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THE USE OF HARMFUL SUBSTANCE AND IMPLICATIONS TO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Harmful substance use is a proliferating public health and social problem leading to negative multi-dimensional impact especially among undergraduate. This study was done to determine the commonly harmful substances used by undergraduate, signs of those taking harmful substances, effect to the student life and solution for those taking harmful substances. Based on the results of the study, it concludes that, Substance Use is a source of medication and treatment for various illness and preventive disease if properly prescribe by medical professionals. But wrongly use without medication prescription has negative consequences for the academic, social, psychological and physical development of students. Finally some recommendation made indicates proper orientation of students can help solve the problem of use of harmful Substances among undergraduate in university.

Keywords: Use; Harm; Substance; Implications; Undergraduate Students; University

Introduction

Harmful substances (HS) use among undergraduate students has become an increasing public health and social problem in many countries. Abdullahi, (2016) It is the non-medical self administration of a substance to produce mood changing effects, intoxication, or altered self-image, despite the knowledge of its potential side effects. It can also be described as the use of any substance to the point where it interferes with an individual's health, social or economic adjustment .One major consequence of harmful substances is dependence and addiction. Substance is a major public health problem all over the world. In 2017, it was estimated that 167 to 315 million people aged 15 to 64 years globally had used an illicit substance in the preceding year. The estimated global burden of alcohol and illicit drugs use is 5.4% while tobacco is 3.7%.7 A national survey of substance use conducted among 10,609 Nigerians aged 15-64 years in the six geopolitical zones of the country recorded a lifetime prevalence of 39% for alcohol, 6.6% for cannabis and 12.2% for

cigarettes. In Nigeria, the most common types of used substances as cited by several researchers include stimulants and amphetamines such as caffeine, tobacco, nicotine, ephedrine; hallucinogens such as marijuana and narcotics such as heroine and codeine. Others include alcohol and sedatives. These substances are largely used 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. The consequences of their abuse could result in physical dependence. The problem of substance use among university students in Nigeria is a recognized phenomenon. .The negative impacts of harmful substances on students are far reaching, and diverse. These include disruption of interpersonal relationships especially within the family, criminal behaviour, academic failure, vocational failure and a lack of commensurate achievement. Harmful substance is a leading cause of violence among individuals and a major cause of preventable mortality and morbidity it has been implicated in majority of cases of vehicle fatalities worldwide, with attendant effects on physical deformity, health, social functions, loss of property, loss of jobs, loss of self-esteem and loss of lives, ADEBAYO, A. (2018)

Harmful substance according to Harters (2019) are elements that are dangerous to human health. They are water, fruits, food and drugs that are unfit for human consumption. Examples of harmful substances are: Stale food; this is food that is spoil, food that has stayed old is not fit for the body because it is very harmful to the body. Expired food and drugs; expired drinks that has stayed beyond the appropriate time ,Impure water, Unripe fruits; fruits that is not yet due for eating, Poorly cooked food, cigarette.

According to Adebayo, (2017) students who engage in harmful substances show lowered commitment to education, declining grades, increased potential for dropout and high truancy rate. Suicides, homicides, and accidental injuries have all been linked to drug use among students. Also, high prevalence of depression, development lag, apathy, withdrawal, drainage of family financial and emotional resources have all been reported among substance using students. Adediji, (2013). The frequent use of substances has resulted in an increase in the number of delinquent acts such as rape, robbery, cultism, violent disorders and vandalism among Nigerian youths. University undergraduates attempt to abuse drugs for a myriad of reasons including: combating real or imagined failure, boosting self-confidence, or an escape route from bad unexpected circumstances. They are particularly at risk because they have unchecked freedom, some have too much money, poor role models, peer pressure, and irrational ambition.

Several factors contribute to substance use among undergraduate. Top on the list is

peer group influence. Students' behaviors seem to be heavily tied to the peer culture. If some members of a peer group use substances, there is a high probability that an individual in that group will experiment and ultimately become a user. In a study by Palfrey, it was reported that peer group pressures appeared to influence student marijuana use.

Curiosity and desire for adventure may also contribute to experimentation with drugs. Because these substances give a feeling of excitement, such students find it difficult to do without them. Also, some students use substances when they are under stress or feel frustrated. They then tend to resort to smoking and drinking to gain a momentary escape from reality. Social consequences of substance use include truancy, absenteeism, cultism, poor study skills and poor memory with many of them resorting to cheating during examinations. Substance use gives students a false sense of security and self-confidence. As a result, these youths take to different types of crime, including kidnapping, rape and armed robbery. Okonkow, (2019) confirmed that many cult members use substance.

