

## The implications of drug abuse: a case study of North West senatorial zone, Jigawa State, Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT:** Drug abuse by youth has grown to be a global social threat. This has implications for mental health in addition to physical health problems. Illegal drug use increases the risk of sickness, suicide, criminality, and social unrest in Sub-Saharan African nations. The situation is the same in Nigeria, particularly in the north. The North-West is where illicit drug use is most prevalent. The states of Jigawa and Kano have the highest rates of teenage drug addicts in the area. Six Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Jigawa State's North-West Senatorial Zone—Kazaure, Rano, Ringim, Babura, Gumel, and Sule-Tankarkar—were the sites of this study. The study found that cigarette, marijuana, and tramadol consumption is higher among drug users. The greatest rate of drug use was 39.3 percent, with abusers taking it twice daily. The study also indicated that peer group influence was the primary cause of drug misuse among youngsters (59.6 percent), with 44.7 percent coming from pharmaceutical shops. The establishment of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and NAFDAC appeared to be the government's most effective attempts to combat the scourge. The study used a total sample size of 94. The study drew on both primary and secondary data.

**Keywords:** Drug, drug abuse, youths, implications, Jigawa State

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### INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse among young people has become a widespread social issue globally. According to Fernandez-Serrano et al. (2009), the implications extended beyond physical health issues like liver disorders, the incapacity to take care of one's physical health, and cardiovascular diseases. Furthermore, according to Fernandez-Serrano et al. (2009), "neuropsychological" problems (i.e., "problems with decision making, reasoning, retentivity to problems with keeping a job") and mental health issues were included. This illustrates how drug use may affect not just the brain but also the body's organs. As a matter of fact, substance addiction is not particularly addressed in the ICD 10th Revision of the International Classification of Disorders (ICD 10). According to the ICD 10, drug and alcohol abuse that results from regular use of psychoactive drugs is classified as "Mental and behaviour disorder." The two are indivisible when it comes to mental health; one cannot exist without the other. Concepts related to social, mental, and physical functioning are interwoven.

Drug misuse is becoming a global social problem that is impeding the progress and development of many nations. In the discussion on discuss how drug misuse affects future leaders, youth affairs is the most negatively impacted. Numerous international researches on drug-related concerns have shown how common substance abuse is and how it raises the danger of criminal activity, physical and mental health disorders, and general societal discontent.

According to the World Drug Report (WDR) (2010), different developed countries have different rates of drug misuse. The prevalence varies between European nations; for example, it is roughly 3% in Greece and 9% in the UK for every 1,000 individuals in the 15–64 age group. According to the survey, drug misuse was less common in Greece, Germany, and Hungary, but it was more common in the United Kingdom, Italy, and Spain. Seven million adults in the United States who are 12 years of age and older—roughly 3 percent of the population—are dependent on drugs. The most often abused drug appears to be marijuana (*cannabis sativa*);

other substances include cocaine and opioid analgesics. Roughly 3% of Canadians aged 15 and older reported having at least one kind of medical, psychological, or social issue as a result of substance misuse (UNODC, 2014). Considering Sub-Saharan African nations using illegal drugs carries a risk of criminality, social instability, and suicide, the issue is widespread. Individuals who regularly take heavy substances, such as cocaine and heroin, are more likely to get physical illnesses like HIV/AIDS and other diseases. Drug abusers face numerous health issues; it has an impact on their physical and emotional well-being in later life. Deadly illnesses including HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis, mental health issues, criminal activity, and animosity are a few of the issues that drug addicts may face (Nsimba, 2010).

