

Research Paper

## Prevalence, Causes, and Effects of Drug and Substance Abuse among Youth in Kaduna State, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

The issue of drug and substance abuse among youth in Sabon Gari Nasarawa (SGN), Kaduna State, Nigeria, is a growing concern that brings about serious health, social, and economic challenges. This study investigated the prevalence, causes, and effects of drug and substance abuse in SGN, a community situated in the Chikun local government area, Kaduna State, Nigeria. Mixed methods of data collection were employed for this research. Questionnaires and interviews were used as the data collection tools, and the data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 25) software. The study findings indicated that a large number of residents, particularly youth, engage in drug and substance abuse due to peer pressure, parental negligence, and the accessibility of drugs and substances. Additionally, the study revealed a significant correlation between drug abuse and the community's crime rate. The study proposes the implementation of awareness campaigns, the establishment of a community guidance and counseling unit, and strict law enforcement to apprehend and penalize drug peddlers.

**Keywords:** *Prevalence, Drug, Substance, Menace, Youth, Kaduna*

Drug and substance abuse is a serious and devastating social issue that has gained significant attention from researchers, governments, organizations, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders. The number of drug users worldwide has increased, with approximately 0.9% of the global population being drug and substance users, according to Ritchie and Roser (2018). In Nigeria, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2018) reported that around 14.3 million Nigerians, representing 14% of those aged between 15 and 64, use illicit drugs and substances. Many Nigerians rely on various drugs and substances, such as marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, tramadol, and alcohol, for their daily activities (Muhammad et al., 2021). The Director-General of the Kaduna State Bureau for Substance Abuse, Prevention, and Treatment (KADBUSA) highlighted an increasing trend of drug and substance abuse in Kaduna State, with

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## **Prevalence, Causes, and Effects of Drug and Substance Abuse among Youth in Kaduna State, Nigeria**

approximately 10% of residents using illicit drugs and substances (Ebije, 2020). This issue contributes to social problems like banditry, communal clashes, theft, and insurgency in various parts of the state.

Drug and substance abuse has become a means of entertainment for relieving boredom and stress, experiencing euphoria, defying laws, enhancing sexual experiences, and improving academic performance, among other reasons. Research has shown that alcohol, cannabis, heroin, and cocaine are the most dangerous drugs consumed globally. Surprisingly, marijuana is considered less dangerous than tobacco (Paranjape, 2019). Several countries, including Mexico, the United States, Spain, Colombia, Argentina, Jamaica, South Africa, Peru, Thailand, Zimbabwe, Costa Rica, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, have allowed the production, sale, and consumption of marijuana cigarettes for recreational, religious, and health purposes (Pal, 2021). Scientific studies have even demonstrated the potential of marijuana to safely treat diseases like arthritis and diabetes (Paranjape, 2019). Nevertheless, adopting a zero-tolerance policy towards the use, sale, and possession of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances is crucial to preventing widespread drug consumption that could harm the younger generation and society as a whole.

Drug and substance abuse has severe consequences for individuals' health, mental capacity, social and economic status, families, and communities (Neupane and Kapali, 2023). It is a significant social and health issue in Nigeria and worldwide. According to Siro (2014), individuals who use drugs often engage in risky and dangerous behaviors, leading to conflicts with authorities, loved ones, and society as a whole. This suggests that they turn to such behaviors as a way to cope with stress and depression.

In SGN, Kaduna State, there has been a concerning rise in youth violence, crime, and various social problems, largely attributed to the pervasive issue of drug and substance abuse. The detrimental effects of drug and substance abuse have had a heavy impact on the community, resulting in increased instances of violent behavior and criminal activities among young people. Drug abuse has not only contributed to a rise in criminality but has also precipitated a range of social issues, including broken families, unemployment, and deteriorating public health. The community is in dire need of comprehensive interventions to address the root causes of drug abuse and its consequences. This includes implementing targeted educational programs, providing accessible rehabilitation services, and fostering collaboration between community members and law enforcement agencies. These efforts are necessary to mitigate this pressing issue and create a safer and healthier community.

