

## **An Investigation into The Effect of Drug Abuse Among Nigerian Adults; Strategies for Counseling**

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### ***Abstract***

*This paper discussed the concept of drug abuse, types, causes, sign and symptoms, effect and strategies for counseling. Adults prefer independent and autonomous life from that is free parental control, thereby engaging in various criminal activities, such as stilling rapping, drug abuse, and cultism e.t.c that are dangerous to the community, schools, homes and the nation at large. The effect of drug abuse among adults has been a stigma of moral decadence, violence, assault, madness and murder. The problem of drug has been deep into mind of our youth in our society. However, with effective counseling programme, the problems can be tackled also through campaign against drug abuse by government and other non-governmental agencies. Drug control counseling Centre should be established in every community and qualified health personnel should be employed to help drug addicts by giving them special advice on how to go about withdrawal system. Drug awareness unit should set up in all states by the Federal, State and Local government not to try people who use drug as criminal but to help them solve their socio- psychological problems.*

## **Introduction**

Since the early time, herbs leaves and plants have been used to heal and control deceases. The use of drugs in itself does not constitute any danger, because drugs correctly administered have been a blessing. Sambo (2008) viewed that, “chronic use of substances can cause serious irreversible damage to adults physical and psychological development. The use of drugs could be beneficial or harmful depending on the mode of use.

Drugs refers to be substance that could bring about a change in the biological function through chemical reaction Okeye (2001). Balogun (2006) observed that, “it is also considered as a substance that modifies perceptions, cognition, mood, behavior and general body function”. They could be considered as chemical modifiers as living Theseus that could bring about physiological and behavioral change. Ndachi (2007)

Drug abuse is a major public health problem that affects society all over the world. The use and abuse of drugs by adults have become one of the most disturbing health related problems in Nigeria and other part of Africa and the world at large. NDLEA (1997) stated that most adult in schools experience mental health problem, either temporary or long term. Some of them become insensible, which lead to maladjustment to school and eventually lead to drop out from school.

Odejide (2000) observed that, drug abusers who exhibit symptoms of street anxiety, depression of behavioral change, fatigue and loss or increase in appetite should be treated by medical experts and counselors to save them from deadly diseases

NAFDAC (2000) cited by Haruna (2000) explained the term drug abuse as excessive and persistence self-administration of drugs without .medical or cultural advices. It could be also viewed as the use of drugs to the extent that it interfere with the health and social function of an individual. World book encyclopedia (2004) defined drug abuse as the non-medical use of drugs that interfere with the health and productive life of an individual. Mande (2008) define drug abuse as the excessive addictive use of drugs for non-medical purpose.

Fahawa (2003) observed and defined drug abuse as taking any substance, which is used for treatment or prevention of diseases in men or animals. Drugs affect the body either positively or negatively depending on the composition and usage, the type of drug used and amount of drugs used.

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

## **Types of Drug Abuse**

The common types of drug abuse in Nigeria, according to NAFDAC (2000) cited by Haruna (2003) are categorized as follows:

- 1 Hallucinogens: These are drugs that alter the sensory processing unit in the brain. Thus produced distorted perception, feeling of anxiety and euphoria, sadness and inner joy. They normally come from marijuana.
- 2 Stimulant: These are substances that directly act and stimulate central nervous system. Users at the initial stage experience pleasant effect such as energy increase. The major source of these come from caffeine substance.
- 3 Narcotics: These drugs relive pain, induce sleeping and are addictive. They are found in heroin, codeine and opium.
- 4 Tranquilizers: They are believed to produce calmness without bringing drowsiness. They are chiefly derived from Librium, and Valium.
- 5 Sedatives: These drugs are among the most widely used and abused. This is used due to the fact that people believe that they reduce 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, promethazine and chloroform.
- 6 Miscellaneous: This is a group of volatile solvents or inhalants that provide euphoria, emotional disinhibiting and perpetual distortion of thought to user. The main sources are glues spot remover, tube repair perfume and other chemicals.

### **Causes of Drug Abuse**

The following are causes of drug abuse among Nigerian adults.

