

Drug Abuse, A Social Ill Among Youths Especially School Children

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Abstract

The use of hard drugs or substance abuse among the youths is growing both in arithmetic and geometric proportions especially among school children. One of the major reasons is exposure to the drugs. Examples have been cited with cases in the media. It is alarming that the very young age, the minors are involved. It is gruesome when a child of eight, nine or ten years do or discuss hard drugs. It runs across the three stages of the educational systems: the primary, secondary and the tertiary schools. This article looks at the implications, medical realities in drug abuse and ways of reducing or maintaining a school atmosphere without narcotics, with tips on quitting and recommendations.

Key words: Drug; Youth and Education

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INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse has been on the increase in recent times among school children or teenagers as if it is a tradition. Parents may no more provide adequate control of the situation, let alone the schools. The many dangers with this condition is apparent because from examples, the use or abuse of hard drug has led many away from their responsibilities and have made moral instruction ineffective as a basic requirement in the school curriculum. Thus many school children grow with the habit they have formed in school

and with it into adulthood. It is a lifestyle for many young people and everyday new ways of “highs,” are introduced as an inducement to life. Many young people see nothing wrong with it. They take it as an exciting spice of life. The implication is that when the habit is being formed the dangers to its after effect may be disastrous yet this condition seems to have been ignored by direct stake holders. Many adults who are hooked up today to one of such habits is as a result of the exposure when they were in school or peer pressure. They would want to quit but cannot because it has become a lifestyle, a dangerous habit.

The life of an addict is pitiable because self control is difficult. This condition can be clinically explained. It is psychiatric as some individuals may object. Old habits die hard is an adage. Most adults look back to pick up an inducement to replace an emotional gap. Early detection or early avoidance is necessary especially at the youth stage when peer pressure is on the high side.

WHAT IS DRUG?

The Thorndike Junior Illustrated Dictionary describes drug as 1.a substance (other than food) that, when taken into the body, produces a change in it. If the change helps the body, the drug is medicine;(good) if the change harms the body, the drug is a poison.2.Give harmful drugs to, particularly drugs that causes sleep.3.Mix harmful drugs with (food or drink).4.Affect or overcome the body(the body or the senses) in a way not natural: we can say that the wine or anything drugged him. It is no longer serving as the purpose of food but a disturbance to the body. But what we are concerned with in this article is Narcotics .Narcotics is an aspect of drug which can be described as hard drug (strong drug, dangerous).

Abuse then is 1.make bad use of; use wrongly.2.treat badly.3.Bad treatment.4.A bad practice or custom.5.Scold severely; use hash language to.

THE CHILD AND DRUG

“KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN.” This label is always on a licensed drug. This means that it is dangerous to expose drugs to children, even their own drugs. The nature of modern drugs is that they are synthetically produced. They have schedule and designed according to the age of the patient. As discussed above, drug becomes poison when they are exposed to the wrong body, or purpose.

From the meaning of abuse, one can abuse anything: one's body, substance, material, people, parents, authority, government and other things. We can deduce from the foregoing that the general meaning of drug abuse is the wrong use of drug. One can abuse something deliberately or ignorantly. Whatever is the case, it does not bring good result. One of the ways in which we can check the bad or wrong use of something is through education. The question now is what type of education because so many people that abuse drugs are educated especially the youth. We are interested in children because they are still green horn and can be corrected. They are likely to form a greater percentage of drug abusers. Adults too can be corrected but it takes more strenuous effort or reformatories. Medically the child is not allowed to handle or administer drug except through an adult. It then becomes abnormal when the child handles drugs. They may be ignorant of the implications of the use.

What is Drug Abuse?

From the many definitions of drug abuse here are some of the other definitions or descriptions that explicitly illustrate the subject to support the term abuse as has been explained above. “Drug abuse occurs when people take drugs for purposes other than for which they are intended, usually for their psychoactive effects.” Also “*Drug abuse* or substance abuse refers to the use of certain chemicals for the purpose of creating pleasurable effects on the brain.” News medical.net reports that “There are over 190 million ...” abusers of drug. One “ can get addicted to alcohol, nicotine, opioid painkillers, and other legal substances. At first, you may choose to take a drug because you like it....”(webmed.com, Feb, 2018). “The use of illegal drugs or the use of prescription or over-the-counter drugs for purposes other than those for which they are meant to be used, or in excessive ...” means abuse (Fundamentals of Forensic Science(second edition, 2010). “Inhalants like household cleaners are some of the most commonly abused substances... the specific physical and psychological effects of *drug use* is ” paramount to health conditions and the abuse of the drug may bring disorder to this condition.(medicinenet.com-drug abuse).

