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## The Strategies for the Curtailing of Drug Abuse Behaviors among Youths in Yobe North, Nigeria

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### **Abstract:**

*'Drugs are as important as food, water and air to man, yet harmful when abused or misused' It is apparent that the abuse of drugs constitutes a menace to the society and has a divesting effect on the youth of Yobe North, Yobe State and Nigeria at Large. It affects their future since they engage in the habit at transitional period of life between childhood and adulthood. The effects of Drug abuse have become endemic in our society to the extent that youths have also indulge themselves in drug abuse because of peer group influence and carelessness of their parents. They become stubborn and recalcitrant as they grow in the society. The main aim of this paper is to assess the main causes of drug abuse and to examine its major effects among youths in Yobe State and Yobe North in particular. The result shows that drug abuse affects the performance of students at school and the findings also revealed that its affect both male and female since they were all involved in the incidence of drug abuse.*

**Keywords:** Curtailing, drug abuse, behavior, youth, Yobe North

### **1. Introduction**

Drug abuse is a serious social problem that is prevalent in the contemporary world especially in Nigeria. Drug abuse is a disastrous act that hampers the effective growth and development of the citizens of a country. Drug is any substance that alters the functions or structure of the body {Anagbogu 2004:12} Drug globally is highly and frequently abused by people especially youth. Drug abuse has recently become one of the most dangerous and despicable acts of our present-day youth. The abuse of drugs is on the increase; this is most especially among adolescent. The socio-cultural lives of the people have been adulterated by foreign culture such that the wrong use of drug is noticed in almost all villages and towns in Yobe State and Nigeria at large. Drug abuse among youth in Yobe North has seriously affected their life especially in their academic performance. Some of them perform poorly in their studies while some have dropped out of school and taken to crime.

The commonly abused drugs include: heroin, morphine, tobacco and alcohol. The sale and consumption of these drugs have caused a lot of problems in Yobe North, Nigerian society. These are the reasons why most of the drugs are prohibited by law. These are some of the motive behind this research.

### **2. Meaning of Drug**

For clear and better understanding and lucid analysis of this discourse, it is appropriate that we define the term 'drug' before carrying on with the main business of the section.

With respect to this, the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) Act Cap 1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN) 2004 opined that:

'Drugs includes any substance of vegetable, animal or mineral origin or any preparation or admixture thereof manufactured, sold or advertised for used in:

- The diagnosis, treatment, mitigation or prevention of any disease, disorder, abnormal physical state or the symptom thereof, in man or animal.
- Restoring, correcting or modifying organic function in man or animal.
- Disinfection or control of vermin, insect or pest.
- Contraception.

Similarly, the black law dictionary define drug as:

- A substance intended for use in diagnosis, cure treatment or prevention of disease.
- A natural or synthetic substance that alters one perception or consciousness.

In addition, the World Health Organization (WHO) defines drug as 'any substance which when taken modifies one or more function of the body of both animal and man'.

It can also be defined as any natural or artificial substance which, when orally taken, inhaled, snorted or injected into the body or applied on the skin, modifies the function of the body system. For instance, an old man who takes common

mixture under the prescription of a medical doctor is taking a 'drug'. Similarly, a burglar who takes cocaine to energize him the more to break the iron door is said to have taken 'drug'.

### 3. Type of Drug

From the above discussion, it should be clear that drugs can be classified into three, namely:

- Legal drugs
- Illegal drugs
- Socially-accepted drugs

#### 3.1. Legal Drug

Legal drugs are otherwise called medicine, they are the drugs approved by the government as safe for human consumption after successfully fulfilling all the standard set by government. They are the ones prescribed in our hospitals and those sold in licensed chemist.

#### 3.2. Illegal Drugs

In their search for beneficial drugs (medicine), scientists have discovered some drugs which were found unsafe for human consumption because they adversely affect the body. Such drugs were considered dangerous and therefore declared illicit and banned by the government. Hence, the production, distribution or consumption of such drugs amount to a criminal offence. Common example is heroin and Indian hemp.

#### 3.3. Socially Accepted

These drugs approved by norms and values of society. Typical example of such drugs includes kola nut and palm wine in northern and southern Nigeria respectively.

