



RESEARCH ARTICLE

ASSESSMENT OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG STUDENTS OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN SOME PARTS OF IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to determine the consequences of drug abuse among students of tertiary institutions in some parts of Imo state to promote the well-being of students in tertiary institutions, thereby fostering a healthier and more successful academic experience for young adults. A total of 400 Questionnaires were distributed to students of tertiary institutions in Imo state. A total of 373 questionnaires were retrieved and analyzed using standard methods from the tools of Google analytics and Microsoft Excel. The findings of the study were that stimulants, depressants, tobacco and cannabis are the most abused drugs with percentages of 48 percent, 49.1 percent, 42.9 percent, and 41.4 percent respectively while least commonly abused is hallucinogenic substances with a percentage of 18.8 percent. The major reasons of drug abuse among students were peer pressure and social influence, 65.8 percent, Stress and Academic Pressure, 35.5 percent, Curiosity and Experimentation, 29.1 percent, Availability of Drug, 23 percent, and Family Factors, 35.8 percent. From the opinions of the respondents, the health implications were: Acute Toxicity, 53.2 percent, Acute Psychiatric Symptom, 40 percent, infectious diseases, 40.2 percent, cognitive deficits and memory problems, 39.5 percent, damage to organs, 45.3 percent and increase risks of heart diseases and lung cancer, 29.2 percent. The government and authorities of the institutions should collectively embark on the campaigns against the illicit use of drugs, create awareness through social media, public enlightenment and seminars about the negative effects of drug abuse.

Keywords: Drug abuse, mental health, pressure, stress, lung cancer.

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Received: 17/6/2025; **Revised:** 23/7/2025; **Accepted:** 28/7/2025; **Published:** 30/7/2025



1.0. INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse is the habitual use of a substance in a manner that is harmful to an individual's health or social functioning. Drug abuse refers to the use of illicit drugs or the misuse of prescription drugs, which can have negative consequences on the physical, mental, and social well-being of the individuals. It is the harmful use of mind-altering drugs, illegal drugs, which also include harmful use of legal prescription drugs, such as in self-medication (Henry, *et al.*, 2007; Oluremi, 2012).

Drug abuse among students in tertiary institutions is a growing concern worldwide. It is a problem that affects the physical, mental, and social health of individuals, families, communities and society at large. Drug abuse among students in tertiary institutions can take various forms, including the use of substances such as marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, and opioids. The abuse of prescription drugs, such as stimulants and painkillers, is also prevalent among students (UNODC, 2011).

According to Fareo (2012), Abiodun, (1994) and Abudu, (2008) great misfortunes have resulted as a result of drug abuse and addiction, examples; series of road accidents that have claimed lives of men. Drug addicts when severely under the influence of drugs walked along the street half naked and perform perpetual acts like rape, assassinations and murders.

Drug abuse can lead to a wide range of physical health problems such as cardiovascular disease, liver and kidney damage, respiratory problems, and sexually transmitted infections. In addition, drug abuse can also have serious mental health implications such as depression, anxiety, and psychosis. Substance abuse among students has also been associated with academic problems, including poor grades, absenteeism, and dropping out of school (Patrick & Schulenberg, 2013).

Drug abuse can lead to social problems such as withdrawal from social activities, conflict with peers and family, and difficulty with maintaining employment. Drug abuse can also lead to addiction, which is a chronic brain disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite negative consequences (Volkow, Koob & McLellan, 2016).

Therefore, drug abuse has a wide range of negative impacts on young people, including impaired academic performance, increased risk of mental and physical health problems, risky behavior, addiction, legal problems, social and financial problems, environmental pollution and interference with future career prospects. It is important to educate young people about the risks of substance abuse and provide resources for those who need help in order to prevent and treat drug abuse among young people to improve their health, well-being, and future prospects.

There are several risk factors for drug abuse among students in tertiary institutions, including peer pressure, academic stress, mental health issues, low self-esteem, lack of coping skills,



easy access to drugs, and societal influences. Effective prevention and intervention programs should be developed to address these risk factors and promote healthy lifestyles. These programs should include education and awareness campaigns, counseling services, and access to treatment for those who are struggling with addiction.

2.0. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research design used in the study was cross-sectional survey design. This was because the nature of the study involves collecting data from different students from different institutions for the same purpose at the same time. This is to evaluate a study population based on their demographics, age, gender, school, level, religion among others. Consequently, quantitative method of analysis was used to generate, interpret and analyze data contained in the instrument using Google analytics and Microsoft Excel through statistical presentations of percentages, frequencies on charts and tables.

