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# Causes of Drug Abuse as Expressed by Secondary School Students in Moro Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

*Increase in a number of young people abusing drugs has become a subject of public concern worldwide. Therefore, the study investigated the causes of drug abuse as expressed by secondary school students in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprises of all the secondary school students in Moro Local Government Area. The descriptive research design of survey type was adopted for the study. Four hundred and thirty (430) respondents were selected for the study with the use of purposive, proportionate and simple random sampling procedures. Researchers' designed questionnaire that had been validated by three experts in the related field was used for the study. A test-retest method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument and the result of 0.72 $r$  was obtained. Inferential statistics of chi-square was used to analyze the result of the stated hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The result of the findings of this study showed that peer group and poor parental communication had an influence on the causes of drug abuse (428.01 > 16.92 at 0.05 alpha level of significant, 234.00 > 16.92) among secondary school students. The researchers concluded that peer group influence and poor parental communication causes drug abuse among secondary school students in Moro Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria. The researchers' recommended among others that Parents should show love, happiness and also take responsibility for helping secondary students to attain wholesome development into responsible adults.*

## Introduction

All over the world, the period of adolescence is the most delicate one; it marks the transition from childhood to adult life. It is therefore in many ways a most difficult stage to manage a person's development. Adolescents are faced with the challenges of transition to adulthood often without much guidance or knowledge of the changes which this period involves. Their difficulties, therefore, result in such manifestations as problems of drug abuse, teenage pregnancies, different forms of violence and other conditions associated with

irresponsible adolescent behaviour. These are not problems that can be overlooked in any society. Apart from the fact that adolescents form a sizeable part of the population, they are also its most virile and potentially productive section (Alfred, 2003).

Drugs are chemical agents other than foodstuff which significantly affect body structure and functioning. Some of them are used as curatives for some ailments, some as preventives against the attack of diseases while some are used as stimulants to purposely heighten the organs or the organic activity to induce excitement and sleeplessness (Oyerinde, 2010). The drug is any substance which by its chemical nature affects the structure and function of a living organism when taken (Moronkola & Okanlawon, 2003; Ajala, 2006; Samuel, 2014). Oguniola (2011) describes the drug as any substance which when it interacts with the body system modifies the physiological and biological process of the body.

Samuel (2014) observes that considerable increases in life expectancy could be linked to the discovery of drugs, which has improved the quality of human lives. When drugs are administered under medical directions, they often appear to have miraculous effect in relieving pains, suffering, prevent and treat diseases that otherwise would interfere with physical, mental and social health. However, while reasonable users of drugs promote optimum health, its abuse and misuse can be dangerous and inimical to health. Okanlawon (2008) explains that the use of illicit drugs including marijuana is common among adolescents, and the trend is spreading particularly among secondary schools students. Adolescent students have been identified as a major group involved in the misuse of psychoactive substances in Nigeria within the last three decades. Oyerinde (2010) opines that every drug is subject to abuse and misuse. When drugs are used in the wrong way it easily becomes a poison. In its large quantities; it becomes fatal. Drugs, when misused or abused, have varying effects on the user depending on the nature and class of drugs used. Some have narcotizing effects; others are stimulating while others have destructive effects on the tissues of the body. It is because of the danger in the wrong use of drugs that man must selectively use and apply drugs.

Fredrick, Olukunmi and Akintayo (2014) describe drug abuse as substance or chemical abuse. It is the deliberate or intentional use of a chemical substance usually for reasons other than the legitimate medical purpose that results into any degree of physical, mental, emotional or social impairment for the user, the user's family or society in general. Some of the factors associated with drug abuse include; peer pressure, availability of drugs, curiosity, loneliness, poor

parent communication, a sign of maturity, to accomplish a task, to cope with the challenges at school or work and lack of parental supervision.

Ogundele (2004) opined that drugs and alcoholic drinks are a common phenomenon among our adolescents. These may result from dehumanizing problems, psychosocial stressors, socio-economic problems and war. The commonly abused drugs and alcohol include beer, palm wine, marijuana, cigarette, valium and cocaine. Drugs and alcohol abuse causes a lot of problems to both the psychological and physiological well-being of the adolescents.