### ***Statement of the Study Problem***

The global consumption of drugs and substances among youth has proportionately increased. The Kaduna State Bureau for Substance Abuse, Prevention, and Treatment (KADBUSA) reported that 10% of residents, primarily youth, in Kaduna State have drug problems (Adepetum, 2021). The SGN community is no exception, as there has been a steady increase in the number of youths, including married individuals, who use illicit drugs and substances. However, there is serious concern within the community, particularly among family members of drug users, who desperately plead for them to quit and sometimes even threaten them to leave the family. This highlights that drug abuse not only devastates the addicts themselves but also their loved ones and society as a whole. Undoubtedly, the menace of drug abuse has become a critical concern in the area, resulting in law and order

## **Prevalence, Causes, and Effects of Drug and Substance Abuse among Youth in Kaduna State, Nigeria**

issues such as youth gang activities, destruction of public and private property, moral decay, mobile snatching, pickpocketing, and other social ills.

### ***Objectives of the Study***

The purpose of this present study was to explore the following objectives:

- To investigate the prevalence rate of drug and substance abuse in SGN, Kaduna State.
- To investigate the causes of drug and substance abuse in SGN, Kaduna State.
- To investigate the effects of drug and substance abuse in SGN, Kaduna State.
- To provide recommendations for curtailing the menace of drug and substance abuse in SGN Kaduna State.

### ***Conceptual Explanations of Drug and Drug Abuse***

#### ***Drug***

A drug is any chemical substance capable of altering the body system of the user. Drugs, commonly known as medicines, are substances used for the treatment or medication of diseases. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a drug is any substance, other than food, that, when ingested into the body of a living organism, can affect mood, thoughts, feelings, awareness, and attitudes (Ghodse, 2003). It can also refer to chemical mixtures that, when taken orally or injected into the body, can change mood and behavior (Alli and Oshikoya, 2006). Similarly, Abdullahi (as cited in Siro, 2014) defines a drug as a substance that, when taken into the body, sedates, stimulates, helps with weight loss, induces sleep, or treats an illness. The 1971 International Convention on Drugs, to which Nigeria is a signatory, classifies drugs into two categories: narcotic drugs and psychoactive drugs. Narcotic drugs, also known as opioids, include substances with pain-relieving properties such as opium and its derivatives (brown sugar, heroin, and codeine), coca leaf, cocaine, cannabis, cannabis resin, extracts and tinctures, methadone, pethidine, and thebaine. On the other hand, psychoactive drugs encompass substances like valium, diazepam, morphine, ketamine, and ephedrine that typically affect the mind, emotions, and general attitude of the user (Paranjape, 2019).

#### ***Drug abuse***

Researchers, regulatory bodies, and organizations have provided different definitions and explanations of drug abuse. However, the term "drug abuse" was derived from the pejorative term "druggie," which refers to a drug addict or abuser (Okolo, 2022, p. 145). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), drug abuse is the unsafe use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Drug abuse occurs when a drug is used without medical recommendation or when a drug or substance is used unreasonably. Laver (as cited in Siro, 2014) views drug abuse as the unlawful use of drugs in a manner that may be harmful and dangerous to the body. Ajila (2001) explains drug abuse as the consumption, inhalation, chewing, or smoking of psychoactive substances that alter an individual's behavior and mood. In other words, Dambazau (2011) describes drug abuse as the illegal use of drugs and substances that have the potential to alter a person's mood. This includes the manufacturing, transportation, possession, and consumption of illicit drugs and substances. It is generally agreed that criminality and delinquency are associated with mental imbalance. Individuals with balanced emotional and physical health typically do not engage in criminal behavior or risky behaviors, nor do they use drugs and substances beyond their control

## **Prevalence, Causes, and Effects of Drug and Substance Abuse among Youth in Kaduna State, Nigeria**

(Paranjape, 2019). Studies on the relationship between drugs and crime reveal a connection between drug addicts and criminals in terms of their characteristics (Ghodse, 2003).

### ***Some of the Most Commonly Abused Drugs and Substances***

#### ***Marijuana***

According to Forster (2004), marijuana is the most commonly abused illegal substance in Nigeria and worldwide. It goes by various street names, such as cannabis, ganja, dope, hashish, bhang, weed, herb, and grass. Marijuana originates from the *Cannabis sativa* plant and is typically smoked. Its effects include mild hallucinations, stimulation of the central nervous system, an increased heart rate, and elevated blood pressure (Stacey, 2006). Excessive marijuana use can lead to addiction, mental disorders, heart disease, lung infections, and other health issues. Users of marijuana are often involved in criminal activities such as pickpocketing, rape, murder, arson, domestic violence, and automobile theft (Ajila, 2001).

