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Understanding Knowledge of Substance Use and its Relationship with Socio-economic Conditions Among Youths in Uyo

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Introduction

The ever-escalating drug abuse of Nigeria's youths presents an emergent public health issue which must be watched anxiously and meticulously. Past national surveys have already indicated such emergent trends of alarming proportions within states like Bayelsa State and among students of Nigeria's secondary schools, showing that it is not an isolated but a nascent national phenomenon. Other specialists have similarly also noted the rampant drug abuse of Nigerian youths. In order to be able to effectively rule out this issue decisively, however, we must look beyond the general national figures and attempt to zoom in on areas like the Uyo Local Government Area. In taking a close look at this particular pattern of drug use herein and all of the various purposes for which it is consumed, we will be better able to understand this phenomenon. This is crucial in the creation of interventions that best fit the social and cultural context of Uyo, and can ultimately lead to more effective drug use prevention and treatment methods for those who are in need.

The consequences of adolescent drug use reach far beyond the drug users themselves, with long-term effects on their families and on society as a whole. World health organizations and studies have focused on the numerous negative consequences on their health and psychological development, school performance and functioning, and social adjustment. Effective prevention strategies are based on a knowledge of the etiology of drug abuse, as professionals have emphasized. Thus, our attempt at finding out what youths in Uyo know about substance consumption and how their social and economic status contribute to this is more than an academic endeavor. It is the first step toward developing evidence-based policy and interventions that will act to mitigate the negative effect of drug abuse on individuals, enhance better family units, and foster healthier and more stable communities in the Uyo Local Government Area

Literature Review

This review invites literature from within the academy as befitting the definition of youth use of drugs in consideration of socio-economic status, sensitivity, and awareness, Nigerian sensibility in response to, befitting the Uyo Local Government Area.

Conceptual Framework

Grounded in adequate conceptualization of the definitional parameters, this context is framed for this review. Buddy (2011) distinguishes use and misuse of substance, along with the experimentation-misuse continuum. Jellinek (1960) also provided a useful contribution to the definition of alcoholism under the "disease concept," shifting attitudes from moral deficiency to disease status. Sean and Bryon (2018) outline an existing taxonomy of the substance use disorders, including diagnostic criteria and the current knowledge of the disorders. World Health Organization (WHO, 2017) offers internationally agreed definitions of substances and related terms to facilitate consistency of terms and interpretation.

Knowledge of Substance Use among Youths

The extent of knowledge among youths regarding substance use has been assessed by various studies. Adumola et al. (2013) investigated knowledge, attitude, and practice of drug use among secondary school students in Lagos, Nigeria, and reported the prevailing gaps in knowledge in spite of awareness. Anetor & Oyekan-Thomas (2018) reiterated again that Lagos State Alimosho Local Government Area adolescents possessed a mixed piece of information about drug use and yet there was still some myth persisted. Other than this, Gloria and Mary (2018) reported attitudes and knowledge of drug and substance abuse among adolescents in yet another Lagos community and, once more, underscored the necessity of specialized education.

Extrapolating outside Nigeria, Liranzo et al. (2017) contrasted attitudes and knowledge of drug and substance abuse among Ethiopian youths compared to cultural attitude determinants. Nahid (2014) developed a questionnaire to assess Iranian secondary school student drug abuse with culturally adapted instruments. Simango (2014) briefly discussed drug knowledge and attitudes among youth in the context of drug use among youth in South Africa and added to adolescent opinion in another nation on the continent of Africa. In general, this research discovers that the youths are aware of something, albeit with enormous gaps and misconceptions about harms as well as drug use effects.

Socio-economic Conditions and Substance Use

Socio-economic status has been linked with trends in drug use over the years. Alireza & Reza (2016) carried out a survey of students' perception of the etiology of drug addiction among young people and enumerated poverty, unemployment, and loneliness as causes. Denise (1980), in a review, explained

the relationship between youths' alcohol use and drug behavior and social forces in more nuanced terms in terms of the social structure and inequality role.

Farhad et al. (2018) conducted a national Iranian risk and protective factors for drug use among university students, including socio-economic indicators such as education and parent income. Ogunsola & Fatusi (2016) compared drug use among rural and urban Osun State, Nigeria secondary school pupils and concluded that socio-economic heterogeneity was a vulnerability factor. Okafor (2020) similarly investigated etiology and implications of drug consumption in adolescents of Kwara State, Nigeria, in relation to unemployment and economic hardship. Trujillo et al. (2019) distanced substance use precocious onset research and multilevel predictors of risk and resilience, i.e., socio-economic, in youth. Those kinds of studies identify an enduring association between substance use and socio-economic disadvantage amplified vulnerability.