Drug use and abuse among young people is a topic that has gained considerable importance and attention worldwide in the last two decades because of a dramatic increase in the use of various illicit drugs. The "drug scene" in Nigeria has undergone pronounced changes in recent years (Alfred, 2003).

Peer groups provide the adolescents with the arena for much of the learning and development that occur in all the life tasks, although parents remain the primary influence in their lives. The peer group serves as strong support to adolescents, individuals and collectively, providing them with a sense of belonging and feeling of strength and power (Samuel, 2006).

Odejide (2006) and Samuel (2014) submit that peer group influence was one of the factors found to be important in hard drugs usage by adolescent students, as they often had their first contact with the hard drug through friends and associates. The pressure of peer groups like friends, school mates and social groups have led many youths into drug addiction. Fredrick et al. (2014) opine that peer pressure plays a major role in influencing many young persons and youths to practice drug abuse. Peers and friends have a great social life and decision-making of young persons and youths. Member of a particular group that is regarded as "social" but abuse drug may command all its members or new intakes to be drug users. Through this, many innocent individuals are forced to be drug abusers in the name of belonging to a group.

Children have to depend on the family during the early years of age, as they cannot meet the demands of life. It is indeed true that parents that smoke, drink or use dangerous drugs indiscriminately in the presence of their wards influence them to do the same. The family is seen as the bedrock of any child towards either negative or positive behaviours (Onohwosafe, 2012; Samuel 2014). In addition, Samuel (2014) asserts that parents should take basic responsibility of helping adolescent students to attain wholesome development into responsible adults. This requires an atmosphere of love, happiness and understanding full of

positive examples to be emulated in the family. Furthermore, Samuel (2014) opines that a harsh family environment is another factor predicting drug abuse. In parenting students, parental interaction is very important. It is necessary that parents should present themselves as suitable in order to guide the students against anti-social behaviour. Parental role is inevitable societal behaviour and there is a need for the parents to support, show concern and understanding to their wards. Deficits in parental support are linked to problem behaviours in students among which is substance abuse.

The role of the family in adolescent drug abuse has been widely recognized. There are certain family characteristics that place an adolescent at risk. Some of the most documented are the abusive families, where either one or both parents use alcohol or tobacco, dysfunctional families, broken homes, where parents spend less and less time with their children either because they have to work or go out for business, families where parents are unable to set good examples (Alfred, 2003).

African parents need to learn to listen to their children rather than just talking at them. Parents must teach their children to make responsible decisions and to accept the consequences of their decisions. This cannot be accomplished overnight; it is a slow process that is nurtured by parental support, love, concern, and understanding, a parent needs to be firm (Alfred, 2003).

### **Statement of the problem**

Africa now occupies second position worldwide in the trafficking and consumption of illegal drugs. According to United Nation statistics, there are 28 million drug users in Africa, 37,000 people in Africa die annually from diseases associated with the consumption of illegal drugs (Ikponmwosa, 2018). Drug abuse in teenagers does not just occur, it is very often that the result of many factors working together to create a drug problem in the individual. Drug abuse among teenagers is an at-risk behaviour. There are many psychological and social factors that contribute to at-risk behaviours. Most parents in the study area, are too busy to explain common daily phenomena to their young children and as a result, some children obtained false information outside the family. Therefore, poor communication can pre-dispose secondary school students to drug abuse. Most adolescent who regularly engages in at-risk behaviours are more likely to come from families with poor parenting styles. As children grow older, their peer group relationship increases in importance while the importance of parents as a reference group and as models for conformity decreases. Peer group strongly influence a young person's decision to use drugs. Secondary school students may take to drugs as a mark of peer pressure

to gain acceptance among their peers. Most young people in the study area engage in drug abuse due to the influence of their peers. Some secondary school students in the study area engage in violent demonstration at school and in the community, drop out from school, engage in unlawful sexual intercourse as well as criminal activities such as stealing and thuggery as a result of abusing drugs. These conditions prompted the researchers to investigate whether peer group influence or poor parental communication causes drug abuse among secondary school students in Moro Local Government area of Kwara State, Nigeria.

### Research questions

The research questions raised for this study were as follows:

- 1) Does peer group influence cause drug abuse among secondary school students in Moro Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria?
- 2) Does poor parental communication cause drug abuse among secondary school students in Moro Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria?