#### ***Cocaine***

Stacey (2006) describes cocaine as a powerful and addictive stimulant made from coca plant leaves, primarily found in Latin American countries like Peru, Ecuador, Argentina, Colombia, and Bolivia. Users typically snort cocaine powder or rub it on their gums. It can also be dissolved and injected. Cocaine produces a euphoric feeling, lasting approximately 30 to 45 minutes (Stacey, 2006). Like other drugs, cocaine has serious effects, including nausea, high blood pressure, runny nose, loss of smell, asthma, pneumonia, and even death (Smith, 2004).

#### ***Methamphetamine***

Methamphetamine, also known as glass, ice, or meth, is a highly potent and addictive stimulant that can be ingested by swallowing, smoking, injecting, or snorting (Lebni et al. 2020). It resembles glass fragments and appears as unscented bluish-white rocks. Methamphetamine increases heart rate and blood pressure and allows users to stay awake and engage in continuous activities with less need for rest or sleep. Habitual users may experience anxiety, insomnia, hallucinations, severe dental problems, memory loss, confusion, sleeping disorders, weight loss, risky behavior, and even cancer (Lebni et al., 2020). Injection of methamphetamine also increases the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and C, and other infectious diseases (NIDA, 2021).

#### ***Alcoholic beverages***

Alcoholic beverages, commonly known as beer, booze, or spirits, are widely used recreational drugs. Users believe that alcohol helps reduce tension, provide pleasure, enhance skills, and alleviate worries. Moderate alcohol consumption is generally safe, but excessive intake can lead to risky behaviors and health problems (Ekpenyong, 2012). In Nigeria, there are various traditional and cultural alcoholic drinks, such as bammi, gogoro, and burkutu.

#### ***Codeine/cough syrup***

Codeine is derived from opium and is used for treating cough, pain, and diarrhea. It is taken orally, and its production and sale are highly regulated due to its narcotic effects. Users believe that codeine provides feelings of increased energy, euphoria, relaxation, drowsiness, and sleepiness. Adverse effects of codeine include vomiting, constipation, itchiness, nausea, dry mouth, and coughing (NIDA, 2021).

## **Prevalence, Causes, and Effects of Drug and Substance Abuse among Youth in Kaduna State, Nigeria**

### ***Causes of Drug and Substance Abuse***

Various factors contribute to the widespread use of drugs and substances. These causes include, but are not limited to:

#### ***Peer pressure***

A peer group refers to a group of individuals who share commonalities or belong to the same social status within the same age range (Ferrante, 2008). According to Yahaya (2019), peer groups have a strong influence on individuals, although families also play a significant role in an individual's life. Edwin Sutherland proposed that crimes and deviant behaviors like drug and substance abuse are learned through intimate face-to-face interactions with both significant others and generalized others (Paranjape, 2019). Similarly, Dambazau (2011) argued that peer group pressure is a major cause of juvenile delinquency. In other words, young people often succumb to the strong influence and pressure from their peers to engage in criminal acts and other disorderly activities. They may initially experiment with drugs and substances for fun and enjoyment, influenced by their friends or peer groups. Over time, the frequency of drug and substance use increases due to the narcotic effects, leading many of them to become addicted (Paranjape, 2019).

#### ***Parental negligence***

Negligence from parents also contributes significantly to the rise in drug and substance abuse. Kendall (2011) posits that parents and siblings play a crucial role in a child's upbringing. Young people are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior and drug abuse if they are treated with respect by their parents, taught discipline, and have responsible role models in their lives (Dambazau, 2011). This aligns with Hirsch's (1969) proposition that the stronger the attachment between an individual and their parents, siblings, friends, and teachers, the less likely they are to break the law and engage in delinquency, such as drug abuse. It has been observed that some parents fail to fulfill their parental roles and responsibilities. Dambazau (2011) argues that juveniles involved in risky behaviors like drug abuse often have high levels of conflict with their parents, lack emotional skills, and resort to crime and disorderly activities to cope with their challenging lives. As a result, they may associate with negligent peers and engage in drug abuse and other deviant behaviors.

#### ***Curiosity***

Generally, young people are curious and experimental. They may start consuming drugs and other illicit substances on an experimental basis for fun and enjoyment. In other words, they may try drugs for various reasons, such as the pleasurable feelings they provide, stress relief, a desire to feel more mature, or a need for a sense of belonging. Unlike adults, teenagers are more inclined to engage in risky behaviors to impress their peers.

