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PREVALENCE AND PATTERN OF DRUGS ABUSE AMONG YOUTHS IN JOS NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA: A 2024 CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Drug abuse among youths in Nigeria has become a significant public health concern, particularly in urban areas like Jos North LGA, Plateau State. The study aims to investigate the prevalence and patterns of drug abuse among youths aged 11-45 years in Jos North LGA, Plateau State, Nigeria.

Method: A cross-sectional descriptive survey design was employed, involving a random sample of 274 youths from six selected communities within Jos North LGA, chosen through a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and subsequently analyzed using SPSS. Bivariate analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and drug abuse.

Results: The study found a moderate prevalence rate of drug abuse at 39.1%. Interestingly, a slightly higher proportion of females (39.1%) engaged in moderate drug or substance abuse compared to males, although this difference was not statistically significant (P-value = .995).

Conclusions: The study concludes that the prevalence of drug abuse among youths in Jos North LGA is moderate, with a slightly higher rate among females. Additionally, awareness of the health risks associated with drug use and parental drug use significantly influence the likelihood of drug abuse in this population. It is recommended that targeted public health interventions be developed to increase awareness of the dangers of drug abuse, particularly among young females



Keywords: Drug abuse, Youth, Prevalence, Patterns, Public health, Jos North LGA, Plateau State, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse is a significant public health concern with far-reaching consequences, affecting individuals and communities across the globe. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) [1] reports that drug abuse not only undermines health but also disrupts social and economic structures, making it a pressing issue worldwide. In Nigeria, the abuse of drugs among youths has escalated into one of the most troubling health-related phenomena, contributing to a range of mental health issues, social dysfunctions, and educational setbacks [2-4]. This alarming trend underscores the importance of understanding the specific factors driving drug abuse among Nigerian youths, particularly in regions like Jos North Local Government Area (LGA) of Plateau State. Empirical studies highlight the severity of drug abuse among youths and its long-term consequences. For instance, research indicates that many adolescents who engage in drug abuse are at a heightened risk of developing substance dependence in adulthood, leading to significant morbidity and mortality [5-8]. This transition from occasional use to chronic dependence is a critical period that warrants focused study, particularly in areas where drug abuse is prevalent. In Nigeria, the situation is exacerbated by socio-economic challenges, which often leave youths more vulnerable to the lure of drug use as a coping mechanism [9-12]. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective interventions that can mitigate the impact of drug abuse in this population. The prevalence of drug abuse among youths in Jos North LGA is particularly concerning. Existing data,

though limited, suggest that drug abuse in this region is not only widespread but also growing, contributing to a host of social and health problems

Despite the wealth of data on drug abuse at the national and global levels, there are significant gaps in our understanding of how these trends manifest in specific localities like Jos North LGA. Most studies have focused on broader national trends, leaving a void in localized research that can offer insights into the unique socio-cultural and economic factors influencing drug abuse in this area. Filling this gap is essential for developing interventions that are not only effective but also culturally and contextually relevant. This study aims to bridge that gap by providing a detailed analysis of the prevalence and patterns of drug abuse among youths in Jos North LGA. The economic and social burden of drug abuse is profound, not just globally but also at the community level. According to the UNODC, the global costs associated with treating drug abuse are staggering, amounting to hundreds of billions of dollars annually. In Nigeria, the financial impact of drug abuse is similarly severe, straining already limited healthcare resources and exacerbating poverty and social inequality. The costs are not just financial; the human cost is equally devastating, with drug abuse leading to increased rates of mental illness, violence, and premature death [1, 13 -16]. These challenges are particularly acute in regions like Jos North LGA, where socio-economic disparities make the population more vulnerable to the adverse effects of drug abuse. The rationale for this study is rooted in the need to address these pressing issues at a localized level. By



focusing on the youths of Jos North LGA, this research seeks to uncover the specific factors that contribute to drug abuse in this region

Study Area

The study was conducted in Jos North Local Government Area (LGA), Plateau State, Nigeria. Jos North is one of the 17 LGAs in Plateau State, characterized by a diverse population and a mix of urban and semi-urban settlements. The area is known for its multi-ethnic and multi-religious communities, which contribute to the socio-cultural complexity of the region. The LGA is subdivided into 20 political wards, each comprising several settlements, with varying levels of access to education, healthcare, and other social amenities.

Study Design

A cross-sectional survey design was employed for this study. allowing for the analysis of multiple variables at once, such as demographic factors, types of drugs abused, and the socio-economic status of the respondents.