### 4. Causes of Drug Abuse

#### 4.1. Peer Group Influence

Peer group is a group of people of approximately the same age. Children usually prefer spending their time in this group.

This is because such group is democratic and relieves a child from a tight parent control. It consists of people who share the same interest and world view. This group has become considerable influence over its members.

#### 4.2. Lack of Parental Supervision

Many parents have no time to supervise the behavior of their children. Some parents have little or have no time to interact with family particularly children.

#### 4.3. Availability of Drugs

In a situation where the Drugs are cheap and very much available, it obviously motivates the youth to joint in Drug Abuse. Other causes include; the need for energy to overwork, experimental curiosity and the need to prevent occurrence of withdrawal symptoms. **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DRUG ABUSE**

The signs could be divided into two:

##### 1. Physical

- Procession of drug abuse related items such as rolling papers and having drug odor.
- Stained palms and lips.
- Lack of personal hygiene.
- Reddened teeth.
- Physical weakness that leads to low productivity.
- Slimness.

##### 2. Psychological

- Criminal Behaviors such as theft, rape, armed robbery, et cetera.
- Impaired relation with friends.
- Over sensitiveness.
- Sudden changes in mood or attitude.
- Good ties with other addicts.
- Emotional instability.
- Aggressive in discussing drugs.
- Inability to live independent life.

### 5. Common Drugs Abuse and Their Effects on the Body

#### 5.1. Marijuana

This otherwise known as weed, Igbo, hashish, cannabis or pot. Marijuana is obtained from Indian hemp plant (cannabis sativa). Although marijuana is usually smoked, it is included in this chapter because is a psychoactive drug.

Marijuana is an illegal drug and seriously devastating. It produces hallucinations and euphoria and affect perception and awareness, particularly of time. It accelerates heartbeat. It makes users talkative and reddens their eyes. It makes its users extra-ordinary hungry. Prolonged use of marijuana may cause brain damage and lead user on to hard drugs such as cocaine and heroin.

### 5.2. Cocaine

Cocaine is an alkaloid that is derived from the leaves of coca plant or prepared synthetically. It is sometimes used as anesthetic in ear, eye, and nose and throat surgery. Cocaine stimulates the central nervous system (the brain and the spinal cord), increase pulse rate and heightens blood pressure. It damages the nasal membrane, lungs and heart. It constricts the small blood vessels and predisposes it abusers to heart attack. It led to rapid heartbeat, shaky twitches, respiratory failure, difficulty in breathing which could cause death and serve mental derangement.

### 5.3. Amphetamines

These are drugs that have marked stimulant effects on the central nervous system producing a feeling of mental alertness and well-being. It is sometimes used by physicians for the treatment of certain type of mental illness. Amphetamines are abused by trailer drivers who want to work beyond their capacity, students who do not plan their work systematically and work their plans carefully, farmers and other hard physical workers who want to create a feeling of excitement and energy.

### 5.4. Tranquilizers

These are drugs that produce a feeling of calmness, relieving anxiety and tension. A typical example of this kind of drugs is diazepam. It is used by medical doctors for the treatment of psychosis (schizophrenia, mania) and neurosis. It is also prescribed to relieved anxiety and relaxes muscles.

A lot of highway and domestic accidents due to loss of coordination and impaired judgment are linked to tranquilizers abuse. They may also lead to unconsciousness and sudden death when combined with alcohol or when overdosed.

### 5.5. Heroine

This is white crystalline powder derived from morphine but has a shorter duration of action when compared with morphine it is medically used as diamorphine for the treatment of great pain.

When taken in large doses heroine slows down the brain's control of breathing, heartbeat and blood pressure it also leads to pinpoint pupil and reduction in vision it makes the abuser always tired, weak and indifferent to his work also, unconsciousness and sudden death may result from large doses of heroine. Heroine suppresses appetite and as a result leads to malnutrition its abuse run the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS as they share needles amongst themselves. Similarly, pregnant women who abuse heroine run the risk of still birth, miscarriage and giving birth to addicted babies.