#### ***Availability of drugs***

The availability of drugs in an area contributes to the prevalence of drug and substance abuse. Paranjape (2019) identifies factors such as the illegal drug market, improper distribution and prescription practices, smuggling, and illicit drug manufacturing as contributors to the availability of drugs and substances for users. It is undeniable that the presence of drugs in a particular area can have serious consequences, including the initiation of drug use, increased drug use, and acting as a gateway to the illegal drug market (Dambazau, 2011). Simply put, the greater the availability and accessibility of illicit drugs like marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and codeine in an area, the higher the risk of drug abuse.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

Numerous problems arise as a result of taking drugs and other substances for reasons other than those recommended. The effects of drug and substance abuse go beyond what is commonly known. Dambazau (2011) discovered that drug abuse primarily leads to dependence, which can vary in severity and impact depending on the specific drug. Essentially, drug abuse can result in physical and psychological addiction, mental disorders, and even death (Oshodi, Aina, and Onajole, 2010).

Illicit drug and substance use have been linked to criminal behavior and delinquency, according to Alli and Oshikoya (2006). Official crime data from both developed and developing nations shows that a significant percentage of criminals use drugs and other substances when committing their offenses. Most offenders were either drunk or under the influence of drugs at the time they engaged in deviant or criminal activities.

Violence is another effect of drug and substance abuse. In many instances, drug and substance addicts are more likely to be involved in violent behavior, resulting in physical, emotional, or sexual abuse (Siro, 2014). People who abuse drugs are particularly prone to perpetrating violence against their spouses or children, which in turn leads to broken families (Ekpenyong, 2012).

A study conducted by Njeri and Ngesu (2014) found that drug abuse has a detrimental impact on the academic performance of students who use drugs for non-prescribed reasons. In other words, students who engage in drug and substance abuse tend to perform poorly in school and are often involved in cheating, cultism, or conflicts with their classmates and teachers.

Drug abuse also has severe financial implications for both individuals and society. It exacerbates poverty and gives rise to various social issues. Poverty should not be seen solely as the inability to meet basic survival needs; it also encompasses the high rates of crime and violence among the economically disadvantaged, particularly women and children (Paranjape, 2019).

Smith (2004) believed that drug abuse can lead to risky and dangerous behaviors, such as injecting drugs, which significantly increase the risk of acquiring infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS and other illnesses transmitted through contaminated needles. Regular drug use can also lead to engaging in unprotected sexual activities with multiple partners, putting individuals at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) like gonorrhea, hepatitis B, or even death (Colfax et al., 2004).

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### ***Differential Association Theory***

Differential Association Theory was propounded by Professor Edwin H. Sutherland in 1939 and later modified in 1947. It focuses on the idea that crime and delinquent behaviors, such as drug and substance abuse, are learned through association with others (Paranjape, 2019). Sutherland called this process "differential association," which refers to the social relationships individuals have with various personalities. According to Sutherland, no one is born with the knowledge or skills to commit crimes or engage in delinquent acts like drug and substance abuse. Learning about criminal or delinquent behavior involves understanding the techniques, attitudes, and justifications for these actions. For example, the process of

## Prevalence, Causes, and Effects of Drug and Substance Abuse among Youth in Kaduna State, Nigeria

learning about drug use or misuse involves observing and imitating the behaviors of influential people in our lives, such as parents, siblings, relatives, neighbors, friends, or colleagues. Essentially, Sutherland's suggests that an individual becomes delinquent when the influences encouraging law-breaking outweigh the influences discouraging it.

Following Sutherland's propositions, we can argue that the sociological view of crime considers criminality and deviance as the result of social processes at work within a given society, such as the Nigerian community. Specifically, within the predominant Hausa-Fulani society in Nigeria, which was historically characterized by an integrated family system and limited individual autonomy, crime and delinquency rates were low. However, factors like advancements in science and information and communication technology, societal modernization, and the changing dynamics of contemporary Hausa-Fulani society have transformed the traditional family structure. As a result, individuals now have more freedom to act independently and adapt to the competing interests of the community. This societal shift has contributed to an increase in crime rates and other antisocial behaviors.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Study setting***

This study was conducted in SGN, Chikun local government area, Kaduna State, which comprises Dallatu Street (*Layin Tanki*), Dokaji Street (*Layin Fim*), Wakili Street (*Layin Falwaya*), Mai Jama'a Street (*Layin Mangwarori*), Dadin Kowa Street (*Layin Dadin Kowa*), Marafa Street (*Layin Mai Kala Kala*), Matawalle Street (*Layin Baban Ghana*), and Hakimi Street (*Layin Tashan Namagi*).