In Nigeria, the government, legislators, and the general public are becoming gravely concerned about the drug usage among young people. As per the 2012 report by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB, 2012), Nigeria holds the top position in West Africa for drug trafficking and addiction. National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA, 2018) disclosed that National Drug Control Master Plan (NDCMP, 2019) Nigeria has released a press release about the alarming rise in drug usage in Nigeria, especially in the Northern Region. It is a real issue that poses a threat to people's lives and the future of the area, especially in the North West, which has the highest rate of drug usage in the nation (Salubuji et al., 2021). Jigawa and Kano states were found to have the highest rates of drug misuse among young people in Northern Nigeria, according to a recent NDLEA (2018) survey on the issue of drugs and substance abuse. In these States, more than 3 million bottles of codeine syrup were drunk every day, according to Nigeria Health Watch (2018). These days, cough syrup, cigarettes, inhalants, cannabis, and alcohol are among the substances that are frequently abused (Akinola, 2015). It was a well-known fact that cocaine, heroin, and marijuana were the most often used illegal substances back then. However, times have changed, with young people even abusing novel substances. "that would cause similar or even more sensational effects as conventional narcotics". "The drug addicts now resort to the use of rubber solution, lizard excreta, cough syrup containing codeine and tramadol tablets instead of the conventional hard that were lawfully banned" (Dutse, 2017). The objectives of the study are: to examine the nature of drug abuse among youths; to identify the health consequences of drug abuse on youths and to explore the measures adopted by the government to check and address drug abuse among youths.

## METHODOLOGY

The area of the study is North West senatorial zone of Jigawa State, Nigeria which comprises Kazaure, Gumel

and Ringim Emirates with a total of 12 Local Government Areas (LGAs) out of which 6 LGAs were considered for the study (Kazaure, Roni, Gumel, Sule-Tankarkar, Ringim and Babura). The study is qualitative whereby interview schedule was used to gather information from the respondents. Snowball sampling technique was employed to solicit data from 84 drug abusers and purposive sampling technique was adopted to collect data from 5 staff of Psychiatric Hospital, Kazaure and 5 staff of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), zonal office, Kazaure. A total of 94 sample size was considered for the study. The secondary sources of data were obtained from the textbooks, journals, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, internet, research projects and offices of concerned. Since *Hausa* is the primary language of the majority ethnic group in this area, interviews with all of the chosen respondents were conducted in *Hausa*. The data obtained were transcribed and analyzed in descriptive statistics.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The primary aim of the study was to finding out how drug use and abuse negatively affect young people's physical and mental health in the study area. The goal of the analysis was to provide information about the types of drug misuse on young people in Nigeria, the health effects that drug abuse has on these young people, and the steps that the government and relevant authorities have taken to curb underage drug use. The interview schedule was broken up into two sections: Section A involved respondents' socio-demographic information (Table 1) and section B involved respondents' views on drug use. Table 1 shows that nearly 94% of respondents were male and 6.4% were female. About 30% were between 26-30 ages and 21-25 years having 17%. Another 17% are between 31-35 years, nearly 11% are between 41-45 years. 7.4% are between 36-40 years. 6.4% are within 15-20 and 6.4% for 46-50 years. Another 5.3% are of aged group 50 and above years. This shows that larger segment of the respondents are youths in accordance with the United Nations that considers youth within 15-25 years of age, 15-35 defined by African charter and 18-35 years for Nigeria. The majority of respondents are single with 54.3%, while 45.7% are married. Concerning the educational level of the respondents, 34 per cent of the respondents had Qur'anic Education, 29.8 per cent reported Primary, 21.2 per cent reported Secondary, 8.5 per cent reported ND/NCE, 2.1 per cent reported HND/B.Sc. Respondents with Qur'anic education comprised those that did not attend formal school. With regard respondents' employment status, the majority constitutes nearly 40.4 per cent of respondents engaged in various businesses (Bus conductor, masons, butcher, trader, food vendor, cattle rearing, tailoring and other labourers). 28.8 per cents are farmers. Another 18 per cent are government

**Table 1:** Respondents' Socio-demographic Information (N=94)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	
Gender:	Male	88	93.6
	Female	6	6.4
Age in years:	15-20	6	6.4
	21-25	16	17
	26-30	28	29.8
	31-35	16	17
	36-40	7	7.4
	41-45	10	10.6
	46-50	6	6.4
Marital Status:	50 and above	5	5.3
	Single	51	54.3
Level of Education	Married	43	45.7
	Certificate of Primary	28	29.8
	Certificate Secondary	20	21.2
	National Diploma (ND)	8	8.5
	National Certificate of Education (NCE)	4	4.3
	Higher Education (HND/BSc)	2	2.1
Occupational Status	Qur'anic Education	32	34
	Farmer	27	28.8
	Government employment	17	18
	Business	38	40.4
	Student	12	12.8
Monthly Earning	N15,000-25,000	40	42.6
	N25,001-35,000	18	19.1
	N35,001-45,000	7	7.4
	N45,001-55,000	3	3.2
	N55,001-65,000	5	5.3
	N65,001 and above	12	12.8
	No income	9	9.6