## 6. Consequences of Drug Abuse

### 6.1. Consequences to Abuser

Drug abuse basically causes many dangers to the abuser. These effects will, at least, make the abuser a liability on his family and the entire society. They include:

#### 6.1.1. Drug Dependence

Drug dependence is otherwise known as addiction. This situation is produced by repeated abuse of a particular drug. The abuser at this stage cannot do without the drug. This is because the drug has become part and parcel of him and sudden withdrawal is accompanied by disastrous withdrawal symptoms. As a result, without the drug, life will be bitterly difficult, if not impossible for the abuser. Hence, he is ready to acquire the drug at all cost. That is why one of the Nigerian musicians called Danfo Driver says 'we are trying to stop it, but we cannot do without it woo'.

#### 6.1.2. Family problems

As seen above, drug abuse makes abusers weak, disoriented, aggressive and harsh-hearted. These make it difficult for them to build up and maintain a family. Some drugs make their abusers believe that their family members want to hurt them and accordingly try to harm them in self-defense. It is therefore not surprising that many users have been reported to have badly beaten up their wives/ children/ brothers/ sisters/ parents without any justifiable cause.

#### 6.1.3. Poor Performance

Drug abuse leads to poor academic and job performances. It leads to poor academic performance because it lowers memory capacity and reduces concentration. In my college days, I share a room with nine drugs addicts but none of them graduate the year we were supposed to graduate.

#### 6.1.4. Body Organs Damage

Drug abuse virtually reserves no organ of the body. It damages the brain, heart, lungs, kidney, liver, reproductive organs, intestine, arteries, nasal membrane and the entire body.

### 6.1.5. Mental Retardation

Since drug abuse endangers the brain, it leads to serious mental illness like psychosis. This is why the number of madmen on the street and the psychiatric wards increase on daily basis at alarming rate.

### 6.1.6. Death

It is obvious that the drug abuse, after damaging the most vital organ of the body, kills the abuser. In fact, it is identified to be the predominant cause of premature and preventable deaths. Drugs like cocaine sometimes kill inexperienced users at first intake.

## *6.2. Consequence on the Society*

### 6.2.1. Insecurity

Since criminal activities like rape, assassination, armed robbery, burglary, theft, et cetera are often committed by hard drug abuser drug abuse makes the society insecure.

### 6.2.2. Instability

Almost all the political, regional and tribal instabilities this country has witnessed were reported to have been fueled by drug addicts.

### 6.2.3. Accidents

Drivers, passengers and passers-by under the influence of drugs cause a lot of highway and domestic accidents. Intoxicated drivers kill a lot of people (including themselves) in accidents induced by hallucination, dizziness, wrong judgment, impaired vision, et cetera.

### 6.2.4. Economic Costs

Another problem associated with drug abuse is economic risk involved. Poor job performance by drug abusers leads to low productivity and reduces the annual total monetary value of product produced by the citizens of the particular country.

## **7. Data Analysis and Presentation**

The analysis of data focuses on the objectives of the study. The result obtained from the description statistics techniques was used to answer three research questions in the counsel of the analysis, common variable especially demographic characteristic were presented the table of frequencies and percentage for the individual items means index, standard deviation and standard error were used in determining the strongly disagree (SD) the detail of the analysis are interpreted in the following section below:-

Table 1 demographic characteristics of Respondent tabular presentation of the frequencies of the respondent.

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	100	
Female	0	0%
Total	100	100%

*Table 1: Respondent Sex Status*

An understanding of the above table on the respondent gender shows that male accounted for 100 representing (100%) while female representing 0%, means that there was no female in the respondent place.

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
13-14	25	25%
15-16	35	35%
17-19	40	40%
Total	100	100%

*Table 2: Respondent Age*

In order to determine the age of the respondent, the above Table 2 reveals that 17-19 years old are of the majority of the respondent being represented by 40% respondent between age 15-16 year are next as they are represented 35%, while those who are within 13-14 year are 25% of the total respondent.

## **8. Presentation of Result**

Research question (1) effect of drug abuse on student performance unit table (1) 4.1.2.1 effect of drug abuse on student performance.

