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**Evaluation of the effect of rehabilitation counselling
on drug abuse and addiction**

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ABSTRACT

Drug abuse and addiction is a problem that is causing serious concern to both individuals and governments all over the world. The problem is prevalent among adolescents who in most cases are ignorant about the danger inherent in the drug abuse. Chronic use of substances can cause serious, and sometimes irreversible damage to adolescent's physical and psychological development. Consequently, this study analyzed the effect of rehabilitation counseling on drug abuse and addiction. Then paper asserts that, with effective counseling, the problem of drug abuse can be tackled. Accordingly, the study recommended that stiff penalty should be meted out to any body found dealing in hard drugs. Also, consent of a doctor should be sought before a prolong intake of a particular soft drug, while drug education should be taught in schools, especially at the secondary level. More importantly, there should be continuous campaign against the use of hard drugs.

Keywords: Drug Abuse, Adolescent, Education, Rehabilitation, Counselling and Addiction

INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse is a major public health problem all over the world. The use and abuse of drugs by adolescent have become one of the most disturbing health related phenomena in Nigeria and other part of the world [1]. A number of adolescents experience mental health, either temporarily or over a long period of time. Some may become poorly, maladjusted to school situation and eventually drop out of school. Drug abuse also known as substance abuse means harmful use of alcohol or other drugs, lasting more than one month, in which a person continues to use a substance after knowingly being harmed by it. The continuous use of drugs in a hazardous manner can lead to substance dependence (addiction) which may be physiological or psychological, or both, and is likely to continue into adulthood [2]. According to [3] drugs alter the body functions either positively or otherwise depending on the body composition of the user, the type of drugs used, the amount used and whether used singly or with other drugs at the same time. Drug abuse interferes with the health and social function of an individual. [4], observes that drug abuse further interferes with the health and social function of an individual. The broader context of substance abuse and addiction includes tobacco, alcohol, and solvents. All these substances have an impact on behavior. The most widely used addictive substance of alcohol and tobacco are harmful with extensive damage to the individual, family and community [5]. [6], notes that one of the effect of drug abuse on educational performance is that it can lead to reduced academic achievement or even halt one's entire academic process. [7], stated that Nigerian adolescents take drugs such as amphetamines and pro-plus as aid for success in examination. He postulated that those who take drugs as aid for studies towards examination are those with poor academic records, a history of instability and family/social problems while others, he continued, use drugs to increase their self-confidence, heighten pleasure, cope with feeling of depression and inadequacy, and facilitate communication. [8], found that student smoke and use drugs at the instances of friends/peers, parents and television/radio advertisement. [7,8,9] in their studies showed that adolescents are influenced by their peers,

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Publications

while [9] asserted that socially, a drug abuser is always pre-occupied with how to obtain drugs of choice and crave for the substance. Studies by Oduaran indicates that drug abuse is a very serious problem among school adolescents, which has slowly made the average Nigerian student to become a victim of jail sentences, delinquency, insanity, street walking and premature death.

Types of Drugs Abuse and Addiction

In Nigeria, the most common types of abused drugs and addiction according to [9] are categorized as follows:

- i. **Stimulants:** These are substance that directly act and stimulate the central nervous system. Users at the initial stage experience pleasant effects such as energy increase. Stimulants come mainly from caffeine substance.
- ii. **Hallucinogen:** These are drugs that alter the sensory unit in the brain, thus producing distorted perception, feeling of anxiety and euphoria, sadness and inner joy. The major source of this drug is marijuana.
- iii. **Narcotics:** These drugs relive pains and induce sleep. They are addictives found in heroin, codeine, opium etc.
- iv. **Sedatives:** These drugs are among the most widely used and abused. This is largely due to the belief that they relieve stress and anxiety, and some of them induce sleep, ease tension, cause relaxation or help users to forget their problems. They are sourced from valium, alcohol, promethazine, chloroform.
- v. **Tranquilizers:** They are believed to produce calmness without bringing drowsiness. They are chiefly derived from Librium, Valium etc.