#### ***Sample***

The total sample comprised 400 adolescents selected using randomized sampling techniques from different streets in SGN, Chikun Local Government Area, Kaduna State. Of the 400 respondents, 310 were male and 90 were female. The age range of the sample was between 15 and 30 years.

#### ***Data collection***

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. Firstly, a quantitative survey was conducted to gather data on the prevalence of drug and substance abuse among various age groups and demographics in SGN. Secondly, a qualitative interview was conducted with individuals who have firsthand experience with drug and substance abuse to delve into the underlying factors contributing to this issue. Questionnaires and interviews were the instruments used to collect data from the respondents. The research questionnaires were self-administered. In each street, the researcher identified the major meeting places (tea and noodles joints, street joints (*majalisa*), schools, and drug abuse joints) within the study area. At these gathering points, researchers randomly selected residents (both drug addicts and non-drug addicts), administered the questionnaire, and waited to collect the instrument when it was answered by the respondent. The informed consent of the questionnaire respondents and interview participants was obtained at the beginning of each process.

#### ***Data analysis***

The retrieved questionnaires were sorted and examined. Descriptive statistics were used for the analysis of the study's data. Respondents' socio-demographic data and the study objectives sections were subjected to descriptive statistical methods. Microsoft Word and

**Prevalence, Causes, and Effects of Drug and Substance Abuse among Youth in Kaduna State, Nigeria**

Excel (2013 version) were used for data entry, coding, editing, and cleaning. Also, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 25) software was used to analyze the quantitative data.

**RESULTS**

**Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percent
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	310	77.5	77.5
Female	90	22.5	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>Age</b>			
15-19	110	27.5	27.5
20-24	150	37.5	65
25-29	80	20.0	85
30 above	60	15.0	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>Street of residence</b>			
Dallatu	70	17.5	17.5
Marafa	55	13.75	31.25
Sarkin Yaki	45	11.25	42.5
Matawalle	43	10.75	53.25
Wakili	42	10.5	63.75
Hakimi	50	12.5	76.25
Dokaje	50	12.5	88.75
Dadin Kowa	45	11.25	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Source: Field, 2023.*

As presented in Table 1 above, the study findings show the majority (37.5%) of the respondents were between the ages of 20 and 24. Male participants made up 77.5%, and female participants made up 22.5%. Furthermore, most of the participants (31.25%) were residents of Dallatu Street and Marafa Street.

**Prevalence of drug and substance abuse**

**Table 2: Awareness of the prevalence of drug and substance abuse in Sabon Gari Nasarawa**

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Yes	400	100	100
No	0	0	
I don't know	0	0	
No response	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Source: Field, 2023.*

Table 2 reveals that all of the respondents (100%) said they were aware of the prevalence of drugs and substances being abused in SGN, Kaduna State.



**Prevalence, Causes, and Effects of Drug and Substance Abuse among Youth in Kaduna State, Nigeria**

**Table 3: Factors that influence drug abuse in Sabon Gari Nasarawa**

Reasons for drug abuse	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Peer pressure	140	35.0	35.0
Parental negligence	70	17.5	52.5
Availability of drugs	80	20.0	72.5
Poverty	20	5.0	77.5
Media and popular culture	10	2.5	80
Unemployment	60	15.0	95
Curiosity	20	5.0	100
Total	400	100	

Source: Field, 2023.

Table 3 illustrates the percentage of factors influencing drugs and substances in SGN. The findings indicate that the majority of the respondents (35.0%) mentioned peer pressure as the main influencing factor. This is followed by the availability of drugs (20%), parental negligence (17.5%), and 15.0% identified unemployment. A small percentage (5.0%) indicated poverty and curiosity.