Studies have reported that students get their supplies of substances from peers, relatives, local grocery shops and chemists, thereby having easy access to these substances with the resultant negative effects. Certain measures have been put in place to curb PAS use in Nigeria. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has the responsibility of controlling illicit drug cultivation, abuse, possession, manufacturing, production, and trafficking. Under the NDLEA, there is a Drug Demand Reduction Unit, which is responsible for effective sensitization of the public on the dangers inherent in drug trafficking and abuse. From 2010-2015, NDLEA noted an average of 1000 schools covered yearly nationwide for preventive education activities.

Becther (2018) Listed types of harmful substance commonly abused by undergraduate students

"49% of full-time college students drink and/or abuse drugs (illegal and prescription)."

1 – **Alcohol**

9.9% of full-time Undergraduate students aged 18 to 22 drank alcohol for the first time in the past year. It's no surprise alcohol is the number one abused drug on campus, simply because it is so widely accepted to consume. You constantly hear reckless stories about college kids getting wasted and causing havoc. Most college parties serve alcohol and even bars close to campus are coined as "college bars." Alcohol is a legal activity for older Undergraduate students; however, the typical freshmen is 18 years old, far below the legal drinking age.

Binge drinking has also become a popular habit in university included in sporting events, celebrations, and in many cases of hazing. Binge drinking can be very

dangerous and lead to alcohol poisoning which can then lead to death.

2 – **Marijuana**

Nearly 50% of Undergraduate students have tried Marijuana at least once.

Although still illegal in many states, Marijuana has been the most popular drug in the United States other than alcohol for several decades. Mary Jane, bud, gron university students and could result in severe injury even if it is not possible to overdose on the drug. Relaxing the nerves and putting one in a sleep-like state is also common, leaving responsibilities of homework and studying a priority for another day.

3 – **Prescription Pills**

One study found that more than 60% of students with a valid prescription from ADHD medication were diverting it to other students without prescriptions.

College-level work gets harder for many as they move up a grade level, making it harder to focus in class and complete assignments. Adderall and Ritalin are very commonly sold and abused drugs on college campuses. These drugs are designed to block out the distractions in your surroundings and in your head, making it easier to concentrate and retain knowledge. Exam week is a popular time in which students scramble to find these pills that will supposedly help them study. Friends sell to friends until the word gets out, turning prescriptions into profitable sales.

Selling Adderall or Ritalin is illegal and can result in a fine up to $10,000 on top of 10 years in jail. Demand for Adderall keeps rising, and at an average of $3-$15 per pill, college students can make a hefty chunk of change that beats their minimum wage job despite the many legal risks.

4 – **Ecstasy**

Emergency room visits due to ecstasy have increased by more than 1,200% since ecstasy became the “club drug” of choice at all-night raves.As raves and festivals grow in popularity, so does the use of “rave drugs,” with Ecstasy being the most popular. Alcohol is the go-to party drug for house parties and normal outings at clubs, but ecstasy is the most common choice at many music festivals and raves. Users claim the music helps intensify the feelings manifesting from the drug. In the college atmosphere, it has become as normal to take ecstasy at a festival as it has to drink alcohol at a bar. The downsides of the drug; however, can be pretty intense as well.

5 – **Cocaine**

One study shows most users (69%) started using cocaine after university entry. From Year 1 to Year 4, lifetime prevalence of Cocaine use more than tripled, from 4% to 13%.

While the popularity and use of ecstasy has risen, Cocaine has followed closely in its path. Cocaine is highly addictive and illegal in the United States. It is derived from the coca plant in South America and is portrayed as the rich man’s drug from its expensive cost to its euphoric effects.

Although it is very expensive, college students seem to want to get their hands on it as much as they can. It adds to the party atmosphere but can really damage the brain after use. One in four of those who try Cocaine will become addicted in their life, damaging their hopes and dreams along the way.

How to tell if someone is Using Drugs

According to Better health Channel (2019) there are physical and behavioral signs that tells someone is consuming harmful substance.

Physical Signs of Harmful substance

Some of the most noticeable symptoms of harmful substance are those that affect certain physiological processes. For example, your body's tolerance to a drug develops when a drug is used long or often enough that it adapts to the consistently elevated presence of the substance. When tolerance grows, increased quantities or strengths are required to achieve the previous effects.

i. Change in physical appearance
ii. Bloodshot or glazed eyes.
iii. Dilated or constricted pupils.
iv. Abrupt weight changes.
v. Changes in hygiene.
vi. Dental issues.
vii. Skin changes.
viii. Problems sleeping or sleeping too much.

Signs will vary based on the substance and the method used (that is smoking, injection,)

Behavioral signs of harmful substances

The use of harmful substances tends to significantly alter a person's behavior and habits. Some harmful substances can impair the brain's ability to focus and think clearly.