Researcher field survey, 2023

employees. The remaining 12.8percent are students. Moreover with regard monthly earning, the majority is 42.6%made ₦15,000- ₦25,000. 19.1%are within ₦25,001-35,000 follow by 12.8percent earned between ₦65,001 and above, 9.6 per cent declined to respond or failed to disclose their monthly earning. 7.4 per cent reported ₦35,001-45,000 monthly. Respondents earned ₦55,001-65,000 have 5.3 per cent and lastly3.2 per cent that earned ₦45,001-,55,000.Considering the international exchange rate, ₦840 Naira is equivalent to 1 USD. The official rate is beyond common man (available at black-market exchange rate N1150). Going by this, the lowest earner in a month is nearly 18 USD. This implies that, the larger portion of survive with less than 1 USD daily even going by the official exchange rate. Almost 10% of respondents declined to reveal their incomes. They mostly comprised jobless or who adopted begging as mean of survival.

### Opinions of the respondents

Opinions of respondents were captured during the interview based on the research questions.

### The nature of drug abuse

Understanding the type and severity of drug misuse is essential to comprehending the negative effects that regular drug use will have on a user's physical, mental, and even social health. The results of the respondents' experiences about the scope and intensity of drug abuse in the study area are examined in this study. The results of this study were attained from the interviews conducted with the 84 drug abusers who were selected with aid of snowball sampling technique. The remaining 10 respondents comprised 5 staff each from Psychiatric hospital, Kazaure and staff of NDLEA selected by purposive sampling technique. Table 2 shows that nearly41% abused valium, cigarette, tramado and other drugs. 21.4% abused cigarette marijuana and tramadol. Nearly 17%used marijuana, tramadol, codeine, cigarette and valium. Those used injection, codeine, marijuana, cigarette and other drugs as well as those used marijuana, injection, cigarette and rubber solution have 10.7% each. The results showed that three drugs were most commonly used: marijuana, valium, and tramadol. In addition to the aforementioned medications, codeine-

**Table 2:** Drug classifications misused by the respondents (N=94).

Drugs	Frequency	Percentage
Valium, cigarette, tramadol and other drugs.	34	40.6
Cigarette marijuana and tramadol	18	21.4
Cigarette, Injection, , marijuana, Codeine and other Drugs	9	10.7
Cigarette,, tramadol, codeine, Marijuana and valium	14	16.6
Marijuana, Injection, Cigarette and rubber solution	9	10.7

Researcher field survey, 2023

**Table 3:** Period spent in abusing drug (N=94).

Years	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	17	20.2
6-10	35	41.7
11-15	24	28.6
16-20	6	7.1
21-25	2	2.4

Researcher field survey, 2023

**Table 4:** The amount and frequency of drugs consumed at a given time (N=94).

Amount of Drugs/No of Tablets/Rolls	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	26	30.9
6-10	33	39.3
11-15	9	10.7
Multiple	11	13.1
No response	5	6
Drug Consumption Frequency		
One time a day	16	19
Two times a day	26	30.9
Three times a day	23	27.4
Four times a day	11	13.1
Five to ten times in a day	4	4.8
Several times a day	4	4.8

Researcher field survey, 2023

type cough syrup, cigarettes, and injections were also taken. It is evident that every respondent uses drugs in a polytypic manner. Table 3 shows the length of time that each respondent has used drugs. In the range of 6 to 10 years, over 42% of individuals abused drugs, and 28.6% misused drugs between 11 and 15 years. 20.2% had abused drugs for one to five years. Moreover, 7.1% belongs to those who have spent 16–20 years. Drug abusers aged 21 to 25 make up 2.4%. Table 4 demonstrates that the majority of respondents—39.3%—took six to ten tablets or rolls of medications per day. Nearly 31% misused drugs from 1-5 a day, 13.1% consumed multiple drugs a day, nearly 11% consumed 11-15 drugs a day and 6% of the refused to answer question tabled before them. On how frequent of drugs consumption, about 31% used drugs twice daily, 27.4%

took drugs three times daily. 19% used drugs one time a day. 13.1% abuse the drugs four times daily. Those that used drugs five times a day and those that are unable determine how many times they use drugs; they take it anytime they want constitute 4.8% each.

