

# COMBATING DRUG ABUSE AS A PATHWAY TO ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 3 AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ILA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OSUN STATE.

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## Abstract

*Combating Drug Abuse as a pathway to achieving sustainable development Goal 3 among Secondary School Students in Ila Local Government Area of Osun State is the focus of this paper. Drug abuse is a common problem among students and can have serious consequences on their physical and mental health, as well as their academic performance. The causes of drug abuse among students include peer pressure, stress and academic pressure, family history, environment, curiosity and experimentation. The effects of drug use on students include physical health risks, such as high blood pressure, liver and kidney problems, and certain types of cancer. It can also lead to mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, and can negatively impact relationships and overall life satisfaction. Drug abuse also has a significant impact on student learning, as it can reduce academic performance, impair cognitive abilities, and lead to dropout rates. Addressing drug abuse among students requires a comprehensive approach that includes education and awareness programmes, peer support networks, and collaboration with parents, community organizations, and healthcare professionals, among others., among others is recommended for goal 3 of Sustainable.*

Keywords: Drug Abuse, Sustainable Development, Healthy Living, Mental health, Secondary School Students

## Introduction

Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to “ensure healthy lives and promote good health for everyone in their daily lives”. Maintaining healthy lifestyles and promoting health at all ages is essential for sustainable development. There is a saying that health is wealth. Health and well-being are important at every stage of life. Since their inception, the SDGs have aimed to end poverty and inequality, protect the planet and ensure health, justice and prosperity for all by 2030. To be fully developed, no one must be left behind. The third goal is to reduce deaths from mental illness and non communicable diseases. Supporting mental health through prevention and treatment has become more important than ever.

It should be noted that mental health issue interferes with a person’s cognitive, emotional or social abilities. There are different types of mental health issues and each of these can occur with a varying degree of severity which can include Depression; Anxiety; Bipolar disorder; Schizophrenia; Personality disorders; Eating disorders; and Psychosis (WHO, 2022).

The SDG target stated that, by 2030, all countries will “promote the prevention and treatment of drug addiction, including drug and alcohol abuse” (SDG tracker, 2023). However, despite global

efforts to improve the quality of life, certain practices of people around the world are hindering the achievement of the 2030 SDGs. The prevention of the problem of drug abuse has become a means to achieving SDG 3.

Drug abuse is common among high school students, adolescents, commercial bus drivers, farmers, and sex workers (UNDOC, 2018). According to UNDOC (2018), one of the key findings is that one in seven people aged 15 to 64 in Nigeria have used drugs other than tobacco and alcohol in the past year. Gilmore (2023) points out that when adolescents enter high school (usually around this time), children may be exposed for the first time to things like tobacco and alcohol. It expressed his view further that drug possession, consumption and drug use among young people are common. Reasons for use include improving physical performance, reducing stress and increasing pleasure. Poor health problems and educational history are less likely to be associated with drug use. We have reviewed the various laws and regulations promulgated by government agencies such as the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), National Food and Drug Administration and Control Agency (NAFDAC), the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria (PCN) and the President's Advisory Council. Nigeria has shown that despite drug laws, policies and prevention strategies, the burden of drug abuse remains high.

