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## Strategies Used by Parents/ Guardians to Prevent Drug and Substance Abuse among High School Students in Kisumu East Sub County, Kisumu County, Kenya

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### **Abstract:**

*Introduction: Drug abuse is a major public health problem among the youth worldwide especially in developed countries with no exception of developing countries. The accessibility, affordability, and consumption of abused drugs by the youths have attracted great concern among public health personnel.*

*Aim: This descriptive cross-sectional study investigated strategies used by parents / guardians to prevent drugs and substance abuse among high school students in Kisumu East Sub-County, Kisumu County Kenya.*

*Subject and Methods: The study targeted high school students aged 15-25 years learning within the study area. Sample size of 394 was calculated using Yamane formula and the participants selected through Snow ball, random, cluster and stratified sampling. Demographic characteristics were summarized using tables while inferential statistic done using Chi square, binomial logistic regression and multiple regression. Data collection done through observation, self-administered questionnaires and key informant interviews. P value <0.05 was considered statistically significant.*

*Results: the strategies used by parents/ guardians to prevent drug and substance abuse among high school students. Among the strategies used were punishment, prayers, taking the child upcountry, monitoring of movements, rewards, guidance and counseling, communication on the dangers of drug and substance abuse as well as reporting to the law enforcers. From the 40 respondents, (37.5%) apply all these strategies, (15%) punish and send their children to upcountry whenever they abuse drugs and substance, (17.5%) punish and pray for their children, (27.5%) punish, pray and counsel while (2.5%) punish, pray, counsel and reward their children after doing good deeds*

*Conclusion: Lack of parental/ guardian's supervision and monitoring of the students movements, poor parent-child attachment due to inadequate family time, no communication on the dangers of drugs and substance abuse to students by the parents and high academic expectations by parents/ guardians from students are the major contributors of drugs and substance abuse among students.*

**Keywords:** Abuse, drug, guardians, high school, Kisumu east sub-county, prevention, parents, strategies, students, substance

### **1. Introduction**

Globally, it is estimated that drug-related deaths account for between 0.5 and 1.3 per cent of all-cause mortality for people aged 15-64 years. There are 211,000 drug-related deaths annually, with younger people being at high risk (WHO, 2019). According to the world drug report, 37,000 people die annually in Africa due to consumption of illegal drugs and substances. The Drug and Illicit Substance Abuse problems in sub-Saharan African countries have however been attributed to the spill-over effect from Europe and Americas where Africa occupies the second position worldwide in trafficking and consumption of illegal drugs (World Drug Report, 2014). Currently, 11.7% of young people aged 15-24 are users of alcohol, 6.2% use tobacco, 4.7% khat while 1.5% are users of cannabis. Regrettably, this age bracket constitutes youths in Kenya some of whom are students in either secondary schools or higher institutions of learning thus depriving the country its energetic population that could otherwise be producing the best of the economy's goods and services

(Chesang, 2013). Studies in high schools in Kenya have shown that between 70 -80% of students use alcohol, whereas 10-14% could be classified as its abusers (World Drug Report, 2014).

Alcohol and drug abuse among young people in Kenya is becoming a major social and public health problem requiring a multifaceted approach to decisively tackle due to its far reaching impacts on the individuals especially among the youth and in secondary school age group, families and communities. For instance, many young lives are destroyed, derailed socio-economic development as well as the efforts of harnessing a demographic dividend which therefore calls for urgent action to curb the problem failure of which achieving Kenya's Vision 2030 and harnessing the demographic dividend will remain a mirage (Cheloti, 2013).

Some parents are compelled to work far away from home, leaving their children in the care of grandparents who cannot monitor their movement (Mohasoa & Fourie, 2012). Additionally, busy work schedules and long working hours of family members leads to limited family time for parents to bond and supervise their children (Gale *et al.*, 2012 ; NACADA, 2012; Mukhandia, 2014 ; Simatwa *et al.*, 2014).

Strategies used by parents to prevent and control alcohol and drug abuse among their children include: monitoring of movements and friends, talking to him/her on the effects of drugs, Punishment, taking the child upcountry, prayers, spiritual counselling and guidance from the religious leaders (Al-Halabi Diaz *et al.*, 2006 ; NACADA, 2019).

This study therefore investigated strategies used by parents / guardians to prevent drug and substance abuse among secondary student in Kisumu East sub-county, Kisumu County so as to help in formulation of policies and designing relevant programs aimed at addressing drug and substance abuse among learners.