Changes in behaviour, such as the following, are sometimes associated with problematic substance use:

i. Increased aggression or irritability.
ii. Changes in attitude/personality.
iii. Lethargy.
iv. Depression.
v. Sudden changes in a social network.
vi. Dramatic changes in habits and/or priorities.
vii. Involvement in criminal activity.
viii. Consequences of youth substance abuse

Effects of harmful substances on undergraduate students in university

Young people who persistently abuse substances often experience an array of problems, including academic difficulties, health-related problems (including mental health), poor peer relationships, and involvement with the juvenile justice system. Additionally, there are consequences for family members, the community, and the entire society.

1. **Academics**

Declining grades, absenteeism from school and other activities, and increased potential for dropping out of school are problems associated with adolescent substance abuse. Hawkins, and Miller (2019) cite research indicating that a low level of commitment to education and

higher truancy rates appear to be related to substance use among adolescents. Cognitive and behavioral problems experienced by alcohol- and drug-using youth may interfere with their academic performance and also present obstacles to learning for their classmates (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2018).

2. **Physical health**

Injuries due to accidents (such as car accidents), physical disabilities and diseases, and the effects of possible overdoses are among the health-related consequences of teenage substance abuse. Disproportionate numbers of youth involved with alcohol and other drugs face an increased risk of death through suicide, homicide, accident, and illness.

The Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) study -- in a representative sample of hospitals throughout the United States -- reports trends in people seeking emergency department treatment related to illegal drug use or nonmedical use of legal drugs. Preliminary 2017estimates indicate drug-related emergency department episodes for youth ages 12 to 17 increased by 17 percent from 2015to 2017. This increase was greater than for any of the older age groups reported. Significantly, emergency department visits related to marijuana/hashish for youth ages 12 to 17 increased 50 percent between 2017and 2018 (McCaig, 2015). Ninety-one youth between the ages of 12 and 17 died of drug abuse in 1993 (Office of Applied Studies, 2019).

Transmission of HIV/AIDS primarily occurs through exposure to body fluids of an infected person during sexual contact or through sharing of unsterile drug-injection equipment. Another primary means of transmission is from mothers to infants during pregnancy or the birth process. Many substance-abusing youth engage in behavior that places them at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases. This may include the actual use of psychoactive substances (particularly those that are injected) or behavior resulting from poor judgment and impulse control while experiencing the effects of mood-altering substances. Rates of AIDS diagnoses currently are relatively low among teenagers, compared with most other age groups. However, because the disease has a long latency period before symptoms appear, it is likely that many young adults with AIDS were actually infected with HIV as adolescents.

Although alcohol-related traffic fatalities for youth have declined, young people are still overrepresented in this area. In 1995 alone, more than 2,000 youth (ages 15 to 20) were killed in alcohol-related car crashes (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2017).

These limited examples illustrate the catastrophic health-related consequences of substance abuse among adolescents. Besides personal and family distress, additional healthcare costs and loss of

future productivity place burdens on the community.

3. **Mental health**

Mental health problems such as depression, developmental lags, apathy, withdrawal, and other psychosocial dysfunctions frequently are linked to substance abuse among adolescents. Substance-abusing youth are at higher risk than nonusers for mental health problems, including depression, conduct problems, personality disorders, suicidal thoughts, attempted suicide, and suicide. Marijuana use, which is prevalent among youth, has been shown to interfere with short-term memory, learning, and psychomotor skills. Motivation and psychosexual/emotional development also may be influenced (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2016).

4. **Peers**

Substance-abusing youth often are alienated from and stigmatized by their peers. Adolescents using alcohol and other drugs also often disengage from school and community activities, depriving their peers and communities of the positive contributions they might otherwise have made.

5. **Families**

In addition to personal adversities, the abuse of alcohol and other drugs by youth may result in family crises and jeopardize many aspects of family life, sometimes resulting in family dysfunction. Both siblings and parents are profoundly affected by alcohol- and drug-involved youth (Nowinski, 2015). Substance abuse can drain a family's financial and emotional resources (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2017).

6. **Social and economic consequences**

The social and economic costs related to youth substance abuse are high. They result from the financial losses and distress suffered by alcohol- and drug-related crime victims, increased burdens for the support of adolescents and young adults who are not able to become self-supporting, and greater demands for medical and other treatment services for these youth (Gropper, 2017).

7. **Delinquency**

There is an undeniable link between substance abuse and delinquency. Arrest, adjudication, and intervention by the juvenile justice system are eventual consequences for many youth engaged in alcohol and other drug use. It cannot be claimed that substance abuse causes delinquent behavior or delinquency causes alcohol and other drug use. However, the two behaviors are strongly correlated and often bring about school and family problems, involvement with negative peer groups, a lack of neighborhood social controls, and physical or sexual abuse (Hawkins et al., 2018; Wilson 2018). Possession and use of alcohol and other drugs are illegal for all youth. Beyond that, however, there is strong evidence of an association between alcohol and other drug use and delinquent behavior of juveniles. Substance abuse is associated with both violent and income-generating crimes by youth. This increases fear among community residents and the demand for juvenile and criminal justice services, thus

increasing the burden on these resources. Gangs, drug trafficking, prostitution, and growing numbers of youth homicides are among the social and criminal justice problems often linked to adolescent substance abuse.