Theoretical Frameworks

There are a number of theoretical models that organize our understanding of substance use. Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1976, 1977) is based on the belief that substance use behavior is learned through observation, imitation, and reinforcement and emphasizes the social influence and self-efficacy aspect of learning them. Reginald (1980) speculated an availability-proneness theory, which explained the interaction between drug availability and the susceptibility of individuals to the threat of illegal drug abuse. They provide an example of a mechanism explanation framework through which drug use and awareness might be influenced by socio-economic status.

Nigeria/Regional Context

There is evidence to contextualize that is useful in Nigeria. Abdulralheem et al. (2019) wrote on drug use among Nigerian adolescents in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, and provided regional differences in drug use patterns. Adebayo (2017) wrote on opioid codeine and tramadol abuse among Nigerian adolescents and provided particular drugs of interest.

Dumbili (2015) did a review of drug use by Nigerian secondary school adolescents and revealed the epidemic trend of the problem among adolescents. Gudaji & Habib (2016) studied the use of psychoactive substances by commercial motorcyclists in Kano, Northern Nigeria, indicating the diverse population impacted by drug use. Jumbo et al. (2020) described abusers of cannabis who were admitted for treatment in Uyo, South-South Nigeria, with as much detail as the research setting would require. Utomi (2019) painted a broader picture of drug abuse and its implications for the youth in Nigeria. General Background/History

A general background or history sets the stage for problems today. Catton & Shain (1976) wrote about the use of heroin in the community, and their article is a sign of the chronic drug use issue. Craig (2003) wrote about the neurobiology of interoception, the sense of the body's physiological state, and its relevance to the study of drug use. The Drug Library (2020) provides an overall description of the use of drugs, detailing how it has progressed over time. Smart & Fejer (1972) looked at drug usage among youths and their parents as a function of intergenerational influences. Specific Substances

Individual agents have also been investigated. Eriksen (2015) examined in detail smoking tobacco in The Tobacco Atlas. Obina (2017) examined the risk of smoking in Nigeria and its influence on public health. Oyewole et al. (2017) provided a systematic review of smoking tobacco among Nigerian youth, outlining the use of the individual agent.

Prevention/Intervention

Lastly, prevention and intervention are addressed in this review. Paul et al. (1999) authored a manual for successful substance abuse prevention programs based on evidence-based practices. Saltz et al. (2011) authored articles on prevention strategies to alcohol problems, including alcohol-related trauma, with implications for potential interventions. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2014) released data and reports by the Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), offering treatment trends and needs data.

This literature review reveals the dynamics between socio-economic status, knowledge, and young people's drug use as a web. All studies agree that socio-economic deprivation is an agent of risk, and some knowledge exists while there is this lack of knowledge. The context in Nigeria presents peculiar challenges requiring culturally appropriate intervention. This study attempts to contribute to this wealth of evidence through examining these variables in the Uyo Local Government Area alone.

Methodology

This study investigates the drug use data and socio-economic determinants of young people aged 10–24 years in Uyo, Nigeria, based on a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Stratified random sampling method enrolls 440 school-going and non-school-going youth by gender and urban/peri-urban strata for ensuring diverse representation (Cochran, 1977). Another 20–30 participants are purposively invited for focus group discussion and qualitative interview to elicit contextual variables (Guest et al., 2006). The research is quantitative in nature with qualitative findings, responding to the specific urban and cultural context of Uyo.

The data are gathered by a culturally translated questionnaire (Nahid, 2014) to assess drug use, awareness, and socio-economic status that is face-to-face administered to ensure ease of administration. Qualitative interviews and focus groups use Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) to ask perception and culture. Quantitative data are computed on SPSS/R for inferential and descriptive statistics such as logistic regression (Trujillo et al., 2019), while qualitative data are computed on thematic analysis with NVivo (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Outcomes are summated to give a composite impression of the dynamics of drug use. Database was gathered for information obtained via a culturally translated questionnaire (Nahid, 2014) to assess substance use, knowledge, and socio-economic status, for ease of face-to-face administration. Qualitative interviews and focus groups, grounded in Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), examine perception and culture. Quantitative data are analyzed on SPSS/R to yield inferential and descriptive statistics such as logistic regression (Trujillo et al., 2019), while qualitative data are analyzed on thematic analysis with the aid of NVivo (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The findings are triangulated in order to present a composite picture of the substance use dynamics.