In 2010, approximately 5% of the population (230 million people) used illegal drugs (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2012). Of these, 27 million are at high risk of substance abuse (also known as substance abuse) that harms their health, causes mental health problems, or causes social problems that put them at risk (United Nations Office on Drugs Crime, 2012; "World Drug Report, 2014). The number of deaths due to drug use in 2015 was 307,400, an increase of 165,000 in 1990 (GBD 2013; GBD, 2015). The high figures were due to alcohol use with 137,500 deaths, opioid use with 122,100 deaths, amphetamine use with 12,200 deaths, and cocaine use with 11,100 deaths (GBD 2015). Jatau, Gulma, Shitu, Khalid, Isa, Wada, and Mustapha (2021) conducted a literature search, generating 253 studies. Nine letters were received from various sources. After the selection process, 23 eligible studies were included in the review. The prevalence of drug addiction would be 20 to 40% and 20.9% among students and adolescents, respectively. Commonly used drugs include cannabis, cocaine, amphetamines, heroin, diazepam, codeine, cough syrup and tramadol. Drug addiction has become a global health problem. According to the recently released World Drug Report 2019 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), an estimated 271 million (5.5%) of the world's population (aged 15-64) have used drugs in previous years. The World Health Organization estimated in 2017 that drug use caused 585,000 deaths and 42 million years of "healthy" life lost worldwide in 2017. About half of patients die from drug use. untreated hepatitis C. Drug abuse includes obtaining illegal drugs and using prescription medications in doses that exceed the recommended dose. Over-the-counter medications use more than what is recommended on the package. The risks associated with drug and alcohol abuse are numerous. (UNDOC, 2018) reported that one in five people who used drugs in the past year suffered from drug addiction. This is not limited to substances that are toxic or deadly to humans. Drug addicts and alcoholics are often ineffective, waste resources, neglect family and social responsibilities, cause harm and endanger others when drunk and suffering from drug and alcohol use. The effects of drug addiction are physical, emotional and social (Zayed, 2022). This risk is increased by physical and mental dependence on various drugs and alcohol.

Although certain behaviors are characteristic of drug users, they also concern a person's health and well-being, domestic violence, and relationships with others. These social problems range from family problems (conflict or separation), unemployment, and legal problems due to drug use (crime or arrest). According to Zayed (2022), drug users in the general population reported not being in school or working, performing poorly in school or work, and neglecting their family or children due to some of the serious problems they face due to drug consumption. .

Nearly half of drug users said their main problems were problems at home, school or work, but fewer drug users also reported facing physical danger, relationship problems with family or friends or problems with the police. Additionally, drug users have caused physical harm (5% of adults) or cannot see their parents or friends because of their drug use (5% of adults). It also mentions that 2% of adults said their family or friends took their money or valuables without permission or necessity.

### **Causes of drug abuse**

- Involvement in drug use among peers and students;
- People use drugs to reduce stress or anxiety.
- Drug addiction is increasing worldwide.
- Medicines are free and affordable.
- People use drugs to control their appetite and relax.

It is important to follow these principles and provide health support, education and prevention programs to prevent substance abuse and promote overall health.

**Peer Pressure:** Students may feel that they must participate in an addiction to fit in or be accepted by their peers. According to Kindram (2023), peer pressure mainly occurs between the ages of 16 and 18. At this time, young people start to think, “Everyone is doing it,” so they must do it too. Peer pressure can be good or bad. Sometimes people force others to stop using drugs and alcohol (Yang and Yang 2022).

**Stress and academic stress:** Students often face stress from difficult studies, exams, and the need to perform well to gain admission to college or obtain scholarships (Yang and Yang 2022). Many young people are stressed because they have to meet the demands of high school courses and extracurricular activities. Thus, in order to cope with these stressors, some students turn to drug use to escape or relax (Eske, 2023; Kindram, 2023). Drugs or alcohol can temporarily relieve stress or anxiety.

**Curiosity and experimentation:** Many people dabble in drugs and alcohol simply because they are curious and want to know what it’s like (Eske, 2023; Kindram, 2023). The desire to be part of a social group can lead students to experiment with drugs even if they don't like it at first. Adolescence is a time of exploration and curiosity, and many students may be tempted to try drugs out of a desire to experiment and develop new ideas or change their mood.

**Family History and Environment:** Growing up in an environment with high levels of substance use or having family members who struggle with substance abuse can increase the likelihood that students will become involved in drug use. Kindram (2023) noted that if there is a family history of drug or alcohol abuse, young people may be genetically predisposed to trying

to become addicted to drugs and alcohol. Sometimes children may observe and imitate the behavior of family members, or genetic factors may predispose them to similar patterns.