## 2. Summary of Methodologies in Literature Reviewed

In the studies by Abur (2014), Barasa (2013), King'endo (2010), (Joel 2015), Mukhandia (2014), Minishi (2017), Nyatuoro (2012) and Njoki (2013), both probability and non-probability sampling methods were used with specific techniques being stratified, cluster, purposive, systematic and random sampling. Furthermore, descriptive research design was adopted where by data was collected through questionnaires, key informant interviews and focused group discussions which were personally administered by the concerned researchers after which data was summarized and finally presented through graphs, pie charts, means, frequency tables and standard deviations. The inferential statistics used were chi square, ANOVA and correlation.

However, the methodologies adopted had some few challenges for instance, during focused group discussion participants were not comfortable sharing their information on drugs and substance abuse; they therefore chose to keep some vital information to themselves for fear of victimization and associated stigma from fellow students being that illicit drug and substance use is punishable by authority. This therefore limited the amount and quality of data collected.

Additionally, closed ended questionnaires were used and administered by the interviewers thus limiting the freedom of the respondents to freely give in depth information since some feared eye-contact with the interviewer and not comfortable answering the questions but would freely do so if the questionnaires were self-administered and open ended. Furthermore data collection process was time consuming and tiresome being that the researchers had to personally administer the questionnaires to each respondent rather than letting them fill questionnaires by themselves upon giving instructions. Finally, the study sample never included parents or students family in the study whereby the focus was majorly on the students and school hence not getting data on parental and family influence on drug and substance abuse among students which is very key in coming up with suitable strategies to address the problem.

In order to avoid the above mentioned shortcomings, this study therefore adopted a more improved methodology as outlined below.

## 3. Subject and Methods

This was a descriptive cross-sectional study design on the socio-cultural and economic predictors of drugs and substance abuse among high school students aged between 15-25 years and learning in secondary schools within the study area. The study sample was 394 comprising of 358 high school students and 40 household heads residing within Kisumu East Sub County for not less than six months. The sample size was determined using Yamane formula (1967) expressed mathematically thus:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where:  $n$  =sample size required

$N$  = target population

$e$  =maximum acceptable margin of error/ allowable error %

$N = 26,000$        $e = 0.05$

$$n = \frac{26,000}{1 + 26,000 * 0.05^2} = 394.$$

Allowance of 10% was made to cover for non -response making the sample size to be 434. Apart from the 394 students, 40 household heads were included as key informants.

The study adopted both probability and non -probability sampling procedures with specific sampling techniques being snow ball, random, cluster and stratified sampling. The area was clustered in to wards and village units after which stratified sampling was applied to sample the students based on gender and age while household heads were randomly selected from each ward based on allocation per ward. Students were identified through Snowball technique where by the identified students gave direction on the next households with secondary students within the community until the

required number of students per ward was met. The same technique was applied in identifying other known students who are involved in drug and substance abuse.

Before actual study began, the research instruments / tools were tested and re-tested for both reliability and validity in a different area to analyze if the results are correct, consistent and meeting the intended purpose. The study objectives were clearly defined to the respondents without being pressured in any way to select specific choices among the answer sets.

Authority to conduct this study was obtained from the Board of Postgraduate Studies, JOOUST thereafter ethical approval and clearance from the JOOTRH Ethics Review Committee and NACOSTI. Permission to conduct the study in the area was sought from the area local administration. Prior to enrolment, the purpose of the study as well as the implications was explained to all prospective study participants and written informed consent as well as assent obtained from all willing to take part in the study before the study commenced. The study participants were assured of confidentiality of both their information and identities. Due diligence was accorded the entire data collection process given the sensitive nature of the study participants in order to prevent any perception of stigmatization of the participants. Study findings were relayed to the community through feedback meetings at the community level and ministry of education. Data was collected using both structured and open ended self-administered questionnaires and observation. The questionnaires were designed in English with native language translation; respondents with difficulty filling the questionnaire were assisted by the researcher and the trained research assistants in language best understood by them. Observation was used to collect data on non-verbal communication displayed through body language such as facial expression, behavior and assessment of living condition

The data was organized and summarized through tables. Inferential statistics were done using Chi square to test for relationship between two categorical variables while study outcome variables analyzed through binomial logistic regression. Multiple regression analysis (multivariable regression) was used to predict the value of dependent variable based on the value of two or more other predictor variables. Data from observation were analyzed through content and narrative analysis. P value <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

All materials used to acquire data were kept under lock, and only limited access by researcher and data analyst permitted. Analyzed data was equally stored in password-protected computers, with no access to anyone not directly involved with data management awaiting dissemination to the relevant authorities and publishing for public consumption.