The validity of the questionnaires was done, and pilot survey was carried out at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of education, Imo state whereby the questionnaires were distributed to 30 respondents, collected and analyzed to ensure clarity and appropriateness of the instrument.

The study population of 400 respondents from three tertiary institutions in Imo state was used in the study, 400 questionnaires were distributed to 400 respondents in the three tertiary institutions in Imo state. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed to respondents physically while 100 questionnaires were distributed electronically through Google forms.

The tertiary institutions were randomly selected which are Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO), 134 questionnaires were distributed, Imo State University (IMSU), 133 questionnaires were distributed and Federal Polytechnic Nekede, 133 questionnaires were distributed.

Google analytics were used to analyze data obtained through the instrument in the google forms. Microsoft Excel was used to calculate frequencies and percentages generated from quantitative data and presented through pie-charts and tables.

A total of 373 questionnaires were retrieved and used for the study's analysis. The data gathered through quantitative technique was analyzed through the aid of percentage and frequency distribution tables and charts.

3.0 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, a total of 373 questionnaires were retrieved and used for the analysis of the study. The data gathered through quantitative technique was analyzed through the aid of percentage and frequency distribution tables and charts as shown in what follow.

370 responses

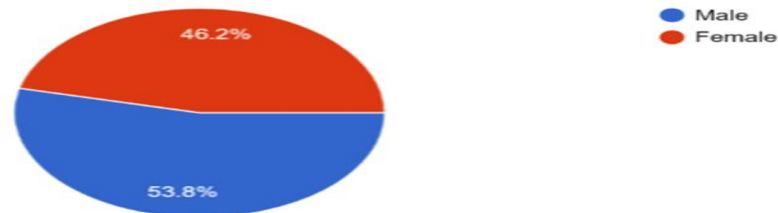
**Figure 1: Sex distribution of respondents**

Fig. 1 has shown that there were 370 responses, the male respondents were 53.8 % while the female respondents were 46.2%. This implies that there were more males than females that participated in the survey.

371 responses

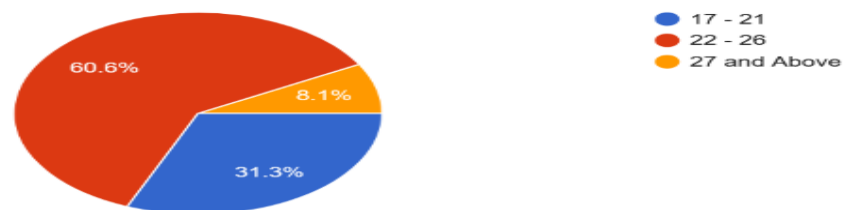
**Figure 2: Age distribution of respondents**

Fig. 2 indicates 31.3% were respondents under 17 - 21 years, 60.6% were respondents under 22-26 years, 8.1% were respondents between 27 above the total 371 respondents. This implies that majority of the respondents were of the age group of 22-26 years.

In Table 1, stimulant has a total number of 373 respondents, 48% of respondents chose strongly agree, 38.3% of respondents chose agree, 11.3% of respondents disagree, 2.4% of respondents chose strongly disagree. Depressant has a total number of 371 respondents, 49.1% of respondents chose strongly agree, 47.4% of respondents chose agree, 47.4% of respondents disagree, 1.1% of respondents strongly disagreed. Tobacco has a total number of 370 respondents, 42.9% of respondents chose strongly agree, 47.5% of respondents chose agree, 9.1% of respondents disagree, 0.5% of respondents chose strongly disagree. Narcotics has a total number of 371 respondents, 38.3% of respondents chose strongly agree, 43.1% of respondents chose agree, 15.6% of respondents disagree, 3% of respondents chose strongly disagree.

Cannabis has a total number of 373 respondents, 41.4% of respondents chose strongly agree, 38.2% of respondents chose agree, 16.3% of respondents disagree, 4% of respondents chose strongly disagree. Prescription has a total number of 369 respondents, 25.5% of respondents chose strongly agree, 35.2% of respondents chose agree, 33.9% of respondents disagree, 5.4% of respondents chose strongly disagree.

