

## PEER GROUP INFLUENCE ON DRUG ABUSE AMONG YOUNG ADULTS (A CASE STUDY OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS STUDENTS OF CHARANCHI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KATSINA STATE)

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### **Abstract**

*This study was carried out to investigate peer group influence on drug abuse among young adults of secondary schools in Charanchi LGA of Katsina State. The population of the study consisted of Three thousand eight Hundred and seventeen (3,817) students and the sample size of Three hundred and Fourty six (346) students was used for the study using random sampling technique. The questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection and the data was analyzed using percentages (%). The result of the findings showed that students in Charanchi LGA get involved in drug abuse through friends and family and peer group influence plays a significant role in drug abuse. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made among which were that; voluntary and religious organizations should intensify campaigns against drug abuse and parents should lead exemplary lives to their children by not taking drugs.*

**Keywords:** Drug, Drug abuse, Young Adults, Influence

### **Introduction**

Drug use is not just a present-day phenomenon. Since the early times, herbs, leaves and plants have been used to heal and control diseases. In china for example, Marijuana was used over 20 centuries ago as an anesthetic in surgery, while even earlier in Egypt, opium was used to hush crying babies (Lynn, 2003). Udo (1987) defined drug as any substance other than food for use in diagnosing, curing, relieving or preventing disease.

According to Okoye (2001) a drug refers to a substance that could bring about a change in the biological function through its chemical actions. The use of drugs in itself does not constitute danger because drugs correctly administered are used for many health benefits of man. However, with the rapid growth of scientific knowledge, new drugs and new properties of old ones have been discovered, radically altering people's ideas of drug use.

Drug abuse, according to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) (2011) is a major public health problem all over the world. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) (1997) stated that the use and abuse of drugs by adolescents have become one of the most disturbing health related phenomena in Nigeria and other parts of the world. Many school age adolescents now engage in indiscriminate use of drugs which most often have a negative effect on their lives and future.

Odejide (1997) defined drug abuse as the improper use or application of drugs by a person without proper knowledge of the drugs and without due prescription from a qualified medical practitioner. Abdullahi (2009) viewed drug abuse as the use of drugs to the extent that it interferes with the health and social functions of an individual. This means that drug abuse can also be defined as any unlawful use of drugs or arbitrary misuse of drugs.

The youth in Nigeria like many countries of the world are developing addiction to drugs. This has caused many students to drop out of school as a result of mental breakdown or crimes. Crimes such as stealing, rape, armed robbery and disregard for social norms and culture among youths are usually committed under the influence of some of these drugs. This is however a menace that is ravaging the youths of nowadays which, if not checked quickly, can cause a bigger problem in future that will be difficult to tackle. It is against this background that this paper investigates the influence of peer-group on drug abuse in Charanchi Local Government Area of Katsina State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The menace of drug abuse among young adults of school age has become an issue of great concern. Confirming this, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) (2015) asserted that the young adults are more affected by alcohol and drugs. For some, one time use of alcohol or drugs can result in tragedy; alcohol overdose (alcohol poisoning), an accident or an arrest associated with alcohol that may cost users their reputation and/or freedom. For others, even though they may not use alcohol or drugs, they could become victims of an alcohol or drug-related crime. And yet for others, what may have started as an occasional use can turn into an addiction that presents extra-ordinary concerns with potentially grave and tragic consequences.

Youth in any society, according to Emmanuel (2014), occupy a delicate and sensitive position within the population structure. The Nigerian Law, for example, recognizes that an individual below the age of seven is incapable of committing a crime and an individual between seven and twelve years should be able to know what he ought not to do, he is also not criminally responsible for his act. He further stated that between the ages of twelve and seventeen, a person is regarded as juvenile and while he may be held responsible for his act or omission, he is treated specially under the law by the children and young persons' Act instead of the criminal procedure

Act. Youth is the period between childhood and adult age, and that is exactly the age drug barons prefer to recruit for drug trafficking and/or use (age 15-35 years) most of whom are either unskilled, students, or unemployed.

Martin (2016) of the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) noted that the new trend in substance abuse in Nigeria is becoming more worrisome due to the increasing number of secondary school and tertiary institution students who are getting involved in drug abuse. These are future leaders of Nigeria!

The National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in 1992 collected drugs use and abuse data from schools, records of patients admitted at mental health institutions for drug problems and interviews of persons arrested for drug. The result showed that young adults constitute the high-risk group for drug trafficking and abuse. Friends and school mates account for about 90% of the source of influence of the use and abuse of various psycho-active substances (United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), 1988 as cited in Amosun et al, 2010).

However, the situation is not different in Charanchi Local Government Area of Katsina state where it has been observed that many young adults smoke cigarette which makes them more prone to using stronger drugs like marijuana, glue and cough syrup. Consequently, many of such youths suffer from the negative effects of drug abuse and the society too also suffers.