**Mental Health Issues:** Students suffering from mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, or other issues, may use drugs as a form of medicine for personal use or as a means to conduct a business. Drinking alcohol can temporarily relieve symptoms, which can be dangerous.

**Lack of knowledge and education:** Lack of knowledge about the dangers and consequences of drug use can lead students to experiment with drugs without fully understanding the risks. Lack of education on drug prevention will leave students vulnerable.

### **How Drug Use Affects Users**

People who use drugs are often at physical risk because they may experience changes in their coordination, changes in their blood pressure and heart rate, feel more sleepy or drowsy, improve their relationships, relieve their pain, and experience physical changes (Eske, 2023). It can affect many aspects of a person's body and mind (Bruijnen, Dijkstra, Walvoort, Markus, VanDerNagel, Kessels, and DE Jong, 2019; Eske, 2023).

- One may need to eat more to get the same results.
- High blood pressure and stroke.
- Liver and kidney problems.
- Certain types of cancer- mouth cancer.
- Difficulty getting or maintaining an erection.
- Orgasm problem.
- Difficulty getting pregnant.
- Think you have to use drugs or alcohol. This is called addiction.
- Withdrawal symptoms which include nausea, chills, sweating, or shaking when you stop taking the medicine if your mood suddenly changes.
- Have a negative outlook on life
- Lack of motivation.
- Depression.
- Anxiety.
- Problems in relationships.
- Manage confidentiality.
- If you have symptoms of mental illness.

Drugs can make you worse and more likely to harm yourself or kill yourself. There is evidence that the use of certain medications can cause dementia. For example, studies have shown that cannabis may increase the risk of mental or psychological disorders (Manish, Deepali, and Neetu, 2020; Dankano and Garba, 2017; Bugbee, 2019; Eske, 2023). According to Bruijnen et al. eggs; (2019) All substances have different effects on the brain, and the consequences of long-term drug use, such as cognitive impairment, also differ between substances.

### **How drug use affects student learning**

Drug addicts often perform poorly in school (Manish, Deepali, and Neetu, 2020; Dankano and

Garba, 2017). Students lose interest in their studies, including extracurricular activities (Manish, et al., 2020). Drug abuse can affect intelligence and reduce academic performance and academic achievement (Bugbee, 2019; Pride Surveys, 2021; Dankano and Garba, 2017). Substance abuse can lead to problems with working memory and attention due to changes in the adolescent brain (Squeglia, Jacobus, and Tampert (2010)). These memory and attention problems can cause a decline in learning and participation in school, ultimately leading to academic problems and dropping out of school. Dankano and Garba (2017) identified a positive relationship between drug use and education among secondary school students in the government area of Bali State. Most psychotropic medications affect students' decisionmaking, affect their thinking and the development of their skills and life skills.

Because of the questionable means used to obtain drugs by force, drugs are associated with crime, but not necessarily crime. Hayhurst, Pierce, Hickman, Seddon, Dunn, Keane, and Millar (2017) compared opioids before and after use and found that crime rates were higher after drug use began. Their conclusion is that initiation of opioid use appears to be the leading cause of crime.

Substance abuse affects the academic performance of secondary school students. Here are some specific problems: Poor grades, absenteeism from school and other activities, and the possibility of dropping out of school are problems associated with youth drug use.

Studies have shown a clear link between youth abuse of drugs and academic performance. Youth who use drugs have lower grades, are more likely to miss school and other activities, and are more likely to drop out (U.S. Department of Justice, 2013). The impact of substance abuse on the academic performance of high school students cannot be overstated.

**Depression and memory span:** Drug abuse can bring about chemical effects on cognitive performance, and as such make students depressed and withholding information (Gould, 2010; Juárez-Portilla, Molina-Jiménez, Morin, Roldán -Roldán, and Zepeda, 2017; Pierce, Hayhurst, Bird, Hickman, Seddon, Dunn and Millar (2017)). This can increase the ability to pass examinations and assignments.