George, K. (2021) pointed out the increase in the use of the Blue Pill by the youths in the “People’s Daily.” Such are captions in the warning against the abuse of drugs by the youths: “Medics Raise Red Flag Over Youths’ Abuse

of Blue Pill.” Also is this caption of the same Daily: “Protect the Youth against Sex Drugs.” As Opera noted:

Medical officers have now raised eye brows over the huge number of youths who are already hooked to the blue pill at their youthful age. The pharmacists have acknowledged that selling the blue pills to the young people, they are turning the hot bloods into zombies in a slow but sure manner....pharmacists explain that it is no more a secret that young men go for the blue pills after drinking sprees. The Pharmacists explain that the effect of these drugs is so fatal where the older men have been exposed through deaths. However in younger men, the pills lead to long term negative consequences. The fact is ,the young people end up becoming zombies later in life--pharmacist explained to the Pd.

The medics have now raised a red flag over the young people who have already been heavily addicted to the pills. According to Amref, a very serious study is urgently needed to be done to evaluate the actual reasons why a big number of young men are going for the pill.

Adolescent substance abuse continues to be a significant problem encountered in both clinical and community settings. Teenage substance abuse is associated with an increased risk for depression, suicide, violence, criminal behavior and incarceration, motor vehicle accidents, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unwanted pregnancies, and other health, safety, and social concerns. In 2007, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 45% of U.S. high-school students reported current alcohol use, 26% engaged in “heavy drinking,” and 20% reported current marijuana use. Although inquiring about alcohol and drug use in the primary care setting may be difficult, the following information outlines a brief framework for the understanding, assessment, and treatment of adolescent substance abuse.(Mary N. Cook MD, John Peterson MD ,Substance Abuse in Berman’s Pediatric Decision Making (Fifth Edition), 2011)

WHY DO CHILDREN DO DRUGS?

This is the question that may continue to remain vague for a long time but there are evidences of the prevalence by both young and adults some of which stems from:

- Conscious abuse
- Ignorance
(off the counter)

There may not have been any serious reasons for the involvement of the youth in drug abuse but for the fact that it is a fad among their group and also for the fact that it is reachable they use it to emphasise their juveniles. But as time goes on it becomes a habit. Many young people do not like to do drugs but because of pressure from their association they join the group and before one know they are already addicts. Ignorance play a big role in this and

that is why it is important to monitor the child during training, to make sure he lives a consistent responsible life through the adolescent stages before he matures into adulthood. The seminary schools of the colonial times are good examples. This was when moral instruction was a subject of study in the school. Most of these subjects are thrown out of the system not the curriculum. The values are no more here because even those to give the values are no more there or trained. Most of the guardians are not responsible to this. They live as they like and the children are on their own.

HOW CAN A CHILD BECOME A DRUG ADDICT?

Exposure: many things like films, associations or peer pressure could give the child a negative inspiration. Children are inquisitive and want to imitate to know how it feels. A child could see something in a film and want to try it.

Wrong Association: parents must endeavor to separate their children from wrong association could deceive their wards.

Lack of Adequate parental care: family systems differ in such a way that some are a family of irresponsibility. The father is a drunk and the mother is not always around. The child is in the care of a nanny, maid or neighbours. Most children are not living with their parents and many also do not take school serious because they have been oriented with the value system that making money in the wrong or right way is the summary of life and financial independence.

Environment: the parents might be well meaning but the environment might take their child away from them.

School: the type of school the child attends might also determine his exposure to drug use.

Leadership systems or guardianship: The gap between the school authorities and the students can be found in the compromises they make in order to keep what they call peace and order.

Religion: an individual preached to the people about salvation after getting down with hemp. He said that it gives him inspiration about righteousness.

Culture: This is lifestyle of the people. The use of hard drugs is a way of life of some people.

