



Help-Seeking Attitude and Commitment to Recovery Among Persons with Substance Use Disorders in Selected Rehabilitation Centers in Langata Sub-County Nairobi, Kenya

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ABSTRACT :

Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) are chronic, relapsing conditions that significantly impact individuals' physical health, mental well-being, social functioning, and overall quality of life. This study assessed the attitudes of persons with SUDs toward help-seeking in selected rehabilitation centres in Langata Sub-County, Kenya. Guided by Egunjobi's Hierarchy of Help Model and Prochaska and DiClemente's Transtheoretical Model, a concurrent mixed-methods design was employed. Quantitative data were collected from 154 participants using the Help-Seeking Attitude Scale (HSAS), while qualitative data were gathered through interviews with ten purposively selected participants. The findings revealed that most participants demonstrated positive attitudes toward help-seeking, influenced by personal, social, and structural factors, though barriers such as stigma and accessibility persisted. The study underscores the importance of fostering positive help-seeking attitudes and recommends interventions to address barriers and strengthen support systems within rehabilitation settings.

Keywords: Substance Use Disorders, Help-Seeking Attitude, Rehabilitation Center's, Kenya, Langata Sub-County

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Substance use disorders (SUDs) continue to pose a significant and growing public health challenge globally and in Kenya. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2024) reports a steady rise in SUD prevalence across sub-Saharan Africa, with Kenya experiencing marked increases in substance-related morbidity, mortality, and social disruption. Recent national surveys indicate that over 10% of Kenyan adults have engaged in harmful substance use, contributing to a surge in demand for rehabilitation and support services (NACADA, 2024). Among university students in Kenya, nearly one in two has used at least one drug or substance of abuse in their lifetime, and one in four is a current user, highlighting the widespread nature of the problem (NACADA, 2024). Despite the expansion of rehabilitation services in regions such as Langata Sub-County, many individuals with SUDs remain reluctant or unable to seek professional help. A substantial body of research underscores that help-seeking attitudes-defined as an individual's disposition or readiness to seek professional assistance for substance use problems-are crucial for successful engagement in treatment and recovery (Yang et al., 2020; Giusto et al., 2024). Stigma and fear of discrimination remain prominent barriers, with individuals frequently internalizing negative societal perceptions of substance use, which in turn discourages them from accessing formal treatment services (NACADA, 2022; Katani Hospital, 2024; Giusto et al., 2024). In Kenya, cultural beliefs, misconceptions about substance use and its treatment, and limited awareness further contribute to negative attitudes toward help-seeking (NACADA, 2024; Mburu et al., 2021). Family and social support have been identified as significant facilitators of positive help-seeking attitudes, with individuals who have strong support networks more likely to pursue treatment (ISSUP, 2024; NACADA, 2024). Conversely, lack of support or negative family dynamics can reinforce denial and resistance to seeking help. Accessibility and affordability of treatment services, as well as previous negative experiences with healthcare providers, also play a critical role in shaping attitudes and behaviors related to help-seeking (WHO, 2014; Katani Hospital, 2024). Within this context, understanding the attitudes of persons with SUDs toward help-seeking is essential for designing effective interventions and improving treatment uptake. Guided by Egunjobi's Hierarchy of Help Model and Prochaska and DiClemente's Transtheoretical Model, this study focuses on assessing the attitudes of persons with SUDs toward help-seeking in selected rehabilitation centers in Langata Sub-County, Kenya. By examining these attitudes and the factors that shape them, the research aims to inform targeted strategies that can enhance access to care and support recovery among affected individuals.

2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was guided by two theoretical models: Egunjobi's Hierarchy of Help Model and the Transtheoretical Model by Prochaska and DiClemente. Egunjobi's Hierarchy of Help Model conceptualizes help-seeking as a progressive process, where individuals move from self-help and informal support (such as family and friends) to formal professional assistance when necessary. The model emphasizes the interplay of personal motivation, social support, and access to services in shaping help-seeking behaviour among persons with substance use disorders. The Transtheoretical Model (TTM) describes

behavioural change as a process that unfolds across distinct stages: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. This model provides a framework for understanding individuals' readiness to seek help and engage in recovery, recognizing that people may move back and forth between stages before achieving sustained change. Together, these models informed the design, data collection, and interpretation of findings in this study, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of help-seeking attitudes among persons with SUDs in Langata Sub-County.

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study employed a concurrent mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of help-seeking attitudes among persons with SUDs in selected rehabilitation centres in Langata Sub-County, Kenya

3.1 Study Design

A concurrent mixed-methods design was employed, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of help-seeking attitudes and commitment to recovery.

3.2 Participants

The study population comprised individuals diagnosed with SUDs and receiving treatment at selected rehabilitation centers in Langata Sub-County, Nairobi. Stratified random sampling was used to select 154 participants for the quantitative component. For the qualitative component, ten participants were purposively selected for in-depth interviews.

3.3 Instruments

Help-Seeking Attitude Scale (HSAS): Assessed participants' attitudes toward seeking professional help.

Recovery Commitment Scale (RCS): Evaluated levels of commitment to recovery based on the stages of change.

Interview Guide: Used for qualitative data to explore personal experiences with help-seeking and recovery.

3.4 Procedures

Quantitative data were collected via structured questionnaires administered to participants. Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews, audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation). Qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns and insights related to the research objectives.

4.0 PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION and DISCUS of FINDINGS

Quantitative Results: Help-Seeking Attitudes

The study assessed the attitudes of persons with SUDs toward help-seeking using the HSAS. Out of 154 participants, the distribution of attitudes was as follows :

Attitude among Persons with SUDs in Seeking-Help

Measures	Positive attitude	Negative attitude
Frequency(F)	103.2	58.2
Percentage	75.9%	42.8%
Mean	3.92	3.39
Level	High	Moderate

The mean HSAS score was 3.92, indicating an overall positive orientation toward seeking help for substance use problems.