**Decreased motivation and interest in learning:** Drug use can lead to a lack of motivation and interest in learning, but much interest will be on crave for drug use because of addiction. Students may not be interested in their studies, these can lead to lower learning outcomes among the students (Manish, Deepali, and Neetu, 2020; Pierce et al., 2017).

**Absences and Missed Deadlines:** Substance abuse can cause students to miss school or miss an important time due to the effects of substance abuse or other issues such as health problems, legal issues, or drug needs . This can lead to poor academic performance and academic performance. Research shows that they have lower grades, score lower on measures of academic performance, are more likely to skip school and drop out of high school, and are less likely to enroll in college (Bugbee , Beck, Fryer, and Arria, 2019).

**The impact of education on student health**

There is evidence that the use of certain drugs can cause mental illness in the first place. For example, studies have shown that cannabis may increase the risk of mental illness (Schoeler, T., Ferris, and Winstock, 2022).

### **The impact of drug abuse on the school system**

**Poor time management and organization:** Substance abuse can affect a student's ability to manage time and stay focused (Bugbee, Beck, Fryer, and Arria, 2019). They may have difficulty reconciling the roles of education and drug use, which can lead to unemployment, academic failure and confusion.

**Lower Overall Academic performance:** Over time, substance abuse can negatively impact a student's grades. As education declines, the ability to meet academic standards and expectations, ultimately leading to lower grades (Kelly, Evans-Whipp, Smith, Chan, Toumbourou, and Patton, 2015; Heradstveit, Skogen, Hetland, and Hysing, 2017 )

**Emotional and behavioral problems:** Addiction can cause emotional and behavioral problems such as depression, anxiety, aggression, and impulsivity. Overall, anything can affect a student's ability to focus, engage, and learn (Richert, Anderberg and Dahlberg, 2020).

**Peer influence and social isolation:** Involvement in drug use can harm students' social relationships because they are associated with drug-using peers. This can lead to isolation and lack of effective learning, in addition to poor performance. Gilmore (2023) stated that social isolation can be destructive, leading to feelings of disparity from others or a lack of relationships. It is important to remember that these effects vary from person to person and their severity varies depending on factors such as the type of drug used, frequency and duration of use, mental health problems and the support. However, generally speaking, drug addiction affects the education of secondary school students.

### **Some of the issues schools face when dealing with substance abuse.**

There is usually lack of awareness and education for schools when faced with the menace of drug abuse (Rono, Kimengi and Githinj, 2019) . Many schools do not have drug awareness programmes, or existing programmes may not teach students about the dangers of drug use. Lack of knowledge about it can make it more difficult for schools to identify and address drug-related problems.

Some schools can stigmatise and there may be denial for students involved. Substance abuse is often stigmatised and students may deny their involvement or downplay the seriousness of the problem (Harris, Yates, Patel, and Patel, 2017). This can make it difficult for schools to identify students struggling with substance abuse and provide them with the support for students engaging in drug abuse.

Availability and easy accessibility of the drugs commonly abused around the school environment is another issue for school administration. These drugs are often easily accessible in the community, and schools are not spared from this problem (Nabofa, 2021). Students have easy access to drugs inside and outside of school, which will make it difficult for schools to prevent drug use.

Peer pressure is a significant factor in drug use among college students. Peer pressure to use alcohol and drugs can contribute to substance use disorders, potentially leading to addiction (Zawn, 2022). Schools must create a positive and supportive environment that discourages drug use and promotes healthy behaviors. However, it can be difficult to break the cycle of peer pressure and create an environment where students need help and support.

Schools often have limited resources, including personnel and money, to adequately address substance abuse problems. This can hinder efforts to provide prevention services, counseling services, and appropriate support to students struggling with addiction.

Parental involvement plays an important role in the fight against drug addiction (Scott and Krinke, 2019). However, some parents may not be aware of or involved in their child's drug-related problems, which can make it difficult for schools to effectively address the problem. Schools should find ways to encourage communication and collaboration with parents to help students overcome substance abuse.