Study Population

Jos North LGA according to National Population Commission (population Census, 2006) is 439,217. Out of this population, the total population of male 220,856 and 216,361 females) The study population comprised youths aged 11-45 years residing in Jos North LGA. This age range was selected because it encompasses the critical periods of adolescence and early adulthood, during which individuals are most susceptible to engaging in drug use and abuse.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria for the study required participants to be within the age range of

11-45 years and to have resided in Jos North LGA for at least six months prior to the study. Exclusion criteria included individuals outside the specified age range, those who were non-residents of Jos North LGA, and individuals with cognitive impairments that could interfere with their ability to understand and respond to the questionnaire.

Sample Size Calculation

The sample size for the study was calculated using the Taro Yamane formula [28] for sample size determination. A sample size of 400 was estimated as presented below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where N = Population size = 1001,155; e = level of significance = 0.05

$$n = \frac{1001155}{1 + 1001155(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1001,155}{1 + 1001155(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1001155}{1 + 2502}$$

$$n = \frac{1001155}{2503}$$

$$n = 399.982$$

Hence, the sample size was approximated to 400.

Four hundred was settled for, as the sample size for the study. The sample size was considered adequate for the study.

Sampling Techniques

A multistage sampling technique was utilized to select the study participants. In the first stage, six political wards were



randomly selected from the 20 existing wards in Jos North LGA using a simple random sampling technique (balloting method). The selected wards were Tafawa Balewa, Angwan Rogo/Rimi, Gangare, Kabong, Tudun Wada, and Naraguta "B." In the second stage, one settlement was randomly chosen from each of the selected wards, ensuring that the sample was representative of the different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds within the LGA. Finally, in the third stage, 67 youths were randomly selected from each of the six settlements, resulting in a total of 402 respondents.

Study Instrument

The primary instrument for data collection was the Prevalence and Pattern of Drug Abuse Questionnaire (PREPATDAS). The questionnaire included sections on demographic information, types of drugs used, frequency and duration of use, and perceptions of drug-related risks. It was pre-tested in a pilot study conducted in a neighboring LGA to ensure its reliability and validity.

Data Analysis

The collected data were entered into Microsoft Excel and subsequently exported to the Statistical Package for

Social Sciences (SPSS) software for analysis. Descriptive statistics, including arithmetic means and percentages, were used to summarize the findings, while frequency distributions and charts were employed to present the data visually. A chi-square test was conducted to determine associations between categorical variables, such as socio-demographic characteristics and drug abuse patterns, with significance set at the 5% level. This analytical approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the factors associated with drug abuse among youths in Jos North LGA and provided the statistical rigor necessary to support the study's conclusions.

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Plateau State Ministry of Health. This approval ensured that the study adhered to ethical standards, including respect for participants' rights, confidentiality, and informed consent. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to their inclusion in the study. For participants under the age of 18, consent was also obtained from a parent or guardian.

Results

The response rate was above 60%, however, out of the 402 copies of the questionnaire administered, 274 copies representing 68.2% were retrieved and found useable. All results of data analyzed were based on the retrieved questionnaire. Hence, table 1 below shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants, which provide a detailed understanding of the population under investigation, which comprised 274 respondents. The distribution of age groups revealed that the majority of the participants (42.0%) were aged between 18-24 years, followed by those aged 25-34 years, who constituted 35.8% of the sample. A smaller proportion of participants were under 18 years old (11.7%), while those aged 35 and above made up 10.6% of the sample. The sample was predominantly male, with 68.2% of the respondents being male and 31.8% female. Educational background varied among the participants, with the majority (55.1%) having attained secondary education. Those with tertiary education and primary education each accounted for 16.4% of the sample, while 12.0% had no formal education. Regarding employment status, the largest group of



respondents were unemployed (40.5%), followed by self-employed individuals (32.5%). Public sector employees made up 17.2% of the sample, while private sector employees constituted 9.9%.

The location of the respondents showed a higher representation from urban areas (70.8%) compared to rural areas (29.2%). Family setting and living arrangements also provided insightful data. A majority of the respondents (55.8%) came from polygamous families, while 44.2% were from monogamous families. Additionally, 66.8% of the participants were living with their families, compared to 33.2% who were not. Parental education levels varied, with 36.5% of fathers having tertiary education, and 28.5% of mothers having secondary education, reflecting a relatively educated parental demographic. However, 25.2% of the respondents reported that either or both parents used drugs

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Socio-Demographic Characteristics	Frequency (n=274)	Percentages (%=100)
Age group		
<18 years	32	11.7
18-24years	115	42.0
25-34years	98	35.8
35 and above years	29	10.6
Sex		
Male	187	68.2
Female	87	31.8
Educational background		
No Education	33	12.0
primary	45	16.4
Secondary	151	55.1
Tertiary	45	16.4
Employment status		
Self-employee	89	32.5
Public sector employee	47	17.2
Unemployed	111	40.5
Private sector employee	27	9.9
Location		
Rural	80	29.2
Urban	194	70.8
Family setting		
Monogamy	121	44.2
Polygamy	153	55.8
Staying with family		
Yes	183	66.8
No	91	33.2
Father's Level of Education		
No education	40	14.6
Primary	59	21.5
Secondary	75	27.4
Tertiary	100	36.5