#### 4. Results

The study sample size was 434; 394 students and 40 household heads respectively. Out of the 394 students, 358 filled the questionnaire while 36 did not because 20 had travelled to upcountry due to Corona pandemic while 16 completely refused to participate in the study due to personal reasons thus reducing the sample size to 398. A response rate of 91 % was achieved which was statistically enough for analysis and reporting. To provide a bit more information about the abuse of drugs and substance among the high school students, the 40 household heads were interviewed as key informants.

##### 4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Students-Kisumu East Sub-County

A total of 358 students were enrolled in the study, whose characteristics are presented in Table 1. Majority of the study participants 217 (60.61%) were aged between 15-17 years. More than half 184 (51.40%) of the participants were female. The highest number 274 (76.54%) of the respondents were Christians. One hundred and fifty (41.90%) of the students were residents of Kolwa Central with a small number 11 (3.07%) came from Manyatta B. Most of the participants, 229 (63.97%) were from mixed day secondary schools with only three (0.84%) from mixed boarding schools (Table 1). Overall, the highest number 138 (38.55%) of the participants were students of form two class.

| Demographic Characteristics | n (%)       |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Age category                |             |
| 15-17 years                 | 217 (60.61) |
| 18-24 years                 | 135 (37.71) |
| >=25 years                  | 6 (1.68)    |
| Gender                      |             |
| Male                        | 174 (48.60) |
| Female                      | 184 (51.40) |
| Religion                    |             |
| Christianity                | 274 (76.54) |
| Islamic                     | 72 (20.11)  |
| Atheist                     | 1 (0.28)    |
| Hinduism                    | 6 (1.68)    |
| Others                      | 5 (1.40)    |
| Ward                        |             |
| Nyalenda A                  | 57 (15.92)  |
| Kajulu                      | 75 (20.95)  |

| Demographic Characteristics | n (%)       |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Kolwa East                  | 65 (18.16)  |
| Kolwa Central               | 150 (41.90) |
| Manyatta B                  | 11 (3.07)   |
| <b>School Category</b>      |             |
| Boys Day                    | 49 (13.69)  |
| Boys Boarding               | 15 (4.19)   |
| Mixed Day                   | 229 (63.97) |
| Girls Day                   | 42 (11.73)  |
| Girls Boarding              | 20 (5.59)   |
| Mixed Boarding              | 3 (0.84)    |
| <b>Form</b>                 |             |
| One                         | 69 (19.27)  |
| Two                         | 138 (38.55) |
| Three                       | 91 (25.42)  |
| Four                        | 60 (16.76)  |

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Students, Kisumu East Sub-County (N=358)

#### 4.2. Demographic Characteristics of Household Heads -Kisumu East Sub-County

To assess strategies used by parents to prevent abuse of drugs among the students, this study used data from the key informants. The data for the individual characteristics of the key informants are presented in the Table 2. Among the selected key informants, the majority were above 40 years 24 (60%) and most of them 23 (57.50%) were female. In terms of religion, 29 (72.5%) were Christians and only 11 (27.5%) were Islamic. The least number of these respondents were residents of Kolwa East 6 (15%). Close to three quarters of the household heads were married 25 (62.5%) and higher proportion of them had a university education 14 (35%) (Table 2).

| Demographic Characteristics | n (%)      |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| <b>Age category</b>         |            |
| 26-35 years                 | 6 (15.00)  |
| 36-40 years                 | 10 (25.00) |
| >40 years                   | 24 (60.00) |
| <b>Gender</b>               |            |
| Male                        | 17 (42.50) |
| Female                      | 23 (57.50) |
| <b>Religion</b>             |            |
| Christianity                | 29 (72.50) |
| Islamic                     | 11 (27.50) |
| <b>Ward</b>                 |            |
| Nyalenda A                  | 8 (20.00)  |
| Kajulu                      | 11 (27.50) |
| Kolwa East                  | 6 (15.00)  |
| Kolwa Central               | 8 (20.00)  |
| Manyatta B                  | 7 (17.50)  |
| <b>Marital Status</b>       |            |
| Married                     | 25 (62.50) |
| Single                      | 5 (12.50)  |
| Divorced                    | 3 (7.50)   |
| Widowed                     | 7 (17.50)  |
| <b>Education Level</b>      |            |
| Primary                     | 7 (17.50)  |
| Secondary                   | 7 (17.50)  |
| College                     | 12 (30.00) |
| University                  | 14 (35.00) |

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Household Heads Kisumu East Sub-County (N=40)