**Table 4: Commonly Abused Drugs in Sabon Gari Nasarawa**

Types of Drugs and Substances	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Marijuana/weed/cannabis	145	36.25	36.25
Cough syrup	60	15.0	51.25
Tramadol	70	17.5	68.75
Cocaine	5	1.25	70
Heroin	5	1.25	71.25
Alcoholic beverages	30	7.5	78.75
Diazepam (Valium)	25	6.25	85
Glue	20	5.0	90
Methamphetamine	20	5.0	95
Shisha	20	5.0	100
Total	400	100	

Source: Field, 2023.

Table 4 displays the percentage of the types of drugs and substances used by drug addicts in SGN. The data indicates that the majority (36.25%) identified marijuana as the most commonly abused drug or substance in SGN. Tramadol was identified by 17.5% of the respondents, followed by cough syrup (15.0%), alcoholic beverages (7.5%), diazepam/valium (6.25%), glue (5.0%), methamphetamine (5.0%), and shisha (5%). Furthermore, only 1.25% reported using cocaine and heroin, respectively.

**Table 5: Sources of drugs and substances in Sabon Gari Nasarawa**

Sources	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Drug peddlers	189	47.25	47.25
Pharmacy/Chemists	150	37.5	84.75
Fellow drug addicts	40	10.0	90.75
Others	15	3.75	98.5
No response	6	1.5	100
Total	400	100	

Source: Field, 2023.

**Prevalence, Causes, and Effects of Drug and Substance Abuse among Youth in Kaduna State, Nigeria**

From the findings presented in Table 5, it is evident that the majority of the respondents (47.25%) identified local drug peddlers as the primary source of illicit drugs and substances in SGN. However, 37.5% stated that pharmaceutical shops are the major source, followed by social networks (10.0%) and other sources (3.75%).

***Consequences of drug and substance abuse***

***Table: 6 Major Consequences of Drug and Substance Abuse in Sabon Gari Nasarawa***

<b>Major consequences</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative percent</b>
Increase in crime rate	105	26.25	26.25
Spread of diseases	40	10.0	36.25
Moral decadence	65	16.25	52.5
Youth gang	150	37.5	90
Family disintegration	20	5.0	95
Theft	10	2.5	97.5
Others	10	2.5	100
Total	400	100	

*Source: Field, 2023.*

As shown in Table 6, the majority of the respondents (37.5%) indicated that youth gang activities are the major consequences of using illicit drugs and other substances. Furthermore, 26.25% indicated an increase in the crime rate, 16.25% indicated moral decadence, 10% indicated the spread of communicable diseases, 5% indicated family disintegration, 5% indicated theft, and others.

**DISCUSSION**

***The nature and pattern of drug and substance abuse in Sabon Gari Nasarawa***

There is an increasing number of people abusing drugs and illicit substances in SGN, Kaduna State. Youth are progressively adopting new techniques for the consumption and trafficking of drugs and substances into the community to satisfy the rising demand. This trend may be the result of inadequate efforts from community members, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders. According to the study findings, almost all participants (100%) believed that they were aware of the prevalence of drug and substance abuse within the community. Furthermore, teenagers constitute the largest population involved in the consumption of drugs and other substances, accounting for 73.75%. This finding is consistent with Siro (2014), who found that young people are vulnerable to drug and substance abuse globally. The transitional phase of growth and development between childhood and adulthood is a delicate stage characterized by freedom and the establishment of bonds with peers and friends at school and other places. Supporting these findings, a male participant aged 40 interviewed on Hakimi Street mentioned that:

“Honestly speaking, adolescents between the ages of 16 and 25 make up the majority of those who abuse drugs and other substances in the community. It is easy to notice this when you are in the community and pass by locations where drugs are abused.”

However, the majority of participants (36.25%) identified marijuana, 17.5% identified tramadol, and 15.0% identified cough syrup or codeine as the most abused drugs and substances in SGN. These findings align with the 2019 National Drug and Law Enforcement Agency report, which identified marijuana as the most prevalent drug or substance abused by drug addicts across the 36 states in Nigeria because it is the only drug locally cultivated.

## **Prevalence, Causes, and Effects of Drug and Substance Abuse among Youth in Kaduna State, Nigeria**

Similarly, Yunusa et al. (2017) identified marijuana, cough syrup, and tramadol as common drugs and substances abused among members of the general public, especially youth, in the Kano State metropolis. Additionally, the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) identified tramadol and codeine as the most commonly abused drugs by youth in Nigeria. Supporting these findings, a male participant, aged 24 and a drug addict, interviewed at a popular drug joint, disclosed:

“I used to take a variety of drugs and substances. Everybody that you see here has used marijuana. I also take alcohol, cough syrup, and tramadol. These drugs help me forget my problems.”