Ethical integrity is maintained through approval from the Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Health, and through voluntary consent, privacy, and respect for cultural issues as being of primary importance (World Medical Association, 2013). Participants are educated with educational material as well as with referral for counseling. Limitations such as self-report bias and results generalizable only in the urban context are controlled through anonymous questionnaires and sound design. The strategy is specific in terms of leading evidence-based intervention and ensuring certain contribution towards drug use prevention among Uyo youth.

Results



The provided histogram depicts the age distribution in a sample population, which is a bunch of individuals between their early and mid-20s, i.e., 24 and 25 years, with the most frequencies. The distribution is skewed to the right since there are more younger individuals up to this peak than older ones. Though the sample is made up of individuals in approximately 17 to 40 years old, frequencies are appreciably smaller towards the bottom and top limits of the interval, reflecting that a great deal of the population in the sample belongs to the younger adult groups.

Table 1: Drug	Abuse Awa	reness Frea	uency Distri	bution
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Item	Yes (%)	No (%)	
Drug Abuse Awareness	233(77.7)	67 (22.3)	<u> </u>

The figures show that the vast majority of the respondents (77.7%) know about drug abuse, and 22.3% reported not knowing about it. This would mean that awareness has reached everyone except a small percentage.

Item	Yes (Freq)	Yes (%)	No (Freq)	No (%)
Have you used drugs other than those required for medical reasons?	231	77.0%	69	23.0%
Have you abused prescription drugs?	218	72.7%	82	27.3%
Do you use more than one drug at a time?	154	51.3%	146	48.7%
Do you ever feel bad or guilty about your drug use?	111	37.0%	189	63.0%
Have you neglected your family because of your use of drugs?	68	22.7%	232	77.3%
Would you like to stop using and abusing drugs?	240	80.0%	60	20.0%

Table 2. Analysis of Respondents Drug Ose and Related Denavior	Table 2: A	alvsis of Resp	ondents' Drug	Use and R	elated Behaviors
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The data shows that the vast majority of the participants (77%) admitted to using drugs for reasons other than medical need, and 72.7% also admitted to abusing prescription drugs. Over half of the participants (51.3%) used two or more drugs at the same time, and therefore there is a pattern of polydrug use. In spite of this, only 37% of the participants reported feeling bad or guilty about drug use, while 63% did not.

As far as the impact on family life is concerned, 22.7% did admit to having neglected their family due to drug use, while the remaining 77.3% denied that this was so. Interestingly, there was a strong majority (80%) who were willing to quit drug and drug abuse, which may suggest willingness to be intervened upon and assisted towards recovery.

Variable	Unstandardized B	Т	p-value	Significant?
Age (in years)	0.003	0.497	.620	No
Gender	0.021	0.325	.746	No
Family Size	0.010	0.610	.543	No
Occupation	-0.027	-3.956	.000	Yes
Level of Education	-0.103	-4.323	.000	Yes
Father's Education Level	-0.053	-2.394	.018	Yes
Mother's Education Level	-0.068	-2.143	.034	Yes
Father's Occupation	-0.107	-3.368	.001	Yes
Mother's Occupation	-0.123	-2.384	.019	Yes

Table 4: Regression Analysis Showing the Relationship Between Youth Knowledge of Drug Use and Selected Socio-Demographic Variables

Regression analysis also goes on to underscore that some socio-demographic predictors do have significant impacts on knowledge of drug use among youths. They are occupation, education level, parent's educational level, and both parents' occupations with statistically significant associations (p < 0.05) with youths' knowledge. These predictors thus are part of what constitutes knowledge as well as drug problem awareness among youths. But family size, gender, and age are not making a contribution well because their p-values are larger than 0.05. Parents' work history and education are good predictors of young adults' drug knowledge based on the overall evidence.