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents Opinions on Types of Drugs or Substances Abused by Students**

Drug / Substances	Response	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Stimulants like cocaine, methamphetamine and caffeine	373	48	38.3	11.3	2.4
Depressants like alcohol	371	49.1	47.4	2.4	1.1
Tobacco including cigarettes	370	42.9	47.5	9.1	0.5
Narcotics like opium, heroin, codeine and tramadol	371	38.3	43.1	15.6	3
Cannabis like hashish, marijuana and indian hemp	373	41.4	38.2	16.3	4
Prescription drugs e.g., adderall or ritalin and benzodiazepines	369	25.5	35.2	33.9	5.4
Hallucinogenic substances like LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) and psilocybin (magic mushrooms).	370	18.8	29.8	40.6	10.8

Hallucinogenic has a total number of 370 respondents, 18.8% of respondents chose strongly agree, 29.8% of respondents chose agree, 40.6% of respondents disagree, 10.8% of respondents chose strongly disagree.

TABLE 2: Distribution of Respondents Opinions on Reasons Why Students Use Drug

Statement	Responses	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Peer Pressure and Social Influence	373	65.8	29.9	3.7	0.5
Stress and Academic Pressure	372	35.5	44.6	15.9	4
Curiosity and Experimentation	371	29.1	51.2	17.8	1.9
Mental Health Issues	373	19	35.9	40.2	4.8
Availability of drugs	369	23	43.6	29.3	4.1
Neighborhood characteristics	372	29.5	47.2	19.3	4
Family factors, such as parental substance use, family conflict, and lack of parental supervision, can influence drug use among students.	372	35.8	50.3	10.5	3.5



In Table 2 Peer Pressure and Social Influence has a total number of 373 respondents, 65.8% of respondents chose strongly agree, 29.9% of respondents chose agree, 3.7% of respondents disagree, 0.5% of respondents chose strongly disagree. Stress and Academic Pressure has a total number of 372 respondents, 35.5% of respondents chose strongly agree, 44.6% of respondents chose agree, 15.9% of respondents disagree, 4% of respondents chose strongly disagree. Curiosity and Experimentation has a total number of 371 respondents, 29.1% of respondents chose strongly agree, 51.2% of respondents chose agree, 17.8% of respondents disagree, 1.9% of respondents chose strongly disagree.

Mental Health Issues has a total number of 373 respondents, 19% of respondents chose strongly agree, 35.9% of respondents chose agree, 40.2% of respondents disagree, 4.8% of respondents chose strongly disagree. Availability of Drugs has a total number of 369 respondents, 23% of respondents chose strongly agree, 43.6% of respondents chose agree, 29.3% of respondents disagree, 4.1% of respondents chose strongly disagree. Neighborhood Characteristics has a total number of 372 respondents, 29.5% of respondents chose strongly agree, 47.2% of respondents chose agree, 19.3% of respondents disagree, 4% of respondents chose strongly disagree. Family Factors has a total number of 372 respondents, 35.8% of respondents chose strongly agree, 50.3% of respondents chose agree, 10.5% of respondents disagree, 3.5% of respondents chose strongly disagree.

In Table 3, students who chose Acute Toxicity has a total number of 373 respondents, 53.2% of respondents chose strongly agree, 42% of respondents chose agree, 4.8% of respondents disagree, 0% of respondents chose strongly disagree.

Students who choose Drug Abuse can trigger Acute Psychiatric Symptoms. It has a total number of 370 respondents, 40% of respondents chose strongly agree, 50.3% of respondents chose agree, 9.7% of respondents disagreed, and no respondent strongly disagreed.

Students who chose Infectious diseases have a total number of 372 respondents, 40.2% of respondents chose strongly agree, 37.5% of respondents chose agree, 19.6% of respondents disagree, 2.7% of respondents chose strongly disagree. Students who chose cognitive deficits and memory problems have a total number of 372 respondents, 39.5% of respondents chose strongly agree, 48.9% of respondents chose agree, 10.5% of respondents disagree, 1.1% of respondents chose strongly disagree. Students who chose Damage of organs like liver has a total number of 371 respondents, 45.3% of respondents chose strongly agree, 46.1% of respondents chose agree, 8.1% of respondents disagree, 0.5% of respondents chose strongly disagree. Students who chose increased risk of heart diseases and lung cancer have a total number of 372 respondents, 29.2% of respondents chose strongly agree, 41.4% of respondents chose agree, 16.1% of respondents disagree, 3.2% of respondents chose strongly disagree.



Table 3: Distribution of Respondents Opinions on Health Implications of Drug Abuse among Students.