### Research hypotheses

The research hypotheses formulated for the study were as follows:

- 1) Peer group influence will not significantly cause drug abuse among secondary school students in Moro Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria
- 2) Poor parental communication will not significantly cause drug abuse among secondary school students in Moro Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria

### Methodology

The descriptive research of survey method was used for the study. The population of the study comprises of all secondary school students in Moro Local Government area of Kwara State, Nigeria. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select two of the secondary schools that had the highest population of students in each of the four political districts available in the study area and eight secondary schools were selected for the study. Purposive sampling procedure was used because the numbers of school available in each of the political district in the study area were not the same. Proportionate sampling technique was used to select ten (10%) of the secondary school students from the selected schools based on their population. The reason for used proportionate sampling technique was due to the fact that the number of students population in each of the selected secondary school in the study area

differ from one another and this procedure enable researchers to select equal representative of the students from the four districts used for the study based on their population. The simple random sampling procedure was used to select four hundred and thirty (430) respondents that participated in the study. The justification for used simple random sampling technique to select four hundred and thirty (430) students that participated in the study was based on guide provided by the Research Advisor's (2006) who pointed out that for the population of 10,000 and above, a sample size of three hundred and eighty (380) is sufficient to represent the entire population at a level of confidence of 95% and a margin error of 5%. Therefore, the total samples used for this study were four hundred and thirty (430) respondents.

The instrument used for the study was a structured questionnaire that had been validated by three experts in the related field. The reliability of the instrument was established using a test re-test method. Twenty copies of the questionnaire administered to twenty secondary school students in Asa Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria which has the same characteristic with secondary school students in the study area. The same instrument was re-administered to the respondents after two weeks interval. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to compare the results of the two tests. A reliability coefficient of 0.72r was obtained which clearly showed that the instrument was reliable. The researchers with the aid of four trained research assistants administered the instrument on the respondents. Inferential statistics of chi-square was used to establish the results obtained from the data collected at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

The limitation of the study experienced by the researchers during the period of conducting the research was flood disaster which made it difficult for researchers to access some selected secondary schools during the rainy season. The problem extends the period of administered the questionnaire. The flood disaster problem was taken-care off accordingly by the researchers and the problem did not affect the findings of the study.

### **Results and discussion of findings**

The results obtained from the two hypotheses used for the study were shown on the tables below:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Peer group influence will not significantly cause drug abuse among secondary school students in Moro LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria

Table 1: *Chi-square Analysis Showing the Influence of Peer Group on Causes of Drug Abuse among Secondary School Students.*

| S/N | ITEMS                                                                                                        | SA             | A              | D            | SD           | Row Total | Df | Cal X <sup>2</sup> | Crit. Value | REM                     |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|----|--------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1   | An attempt to please friends make secondary school students abuse drugs                                      | 140<br>(32.6%) | 260<br>(60.5%) | 12<br>(2.8%) | 18<br>(4.2%) | 430       |    |                    |             |                         |
| 2   | Spirit of belonging to an important group make secondary school students abuse drugs                         | 148<br>(34.2%) | 254<br>(59.1%) | 26<br>(6.0%) | 2<br>(0.6%)  | 430       |    |                    |             |                         |
| 3   | Development of identity with peer group make secondary school students involved in drugs abuse               | 174<br>(40.5%) | 210<br>(48.8%) | 36<br>(8.4%) | 10<br>(2.3%) | 430       | 9  | 428.01             | 16.92       | H <sub>0</sub> Rejected |
| 4   | Motivation on the value of abusing drugs by peer group make secondary school students involved in drug abuse | 90<br>(20.9%)  | 290<br>(67.4%) | 36<br>(8.4%) | 14<br>(3.3%) | 430       |    |                    |             |                         |
|     | Column Total                                                                                                 | 552            | 1014           | 110          | 44           | 1720      |    |                    |             |                         |

@0.05 alpha level

The result obtained from table one shows the calculated chi-square value of 428.01 against the critical chi-square value of 16.92 at 0.05 alpha level with 9 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated chi-square value is greater than critical chi-square value, hypothesis one rejected and alternative hypothesis upheld that, there is a significant influence of peer group on causes of drug abuse among secondary school students. The result of this submission carved around the fact that some of the secondary school students in the study area imitate people they admire with the aim to create an identity to a particular group. They engage in drug abuse due to the advice they receive from their peers that abusing drugs is the only way to become social as well as means to overcome stress condition in life. The result of this finding confirmed with the submission of Fredrick et al. (2014) who opined that peer pressure plays a major role in influencing many young persons and youths to practice drug abuse. Peers and friends have a great social life and decision-making of young persons and youths. Member of a particular group that is regarded as "social" but abuse drug may command all its members or new intakes to be drug users. Through this, many innocent individuals are forced to be drug abusers in the name of belonging to a group. Also, the outcome of the finding corroborates with the