#### 4.3: Strategies Used by Parents / Guardians to Prevent Drug and Substance Abuse among High School Students

Strategies used by parents/ guardians to prevent drug and substance abuse among high school students. Among the strategies used were punishment, prayers, taking the child upcountry, monitoring of movements, rewards, guidance and counseling, communication on the dangers of drug and substance abuse as well as reporting to the law enforcers. From the 40 respondents, (37.5%) apply all these strategies, (15%) punish and send their children to upcountry

whenever they abuse drugs and substance, (17.5%) punish and pray for their children, (27.5%) punish, pray and counsel while (2.5%) punish, pray, counsel and reward their children after doing good deeds (Table 3).

| Preventive Measures   | Frequency (%) |
|---|---------------|
| Punishment, counselling, prayer, monitoring of movement, taking the student upcountry, rewards, communicating the dangers of abuse and report to law enforcers. | 15(37.5)      |
| Punishment, taking the student upcountry.   | 6(15)         |
| Punishment, counselling, prayers  | 11(27.5)      |
| Punishment, counselling, rewards  | 1(2.5)        |
| Punishment, prayer  | 7(17.5)       |
| Total   | 40 (100%)     |

Table 3: Strategies Used by Parents/ Guardians to Prevent Abuse of Drugs and Substance among High School Students N=40

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Strategies Used by Parents / Guardians to Prevent Drug and Substance Abuse among High School Students

The study result reveals that 56.7 % of the parents / guardians are concerned about their children's company, 43.3% monitor their movement while only 37% discuss with the children about drugs and substance abuse. This clearly shows that most parents/ guardians neither discuss with their children about drugs and substances abuse nor monitor their movements citing busy work schedules, overwhelming family responsibilities, rebellious nature of the students as some of the hindrance towards performing the role. In families that trade in drugs and substances for their daily upkeep, the topic was considered irrelevant as it would negatively impact on the sales.

Consistent with findings by Al-Halabi Diaz *et al.*, (2006 );NACADA, (2019), strategies used by parents / guardians to discourage students from abusing drugs and substance include punishment for abuse, prayers / spiritual interventions to rebuke the spirit of drug and substance abuse since some families believe that there is demonic connection with the habit, monitoring of movement, taking the student up country, communication on the dangers of the abuse, guidance and counseling as a way of ensuring positive behavior, rewards for abstinence and good deeds and reporting to the law enforcers for legal action. 37.5% of the parents/ guardians apply all these strategies, 15% punish and take their children upcountry whenever they abuse drugs and substance, 17.5% punish and pray for their children, 27.5% punish, pray for and counsel their children and only 2.5% punish, pray, counsel and reward their children after doing good deeds as a motivation to maintain the behavior.

Based on this statistic, all the sampled household heads preferred punishment as a strategy with least preference for rewards and reporting to the law enforcers for legal action simply because punishment was viewed to yield long lasting effect and no student would wish to be punished for actions they can avoid while rewards has cost implication in terms of purchase of the gifts. Legal action on the other hand was least applied because the student would end up in jail and still the same parent / guardian required to meet the legal expenses. Furthermore due to corruption no major action would be taken on the culprits since they can easily bribe their freedom. Despite the fact that punishment was mostly preferred, it was not very effective in that the more it was applied, the more the student became rebellious.

## 6. Conclusion

Drug and substance abuse is a major public health problem among all age groups worldwide with substantial impact on human health and well-being ranging from medical, social, economic and political consequences. Due to its magnitude, it calls for concerted effort by parents, community, ministry of health and education as well as all other stakeholders for the attainment of the Sustainable development Goals as well as the vision 2030 which aims at making Kenya industrial and mid-level income country. Lack of parental/ guardian's supervision and monitoring of the students movements, poor parent-child attachment due to inadequate family time, no communication on the dangers of drugs and substance abuse to students by the parents and high academic expectations by parents/ guardians from students are the major contributors of drugs and substance abuse among students.

## 7. Authorship Contribution Statement

All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Material preparation, data collection and analysis were performed by Marceline Awino Orendo, Marion Agiza Muranda while review and editing was done by Dr. David Odongo Otieno and Dr. Daniel Ogungu Onguru. The first draft of the manuscript was written by Marceline Awino Orendo, reviewed and edited by Marion Agiza Muranda, Dr. David Odongo Otieno and Dr. Daniel Ogungu Onguru. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

## 8. Recommendations

There is need for parents/guardians to balance between work and family time in order to build strong attachment with the children and timely address their concerns. This will ensure sufficient monitoring of their movements and act promptly should there be anything unusual in their behavior.



## 9. Ethical Considerations

- **Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare no significant competing financial, professional or personal interests that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this manuscript.
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- **Ethical Approval:** Ethical approval was obtained from Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching and Referral Hospital ERC and a study permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and innovation (NACOSTI).
- **Informed Consent:** A written consent was obtained from both the Health facility managers and the community members before starting the study.

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