Qualitative Results: Thematic Insights

Thematic analysis of interviews with ten participants revealed several key factors influencing help-seeking attitudes:

Personal Motivation: Many participants recognized the need for professional intervention, especially after experiencing negative consequences of substance use.

Family and Social Support: Family encouragement and peer support were frequently cited as motivators for seeking help.

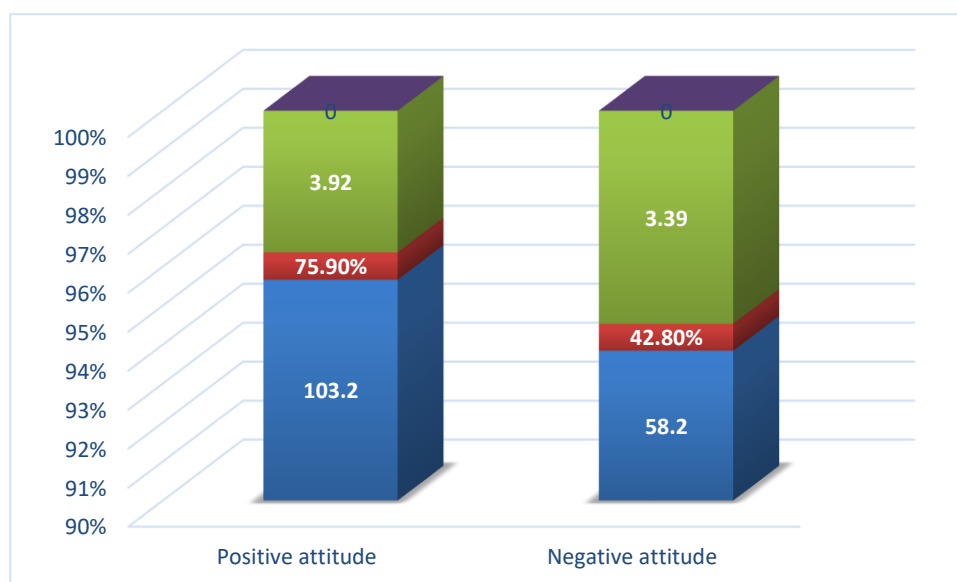
Stigma and Fear: Some participants reported that fear of being judged or stigmatized by the community delayed their decision to seek help.

Accessibility and Past Experiences: Accessibility of services and previous positive or negative experiences with healthcare providers also shaped attitudes.

A participant shared: “My family encouraged me to come here. At first, I was ashamed, but after talking to the counselors, I realized I needed help.”

Chart Representation

Figure 1: Distribution of Help-Seeking Attitudes among Persons with SUDs (N=154)



4.1 INTERPRETATION and DISCUSSION

The quantitative findings indicate that a substantial majority (79.9%) of participants had either highly positive or moderately positive attitudes toward help-seeking. This suggests a generally favorable disposition among persons with SUDs in Langata Sub-County toward engaging with professional treatment services. The qualitative results further illuminate these quantitative findings, highlighting that positive attitudes are often rooted in personal readiness for change and the presence of strong family or social support systems. Conversely, negative attitudes were frequently linked to stigma, lack of awareness, or previous negative experiences with treatment providers. These results align with existing literature, which emphasizes the importance of positive help-seeking attitudes for successful treatment engagement among persons with SUDs. The findings confirm that while most individuals are open to seeking help, a significant minority continue to face barriers such as stigma and fear of discrimination.

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study set out to assess the attitudes of persons with SUDs toward help-seeking in selected rehabilitation centers in Langata Sub-County, Kenya. The findings revealed that the majority of participants held positive attitudes toward seeking professional help for substance use problems. Specifically, 42.2% of respondents demonstrated highly positive attitudes, 37.7% had moderately positive attitudes, while 20.1% exhibited negative attitudes (Table 4.7, p. 102). Qualitative data reinforced these results, highlighting that personal motivation, family encouragement, and supportive

treatment environments facilitated positive attitudes. Conversely, barriers such as stigma, fear of discrimination, lack of awareness, and previous negative experiences with healthcare providers contributed to negative attitudes among some participants.

5.2 Conclusions

The study concludes that most persons with SUDs in Langata Sub-County rehabilitation centers possess positive attitudes toward help-seeking. This positive disposition is a promising indicator for treatment engagement and recovery. However, a significant minority continue to experience negative attitudes, primarily due to stigma and other psychosocial barriers. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to address the persistent obstacles that hinder some individuals from seeking or fully engaging with professional help.

5.3 Recommendations

- **Stigma Reduction:**

Implement community-based psychoeducation and awareness campaigns to reduce stigma and misconceptions about substance use and treatment.

- **Family and Peer Support Enhancement:**

Encourage the involvement of families and peer networks in the rehabilitation process to foster more positive attitudes toward seeking help.

- **Improve Service Accessibility and Quality:**

Increase the availability, affordability, and approachability of rehabilitation services to ensure that help-seeking is both possible and appealing for all individuals with SUDs.

- **Capacity Building for Service Providers:**

Train healthcare and rehabilitation staff in empathetic, non-judgmental care to improve client experiences and encourage positive attitudes toward help-seeking.

5.4 FURTHER RESEARCH

Conduct additional studies to explore help-seeking attitudes among persons with SUDs who are not currently in treatment, and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions aimed at reducing stigma and improving attitudes.

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