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submission of Mfrekemifon and Walker (2014) who asserted that majority of psychoactive substance users were influenced significantly by their friends who are already abusing the drugs without giving adequate consideration to the risk associated with psychoactive drug use.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** Poor parental communication will not significantly cause drug abuse among secondary school students in Moro LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria

Table 2: *Chi-square Analysis Showing the Influence of Poor Parental Communication on Causes of Drug Abuse among Secondary School Students.*

| S/N          | ITEMS                                                                                                                                                                         | SA             | A              | D            | SD           | Row Total | df | Cal X <sup>2</sup> | Crit. Value | REM                         |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|----|--------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 5            | Failure of parents to educate their children on health consequences involved in drug abuse make secondary school students abuse drugs                                         | 192<br>(44.7%) | 196<br>(45.4%) | 28<br>(6.5%) | 14<br>(3.3%) | 430       |    |                    |             |                             |
| 6            | Failure of parents to educate their children on the advantages of using other ways to manage their emotional condition make secondary school students involved in abuse drugs | 172<br>(40.0%) | 230<br>(53.5%) | 18<br>(4.2%) | 10<br>(2.3%) | 430       |    |                    |             |                             |
| 7            | Failure of parents to educate their children on legal consequences of abusing drugs make secondary school students involved in drugs abuse                                    | 142<br>(33.4%) | 246<br>(56.8%) | 30<br>(7.0%) | 12<br>(2.8%) | 430       | 9  | 234.00             | 16.92       | HO <sub>2</sub><br>Rejected |
| 8            | Excessive criticisms of parents on children causes drug abuse among secondary school students                                                                                 | 136<br>(31.6%) | 248<br>(57.7%) | 28<br>(6.5%) | 18<br>(4.2%) | 430       |    |                    |             |                             |
| Column Total |                                                                                                                                                                               | 642            | 920            | 104          | 54           | 1720      |    |                    |             |                             |

@0.05 alpha level

The result obtained from table two shows the calculated chi-square value of 234.00 against the critical value of 16.92 at 0.05 alpha level with 9 degrees of

freedom. The calculated chi-square value greater than the critical value, hypothesis two rejected and the alternative hypothesis upheld that, poor parental communication causes drug abuse among secondary school students. This finding could be attributed to the fact that some of the secondary school students in the study area that engage in drug abuse may come from unstable family background, family use harsh discipline or poor parent-child relationship and as a result, they may be tempted to see drugs as a measure to overcome family troubles. The result of this finding agrees with the finding of Okanlawon (2008) who explained that study have shown that inconsistent parenting, family or marital conflicts and harsh discipline contribute a lot to substance abuse among secondary school students. The outcome of this finding is in line with the submission of Samuel (2014), who opined that harsh family environment is another factor predicting drug abuse. In parenting students, parental interaction is very important. It is necessary that parents should present themselves as suitable models in order to guide the students against anti-social behaviour. Parental role is inevitable societal behaviour and there is a need for the parents to support, show concern and understanding to their wards. Deficits in parental support are linked to problem behaviours in students among which are substance abuse. Also, the finding of the study corroborate with the view of Makinde (2014) who asserted that a relationship exists between drug use and poor role modelling. Several survey of teens repeatedly showed that parents can make an enormous difference in influencing their children's perceptions of tobacco, alcohol or illicit drug use.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it was found that; first, peer group influence causes drug abuse among secondary school students in Moro Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria. Secondly, poor parental communication causes drug abuse among secondary school students in Moro Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the followings recommendations were made:

- ❖ Moro Local Government education authority should organize enlightenment campaign programme that will educate secondary school students on consequences associated with drug abuse to their health, families and society at large.
- ❖ Parents should show love, happiness and also take responsibility for helping secondary students to attain wholesome development into responsible adults.

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