Theories of Drug Abuse

Theories of drugs abuse indicate that some people truly depend on certain drugs for their survival due to a number of factors. The major emphasis of the theories is that people have their individual reasons for depending on one type of drug or another. Such reasons, according to [8, 9] are explained by the following theories.

Personality Theory of Drugs Abuse

The main emphasis of this theory is that there are certain traits or characteristics found in the individual that abuse drugs. Such personality characteristic according to [9] are inability to delay gratification, low tolerance for frustration, poor impulse control, high emotional dependence on other people, poor coping ability and low self-esteem. Individuals with these personality traits find it difficult to abstain from drug abuse.

Learning Theory of Drug Abuse

This theory maintains that dependence or abuse of drugs occurs as a result of learning. This could be by means of instrumental learning or social learning.

Biological Theory of Drug Abuse

This theory maintains that drug abuse is determined by the individual's biological or genetic factors which make them vulnerable to drug addiction.

Social-Cultural Theories of Drugs Dependence /Abuse

The theory maintains that drug abuse is determined by socio-cultural values of the people. For instance, while certain cultures permit the consumption of alcohol and marijuana, other cultures do not. In northern Nigeria for instance, alcohol is forbidden due to Sharia law. However, Sharia laws do not forbid cigarette consumption and thus nicotine dependence. It should be noted, however that no theory fully explains the etiology of drug abuse, and this is due to individual differences. It then becomes obvious that the disorder (drugs abuse) is an acquired one. The acquisition then is dependent on a host of personal inclinations and environmental factors.

Causes of Drug Abuse and Addiction

According to [6], the following factors constitute the major causes of drug abuse among the youths:

- i. **Experimental Curiosity:** Curiosity to explore unknown facts about drugs motivates adolescents into the use of drugs. The first experience in drug abuse produces a state of arousal such as happiness and pleasure which in turn motivate them to continue.
- ii. **Peer Group Influence:** Peer pressure plays a major role in influencing many adolescents into drugs abuse. This is results when they try to depend less on their parents, and show more dependency on their friends. In Nigeria as in other parts of the world, one may not enjoy the company of others, unless he conforms to their norms.
- iii. **Lack of Parental Supervision:** Many parents have no time to supervise their sons and daughters; some parents have little or no interaction with family members, while others put pressure on their children to pass exams or perform better in their studies. This phenomenon initiates and increases drug use.

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- iv. Personality Problems Due to Socio-Economic Condition: Adolescents with personality problems arising from social conditions have been average. Poverty is widespread, broken homes and unemployment is on the increase, therefore youths roam the streets looking for employment, or resort to begging. These situations have been aggravated by lack skills, opportunities for training and re-training, and lack of committed action to promote job creation by private and community entrepreneurs. Frustration arising from these problems lead to resort to drug abuse.
- v. Long Work Hours: The increasing economic deterioration that leads to poverty and unemployment has driven many parents to send their children out in search of a means of earning something for contribution to family income. These children engage in hawking, bus conducting, head loading, scavenging, serving in food canteens etc and are prone to drug taking so as to gain more energy to work for long hours.
- vi. Inability to cope with Withdrawal Symptoms: If a drug is stopped, the user experiences “withdrawal symptoms”. Pain, anxiety, excessive sweating, and shaking characterize such symptoms. The drug user’s inability to tolerate the symptoms makes him to continue [5].

The Effect of Drugs Abuse and Addiction

[6] identified numerous negative impact of drugs abuse on the body chemistry as follows:

Alcohol-related problem includes:

- a. Physical problems such as liver cirrhosis, pancreatic, peptic ulcer, tuberculosis, hypertension, neurological disorder.
- b. Mental retardation for the fetus in the womb, growth deficiency, delayed motor development.
- c. Raniofacial abnormalities and cardiac deficit.
- d. Psychiatric - e.g, pathological drunkenness, suicidal behaviour
- e. Socially-broken homes, increased crime rate, sexual offences, homicide and sexually transmitted diseases.

