



## Determinants of substance abuse among senior secondary students in Mainland local government, Lagos

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### ABSTRACT

#### Background

The World Health Organization defines a psychoactive substance as any substance that, when taken by a person, modifies perception, mood, cognition, behavior or motor functions and includes illicit and licit substances, whether or not their use brings about dependence problems in individual, and whether or not people consider them harmful. The use of drugs among adolescents is a global phenomenon eating deep into the fabrics of our society. Students are most vulnerable at this transformative stage in their life. What are the determinants of drug abuse by Students?

#### Methodology

This research was a cross sectional descriptive design to identify the factors or determinants of substance abuse among Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Mainland Local Government, Lagos. A sample size of two hundred and sixty two was determined and used from randomly selected five out of nine public schools identified. Multi stage sampling (including simple random and systematic sampling) and probability proportional to size methods were usefully employed in scientific selection of 262 samples and subsequent data collection in a total sample frame of 1,938 students. Self administered questionnaire consisting of open and close-ended questions generated using research objectives was used in data collection.

#### Result

It identified that there is significant association between educational levels of respondents' parents and their use of alcohol, cigarette and marijuana at P-values of 0.002, 0.010 and 0.005 respectively, but there is no significant association in the use of cocaine at P-value of 0.111. It also found that there is a significant association between household structure of respondents and their use of alcohol, cigarette and marijuana at P-values of 0.000, 0.000 and 0.033 respectively, but there is no significant association in the use of cocaine at P-value of 0.229.

#### Conclusion

Everybody is at risk of drugs. It is hence recommended that Government and Non-governmental agencies, Schools, Religious organizations and Parents should put up a more proactive disposition in learning and teaching of adolescents on the dangers of drug use or abuse as well as pay closer attention to children as they are very vulnerable at the tender stage of development.

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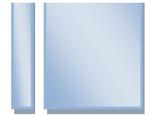
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## INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization defines a psychoactive substance as any substance that, when taken by a person, modifies perception, mood, cognition, behavior or motor functions and includes illicit and licit substances, whether or not their use brings about dependence problems in individual, and whether or not people consider them harmful.<sup>1</sup> Hence substance abuse or drug dependence can further be defined as "state of psychic or physical dependence, or both on a drug, following administration of the drug on a periodic or continuous basis".<sup>1</sup> The use of these drugs among adolescents is a global phenomenon eating deep into the fabrics of our society. Senior Secondary Students are most vulnerable at this transformative stage of their life and often prone to dangers associated with lack of awareness on substance abuse.

Substance abuse, a public health and social problem has gradually become a cause for concern in Africa and indeed Nigeria. In Nigeria, the consumption of illegal drugs and the harmful use of other psychoactive substances such as alcohol, pharmaceutical drugs, inhalants and solvents have increased at an alarming rate over the years. Available report indicates that Nigeria is currently the highest consumer of cannabis and amphetamines in Africa.<sup>2</sup> The estimated lifetime consumption of cannabis among the population is 10.8%, followed by psychotropic substances like benzodiazepines and amphetamine-type stimulants (10.6%) and cocaine (1.4%) in both urban and rural areas.<sup>3</sup> What reasons or factors make these students abuse drugs?

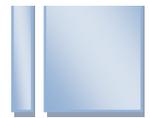
Several researchers both locally and internationally gave similar and recurring reasons in their studies for abuse of drugs.<sup>4-12</sup> A study done on the causative factors of substance abuse among selected secondary school students in Ibadan, Nigeria gave reasons for abuse on the basis of gender, level of school class and religion. It adduced that Males and Females have different reasons like 'stimulation of their brains, inability to cope with the realities of life, shyness, talk to opposite sex', for engaging in drug abuse.<sup>6</sup> Also junior and senior students have different reasons for getting involved in substance abuse. Religion however was not a determining factor of

substance abuse between Muslims and Christian students -as these students would have different reasons for drug abuse.<sup>6</sup>

The causes of substance abuse among secondary school students are numerous.<sup>6</sup> In another similar scenario in Rivers State, factors influencing such use were identified as; stress relief, good feelings and parental influences.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps this study in Ile-Ife, Nigeria goes further to establish more facts on the reasons for use. It looks at the Family unit and asserted its evidence mainly therein. That too much freedom and lack of care by parents contributed to the problem; that students whose parents had television sets, radio and videos were more involved in the abuse; and that the availability of these substances at home contributed to the abuse problems.<sup>13</sup> This evidence finds the family unit culpable as the unit of failure. However you look at it, all factors indicate that something is fundamentally wrong.