#### Causal factors into drug abuse

The findings revealed the key influential factors causing drug abuse in the study area. It is noticed from table 5 below that peer group influence appeared as the prime factor followed by broken home (single parental, orphan or irresponsible parents leading to poor upbringing). About 84% of the abusers reported that they were influenced by their friends to take drugs. Table 5 shows factors behind substance abuse and where they are

**Table 5:** Causes and access to drugs (N=94).

Initiation to Drugs Abuse	Frequency	Percentage
Peer group Influence	56	59.6
Curiosity/Fashion	2	2.1
Broken home/home pressure	16	17
Environmental Factors	12	12.8
Anxiety	3	3.2
Member of the family	5	5.3
Where Drugs are obtained		
Pharmaceutical shop	42	44.7
Dealers in Drugs	12	12.8
Small-scale merchants	20	21.3
By way of friends	17	18
Declined to Disclose	3	3.2

Researcher field survey, 2023

**Table 6:** Consequences of drug abuse on physical health (N=94).

Physically affected	Number	Percentage
Yes	43	45.7
No	51	54.3

Researcher field survey, 2023

**Table 7:** Drug abuse effects on mental health (N=94).

Effects	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	57	60.6
No	37	39.4

Researcher field survey, 2023

obtained. Nearly 60% of the responded opined that involving into drug abuse was by peer group. With 17% reported that it was broken home/home pressure. Nearly 13% reported environmental influence, 5.3% involved into drug abuse via member of the family, anxiety having 3.2% also another 2.1% curiosity/fashion.

### Where drugs are obtained

The findings showed that drugs were mostly attained from the pharmaceutical shops within the local community having nearly 45%. 21.3% reported small-scale merchants as their source. 18% reported that it was through their friends, about 13% obtained directly from the drug dealers and the remaining 3.2% refused to disclose their sources of getting drugs.

### The effects of substance abuse on health

The study investigated the effects of illegal substance usage on young people's health at the area of the study. Data were gathered with aid of interview schedule with drug abusers. Table 6 shows that majority with 54.3% believed the medicine had no effect on their health and

the remaining 43 per cent reported that their physical health is affected by certain health problems including: hepatitis and ulcer, neurological problem. Others are respiratory diseases. Hepatitis, heart attacks, and ulcers were the most prevalent health complications among drug users in the research area. To ascertain this, interview was conducted with the entire study sample size which comprised 75 drug users, 15 respondents of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and two (2) psychiatric nurses in the Jigawa State Psychiatric Hospital, Kazaure who disclosed that, more than 70% of mentally ill patients have drug-induced psychosis, a mental condition brought on by long-term substance usage by drug users. The purpose of the institution is to rehabilitate those who have mental disability.

Table 7 shows that over half of the entire respondents (57%) reported that abusing drug does created a severe negative consequence such as mental health. And 37% revealed that drug abuse has no negative consequences on their mental health in one way or the other such as anxiety disorders, mild mental disorders (neurosis), serious psychological illness (psychosis) and anxiety response hallucination, drug-induced psychosis and attempt suicide etc.