Tobacco-Related Problems: these causes stimulation of heart and narrowing of blood vessels, producing hypertension, headache, loss of appetite, nausea and delayed growth of the fetus. It also aggravates or causes sinusitis, bronchitis, cancer, strokes, and heart attack.

Stimulant Related Problems: These include; lethargy, irritability, exaggerating self-confidence, damaged nose linings, sleeplessness, and psychiatric complication.

Inhalant Related Problems: these causes anaemia, damaged kidney and stomach bleeding.

Narcotics Related Problems: these causes poor perception, constipation, cough suppression, vomiting, drowsiness and sleep, unconsciousness and death.

Incidence of drug abuse among Nigerian adolescents students, especially those in secondary schools, tend to see the drug user as one who is tough, bold and strong. Summarily, substance abuse and addiction are associated with a wide range of short-and long-term health effects. They can vary depending on the type, how much and how often it’s taken, and the person’s overall wellbeing. The effect of drug abuse and dependence can be far-reaching. They can impact almost every organ in the human body which include:

- A weakened immune system increasing the risk of illness and infection.
- Heart condition ranging from abnormal heart rates to heart attacks and collapsed veins and blood vessels infection from injected drugs.
- Nausea and abdominal pain, which can also lead to changes in appetite and weight loss
- Increased strains on the liver, which puts the person at risk of significant liver damage or liver failure.
- Seizures, stroke, mental confusion and brain damage.
- Lung diseases
- Problems with memory retention and decision-making which make daily living more difficult.

Strategies for Guidance and Counseling Intervention on Drug Abuse and Addiction

The following counseling strategies are suggested to help reduce drug abuse among adolescents:

- i. Establishment of Family Education on Drugs: The family is the nucleus of every society. Parents should give their children appropriate education on drug use. They should be encouraged by health practitioners to offer family education on the effect of drug abuse and dependence on their health, society and the nation.
- ii. Establishment of Counseling Centres for Drugs Control: counseling centres should be established in every community by the government or private individuals. Qualified health counselors should be employed in helping drug addicts or those dependent on drugs by giving them special advice on how to go about the withdrawal system.

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- iii. Designing Curricula on Drug Education: the ministry of education (state and federal) should as a matter of urgency add to the curricula, drug education, which would be taught at all levels of education.
- iv. Campaign Against Drug Abuse: The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) should intensify their campaigns on antidrug use in order to have a drug free society. The campaign against use of certain drugs and misuse of drugs should be more intensified at the secondary school level because it is the peak of adolescence; also, government and other relevant authorities should launch campaigns against drugs as well as dependence on drugs.
- v. Effective Study Habit for Student: an effective study habit is that which centers on a well-planned scheme of study involving sufficient recreation activities, enough resting time and sleep. Thus such well-planned time table of study habit that makes adequate provision for rest will enhance good study habit without unnecessary resort to the use of drugs to keep student artificially awake.
- vi. Establishment of Drugs Awareness Unit: drug awareness unit should be set up in all states and moderated by the federal, state and local governments. It should not be a panel establishment to try people who use drugs as criminals; rather, it should help solve their socio-psychological problems. Parents and adults should refrain from using drugs indiscriminately in the presence of youngsters, and they should discourage their wards/children from associating with “unknown” gangs or suspicious peer groups.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

Drug abuse and addiction is a problem that is causing serious concern to both individuals and governments all over the world. The problem is prevalent among adolescents who in most cases are ignorant about the danger inherent in the drug abuse. Chronic use of substances can cause serious, and sometimes irreversible damage to adolescent's physical and psychological development; however, with effective counseling, the problem can be tackled. Based on this, the following recommendations are suggested:

- i. Stiff penalty should be meted out to any body found dealing in hard drugs.
- ii. Consent of a doctor should be sought before a prolong intake of a particular soft drug.
- iii. Drug education should be taught in schools, especially at the secondary level.
- iv. There should be continuous campaign against the use of hard drugs.

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