- (i) Peer groups influence. Peer group plays a major role in influencing adults into drug abuse. This is because peer pressure is a fact of youth life. They try to depend less on parents. They show more dependency on their friends. In Nigeria and other part of the world one may not join the company of others unless you obey their norms.
- (ii) Lack of parental supervision. Many parents have no time to supervise the behaviors of their children. Some parents have little or no interaction with family members. While others put pressure to their children to pass exams or perform better in their studies. These phenomena initialize and increase drug abuse among adult.
- (iii) Experimental Curiosity. Curiosity to experiment the unknown thing about drug, thus motivate the adult into drug use. The first experience in drug abuse produces state of arousal of happiness and pleasure which in turn motivates them to continue.
- (iv) The need for energy to work for longer time. Increase in economic deterioration which leads to poverty and unemployment of the people has derived many parents to send their children out in searching for the means of earning something to contribute to family income. These children engage in street hawking, bus conductors, head loading and serving in food container are prone to drug taking so as to gain more strength to work for long time.
- (v) Availability of drugs. If the drug is available and is very cheap, it motivates the adult to joint in drug abuse.
- (vi) The Need to prevent Occurrence of withdrawal symptoms. If an adult stopped taking drugs, he may experience what is called withdrawal symptoms, such as pain, anxiety, excessive sweating these motivate them to continue. Philosophically an adult is a person that has reached sexual maturity, and has attend the age of 18 years and above. According to Advance learners Dictionary an adult is

a person who is physically, mentally and biologically matured is called adult while adolescent is a period between childhood and adulthood.

### **Sign and Symptoms of Drug Abuse**

The following are sign and symptoms of drug abuse among Nigerian adults.

- 1 Tolerance. Over time and with prolonged use, those who use drugs can build up tolerance to them, meaning they need more of drugs to achieve their desired effect.
- 2 Craving. People suffering from drug abuse usually experience intensive anger or craving for the drug as their addiction develops. Craving can be through conscious or unconscious experience of working to use substance.
- 3 Withdrawal Symptoms. Many drug abusers create withdrawal symptoms when those who use them attempt to stop abruptly or reduce their usage. The presence of withdrawal syndrome and tolerance indicates that physiological dependence on a substance is occurring.
- 4 Physical Dependence. Physical dependence on drugs can develop an individual to be accustomed to persistence presence and influence of the substance. The change in physiology that accompanies this process leave people feeling poorly functioning sub-optimally when the drug is no longer in the system.
- 5 Financial Trouble. Individual using drugs may spend much and unexplain amount of money, drain their bank account, and go outside their budgets in order to get the drugs. This behavior can be a major red flag for addiction and has massive consequences.
- 6 Drug-Seeking. People may spend excessive amount of time and energy finding and guesing their drug choice.
- 7 Developing Unhealthy Friendship. When people start using new substance, they may spend time with others who have similar habits. They may hang out with new group of people who may encourage unhealthy habits, doing so makes them most likely to use for a longer time, especially if others in the group have a negative life outlook.
- 8 Neglect Responsibility. When people choose using or tacking the drugs over and over will lead them to neglect any work or responsibility given to them, this is a classical sign of addiction.
- 9 Isolation. An individual may withdraw and isolate himself, hiding their drug use from friends and family. Some reason for this may include perceived stigma of increased depression, anxiety, or paranoia as a result of their drug addiction.

### **Effects of Drug Abuse**

The effects of drug abuse are divided into three as follows:

- 1 Effect of drug abuse on the body.
  - 2 Psychological effect of drug abuse.
  - 3 Effect of drug abuse on lifestyle.
- (1) Effect of drug abuse on the body. A person who abuses drugs may not realize that he has a problem until pronounced. Effect of drug abuse are seen, often physically, while drug abuse effect on the body vary depending on the drug used, all drug abuse negatively affect the health of the drug abuser. The most common effect of drug abuse on the body include:

*An Investigation into The Effect of Drug Abuse Among Nigerian Adults; Strategies for Counseling*

- = Sleeping change
  - = Decreased memory and cognitive ability
  - = Abnormal vital sign, like respiration, heart rate and blood pressure
  - = Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach pain
  - = Skin can also feel cool and sweating or hot and dry
  - = Diseases such as hepatitis B or C or HIV from needle sharing
  - = More frequent illness.
- (2) Psychological effect of drug abuse may include the following
- = Depression
  - = Aggressiveness
  - = Selfishness
  - = Hopelessness
  - = Lack of pleasure from previously enjoyed activities
  - = Pressuring others to join drug abuse.
- (3) Effect of drug abuse on lifestyle

Drug abuser chooses the drug better than anything or anybody, which includes family and friends. One of the side effects of drug abuse is the loss of friendship and family due to their choice to drugs. Families and friends have to watch as the drug abuse pulls away and the effect of the drug abuse ravage their body and mind. Moreover, one of the side effect of drug use may be bizarre, out of character behavior that further separate the drug abuser from their loved ones.

