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PREVALENCE OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN MINNA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Reports have been presented from different states in Nigeria to determine the prevalence of drugs or substance abuse in specific regions in the country but only a few have been reported from Niger State. Drugs of abuse can be classified as traditional drugs (cannabis, cocaine), prescription drugs (tramadol, benylin), and new psychoactive substances (madarasukudaye, solution). This study was carried out to determine the prevalence of substance abuse in Niger state by gathering relevant drug related data from a major street in Bosso Local Government and two rehabilitation centres in Minna. Sixty questionnaires were administered to respondents using a simple random sampling method. The questionnaires targeted the types of drugs abused in the region, drugs consumed by participants, frequency of intake. The following drugs are abused in the study area- cannabis, benylin, tramadol, madarasukudaye, solution, heroin, zakami (*Datura metel*), petrol, magadon M5, silver D5, exzol 5, bozol 5, diazepam, rohyphnol, sephanol, nitrazepam, katamine, *gwana, gutter, bla, shakare, taba*, dried pawpaw leaf. The frequently abused drugs/substances based on their classification, were cannabis (71.4%), benylin (53.52%) and madarasukudaye (38%), which reflects the highest intake in the study area. The following drugs also recorded high intake- tramadol (36.62%) and solution (23%). Traditional drugs, prescription drugs and new psychoactive substances, had a daily frequency intake of 83.64%, 88.46% and 77.08% respectively. Cannabis, and a good number of prescription drugs and NPS are well abused in Niger state because they are affordable and readily available. There is need for further identification of the chemical composition of these NPS.

Keywords: *drugs of abuse, new psychoactive substances, prescription drugs, cannabis*

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INTRODUCTION

Drugs of abuse (DOA) are illicit drugs that alter the normal brain functions by causing an elevation or depression of the mood. Cannabis, cocaine and heroin are well known traditional drugs. Therapeutic drugs or prescription drugs are drugs that are prescribed by a medical doctor but some of these drugs are abused because of the psychoactive effects they produce. Examples of abused therapeutic drugs are

tramadol and benylin cough syrups. The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drugs Addiction (EMCDDA) defines psychoactive substance as "a new narcotic or psychotropic drug, in pure form or in preparation, that is not controlled by the United Nations drug conventions, but may pose a public health threat comparable to that posed by illegal drugs" (EMCDDA, 2015). Volatile substances are examples of psychoactive substances that are abused in Nigeria. Volatile substances like

paints, glue, petrol and kerosene have been reported by Morakinyo and Odejide (2003). According to Obot (1990), the earliest abused drug in Nigeria was cannabis in the 1960s, and this was found associated with mental health issues. Cocaine and heroin emerged in the early 1980s and they were popular drugs, especially for drug trafficking (Obot, 1990). In recent times, cannabis tops the list, apart from it being produced locally; it is cheaper than cocaine and heroin. A survey by Morakinyo and Odejide (2003) pointed out four psychoactive substances that were readily available to street children because they were cheap and affordable- alcohol, marijuana, tobacco and kolanut (arranged in order of the most preferred by street children). Cocaine, opiates and hallucinogen abuse was not reported in this survey, indicating that either the street children were not aware of them or could not afford them (Morakinyo and Odejide, 2003).

There have been quite a number of regional researches on assessment of substance, conducted in some Nigerian states. In a study carried out by Makanjuola *et al* (2014), assessing the prevalence of alcohol and psychoactive substance used among medical students of the university of Ilorin, mild stimulants, alcohol, hypnotosedatives, tobacco, cannabis, opioids and organic solvents (arranged in order of most consumed to less consumed) were reported. Afolabi *et al* (2012), also found out similar results when a survey of drugs used among young people was conducted in Ife. Caffeine (stimulant) had the highest use, followed by alcohol.