Sometimes, it is possible for schools to have common mental health issues manifesting in students. Many students struggling with substance abuse can also experience mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, or trauma. This kind of situation may tend to be difficult for schools to cope with especially in schools that lack adequate mental health resources. Addressing substance abuse and mental health issues is important, but can be difficult and pose problems for schools.

### **Strategies to Help Prevent Substance Abuse in Secondary Schools.**

Education and Knowledge has always been a veritable tool towards desirable change in behaviour. Use education to make students aware of the dangers of drug use, its effects on the body and mind, and the consequences of drug use. Develop awareness of the long-term negative impact on academic, social and future opportunities.

Peer Support Networks can help to curb the spread of drug abuse. Encourage the creation of peer support groups or partnerships where students can discuss and help each other to make healthy choices. These groups can help create a positive environment that prevents substance abuse and provides support to students struggling with drug-related issues.

Counseling and Mental Health has always been a strong means of effecting behavioural change. School should have effective and efficient counseling and mental health services to help identify students at risk for substance abuse and provide appropriate intervention and support. Counseling services should be accessible, confidential, and nonjudgmental so that students can seek help without fear of stigma.

Parental Involvement is very crucial in the bid to curb drug abuse. Prevention of substance abuse among secondary school students can be enhanced by training or advising parents on tools and knowledge to recognize the signs of substance abuse, communicate effectively with their children, and create a healthy and supportive home environment.

Strict control and discipline is another viable tool. Schools can establish clear and consistent laws regarding drug use and strict action against violators. Schools should have a policy of not tolerating and taking disciplinary action for drug possession or disruption on campus.

Schools can collaborate with Community Agencies. Such collaboration could be with community agencies, law enforcement, and medical professionals to create a broad support system. They can collaboratively work together to plan outreach programs, provide resources, and ensure educational protections in schools and communities.

Another pathway is life skills development and empowerment. The integration of life skills development and empowerment into the school curriculum can foster reduction in drug abuse. These programs should focus on improving students' decision-making skills, building self-esteem, developing problem-solving strategies, and fostering relationships that can help prevent drug addiction.

Randomized clinical trials are another strategy. Consider randomized clinical trials in students as a preventative measure. Random testing can help identify students who need intervention or support and can act as a deterrent to students who might be tempted to use drugs.

Participation in Extracurricular Activities could also help. Encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities such as sports, art, clubs, and community service. Providing more opportunities for participation can help students stay active, build self-esteem, and reduce the risk of substance abuse. Collaborate with healthcare providers: Partner with healthcare providers, such as physicians, psychiatrists, or medical specialists, to provide additional support, guidance, and assistance to students in need, as well as to train staff to recognize the signs of the presence of drugs addiction.

### **Conclusion**

Schools need to take a comprehensive approach which includes education, prevention, intervention, and support services to effectively address drug abuse among students. Collaboration with parents, community organizations, and healthcare professionals is also vital in tackling this difficult problem. Efforts to reduce crime generally should include preventing drug use through awareness, and the message is that prevention is better than cure.

It is important to note that drug abuse and addiction have significant health and social consequences, which include increased risks of infection, social problems, mental illness, violence and serious health problems. Efforts to combat drug abuse include prevention programs, treatment options, harm reduction strategies, and international cooperation to address drug trafficking.

### **Recommendation**

Parents should make an effort to educate their children about drug and alcohol use. This can go a long way in reducing substance abuse problems and can kill the curiosity and experimentation that young people always want to explore. Additionally, if there is a family history of substance abuse, parents and teachers should have an honest discussion about the dangers of substance abuse in order to help their children.

Children, teens, and students who do not know how to handle peer pressure should talk with trusted adults or invest in relationships with friends who do not use drugs or alcohol, this can keep them informed so as not to fall into the mistake of engaging in drug abuse.

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