United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), asserts that general poverty level increases the pressure for survival and at same time the vulnerability of Children.<sup>3</sup> Though poverty might increase the tendency to doing drugs, what of those who are not poor but addicts? What reasons can be applied here? Can it be rightly said that drug abuse knows no class or level of education? A pattern of drug/substance abuse among senior secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria City, showed that the predominant reasons for indulgence of respondents in use of drugs are for academic purposes, to feel high/good and for physical fitness.<sup>8</sup>

Different strokes for different folks. Each researcher with the peculiarity of his environment has at least one reason or the other. A study in Minna has this to say about Family as the root of the menace; however it still claimed that the reasons are insignificant and temporary. It showed that family size contributes immensely to inability of the parents to control their children.<sup>12</sup> Family conditions were considered and incompetent parenting were found to expose children to different types of danger in the society including drug abuse and other crimes. Children without proper home care easily fall victim to peer



pressure.<sup>12</sup> It was also evident that reasons adduced for drug use and abuse are insignificant and temporary. In most cases drug abuse emanates from an array of psycho-social reasons; for example peer pressure, hedonism, depression, frustration and sometimes to build up self-esteem.<sup>12</sup>

What are the international dimensions to these reasons? A study in Jamaica did not reveal anything new in the reasons for use of these drugs. It still substantiated the local views but went further than that to add other associated factors. It showed that illicit drug use among males, urban students and children of professionals was higher than that among females, rural students and children of nonprofessionals, respectively.<sup>5</sup> This further proved that drug knows no socio-economic class. The view in the United States is also in consonance and identified social factors attributable to such use and abuse among adolescents to include; relieve boredom, feel good, forget their trouble and relax, have fun, satisfy their curiosity, take risks, ease their pain, feel grown up, show their independence, belong to a specific group, look cool.<sup>14</sup>

This study which employs a descriptive study is to identify those factors that influence substance abuse among senior secondary students in Lagos Mainland Local Government. It aimed at looking at the socioeconomic status of respondents in terms of their household structure, educational level of parents among other things and its connection with substance abuse.

## METHODOLOGY

### Study design

This was a cross-sectional descriptive study to determine the factors that influence substance abuse among public senior secondary students in Mainland Local Government, Lagos Nigeria. This study included all senior secondary 1 and 2 students in public schools in Mainland Local Government. Senior secondary 3 students were however excluded because at the time of this study, they had finished West African school Certificate Examinations and were out of school. There was a total target student population size of 5,791 from the nine schools in the area. A sampling frame of 1,938 students was

identified from 3,671 students study population which was randomly selected in five out of the nine schools. Ethical approval was sought and approved by Research and Ethics Committee of Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH). Informed consent was obtained from heads of schools and students. Confidentiality was also assured as no personal identification information was included on the questionnaire.

### Sample and sampling method

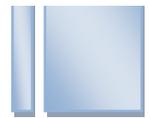
A sample size of 262 was determined using the formula for descriptive studies.<sup>15</sup> Multistage sampling method (simple random sampling, systematic sampling and proportionate to size sampling) was employed in the selection of these 262 respondents from the five public schools in a sampling frame of 1,938.

### Data collection/Analysis

Self-administered questionnaire consisting of open and close-ended questions generated using research objectives and from relevant literature review was used for data collection.<sup>4-12</sup> The questionnaire comprised questions ranging from socio-demographic variables including household structure, educational levels of respondents' parents to reasons why respondents think people abuse drugs etc. Data entry and analysis was done using Epi-info version 3.5.1. The data got was presented in tables.

## RESULTS

Table 1 is a cross tabulation of educational level of parent with alcohol and Cigarette use by respondents in Lagos mainland Local Government. One hundred percent of respondents whose parents had education above secondary school used alcohol while only thirty one percent respondents whose parents had education below secondary school did same. Additionally, twenty eight percent of respondents whose parents had education above secondary school level used cigarette while zero percent of respondents did same for those whose parents had education below secondary school. At p-values of 0.002 and 0.010 each, there is significant association between educational level of parent and the use of alcohol and cigarette respectively.

**Table 1** Cross tabulation of educational level of parent with alcohol and cigarette use by respondents

Educational level	Alcohol use		X <sup>2</sup> (P-value)	Cigarette Use		X <sup>2</sup> (P-value)
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Above secondary school	175 100%	0 .0%	156.5(.002)	50 28.6%	125 71.4%	30.72(0.010)
Below secondary school	27 31.0%	60 69.0%		0 .0%	87 100%	
Total	202	60		50	212	

This shows a significant association between educational level of parent and the use of alcohol and cigarette at p-values of 0.002 and 0.010 respectively.

Table 2 is a cross tabulation of educational level of parent with cocaine and marijuana use by respondents in Lagos mainland Local Government. Three percent of respondents whose parents had education above secondary school used cocaine while zero percent respondents whose parents had education below secondary school did same. Also,

nine percent of respondents whose parents had education above secondary school level used marijuana while zero percent of respondents did same for those whose parents had education below secondary school. At p-value of 0.111 there is no significant association between educational level of parent and the use of cocaine but with significant association for marijuana use at p-value of 0.005.