The main causes of this ugly development among young adults cannot be easily established. This study therefore attempts to investigate the peer influence of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Charanchi Local Government Area of Katsina State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate peer group influence on drug abuse among students of senior secondary schools in Charanchi Local Government Area of Katsina state. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To determine the level of engagement in drug abuse by Senior Secondary School Students in Charanchi Local Government Area.
2. To determine the influence of peer group in drug abuse among Senior Secondary School Students in Charanchi Local Government Area.

### Research Questions

In the attempt to investigate the influence of peer group on drug abuse among Senior Secondary School Students in Charanchi Local Government Area, the following questions shall be advanced:

1. What is the level of engagement in drug abuse by Senior Secondary School Students in Charanchi Local Government Area?
2. What is the role of peer-group in drug abuse among Senior Secondary School Students in Charanchi Local Government Area?

### Conceptual framework

#### Definition of Drug

Drug has been defined by various individuals and organizations. Business Dictionary (2016) define drugs as “any natural or synthetic substance which (when taken into a living body) affects its functioning or structure, and is used in the diagnosis, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of a disease or relief of discomfort” or “habit forming stimulants or narcotics substance which produces a state of arousal, contentment, or euphoria”. According to Farcon (2016) a drug is a substance other than food intended to affect the structural function of physiological system such as the human body. Fawa (2003) as cited in Fareo (2012) asserted that drug is any substance which is used for treatment or prevention of a disease in humans and animals.

The World Health Organization (WHO) Expert committee on drug dependence (1993) defined drug as any substance that when taken into a living organism may modified its perceptions, mood, cognitive behaviour or motor function. To buttress this, Ahire (1990) defined drug as any substance which when

taken into the body may modify or cause changes in the body. Yunusa (1988) says “to a doctor, a drug might be any substance used as medicine for the treatment of physical or mental diseases”.

Drugs alters the body functions either positively or otherwise depending on the body composition of the user, the type of drug used, the amount used and whether used single or with other drugs at the same time.

### Meaning of Drug Abuse

Abdullahi (2009) viewed drug abuse as the use of drugs to the extent that it interferes with the health and social function of an individual. In essence, he defined drug abuse as the arbitrary overdependence or misuse of one particular drug with or without a prior medical diagnosis from qualified health practitioners. It can also be viewed as the unlawful overdose in the use of drug(s).

World Book Encyclopedia (2004) defined drug abuse as the non- medical use of a drug that interferes with a healthy and productive life. According to University of Maryland Medical Center (2016), drug abuse is a patterned use of a drug in which the user consumes the substance in amounts or with methods which are harmful to themselves or others.

Natasha (2016) opined that drug abuse is an extreme desire to obtain and use increasing amounts of one or more substances. Drug abuse is a generic term for the abuse of any drug, including alcohol and cigarettes. Cling (1990) defined drug abuse as the excessive or inappropriate use of substance (drugs) by a person, such use being considered or judged to be illegal (immoral) by the culture and also resulting in harm to the person or society. To Udo (1987) drug abuse involves taking various categories of drugs whether prescribed or not in such a way as to interfere with community accepted standards of social psychological wellbeing.

### Classification of Commonly Abused Drugs

The National Agency for Food, Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC) (2000) as cited in Fareo (2012) stated that in

Nigeria, the most common types of abused drugs are categorized as follows:

- a. **Stimulants:** These are substance that directly act and stimulate the central nervous system. Users at the initial stage experience pleasant effects such as energy increase. The major source of these comes from caffeine substance.
- b. **Hallucinogens:** These are drugs that alter the sensory processing unit in the brain. Thus, producing distorted perception, feeling of anxiety and euphoria, sadness and inner joy, they normally come from marijuana, Indian hemp etc.
- c. **Narcotics:** These drugs relieve pains, induces sleeping and they are addictive. They are among the most widely used and abused. This is largely 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. They are sourced from valium, alcohol, promotazine, chloroform.
- d. **Miscellaneous:** This is a group of volatile solvents or inhabitants that provide euphoria, emotional exhibition and perpetual distortion of thought to the user. The main sources are glues, spot removers, tube repair, perfumes, chemicals etc.
- e. **Tranquilizers:** They are believed to produce calmness without bringing drowsiness. They are chiefly derived from librium, valium etc.

Dan (1983) asserted that sometimes, drugs could be described as legal or illegal. The legal drugs are those that are available for purchase freely or by prescription. The illegal drugs are forbidden from being manufactured, purchased or used. According to World Health Organization (WHO) (1993), drugs could generally be described as prescription or non-prescription. The prescription drugs are those that can be obtained and used when prescribed by a physician or any trained medical personal. Their use without the doctor's prescription and supervision can be

hazardous. They are mostly used for the treatment of certain major disease.

The non- prescriptive drugs are those that can be obtained without doctor's prescription. They are often referred to as over-the-counter drugs. They are mostly used for minor cases of illness to give temporary relief.