Discussion

The outcome of this research, from a sample population of 300 youths aged between 10–24 years old in Uyo Local Government Area, Nigeria, is significant to their drug use attitudes and drug abuse, their socio-economic status relationship, and knowledge level. By comparing the findings with the literature, via conceptual models, and testing implications, this discussion situates the findings within the broader substance use research arena, highlighting differences, similarities, and practical recommendations for the treatment of this public health disorder. Attitudes towards drug abuse and use

The survey findings are that Uyo adolescents possess drug-use and drug-abuse-promoting attitudes since 77.0% have reported non-medical drug use, 72.7% have abused prescription drugs, and 51.3% have used polydrugs. However, 37.0% report only feeling guilty and 22.7% confess family neglect, which reflects low levels of consequence awareness. Interestingly, 80.0% of them wish to quit, reflecting willingness to change. These findings agree with Adumola et al. (2013), who found that Lagos secondary school students were not unaware of drug use but engaged in risky behaviors since they held misconceptions or social pressure. Anetor and Oyekan-Thomas (2018) also found that Lagos youths had chronic attitudinal deficits, as they were found to underestimation the harm of substance use. The low consequence awareness in Uyo mirrors this research, suggesting a broader Nigerian pattern that what is known is not equal to defensive postures.

However, the high drug quitting motivation (80.0%) in Uyo is a peculiar finding, as opposed to Gloria and Mary (2018), who observed weaker cessation desire among Lagos youths. This may be due to the particular socio-cultural context of Uyo, where religious morals and communal relations (typical of Akwa Ibom State) may engender reform desire. Bandura's 1977 Social Learning Theory is a framework through which the attitudes described can be explained to theorize the acquisition of drug use behavior by children from others through observing and reinforcement by peers. Peers may have modeled usage of non-medication and prescription drugs in Uyo because of modeling, but be motivated by stopping because of positive modeling like religious leaders and figures who support abandonment behaviors.

Gaps and Levels of Knowledge

77.7% of the youth have learned about drug use, indicating a high level of awareness, but the knowledge does not hinder risky attitudes or behavior. This agrees with Adumola et al. (2013), who indicated that Lagos pupils had incomplete knowledge but persistent misconceptions about drug dangers. Anetor and Oyekan-Thomas (2018) also recorded that Lagos Alimosho youth had misconceptions about drug safety and hence misused them. The Uyo evidence generalizes such findings, with the implication that dissemination of knowledge is not enough without overcoming attitudinal and behavioral barriers. Globally, Liranzo et al. (2017) found that cultural beliefs for Ethiopian adolescents controlled their drug information, a literal translation of Uyo, by which overall standards (e.g., acceptance of drugs) were capable of bypassing public awareness messages.

The absence of significant difference in substance knowledge and consumption (Hypothesis 1, p = .240; Hypothesis 3, p = .132) supports this lack of relationship, mirroring the Nigerian secondary school learners' study conducted by Dumbili (2015), which concluded awareness simply does not translate into reduction in use. Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) explains this disparity, and it also states that self-efficacy—adolescents' beliefs in their

capacity to avoid taking drugs—can be low in the presence of knowledge because of social reinforcement to use. This emphasizes the need for interventions that enhance self-efficacy as well as knowledge.

Socio-economic Influences on Attitudes and Knowledge

The regression analysis (Table 4(a)) revealed that there were significant correlations between socio-economic variables and knowledge, including education (p <.001), parental education (p <.05), and parental occupation (p <.05), but not knowledge with age, gender, and family size (p >.05). This aligns with Okafor (2020), whose determination of economic hardship and parental rejection as imperatives for drug abuse among youths of Kwara State required the consideration of socio-economic factors. Similarly, Alireza and Reza (2016) found that poverty and social loneliness heightened drug abuse among university students, consistent with Uyo's scenario where economic hardship had a tendency to legitimize substance use as an adaptive strategy. However, the nonsignificance in gender contradicts that of Ogunsola and Fatusi (2016), whose results reflected higher male vulnerability in Osun State, the implication being that Uyo's urban setting may render gendered vulnerabilities equal due to easy drug availability.

Student dominance among secondary school attendees and 20–29-year-olds as drug users (Chart 5, Chart 8) concurs with Abdulralheem et al. (2019), who reported adolescent vulnerability in Bayelsa State. Farhad et al. (2018) also confirm parental education as a protective factor since educated parents provide advice or content to avoid drug use. Availability-proneness theory by Reginald (1980) explains drug availability as being highly available in Uyo (Chart 2), as availability is supported by socio-economic risk factors (e.g., unemployment, low income) to maximize utilization. These socio-economic patterns validate the need for interventions among at-risk groups, including students and young adults who reside in deprived environments.