**Table 2** Cross tabulation of educational level of parent with cocaine and marijuana use by respondents

Educational level	Cocaine Use		X <sup>2</sup> (P-value)	Marijuana Use		X <sup>2</sup> (P-value)
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Above secondary school	5 3.0%	170 97.0%	2.53(0.111)	15 9%	160 91%	7.91(0.005)
Below secondary school	0 .0%	87 100%		0 .0%	87 100%	
Total	5	257		15	247	

This shows no significant association between educational level of parent and the use of cocaine but with significant association with marijuana use at p-values of 0.111 and 0.005 respectively.

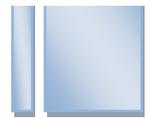
**Table 3** Cross tabulation of household structure of respondents with alcohol and cigarette

Household structure	Alcohol Use		X <sup>2</sup> (P-value)	Cigarette Use		X <sup>2</sup> (P-value)
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Living with parents	202 99.0%	2 1.0%	250.8(0.000)	50 25.0%	154 75.0%	17.57(0.000)
Living with other relatives	0 .0%	58 100.0%		0 .0%	58 100%	
Total	202	60		50	212	

This shows a significant association between household structure of respondents and the use of alcohol and cigarette at p-values of 0.000 and 0.000 respectively.

Table 3 shows a cross tabulation of household structure of respondents with alcohol and Cigarette use. Ninety nine percent of respondents who live with

their parent used alcohol while zero percent of respondents living with other relatives did same. Besides, Twenty five percent of respondents who live with their parent used cigarette while zero percent of



respondents living with other relatives did same. At p-value of 0.000 for each, it showed a significant association between the household structure of respondents and the use of alcohol and cigarette respectively.

Table 4 shows a cross tabulation of household structure of respondents with cocaine and marijuana use. Two percent of respondents who live with their

parent used cocaine while zero percent of respondents living with other relatives did same. Moreover, Seven percent of respondents who live with their parent used marijuana while zero percent of respondents living with other relatives did same. At p-value of 0.229 there is no significant association between household structure of respondents and the use of cocaine but with significant association for marijuana use at p-value of 0.033.

**Table 4 Cross tabulation of household structure of respondents with cocaine and marijuana use**

Household structure	Cocaine Use		X <sup>2</sup> (P-value)	Marijuana Use		X <sup>2</sup> (P-value)
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Living with parents	5 2.0%	199 98.0%	1.449(0.229)	15 7.0%	189 93.0%	4.52(0.033)
Living with other relatives	0 .0%	58 100%		0 .0%	58 100%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>257</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>247</b>	

*This shows no significant association between household structure of respondents and the use of cocaine but with significant association for marijuana use at p-values of 0.229 and 0.033 respectively.*

Table 5 shows the reasons respondents think make people abuse drugs. Thirty nine respondents(14.9%) claimed it is due to peer pressure, twenty six respondents(9.9%) depression, fifty eight respondents(22.1%) curiosity, twelve

respondents(4.6%) media influence, sixty one(23.3%) coping with home problems, thirty eight(14.5%) lack of parental guidance and five (1.9%) claimed it was to deal with school pressure.

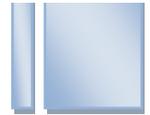
**Table 5 Reasons why respondents think people abuse drugs**

Reasons why people abuse drugs	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Peer pressure	39	14.9
Depression	26	9.9
Curiosity	58	22.1
In the influence of the media	12	4.6
To cope with home problems	61	23.3
Lack of parental guidance	38	14.5
To deal with school	5	1.9
Others	23	8.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>100</b>

*This shows that 23% of respondents claimed people abused drugs in other to cope with home problems, 22% due to curiosity and 14.9% due to peer pressure and 14.5% attributed to lack of parental guidance.*

Table 6 shows the distribution of people who introduced respondents to their first attempt at taking drugs. Ninety eight respondents (37.4%) out of those that have taken the substance said it was

friends that introduced them to it while thirteen (5.0%) said it was from family. However fifty seven percent declined it was not applied to them.



**Table 6 People who introduced respondents to first attempt at trying drugs**

Who first introduced you to taking any of the substances	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Friends	98	37.4
Family	13	5.0
Not applied	151	57.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>100</b>

*This table shows that 37.4% of respondents who have taken drugs, were introduced to it for the first time through their friends while 5.0% was through a family member.*

#### KEY POINTS

- 1) There is significant association between educational level of respondents' parents and their use of alcohol and cigarette at p-values of 0.002 and 0.010 respectively.
- 2) There is no significant association between educational level of respondents' parents and the use of cocaine but significant association in the use of marijuana at p-values of 0.111 and 0.005 respectively.
- 3) There is significant association between household structure of respondents and their use of alcohol, cigarette and marijuana at p-values of 0.000, 0.000 and 0.033 respectively, but there is no significant association in the use of cocaine at p-value of 0.229.
- 4) It is advised that Government and Non-Governmental agencies, schools, religious organizations and parents should put up a more proactive disposition in learning and teaching of adolescents on the dangers of drug use and abuse as well as pay closer attention to children as they are very vulnerable at the tender stage of development.

#### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A whole lot of factors influence substance abuse among students. This study scientifically tried to ascertain the relationship between substance abuse and the educational status of respondents' parents and the nature of household respondents live in. It compared the commonly abused substances with the above variables using chi-square to express if there are obvious relationships.

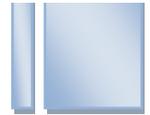
A cross tabulation of educational level of respondents' parent with the use of alcohol and cigarette among students showed a significant association between this variable and the use of the two substances at p-values of 0.002 and 0.010 respectively. From this picture, it is clear those students whose parents had secondary education and above are more likely to abuse alcohol and cigarette.

Moreover comparing same variable (educational level) with cocaine and marijuana use showed a significant association with marijuana use at p-value of 0.005 and no significant association with cocaine use at p-value 0.111. It shows that students whose parents had secondary education and above had more inclination towards marijuana while educational status of parents had no role to play in the use of cocaine.

This study also went further to show if the household structure of respondents in terms of those staying with their biological parents or those with relatives had any role to play in their abuse of drugs. This was to elucidate if the background of these respondents – good or defective parenting affected respondents on their abuse of drugs.

The household structure of respondents compared with alcohol and cigarette use, showed a significant association between this variable and the use of alcohol and cigarette at p-values of 0.000 and 0.000 respectively. This study depicts vividly that students living with parents are more likely to abuse drugs than those living with other relatives.

In addition comparing household structure with the use of cocaine and marijuana, showed no significant relationship between cocaine use and the variable at



p-value 0.229 while marijuana use showed significant use with household structure at p-value of 0.033. It follows that living with parents had no effect on the use of cocaine among respondents however living with parents made students abuse marijuana.

Other factors assessed include the reasons given by respondents as to what they think makes people abuse drugs. Greater percentages of respondents (23.3%, 22.1%, 14.9% and 14.5%) think people abuse drugs to cope with home problems, curiosity, peer pressure and lack of parental guidance respectively. However when they were asked about who introduced them first to taking these substances, 37.4% of respondents claimed they had it first from friends while 5% claimed first attempt was through a family member.

A critical look at the findings above in comparison to what was found from literature,<sup>8, 12</sup> attest to the fact that peer pressure and lack of parenting influence substance use and abuse. United Nations office on drug and crime feels otherwise by asserting that general poverty level increases the pressure for survival and at same time the vulnerability of Children.<sup>3</sup> This was however countered by a study which showed that illicit drug use among urban students and children of professionals was higher than that among rural students and children of nonprofessionals, respectively.<sup>5</sup> The foregoing is in consonance with this study where educational level of parents above secondary school was found to be a significant influence on respondents' abuse of alcohol, cigarette and marijuana. It also showed that most students who live with their parents instead of other relatives were more influenced in using alcohol, cigarette and marijuana.

Some studies revealed poverty, poor parenting, and lack of care as factors influencing substance abuse, this study went even further to establish a significant association between educational level of parents of respondents above secondary school and the use of alcohol, cigarette and marijuana. It also proved that household structure of respondents (living with parents) has a significant association with the use of alcohol, cigarette and marijuana. A child, whose parents is learned and also lives with them, has more

tendency of abusing drugs. However, this does not agree with the assertion that "a child who has fundamental issues with parenting seeks solution elsewhere".<sup>14</sup>

A study in Rivers State, where factors influencing such use were identified as; stress relief, good feelings and parental influences substantiated the facts in this study.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps this study in Ile-Ife Nigeria even goes further to concur on the reasons for use. It looks at the family unit and asserted its evidence mainly therein- that too much freedom and lack of care by parents contributed to the problem; that students whose parents had television sets, radio and videos were more involved in the abuse; and that the availability of these substances at home contributed to the abuse problems.<sup>13</sup>

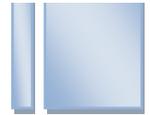
In conclusion, determinants of substance abuse in comparison to other studies from literature, has no socioeconomic standard or class. Substance abuse knows nobody and respects nobody. Everybody is at risk of drugs. It is hence recommended that Governmental and Non-Governmental agencies, schools, religious organizations and parents, should put up a more proactive disposition in learning and teaching of adolescents on the dangers of drug use and abuse as well as pay closer attention to children as they are very vulnerable at the tender stage of development.

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