Natasha (2016) Categorizes drugs commonly seen in drug abuse cases to include:

- a. Legal, over-the-counter: includes drugs like alcohol and cigarettes.
- b. Legal, prescription: includes drugs like methadone, oxycodone and zolpiden.
- c. Chemical: includes drugs like inhalants.
- d. Illegal: includes drugs like marijuana, opiates (like heroin), stimulants (like methamphetamines and cocaine) and hallucinogenics (like acid).

### Methodology

The target population for this study consists of the entire secondary school students within Charanchi Local Government (3817 students). Since it is not practicable to interview or administer questionnaire on the whole population of students (3817 students) in all the five schools in Charanchi Local Government Area, the researchers therefore used Kreyce and Morgan's (1971) table of determining sample size to arrive at a manageable sample size. The table stated that a research population within the range of 3000 to 4000 should have a sample size of 346.

The researchers used simple random sampling technique based on percentage, to determine the number of respondents to be selected from each school. The distribution is as follows: 8.12% of 346 from GDSS Ganuwa, 13.89% of 346 from GDSS Radda, 11.32% of 346 from GDSS Barye, 16.37% of 346 from GDSS Kuraye and 50.30% of 346 from GDSS Charanchi. However, the percentages for various schools were based on the population of individual school, thus the variation. Simple random sampling was used to select respondents from each school as follows:

GDSS Garuwa -----28 respondents

GDSS Radda ----- 48 respondents

GDSS Barye ----- 39 respondents

GDSS Kurye ----- 57 respondents

The instrument for data collection is a questionnaire adopted from a similar study conducted by Omebijeh (1997) in Numan

GDSS Charanchi ----- 174 respondents

**TOTAL----- 346 respondents**

LGA of Adamawa State. The questionnaire deals with questions based on variables of the study.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1:** Do senior secondary school students in Charanchi Local Government Area abuse drugs?

Question/item	Frequency percentage (%)	Yes	No	Total
Do you take Drugs?	F	147	199	346
	%	42.5	57.5	100

The analysis of the Table 1 above shows that 42.5% of the respondents are involved in drug abuse while the remaining 57.5% do not take drugs.

**Table 2:** How do senior secondary school students in Charanchi Local Government Area get involved in drug abuse

Question/Item	Frequency (F) Percentage (%)	Through Friends	Through Others	Total
How did you start taking drugs?	F	89	58	147
	%	60.5	39.5	100

According to the analysis of table 2 above, 60.5% of the respondents who take drugs admitted that they were influenced by friends and relatives while 39.5% agreed that other people were of influence.

**Table 3:** What role do peer group play in drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Charanchi Local Government Area?

Question/item	Frequency(F) Percentage (%)	Yes	N0	Other	Total
i. Would you advised your friend to take drugs	F	93	242	11	346
	%	26.9	69.9	3.2	100
ii. Do you think that your friends can influence you to be taking drugs?	F	226	56	64	346
	%	65.3	16.2	18.5	100
iii. Do you take drugs because your friends are taking it?	F	118	228	—	346
	%	34.1	65.9	—	100

From the table 3 above, the analysis of item one (1) show that 26.9% of the respondents agreed that they would advise their friends to take drugs while 69.9%

rejected the statement. Item (ii) in the table 6 above shows that 65.3% of the respondents admitted that their friends can influence them to be taking drugs while 16.2% disagreed with



the statement. Item (iii) of table 6 above indicates that 34.1% of the respondents admitted that they take drugs because their friends do so and 65.9% disagreed with the statement.

### Discussion of findings

The findings of this study show that secondary students in Charanchi Local Government Area are involved in drug abuse. This agrees with the assertion of NDLEA (1997) that the use and abuse of drugs by adolescents have become one of the most disturbing health related phenomena in Nigeria and other parts of the world.

From the findings of this research, it is clear that peer group plays a significant role in drug abuse. This finding agrees with Yunusa (1988) and Erickson (1976). Yunusa (1988) noted that students abuse drugs due to bad company while Erickson (1976) noted that students abuse drugs to make them better friends.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be submitted that students in Charanchi Local Government Area are involved in drug abuse. They get involved through friends and relatives. Accessibility to drugs and ignorance contributes to drug abuse in the area. In as much as the findings of this research may not be entirely new especially to researchers, it calls to attention the fact that drug abuse is a challenge in Charanchi LGA also. This should prompt parents, teachers and other stakeholders to make up and give the fight against drug abuse the attention it deserves, especially among the youth because they are the future leaders

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made;

1. Both parents and teachers should take adequate care of the students and be interested in their day to day activities at home and school.

2. Health education should be revived and made compulsory in schools. This will help to enlighten the students on the consequences of drug abuse and how to avoid them.
3. Voluntary and religious organizations should intensify campaigns against drug abuse.
4. Parents should lead exemplary lives to their children by not taking drugs.
5. Drug-free clubs should be strengthened in all schools.

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