THE USE OF NARCOTICS (HARD DRUGS)

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary describes Narcotics as a powerful illegal drug that affects the mind in a harmful way. Heroin, cannabis, cocaine and marijuana are narcotics. Medically, it is a substance that make you relax, reduce pain or make you sleep. When we

say somebody is in a state of narcosis we mean that he is in a state caused by drugs in which he is unconscious or keep falling asleep. There are numerous substances which one can use as drug. They are all around us; it is only when they are introduced to us that one will know them.

EFFECTS OF NARCOTICS

Mental illness

Carelessness

Crime-Some are so expensive that one has to often steal or lie to have access to it.

Loss of memory

Giving vent to negative reasoning without control

Nausea

Drowsiness

Depression

Violence/Accident

Feeling High

Death

Losing consciousness

Mental imbalance

Frustration

Join gang to protect one

Hooliganism

Drop out of school because others have dropped out and yet have made it.

Rape

Terrorism

Beat, abuse, fight or curse parents.

REASONS WHY SOME PEOPLE USE HARD DRUGS

It is likely that there is no one addict that will not give reason for his addiction. However it looks, addiction is psychological. One might warn, never to allow what one eats or do to control one. It becomes a habit if one does. People should learn to be self controlled; that is the mark of a man or maturity not the abuse of drugs. Discipline. It becomes worrisome when children are identified as high abusers. These are some of the reasons given by some young people over their use of illegal drugs. Some say that it serves as a form of :

Dependency. An exchange for a mental disposition

Sense of belonging

Boldness or removes shyness.

It makes one strong or to look manly

That it gives synthetic Happiness

Some do it out of frustration

It makes one look calm and peaceful

It makes them forget their sorrow and many other reasons.

These reasons may be far from the truth or near the truth but the reality is that what it does to one maybe

different from what it does to the other but the general tendency is that it changes ones mood for good or bad. It can change the way we think. It can cause phobia of any sort. Some users say that big people look small in their eyes; that it always make you smile and happy even when nothing has happened to make one feel that way. It makes some lose concentration; not committed to anything, thinking so many unusual thoughts. It is no more news for the cases of death that have been recorded from some users, male or female. Medically the implications and effects have been proven from reports.

THE PROBLEM WITH ADDICTION

Once addicted one will always patronize. There are a lot of people who are enslaved to addiction. They do not know how to stop because addiction is their life-blood. Withdrawal is also dangerous because one may develop side effects to the extent that it might cause life or disability or destabilization. Thus, the cure is usually systematic, strategic, and needs clinical approach where experts can help. It might be expensive.

In drugabuse.gov, “addiction is defined as a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use ...,” and the other “health consequences of *drug addiction*,” has proven that people with addiction often have one or more associated health issues.”

Nevertheless, “*Drug abuse* takes a toll on millions of Americans every day.” For health purposes of modern medical practice, one can learn the signs, risks, and treatment options for alcoholism or *drug addiction*.”

Siencedirect.com pointed out that “A careful history elicited from both the adolescent patient and the parents will likely yield most of the information needed to diagnose a substance *abuse* disorder....Excessive use of psychoactive drugs, such as alcohol, pain medications or illegal drugs” can harm one... “It can lead to physical, social or emotional harm.”

QUITTING

Identify your weakness

Understand that it is a problem

Avoid the place, friends, or thoughts that can hook you to the habit.

Don't stay alone

Mix up with friends who do not have the same habit

Run away from it as far as you can. But it must be replaced with something. Otherwise the side effect of withdrawal might be more dangerous than staying with the habit. In due time the victim will begin to forget and leave without habit.

Art therapy could be a mode of rehabilitation—diverting attention.

The place of National Drug Law and Enforcement agency (NDLEA) as a centre of Rehabilitation.

CULTURE AND DRUG ABUSE

What is drug abuse in some cultures is drug appreciation” in another. For example those who use traditional medicine may be abusing drug to their detriment. In some cultures hemp use is traditional. Some parents and their children start the day by taking some pints of alcohol. Even Narcotics is treated in the same way. Nevertheless, we emphasise and recognize the WHO and UN options on the child's protection as one of the high points of rights from the use of hard drugs because of the implication on the child and its influence or effect on the child's development or adulthood. Some cultures admit hard drugs as food. Many communities fraternize its use.