In Niger state, only a few report has been presented with respect to substance use, hence, the need for this study. This study

was intended to determine the prevalence of substance abuse in Minna and the frequently abused substance in the region.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area

The study area included a major street in Bosso Local Government Area, two rehabilitation centres- social rehabilitation centre and National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) rehabilitation centre. The survey included administration of questionnaires with brief interview, since some of the participant were not literate and so needed interpretation. Drug users made up the population in this study. A total number of 60 participants/respondents were selected using simple random sampling. The questionnaire targeted the following- types of drugs abused in the region (traditional drugs, prescription drugs and NPS), type of drug consumed by participant and the frequency of intake. The questionnaire consisted of six sections (A-C), which included-

Section A- General demographic profile of participants.

Section B- Types of drugs abused in the region.

Section C- Frequency of intake
The statistical tool used was descriptive statistics using excel and Power query.

RESULTS

Table 1 was demographics profile which gives the background information of participants based on their occupational status, educational status, sex, age, location, marital status.

Table 1: Demographics of participants

Variables	Frequency
Occupational status	
Self-employed	35.00%
Unemployed	26.67%
Business man/woman	23.33%
Civil servant	15.00%
Educational status	
Primary	6.78%
Secondary	57.63%
Tertiary	35.59%
Age (years)	
15-19	1.67%
20-24	21.67%
25-29	33.33%
30-39	40.00%
40-49	3.33%
Sex	
Male	66.67%
Female	33.33%
Marital status	
Single	66.67%
Married	20.37%
Divorced	12.96%

The most abused drugs in the study area are- cannabis, benylin, tramadol, madarasukudaye, solution, heroin, zakami (*Datura metel*), petrol. The drugs listed in table 2, are drugs that were not captured in the questionnaires but the respondents admitted their abuse.

Table 2- drugs abused in the study area

Prescription drugs	New Psychoactive Substances
Magadon M5	<i>Gwana</i>
Silver D5	<i>Gutter</i>
Exzol 5	<i>Bla</i>
Bozol 5	<i>Shakare</i>
Diazepam	<i>Taba</i>
Rohyphnol	<i>Dried pawpaw leaves</i>
Sephanol	
Nitrazepam	
Katamine	

For easy identification and analysis, drugs were classified into three categories- traditional drugs, prescription drugs and new psychoactive substances as shown in table 3.

Table 3- the drugs abused by participants

Variables	Frequency
Traditional drugs	
Cannabis	50 (71.43%)
Heroin	14 (20.00%)
Cocaine	5 (7.14%)
Others	1 (1.43%)

Prescription drugs	
Benlylin	38 (53.52%)
Tramadol	26 (36.62%)
Paracetamol	2 (2.82%)
Morphine	1 (1.41%)
Pentazocine	1 (1.41%)
Others	3 (4.23%)
New psychoactive substances	
Madarasukudaye	5 (38%)
Solution	3 (23%)
Cow dung	1 (8)
Mandrax	1 (8)
Earth of toilet effluent	1 (8)
Others	2 (15%)

Frequency of intake of traditional drugs, prescription drugs and NPS

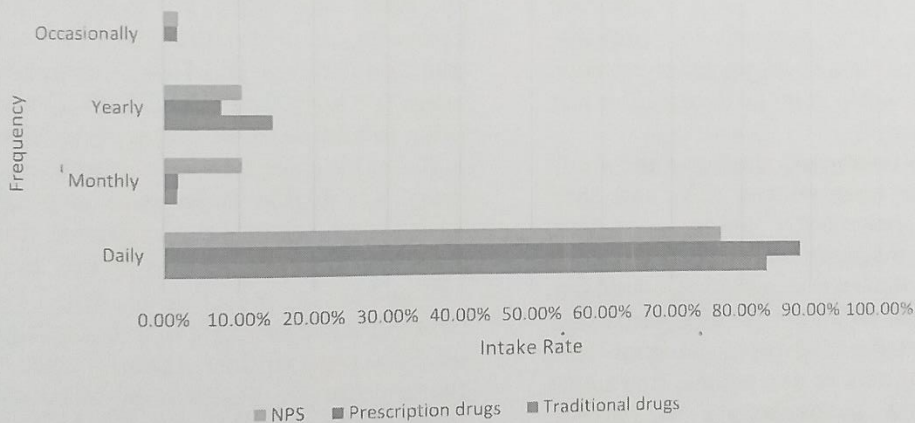


Figure 1: Frequency intake chart in the study area

The frequency of intake is represented in figure 1, showing participants' rate of exposure to the different classes of drugs.