Mother’s Level of Education

No formal Education	57	20.8
Primary	68	24.8
Secondary	78	28.5
Tertiary	71	25.9

Either or both parents taking drugs

Yes		
No	69	25.2
	205	74.8

Table 2 shows the data from the study. Of the 274 respondents, 58.4% reported being aware of the health implications associated with taking drugs, while 41.6% indicated a lack of awareness. When asked about their current drug or substance use, 39.1% of respondents admitted to taking drugs, whereas 60.9% stated that they were not involved in drug use. Although a majority do not engage in drug abuse, the significant proportion that does (nearly 40%) highlights the prevalence of this issue among the youth. Among those who use drugs, a significant majority (74.8%) reported using multiple drugs, while 25.2% were involved in mono or single drug abuse. Regarding the influence behind drug use, 71.0% of respondents who take drugs cited friends as the primary influence, while 11.2% mentioned parents, and 17.8% indicated that no one influenced them.

Interestingly, when asked whether they enjoyed taking drugs, 67.3% of the drug users responded affirmatively, while 32.7% did not enjoy the experience.

Table 2: The prevalence rate of youths’ drug abuse

Characteristics	Frequency(n=274)	Percentages (%)
Awareness of health implication of taking drugs		
Yes	160	58.4
NO	114	41.6
Are you taking any drug or substances?		
Yes	107	39.1
NO	167	60.9
Number of drugs being use		
Mono/single drug abuse	27	25.2
Multiple drugs of abuse	80	74.8
Who influence you into taking drug/substance		
Friend	76	71.0
Parents	12	11.2
No body	19	17.8
Do you enjoy taking drug?		
Yes	72	67.3
No	35	32.7

Table 3 below displayed the results of bivariate association between characteristics of respondents and their abuse of drug or substance. From the Table, it was found that there is no significant association between nine of the respondents characteristics (age, gender, educational level, location, employment status, family setting, staying with family, mothers level of education and fathers level of education) and their abuse of drugs and substances (p-



values >0.05) among youths in the study area. While there is significant association between two of the respondents characteristics (either or both parents using drugs and awareness of health implication of taking drug or substance) and abuse of drugs or substance among youth in the study area (p -values <0.05).

Table 3: Association Between Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Drug Use

Characteristic	Taking any drug or substances?		X ²	Df	P-value	Remark
	Yes (%)	No (%)				
Age group						
<18 years	14 (43.8%)	18 (56.3%)	1.049	3	.789	
18-24 years	41 (35.7%)	74 (64.3%)				
25-34 years	40 (40.8%)	58 (59.2%)				
35 years and above	12 (41.4%)	17 (58.6%)				
Gender						
Male	73 (39.0%)	114 (61.0%)	.000	1	.995	
Female	34 (39.1%)	53 (60.9%)				
Educational background						
No education	14 (42.4%)	19 (57.6%)	1.263	3	.738	
Primary	16 (35.6%)	29 (64.4%)				
Secondary	62 (41.1%)	89 (58.9%)				
Tertiary	15 (33.3%)	30 (66.7%)				
Location						
Rural	38 (47.5%)	42 (52.5%)	3.389	1	.066	
Urban	69 (35.6%)	125 (64.4%)				
Employment status						
Self-employed	34 (38.2%)	55 (61.8%)	2.524	3	.471	
Public sector employee	19 (40.4%)	28 (59.6%)				
Unemployed	47 (42.3%)	64 (57.7%)				
Private sector employee	7 (25.9%)	20 (74.1%)				
Family setting						
Monogamy	50 (41.3%)	71 (58.7%)	.470	1	.493	
Polygamy	57 (37.3%)	96 (62.7%)				
Staying with family						
Yes	65 (35.5%)	118 (64.5%)	2.888	1	.089	
No	42 (46.2%)	49 (53.8%)				
Mother's level of education						
No education	27 (47.4%)	30 (52.6%)	4.436	3	.218	
Primary	30 (44.1%)	38 (55.9%)				