DISCUSSION

The child is still forming its personality at its stage. He has not brought much destruction to his life and the society. The slogan “catch them young” is an ideal approach.” We were all once children. Every adult can trace his upbringing, sorting out stumps, gutters and true lanes while growing up. The lucky ones are what we see as refined society where norms, values and traditions guide the system. A fallen society can be blamed on the adults not the children. One cannot give what one does not have. There is this adage that a snake must give birth to a long thing. So positive education is key to a healthy society. The problem today is that most parents are drug addicts. You cannot be a chain smoker and ask your child not to smoke. Education is key. Nelson Mandela stated that education is the key with which we can change the world. The type of education to give the child is the type of education that challenges the 21st century society where virtually everyone pretends to be educated but cannot characterize the essence of a true education. We believe that there are certain things educated people are not supposed to do which makes them different from one who did not have the same type of education or level of education. But this may be a wrong way of assessing an educated person. Instead we emphasise the kind of education because there are many kinds or types of education. Apart from the formal or informal education, traditional or modern, there is a kind of education on how to use bad drugs and not be caught, education on how to use sex as a weapon, education on how to steal, education on how to terrorise, how to kill and others. Thus the type of education that will curb the use of drugs should start as a foundational class. We should stop pretending that our children in primary or secondary schools do not know what a bad drug is.

Today one talk of ICT, the internet, the windows. Children of today train on how to use these gadgets; how

to use their eyes more than how to use their brain. They browse the net than read, watch films and videos. They are exposed to so many dangerous things like pornography in the net, chatting, fraud and internet stealing. They end up abusing their lives and responsibilities, just as they abuse drugs. It may not be easy to stop the tide because the current is inevitable and beyond the basic understanding of the age. The only formulae are to help these children sieve positive information because without warning a lot of the youths have destroyed their lives abusing drugs. 1

The period of growing up for the males from 12-19 and for girls 11-19, (from puberty to teenage), is very crucial. It is a trying period for the parents. This is a period that biologically and socially the child is trying to emphasise its sex and its relationship to the society. Youthful exuberance is high but this period can be controlled if the parents, the society and the school are committed. If the adults are to be sincere, what groomed most of them are the practical measures that their guardians took. No child will desire labour except by persuasion or hard work; by definite and emphatic discipline, example and reward. The child must be occupied bywhat? Doing drug cannot be the best occupation. Recreation, sports and art are good occupation at this stage. But most societies do not have this orientation, or even if they have, poverty is usually a basic distraction. Wherever the child is, there should be expert attention. No matter how he behaves, early childhood education is ideal; the child must be taught that it will be responsible for its actions. But virtue and morals must be the permanent. This is why we are Christians, Muslims, doctors, engineers, and pharmacists or architects. We have armed robbers, kidnapers and ritualist today because of their orientation when they were children or because of their philosophy of life; what they believe in , peer pressure, cultists and parental negligence.

The condition of the child under school age is still delicate. For the under-aged,(6-18)the school system is another social group, a home or haven away from home. It is a second home where the parents are hired to teach the pupil a special way of life and skill to face the challenges of life. The nursery, the primary, the secondary and the tertiary are living outside home and so they have the opportunity to form groups, gangs, associations, secretly or otherwise. It is also a time to grow up, to exercise manhood or womanhood, independence and self

reliance. To allow children at this stage to form opinion of themselves or of life without guidance will be disastrous because they are not equipped in (all ramification) for that. This is why guidance and counseling method is necessary at these levels of education. There are also children who do not have the opportunity to attend formal school. Whatever form of education should be with a guided authority. This is an area where there may be no policy in most educational systems of some societies regarding the growth of the child from 6-18 years. If in any way this group of children could be guided since they did not attend formal school it will help curb the menace of crime. They are more exposed to the use of narcotics because, they are wild and on the loose without the care of parents or any authority.

CONCLUSION

As has been stated the many reasons why children abuse drugs is that it is within their reach. Nevertheless, medical education on the use of drugs should be the high points in the school curriculum as a general subject and not only for health students from the UBE to the tertiary levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The authorities have to put more pressure, distancing the child from narcotics and drug abuse, especially by the adequate control of its source and distribution especially in the third world countries where inadequate attention is possible.

- Proper medical rehabilitation centers for addicts
- Establishing a network of control across the globe
- Cultures where such drugs are used should be banned from interacting with others where they are not.
- Grass root campaign, especially in communities will also be idea to the measures in stopping over abuse of drugs among school children

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