The study revealed how drug users in SGN obtain illicit drugs and substances. Nearly half of the participants (47.25%) mentioned street drug peddlers, while 37.5% identified pharmaceutical shops as common sources of illicit drugs. One 30-year-old male participant, a drug addict, interviewed on Dadin Kowa Street explained:

“We [drug addicts] typically obtain drugs and narcotic substances within the community. I used to buy prescription drugs like cough syrup and tramadol from local pharmacies. While marijuana, methamphetamine, and other narcotics from drug dealers in the drug-addled areas.”

Similarly, a 20-year-old female participant, a drug addict, interviewed on Dallatu Street opined:

“I used to smoke marijuana, cigarettes, and cough syrup every day. I got them from pharmacies and drug peddlers with the help of my friends.”

These findings highlight the significant role played by pharmaceutical shops and drug peddlers in making legal and illegal drugs and narcotics accessible to users in SGN. Therefore, drug addicts obtained prescription medications and over-the-counter drugs from local pharmacies without legitimate expert recommendations and also from drug peddlers within the community.

### ***Causes of drug and substance abuse in Sabon Gari Nasarawa***

Peer pressure is a major factor, accounting for 35% of the total responses. This finding aligns with Oketch (2008), who noted that the period of transition to adulthood comes with various challenges, which young people believe are understood by peers. Consequently, many adolescents experiment with available drugs and substances, unaware of the uncertain consequences. A study by the National Authority for the Campaign against Drug Abuse (NACADA, cited in Njeri and Negus 2014) reported that external influences, such as peer pressure, contribute to individuals engaging in drug and substance abuse. Essentially, delinquent peers may introduce drugs and substances, establish a social environment conducive to their use, and provide advice. Supporting the findings, a 16-year-old female participant, a drug addict, interviewed at Sarkin Yaki Street revealed:

“My friend introduced me to drugs and substances, and it eventually shaped my lifestyle. I got caught up in the party scene, where illicit drug and substance use is normalized.”

Likewise, a 19-year-old male participant, a drug addict interviewed on Marafa Street, opined that:

“I began experimenting with drugs during secondary school because I didn’t want to feel excluded because my schoolmates were drug addicts. This led me to join them.”

## **Prevalence, Causes, and Effects of Drug and Substance Abuse among Youth in Kaduna State, Nigeria**

Other factors contributing to drug and substance abuse in SGN include the availability of drugs (20.0%) and parental laxity (17.5%), respectively. As Paranjape (2019) argues, situations like parental death, divorce, abandonment, ignorance, illness, immorality of parents, and an unpleasant family atmosphere can create an environment that encourages children to engage in drug and substance abuse. Additionally, the presence of illicit drugs and substances in an area can have serious consequences, even sparking illegal drug trafficking (Paranjape, 2019). These findings indicate that peer pressure, drug availability, and parental negligence are the main factors contributing to drug abuse in SGN. In this case, drug addicts in SGN are involved in drug and substance abuse due to the influence of their friends, who are also drug addicts. They believe that drug and substance use will give them a sense of euphoria, relieve stress and worry, and make them feel like they belong. Consequently, they become interested in experimenting with drugs and substances and eventually abuse them.

### ***Consequences of drug and substance abuse in Sabon Gari Nasarawa***

According to the study's findings, all participants believed that drug and substance abuse had devastating consequences. The majority (37.5%) identified drug and substance abuse as a major cause of gang activities in SGN, while 26.25% believed it was a significant factor contributing to crime and other social problems. These findings align with Siro's (2014) observation that drug and substance abuse among young people leads to violence, particularly during elections, resulting in the loss of life and property and threatening the future of Kano and Nigeria. Additionally, 16.25% of participants believed that drug abuse leads to moral decay, and 10% noted that injecting drugs puts users at risk of contracting and spreading diseases such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B, or hepatitis C. To support these findings, a 45-year-old male participant, a medical practitioner interviewed at community primary healthcare, emphasized the severity of the problem, stating that:

“We have a serious problem with drug and substance abuse in our neighborhood. The majority of the population consists of young people who use illicit drugs and various narcotics that impair their well-being and rationality. Drug and substance abuse causes many problems in the community, including gang activities, street fights, crime, illness, and more.”