Effect Questions	SA	AG	DA	SD	Total Weight	Mean Index	Rel	Rank
A student who abuses drugs respects his teacher.	48	27	13	12	311	3.11	0.77	3
Drug Abuser may end up with poor performance at school.	56	26	10	8	330	3.30	0.85	1
A student may persistently absent himself from the class.	40	34	17	11	307	3.07	0.77	3
Smoking make student release anxiety.	40	29	17	14	295	2.95	0.73	7
A student during the experience (Drug can attack other student in the school).	43	31	14	12	305	3.05	0.76	4
Student engaged in drug abuse because when they smoke right teacher does not praise them.	39	28	18	15	291	2.91	0.72	8
Drug abuse leads to negligence of student's responsibilities.	41	31	16	12	301	3.01	0.75	5

Table 3

Research question (2) effect of drug abuse on student life activities unit ii

Effect Question	SA	AG	DA	SD	Total	Mean	Rel	Rank
Student who abuses drug does not have relationship with other members of the school.	45	29	13	13	306	3.06	0.71	2
A student who abuses Drug is less careful or their colleagues (Student).	41	30	27	12	300	3	0.75	3

Table 4: Effect of Drug Abuse on Student Life Activities

Research question (3) effect of drug consumption by the student unit ii table 4.2.3 effect of drug consumption by the student

Effect Question	SA	AG	DA	SD	Total Weight	Mean Index	Rel	Rank
Students who are abuser of alcohol have no respect for their teachers.	50	30	11	10	321	3.21	0.80	2
Stimulant drugs reduce the quality of student.	44	39	14	13	304	3.04	0.76	5
The use of marijuana led to the sleepiness among students.	40	30	18	12	298	2.98	0.75	6
Student smoke mostly when they are afraid of situation	41	31	16	12	301	3.01	0.75	6
Smoking hemp give student extremely joy.	41	30	20	9	335	3.35	0.87	1
Some students whose teacher is drug abuser may end up drug abusers.	55	30	10	5	335	3.35	0.87	1
Students who are influenced by drug abuse often intimidate and disturb the non-drug abusers in the school.	40	30	16	14	296	2.96	0.74	4
Some students steal to get money for drugs.	30	29	20	21	268	2.68	0.67	6
Drug abuse lead violence in the school.	43	29	16	12	303	3.03	0.73	1
Careless and play full students are easily lured into drug abuse	40	28	17	15	293	2.93	0.73	5
As for students they become less careful and get dangerously when under the influence of the drug.	42	31	14	13	302	3.02	0.73	5
Some students started taking drugs through friend's influence.	41	33	14	12	303	3.03	0.75	5
Students under influence of drug listen more to their friends.	42	39	15	13	301	3.19	0.75	3
Stimulant like caffeine weight loss pills and energy drinks.	39	34	15	12	300	3.0	0.75	6
Use of excitants is substance which causes central nervous system stimulation amphetamines caffeine.	30	32	17	13	295	2.95	0.77	4
Inebriant cause intoxication behavior excitement.	40	32	15	12	298	2.98	0.75	6
Stimulant drugs cause unconsciousness further	42	28	15	15	312	3.12	0.78	3

Table 5

## 9. Recommendation

The following recommendations have been made in the light of findings and decisions that follow as well as the various implications which have been highlighted.

- Government commitment the government must show strong commitment and increase interest in the prevention of the drug scourge Drug abuse prevention activities should be sufficiently captured when preparing budget allocation, fund should be allocated for sustainable drug abuse prevention programmers. In view of the fact that the strong relationship between drug abuse and other society device.
- Initiation of policies and programmed: greater emphasis must be placed at programmed aimed at reducing the use abuse drug.
- Intensive drug education prevention education by way of saving factual information on the danger inherent in drug abuse should be carried out targeting student in school, principals, teachers, and school administration.
- Reporting drug dealers to appropriate authorities' availability has been mentioned as predisposing factor to drug abuse, so many people caught as a drug dealer should be reported to the appropriate authorities for necessary action. Parents must be knowledgeable about the drug issues. Parents should inculcate drug abuse resistance behavior to the youth by teaching how to say no when offered drug.

## 10. Conclusion

The effects of Drug abuse have become endemic in our society to the extent that youth have also indulge in drug abuse because of peer group influence and carelessness of their parents. They become stubborn and recalcitrant as they grow in the society. The researchers hope that this research work would be used for students, teachers and parents to take preventive measures on these issues and this will be relevant materials for those who want to carry out a research work about drug abuse.

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