Discussion

The demographic profile shows that the self-employed (35%) were the main participants in the survey, followed by the unemployed (26%), then business men/women (23.33%) and civil servant (15%), implying that the self-employed and unemployed in the study area, are more susceptible to drugs abuse. Majority of the participants were educated to

secondary level (57.63%), 35.59% tertiary level and 6.78% educated to primary level. Respondents in their 20s and 30s were likely drug users as compared to respondents in their teens and 40s. Makanjuola *et al* (2014), said there was significant association between the use of stimulants and age, since from their study, respondents between ages 15-24 years tend to use drugs than older ones. They suggested this could be to enhance their reading techniques and ability to stay awake. This is only

applicable to students, but majority of the participant in this survey were self-employed and unemployed with little or no formal education as seen in table 1. In terms of gender, the males (66.67%) were more than the females (33.33%). Most researches in Nigeria have confirmed this, that males are prone to drug abuse than females (UNODC, 2007; Osa-Edoh and Egbochukwu, 2012; Amosun *et al*, 2010), this could be attributed to the perception of females using drugs in the society or the stigmatization. As a result, females abuse drugs in hiding. Also notable in the demographic profile, was the marital status, a higher percentage of singles (66.67%) took drugs as compared to the married (20.37%) and divorced (12.96%). This suggests a probable problem of lack of engagement or need energy to enable them do hard jobs or just for pleasure.

The drugs commonly abused in the study area were twenty-three (23) and they include- cannabis, heroin, benylin, tramadol, magadon M5, silver D5, exzol 5, bozol 5, diazepam, rohypnol, sephanol, nitrazepam, katamine, *gwana, gutter, bla, shakare, taba*, and dried pawpaw leaf. Expressing this in percentage, traditional drugs had a percentage of 4.23%, prescription drugs (47.83%) and NPS (43.48%). The list of drugs shows increasing consumption of prescription drugs and NPS. Invariably implying that the traditional drugs are gradually phasing out and the prescription drugs and NPS are gaining grounds. This was observed by Akannam (2008), the drugs that were readily abused on the street were-lizard dung, delta 9, madrax, magdon, Valium, benylin (cough syrup), solvent, cannabis, kwana tara, arungumi zaki, tsumi. Note that, cannabis still top the list in traditional drugs. Cannabis is a well-known drug of abuse globally and

locally (UNODC, 2014) because it is cheap and readily available. In some regions, it is even cultivated without difficulties (NDLEA, 2015, Obot, 2014).

Different regions have different means of getting *high*. A consistent drug user is constantly exploring new drugs or substances to keep up with the trend. Heimer (2013), pointed out that, once a drug with psychoactive effect has been identified, and banned, a new substance emerges, which is referred to as NPS. In the case of cannabis, "spice" (herbal product), which was identified to be a synthetic cannabinoid, emerged in the drug market producing similar effects as cannabinoid (Vardakou *et al*, 2010). For all class of drugs of abuse, a high percentage of users admitted daily intake-traditional drugs (83.46%), prescription drugs (88.46%) and NPS (77.08%), which leads to addiction with time. From figure 1, it can be clearly seen that prescription drugs are highly consumed on a daily basis as compared to traditional drugs and NPS. This is a serious pointer to the availability of prescription drugs even though they are supposed to be strictly on doctor's prescription. There is need for the appropriate health body to intensify their efforts in curbing the availability of these prescription drugs.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the singles, self-employed and unemployed are prone to drug abuse. Also, cannabis continues to be the leading traditional drug, benylin and madarakudaye, are the leading prescription drugs and NPS respectively, with all the drug classes recording a high percentage of daily intake in the study area.

RECOMMENDATION

More work should be done to elucidate the active component of the new psychoactive substances identified so that, their biochemical names can be ascertained.

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