The effects of drug abuse can also include decreasing performance in work or school. This decreased performance may lead to disciplinary action, which include expulsion or dismissal or even problem which lead to legal trouble.

### **Incidence of Drug Abuse among Nigerian Adults**

Adults, especially those in tertiary institutions tend to see drug users as one who is tough, bold and strong. Many adults have been known to use drugs at the instance of peer group, adult who usually feel inadequate has to use drugs to achieve their social acceptance among the peer group. Esent (1979) stated that, most of Nigerian tertiary institutions most of the adult who are under the influence of Indian hemp are exhibiting behavior that is inconsistent to the rules and regulation of the institution. He went further to observe that increasing incidence of drug abuse among learners in tertiary institution in Nigeria is leading to the students to engage in many social vices which include stealing, fighting and cultism.

Aremu and Fayombo (2000) in their research on the effect of drug abuse on educational performance of some adult drug abusers in Ibadan found that the misuse of marijuana had reached higher level in the present day Nigeria higher institutions. Olatunde (1980) stated that, Nigerian adults take drugs such as amphetamines and pro-plus as aid for success in examination. He postulated that those who take drugs as aid for studies toward examinations are those with poor academic performance, and history of instability and family and social problems. While others use drugs to increase their self-confidence, heighten pleasure, cope with feeling of depression and inadequacy, and to facilitated communication.

Osikiya and Ali (2006) asserted that, socially, drug abusers are always pre-occupied with how to obtain drug of their choice and crave for the substance. Kabiru (2006) revealed that, the academic pursuit of those

undergraduates who engage in drug misuse are not unduly jeopardized, and that the abusers do not socialize extraordinarily, contrary to seemingly to be influence of their peer group.

### **Strategies for Counseling Drug Abuser**

The following counseling strategies are suggested to help reduce drug abuse among Nigerian adults.

- 1 Establish counseling center for drug control: Counseling centers should be established in every community by the government or private individuals, where qualified health counselors should be employed in order to help drug addicts or those deepened on drug by giving them special advice on how to go about the withdrawal system.
- 2 Established family education on drug abuse. The family is the first agent of socialization of every child; therefore parents should give their children appropriate education on drug use. They should be encouraged by health authority to offer family education on drug abuse to their children. They should inform them of the danger of drug abuse and dependence on their health, society and the nation.
- 3 Designing Curriculum on Drug Education. Ministry of education (state and Federal) should as a matter of urgency should add drug education as part of curriculum at all levels of education. Campaign against drug abuse should be done at all institutions of learning. National Drug Law Informant Agency (NDLEA) should intensify their campaign on antidrug in order to have a drug free society. The campaign against use of drugs and misuse of drugs should be more intensified right from secondary up to tertiary institutions. Government and other relevant authorities should lunch out campaign drug abuse as well as dependency.
- 4 Drugs awareness unit should be established. This unit should be established by federal, state local government, which it should be panel established unit to try adults who use drugs as criminals, but to help them solve their socio-psychological problems. Parents should refrain from using drugs in discriminately in the presence of their children, and they should discourage their children from associating with gangs or suspected neighbors or peer group who engage in drug abuse.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations:**

Drug abuse is a problem that causes serious problem to the society which is the concern of both government and individual all over the world. The problem is prevailing among adults who in most cases are ignorant about the dangers of drug abuse. Most of them engage in drug abuse out of frustration, poverty, poor parental supervision, pleasure and peer group influence.

Government should build stopped sending drug abuser to prisons but it should provide treatment centres in each local government and employed councilors that will help in counseling the drug abusers.

Community and religious leaders should be involve in lighting the youth on the effect of drug abuse and consequences of drug abuse.

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