### ***Strengths and Weaknesses of the Study***

This study is the first attempt to investigate the prevalence, causes, and consequences of drug and substance abuse within the SGN, Kaduna State. We aimed to shed light on the specific factors contributing to the rise of drug abuse in the community. Another advantage of this research is that its conclusions have the potential to benefit not only SGN but also neighboring communities facing similar problems, such as Kakuri, Makera, Kudendan, Unguwan Muazu, Kinkinau, Barnawa, and Tudun Wada.

However, we encountered a main obstacle in this study: the difficulty of directly contacting drug addicts and drug abuse locations in SGN. To address this, we built trust with some participants, who then introduced their friends who were drug addicts. Another shortcoming was that the majority of the respondents did not understand the English language. To overcome this, we translated the questionnaire into Hausa, the native language. Lastly, it is important to understand that this study was primarily conducted in SGN, Kaduna State, so its findings may not be generalized.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, drug and substance abuse is a social problem that negatively impacts the quality of life for people worldwide. Drug abuse is not a problem limited to SGN; rather, it is a global issue affecting all societies. This study has found that drug and substance abuse is increasing in SGN, Kaduna State. The study findings indicate that a large number of young people, including married individuals, are involved in the consumption of illicit drugs and substances. Additionally, it is evident that most participants, especially drug addicts, are fully aware of the devastating consequences of using illicit drugs and substances, yet they choose not to stop. Drug and substance abuse affects individuals, families, and community members, leading to a rise in crime rates, urban gangs, theft, and communal clashes in SGN. However, to address this issue, the following recommendations are proposed:

### *Spread awareness and education*

Community awareness and education campaigns are necessary to inform SGN residents about the risks related to drug and substance use and misuse. This can be accomplished through:

- Organizing workshops and seminars with experts to discuss the implications of consuming drugs and substances.
- Engaging in community outreach to reach out to drug addicts and other vulnerable individuals at risk.
- Creating and distributing awareness and educational materials such as pamphlets, posters, billboards, and social media content to inform community members about the dangers associated with illicit drug and substance use.
- Organizing community events, such as sports competitions that focus on drug and substance use prevention.

### *Guidance and counseling*

Establish a community guidance and counseling unit in SGN. Social workers and guidance counselors can help address the problem of drug and substance abuse by:

- Identifying and rescuing drug addicts and individuals at risk.
- Addressing factors that may influence individuals to engage in drug and substance consumption.
- Collaborating with parents, community members, and other stakeholders to provide support and guidance to those battling drug addiction.
- Organizing sessions to bring together individuals facing similar problems.

### *Law enforcement agencies*

Law enforcement agencies like the NDLEA, NAFDAC, and police have a crucial role in curbing drug and substance abuse in the community. They should:

- Ensure strict compliance with established rules and regulations that prohibit the sale and use of illicit drugs and substances.
- Increase regular patrols in areas associated with illicit drug and substance use and sales.
- Collaborate with community members to gather information about drug peddlers, drug addicts, and their hideouts.
- Identify and apprehend drug peddlers to face the full wrath of the law.

## Prevalence, Causes, and Effects of Drug and Substance Abuse among Youth in Kaduna State, Nigeria

### *Parents/guardians*

The role of parents or guardians in curtailing the menace of drugs and substance abuse cannot be overemphasized. They should:

- Educate their children about the dangers of illicit drugs and substances.
- Be aware of their children's social interaction at school and elsewhere.
- Monitor and supervise their children's online and offline activities.
- Be positive role models by abstaining from drug use and promoting drug-free attitudes.
- Monitor their children's whereabouts and the people they associate with.

### *Community schools*

Community schools can contribute to the fight against drug and substance abuse in various ways, including:

- Building a positive and trusting relationship between teachers and students is important, as it allows students to express themselves freely without fear.
- If implemented properly, a comprehensive drug education program can help provide students with the required information about the dangers associated with taking illicit drugs or substances, thereby making them refrain from the menace.
- School administrators, including both academic and non-academic staff, should be able to observe and understand the behaviors of at-risk students. The significance of early detection and intervention cannot be overstated.
- Collaborating with parents and other stakeholders to organize lectures, seminars, and workshops can facilitate discussions about the consequences and prevention of drug abuse.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

We have no conflicts of interest in the conduct of this study.

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