**Table 8:** Actions taken to manage substance abuse (N=94).

Measures	Frequency	Percentage
Establishment of NDLEA & NAFDAC	51	54.3
Programmes for rehabilitation	8	8.5
Raising the cost of drugs (tramadol)	31	32.9
Arrest and incarceration	4	4.3

Researcher field survey, 2023

### Nigeria's intervention in dealing with substance abuse

The investigation found that certain young people continue to engage in drug use and misuse despite all efforts by the government to curb and lessen the problem. This could be due to the fact that they were not aware of the controls or were illiterate and lived in remote areas. The analysis showed that the government has done a commendable job of reducing the threat posed by drug usage. The National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) appears to be the only agency that the respondents are aware of, despite the government having established other agencies for this purpose, including the National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC). NAFDAC is an agency of the federal government that is attached with the Federal Ministry of Health. The mandate of the agency is "regulating and controlling the manufacture, importation, exportation, advertisement, distribution, sale and use of food, drugs, cosmetics, medical devices, chemicals and packaged water in Nigeria" (NAFDAC, 2017). Similar observation was made by Udama (2013) stressed that the NDLEA official's incapacity to arrest prominent drug sellers while knowing of their presence has contributed to the ongoing drug misuse epidemic in Nigeria. It also revealed that drug dealers only receive short sentences or are given the option to pay fines, which, given the size of the enterprise, they can afford to do without difficulty and carry on operating.

From (Table 8), 54.3% of the respondents opined that establishment of NDLEA by government was a welcome development and yielding good result. Nearly 33% believed that raising the price of drugs that are mostly abused made it unaffordable. 8.5% of the respondents considered rehabilitation programmes. 4.3% reported that incarceration serving as a bold step by the government in tackling the menace of drug abuser and sellers.

### Conclusion

The study was carried in six local government areas of Jigawa State, Nigeria's North-West senatorial zone, examining the impact of drug abuse on mental and

physical health. It demonstrates that substance misuse is a significant problem that has harmed the health and social environments of the young people in the study region. Larger portion of the respondents are unemployed, single and male youths. They have attained low formal educational level: secondary, elementary, and Islamic education and they are low-income individuals who live below the poverty line. The most often abused medications identified in this study were codeine syrup, cannabis, benzodiazepines, and tramadol. The majority of responders had one of the following main mental disorders: neurosis, schizophrenia, anxiety, or depression. They are also prone to respiratory and neurological illnesses; the main causes of their neuropsychiatric disorders include drug misuse, genetics, and spiritual assault. The perception of drug users on tramadol tables is contrary to its purpose. Tramadol tablets are prescribed to treat pain, but drug addicts use them to increase their energy levels. Even though the majority of the medications taken by the population were prescribed, they were smuggled into these communities. The most depressing aspect is that the majority of them are fake medications, using which could have major negative effects on one's health. Youths are encouraged to take drugs by their peers, who also participate in drug abuse. Their living environment has an impact on their decision to utilize illicit drugs. Some people used drugs to quench their curiosity, and after abusing them for a long time, they developed a drug addiction that prevented them from using drugs.

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### Recommendations

In order to tackle the problem of substance abuse in the study area, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Government should provide access road for effective patrol to the rural areas by the official of NDLEA and NAFDAC to overcome the illegal drug selling in the study area.
2. It has been noted that most people who live in rural areas are unaware of the risks involved in self-medicating. Therefore, government should organize a sensitization and public awareness campaign through electronic media using local language to enlighten people about the danger of taking drugs without prescription by the medical Doctors.
3. Medicine stores should only sell tramadol tablets in accordance with a doctor's prescription.
4. The problem of porous border should be addressed to protect the illicit smuggling and trafficking of illegal drugs and weapons to the country. These illicit drugs in most case seem to be fake drugs which are dangerous to community health.
5. It is apparent that there is a severe shortage of personnel in the law enforcement organizations tasked with containing the drug abuse. Therefore, government should recruit required staff in NDLEA and NAFDAC. Additionally, these agencies should be provided with well-conditioned vehicles and other required facilities to accomplish their targets.
6. The only Psychiatric hospital in Jigawa state should be improved with modern facilities and additional staff such as specialize Doctor, psychiatric social workers, psychiatric nurses
7. The people of the community should form community-based organizations to take proactive measures ensuring that drug vendors are monitored so that no shop keeper would be allowed to sell illicit drug in their shops.
8. The family should also ensure discipline be enforced among the family members. Doing so would go a long way toward reduction of social vices such as drug use and abuse among the family members.
9. Traditional and religious leaders should contribute in shaping the moral conduct of our youths through preaching.

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