7 Tips for Helping Someone with an Addiction

According to daily health wire (2014) .The challenge with addiction is that the addict is not the only one impacted by this disease. Family and friends can have difficulty with the addict's behavior, financial problems, legal problems and the daily struggle of supporting a loved one. Here are seven tips that family and friends can reference to support an addicted family member or friend.

1: **Educate Yourself**

Get information about addictions. Understand the addict's disease process. Find information about how it impacts the family and friends. Knowledge is power and it may help you understand more about yourself and your loved one. There are many resources for finding this information: SAMHSA.gov (Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration) has all types of educational and informational resources. The public library and the internet have an enormous amount of information for education, groups, support, treatment, etc.

2**: Get Support**

When you have a loved one with an addiction problem, it can create a great deal of difficulty in your life. There are groups that can help you learn how to cope, provide resources and help the addict, including:

Al-Anon (focused on Alcohol addiction)

Nar-Anon (focused on drug addiction – prescription and illegal)

3: **Get Counseling**

It may be helpful to get some individual counseling to assist yourself. Counseling isn't just for the addict. The more you are able to manage the better you will be able to help your loved one. There are a variety of resources to find counselors. Your company may have an Employee Assistance Program or your health insurance may have mental health benefits that you can access. Talk to someone you trust about finding the resources you need and do a search for resources in your area.

4: **Seek Specialty Help**

If you need assistance with financial issues or legal issues it may be helpful to talk to attorney providers that are covered. There are organizations that provide services on a sliding scale fee and you can often find those by calling your local Mental Health Agency or United Way. Local churches may also provide some low or no cost counseling.

5: **Don't Enable**

It is difficult for family members when the disease takes hold. Often, family members have supported the person's addiction

without even fully realizing that was what they were doing. Don't rescue the addict. Let them experience the consequences of their disease. Many times, people are unable to change until they are forced. Don't financially support the addict or their addiction. Many family members and friends buy groceries, give financial assistance to pay court fines or attorneys, or pay rent to help someone out, but usually it only prolongs the disease as addicts are able to avoid consequences.

6: **Have Realistic Expectations**
Don't preach or lecture to the addict. They are usually unable to hear what you are saying. Continue to hold them accountable to expectations and offer help to direct them to the treatment they need. Don't expect addicts to keep promises, they are not able to do so while in the process of their disease. Don't react with pity or anger. This only keeps you in the process with the addict.

If your loved one is ready to get help, visit our Alcohol and Drug Treatment page to find out more about getting a referral and assessment. You can also contact Legal Aid programs in your area to see if you qualify for those services or they may be able to direct you to someone who can assist you.

7: **Take Care of Yourself**
Focusing on your own life is the most important thing you can do to assist the addict. If you are stressed out due to their issues, in addition to your own, it creates resentment and strain. It makes it difficult to want to help someone who has created so much difficulty in your life. By taking care of yourself through exercising, getting plenty of sleep, socializing and getting support, you may be better able to help your loved one when they are ready to accept the help.

The most important thing to remember is that you aren't alone. Many people battle with these issues every day and it is vital to get the resources and support you need.

Conclusion
In conclusion Substance abuse can simply be as a pattern of harmful use of any substance for mood-altering purposes. "Substances" can include alcohol and other drugs (illegal or not) as well as some substances that are not drugs at all. Therefore there is need to address those factors that triggers the use of illicit Substance in order to help our undergraduates. Multidimensional approach is needed in curbing substance use among undergraduate students both at the educational institution and family levels. These include drug education along with lectures, rallies, seminars and film shows on the adverse effects of harmful substances, imposing severe sanctions on victimless offenders who are traffickers of illicit substances and institutional steps taken toward rehabilitating dependants.

Recommendations

1. There should be proper orientation of students on the dangers associated with constant use of substances. This should be embark upon by departmental heads, student union government and all registered associations and clubs on campus in their orientation programmes organize for fresher's as this will enable them avoid the take of illicit drugs.
2. Parents should ensure peaceful home, knowing it has influence on the attitude of the child.
3. Counselling services should be provided by counselling unit of our Nations institutions of higher learning to students already addicted with the social problem of Substances usage in order to reduce the level of their intake and help them recover from its effects on their academic loss.
4. Parents should be involved in supervising students' academic work.
5. The state government should provide more fund to support the students academically
6. Parents should be counseled on the negative impact of broken home

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