of Abuja Sedatives and narcotics were together ranked the least abused drugs by students in university of Abuja . Muhammad *et al.* (2012) however, reported higher abuse of cannabis among Pakistani students than alcohol and heroine. Oshikoya and Alli (2006) in a similar study among Nigerian undergraduates in Lagos state reported higher abuse rate for cocaine, marijuana and alcohol in sequential order. Both studies support the current finding that marijuana and alcohol are among

the most abused drugs by undergraduates. Adeyemo *et al.* (2016) on the contrary, reported a higher abuse rate for coffee and alcohol than other substances.

The present study has also identified abuse of drugs by students in the University to be caused by peer pressure, peer group influence, lack of parental guidance, frustration, availability of drugs, increase in alertness and self-satisfaction. Other causes of drug abuse identified by this study include possession of money for buying drugs, the quest for stress relief and self-medication, physical sensation and curiosity. Findings of this study further revealed that peer pressure and peer group influence account most for abuse of drugs by students of university of Abuja. This finding is supported by Bernard *et al.* (2015) who reported a similar finding among students of Colleges of Education in South-Western Nigeria as well as findings by Oshikoya and Alli (2006). Report by Tolu and Keskis (2015) also support this present finding. Njeru and Ngesu (2014) however reported a different finding in favour of the quest for physical and sensational satisfaction.

This study also investigated the possible effects that drug abuse has on students of the University of Abuja. The findings reveal in descending order that poor academic performance, Criminality, Mental disorder, Violence, Family problem/disharmony, Low self-esteem, Physical injury and Death are all effects of drug abuse on students in the University of Abuja. This position is supported by earlier report by Njeru and Ngesu (2014). In variance however, Oshikoya and Alli (2006) reported behavioral change as the greatest effect of drug abuse among students in Lagos state Nigeria. This is still in line with the findings of this study as a negative change in a student's behavior will certainly affect their attitude towards studies and life in general. The present finding therefore highlights that drug abuse has a considerable negative effect on students of university of Abuja.

As a solution to the problem of drug abuse in the University of Abuja at Gwagwalada, this study highlights the need to strengthen educational awareness, effective parenting/guidance, counselling/rehabilitation, the use of capital punishment and jailing of offenders as a means to deterring abuse of drugs by students. A striking finding however, is that most respondents agree that educational awareness should be most encouraged, while the use of capital punishment and jailing of offenders should be less applied. This position is supported by Adeyemo *et al.* (2016) and Oshikoya and Alli (2006) who advocated education of the young populace on the negative effects of drug abuse to deter them from continuing in the act. It is the belief of this researcher that such an intervention would yield great impact in reducing the rate of drug abuse among students of higher institutions in Nigeria.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that drug abuse is prevalent among students of the University of Abuja as overwhelming affirmed by respondents that participated in the study. Furthermore, the causes of drug abuse among students in this university have been identified as peer pressure and peer group influence, curiosity, frustration and depression, lack of parental guidance or supervision, availability of drugs and possession of money to obtain them, pursuit of stress relief and self-medication, to increase alertness and memory as well as deriving physical sensation. Effects of drug abuse in the University of Abuja were identified to include poor academic performance, criminality, mental disorder, violence, family problem/disharmony, low self-esteem, physical injury and death. The study therefore highlights the need for focused intervention of government and society in curbing the menace of drug abuse among students of university of Abuja so as to reduce and possibly eliminate the problem.

### **Recommendations**

In line with the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- i. Adequate and proper sensitization programs should be put in place in order to educate the students on the dangers of drug abuse; and its effects on the socio-economic development of the society. This can be done with help of religious organizations, civil societies as well as government agencies.
- ii. Deliberate efforts should be put into encouraging family life and proper parental guidance in the society. Again, civil society organizations and religious bodies should be encouraged to regularly inform parents of how important it is to inculcate the right moral and societal values into their children.
- iii. The government should enforce legal sanctions on the abuse of drugs by members of the society. Also, adequate sanctions such as jailing of producers and retailers of such drugs should be strengthened and publicized to the general populace to deter engagement in such merchandise.
- iv. Institutions of higher learning should be mandated to set up effective and functional guidance and counselling units that will take care of drug abuse cases among students. This can assist those already involved in drug abuse to give up the habit.
- v. In addition, rehabilitation centers should be set up to help manage and rehabilitate addicts of drug abuse and help them begin a new and proper life style free of drug abuse.

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