Characteristic	Taking any drug or substances?	X ²	Df	P-value	Remark
Secondary	25 (32.1%)	53 (67.9%)			
Tertiary	25 (35.2%)	46 (64.8%)			
Father's level of education					
No education	14 (35.0%)	26 (65.0%)	2.011	3	.570
Primary	25 (42.4%)	34 (57.6%)			
Secondary	33 (44.0%)	42 (56.0%)			
Tertiary	35 (35.0%)	65 (65.0%)			
Either or both parents using drugs					
Yes	48 (69.6%)	21 (30.4%)	36.078	1	.000
No	59 (28.8%)	146 (71.2%)			
Awareness of health implications					
Yes	77 (48.1%)	83 (51.9%)	13.303	1	.000
No	30 (26.3%)	84 (73.7%)			

Discussion of Findings

Prevalence of drug or substance abuse

The finding of moderate (39.1%) prevalence rate of drug abuse was discovered. The finding is in contrast with that of Odejide, A. O. (16) who found that drug abuse was high. The implication of this finding is that the low proportion of prevalence rate may be due to chance. Moreover, office of National Drug Control strategy [1]. found that mostly abused drugs are for free, usually from friends and relatives made this finding not surprising because drugs that were abused may be easily gotten without much labour and difficulty. This finding agree with the findings of NDLEA [18] that despite the efforts of various tiers of government and NDLEA to stem drug abuse tide in the country, there has been a consistent rapid rise in the number of cases especially among the young adolescents (10-24 years).

Demographic variations of drug and substance abuse

In this study, lager percentage of female respondents (39.1%) engage in substance abuse compared to male respondents (39.0%) which is steeper for those in their early age compared to other age group this is contrast with the studies of [19] who also reported that majority of drug users are male respondents in a study on systematic review on prevalence and description of tobacco control and substance abuse strategies in Sub-Saharan African countries [20]. This gender difference may be attributed to societal perception as most African communities see drug abuse as a sign of masculinity or even specific to manhood and vigor [21]and also in contrast with these submissions of [9] who reported a higher proportion of respondents were male students and this suggests that the compulsive use of drugs is associated majorly with male gender. The gender differences in drug abuse are said to have their foundation in the very first stage of



drug involvement and the opportunity to use the drugs. While social values discourage such act among women. However, gender differences with regard to substance use vary widely across the literature. Age, though, shows consistent patterns, with older adolescents participating in substance use more often than their younger counterparts, with risk increasing each year from ages 10 to 17 [12]). One review of thirty-five studies indicated that most findings consistently show that childhood maltreatment is a risk factor for earlier onset of substance use [24] This may be because victims of maltreatment use drugs and alcohol as coping mechanisms rather than purely for social reasons. Thus, their onset is less dependent on the time other adolescents begin to use substances.

Conclusion

There was moderate prevalence rate of youth' drug abuse while female abuse drug or substance than male in addition and awareness of health implication of using drug or substance is significantly associated factor to drug or substance abuse.

Strength and

One of the strength of this study is that it focusses on a novel environment which is cosmopolitan area, providing valuable insights into the prevalence and patterns of drug abuse among youths in Jos North LGA, Plateau State,

Limitation

Some limitations that should be acknowledged include firstly, the cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to infer causality. The data were collected at a single point in time, which means that while associations between variables were identified, it is not possible to determine the direction of these

relationships or establish a cause-and-effect link. This limitation could affect the interpretation of findings, particularly concerning the relationships between socio-demographic factors and drug abuse.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, as well as the discussions and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are proposed to address the issue of drug abuse among youths in Jos North LGA:

Enhancing Educational Interventions:

Ensuring uninterrupted school sessions is vital, as consistent educational engagement plays a key role in educating and enlightening youths about the dangers of drug abuse. Educational institutions should integrate comprehensive drug education into their curricula, focusing on the health risks, legal consequences, and long-term impact of drug use.

Establishing Specialized Government Agencies:

it is recommended that specialized agencies be established at both the state and local government levels, in addition to the existing National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA).

Targeting Gender-Specific

Interventions: The study's findings indicate that females in Jos North LGA are slightly more likely to engage in drug abuse than males, challenging traditional perceptions of drug abuse as predominantly a male issue. Therefore, it is essential to adopt a multifaceted approach to drug education, with a particular focus on young females.

Supporting Families Affected by Drug

Abuse: The study revealed a significant association between parental drug use and the likelihood of drug abuse among youths, underscoring the critical role of family dynamics in the perpetuation of drug abuse behaviors. It is recommended



that support programs be developed to assist families where drug use is prevalent.

Policy Development and Implementation: Policymakers in Plateau State and beyond should consider the findings of this study when formulating drug prevention and control policies. These policies should be inclusive of gender considerations, recognizing the

vulnerability of both young males and females to drug abuse. Furthermore, policies that promote collaboration between schools, healthcare providers, community organizations, and law enforcement agencies could enhance the effectiveness of drug abuse prevention efforts.

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