Comparison with Regional and International Contexts

At the regional level, the Uyo findings align with Jumbo et al. (2020), who characterized cannabis abusers in Uyo, citing the same patterns of abuse driven by availability and socio-economic factors. The use of prescription drugs (e.g., painkillers) is reminiscent in Adebayo's (2017) call to end codeine and tramadol abuse among Nigerian youths, which testifies to an endemically prevalent issue with the misuse of drugs. Abroad, likewise, Simango's (2014) study of South African youth also noted the identical attitudinal acceptance of drug use, peer-driven, establishing the applicability of Bandura's Social Learning Theory across settings in Africa. However, high intention to quit is otherwise exhibited by Nahid's (2014) Iranian data where cultural stigma affected reduced help-seeking willingness, which further illustrates community-based culture-driven effects on Uyo's behavior.

Differences are present in the level of consequence awareness. Contrary to Trujillo et al. (2019), who linked initiation of drug use at an earlier age with socio-economic disadvantage among youths, the Uyo youths report lower levels of consequence awareness, an occurrence that can be attributed either to cultural normalization or to a lack of health education. The difference demonstrates the need for context-specific interventions guided by local challenges and attitudes.

Theoretical Implications

Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) offers a concrete framework for the explanation of the results. The large percentages of risk attitudes (e.g., 77.0% non-medical use) are suggestive of adolescents acquiring and imitating drug use in peer groups through social reinforcement. The low guilt (37.0%) and family neglect recognition (22.7%) are indicative of weak negative feedback loops, which Bandura suggests are necessary for behavior change. The need to refrain (80.0%) can be utilized as an indicator of exposure to contradictory role models (e.g., societal leaders), with opportunities for intervention by reinforcement. Availability-proneness theory of Reginald (1980) additionally outlines the impact of easy availability of drugs (e.g., cannabis, antibiotics) in urban markets of Uyo in action on socio-economic vulnerability for abuse continuation.

The above theories call for interaction among individual, social, and environmental factors, and they also suggest that the interventions must be addressed at both attitudinal problems of individuals as well as system-related problems like drug availability and economic downturn. The statistically non-significant correlation between drug use and attitude (Hypothesis 4, p = .209) suggests that unmeasured unobserved variables (e.g., peer influence, cultural consensus) mediate between attitudes and drug use and, therefore, more studies must be conducted.

Implications for evidence-based intervention design in Uyo are substantial. The 80.0% who want to stop drug use corroborates Paul et al.'s (1999) emphasis on increasing motivation in prevention interventions. Consequence awareness and refusal skills can be implemented as school-based interventions for secondary students (Chart 8), applying Saltz et al.'s (2011) methods of reducing alcohol problems. Prescribed drug abuse, which is rampant (72.7%), should be addressed at the community level by managing accessibility to pharmacies and sensitizing medical professionals, according to Adebayo (2017).

Socio-economic interventions are also of paramount significance. Economic deprivation mitigation measures, e.g., vocational training for unemployed youths (Okafor, 2020), would suppress drug use as a survival strategy. Parent education programs, in taking advantage of the protecting effects of educated parents (Table 4(a)), would reinforce family guidance, in line with Farhad et al. (2018). Networking with local health administrations and religious centers, which are prevalent in Uyo, would improve intervention coverage, in line with WHO's (2017) guideline on prevention at community levels. Limitations and Future Research

There are some limitations apparent. Self-report data is liable to social desirability bias, particularly in a culturally conservative society like Uyo where stigma may quieten disclosure of guilt or social repercussions. Cross-sectional design restrains causal inference on the way attitudes and socio-economic status influence drug use in the long term. The urban-based emphasis of Uyo might not be extrapolated to rural Nigerian settings, as intimated by Ogunsola and Fatusi (2016). Longitudinal study designs should be used in future research to follow up on attitudinal changes and include qualitative designs to

study peer and cultural influences, as Liranzo et al. (2017) recommended. And the study of unmeasured variables (e.g., mental health, peer groups) would help explain the non-significant attitude-use relationship (Hypothesis 4).

Conclusion

Conclusion

The findings of the study explain the complex drug use and abuse attitudes of Uyo youth as characterized by generalized risk behavior, low awareness of consequences, and high motivation to quit. The discussion, in contrast with Nigerian and foreign literature, identifies prevailing tendencies (e.g., differences between knowledge and behavior) and some Uyo-specific variables (e.g., motivation to quit). Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Reginald's theory of availability-proneness both provide cogent explanation involving environmental and social determinants. Implications warrant multilevel interventions—educational, socio-economic, and community-based—in efforts to transform attitudes and reduce the use of substances in developing healthier, resilient communities in Uyo.

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