Statement	Responses	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Acute drug toxicity can result in overdose leading to respiratory depression, seizures, coma and even death.	373	53.2	42	4.8	0
Drug abuse can trigger acute psychiatric symptoms, including severe anxiety, panic attacks, psychosis, or suicidal ideation	370	40	50.3	9.7	0
Injection of drugs can lead infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and C through sharing of needles or engaging in risky sexual behaviors such as unprotected sex	372	40.2	37.5	19.6	2.7
Long-term drug abuse can lead to cognitive deficits and memory problems	372	39.5	48.9	10.5	1.1
Chronic drug abuse can result in significant damage to organs such as the liver, kidneys, heart, and lungs	371	45.3	46.1	8.1	0.5
Drug abuse increases risks of heart diseases and lung cancer in people who have never smoked	372	29.2	41.4	16.1	3.2

In Table 4, students who chose Drug Abuse can lead to Health Problems has a total number of 372 respondents, 57.1% of respondents chose strongly agree, 40.2% of respondents chose agree, 1.3% of respondents disagree, 1.3% of respondents chose strongly disagree. Students who chose Drug Abuse can be Expensive has a total number of 370 respondents, 40% of respondents chose strongly agree, 53.3% of respondents chose agree, 4.1% of respondents disagree, 2.4% of respondents chose strongly disagree. Students who chose Drug Abuse can contribute to Unsafe Environment has a total number of 370 respondents, 38.9% of respondents chose strongly agree, 51.4% of respondents chose agree, 7% of respondents disagree, 2.8% of respondents chose strongly disagree.

Students who chose Drug Abuse can lead to Environmental Pollution has a total number of 369 respondents, 26.2% of respondents chose strongly agree, 42.7% of respondents chose agree, 24.1 percent of respondents disagree, 7% of respondents chose strongly disagree. Students who chose Drug Abuse can strain Relationships has a total number of 371 respondents, 35.3% of respondents chose strongly agree, 53.4% of respondents chose agree, 8.4% of respondents disagree, 2.7% of respondents chose strongly disagree.

**Table 4:** Distribution of Respondents' Opinions on Consequences of Drug Abuse Among Students

Statement	Responses	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Drug abuse can lead to a wide range of health problems, including addiction, overdose, and various physical and mental health issues	372	57.1	40.2	1.3	1.3
Drug abuse can be expensive, leading to financial difficulties and even poverty	370	40	53.5	4.1	2.4
Drug abuse can contribute to an unsafe campus environment, with increased incidents of violence, theft, and other criminal activities	370	38.9	51.4	7	2.8
Drug abuse can lead to environmental pollution	369	26.2	42.7	24.1	7
Drug abuse can strain relationships with friends, family, and peers	371	35.3	53.4	8.4	2.7
Students engaged in drug abuse may isolate themselves from their social circles, leading to a lack of social support and feelings of loneliness	370	33.8	51.4	10.3	4.6
Drug abuse can negatively impact academic performance, leading to decreased grades, missed assignments, lower graduation rates and even dropping out of school	372	40.5	46.6	9.4	3.5

Students who chose Drug Abuse can make them isolate themselves have a total number of 370 respondents, 33.8% of respondents chose strongly agree, 51.4% of respondents chose agree, 10.3% of respondents disagree, 4.6% of respondents chose strongly disagree. Students who chose Drug Abuse can lead to Health Problems has a total number of 372 respondents, 40.5% of respondents chose strongly agree, 46.6% of respondents chose agree, 9.4% of respondents disagree, 3.5% of respondents chose strongly disagree.

The above results collaborated with the findings of the following researchers (Arria, *et al.*, 2015 Coleman, 2010; Oshodi, *et al.*, 2010, Adam, 2019; Peter, *et al.*, 2014; Ogunsola, *et al.*, 2020; Nasiru & Mustapha, 2020) who equally worked on the assessment of substance abuse among the students at both secondary schools and tertiary institutions within the country.

In the same vein, the findings from this research agree with the reports of West & Graham (2005) and Womble & Williamson (2016) whose research were carried out outside Nigeria.



4.0. CONCLUSION

The research investigated the Consequences of Drug Abuse among Students in Tertiary Institutions in some parts of Imo State. Statistical records reveal that drug abuse among students in Imo state is on the increase with peer pressure and social influence as the major reasons. More worrisome is the devastating implications that the usage has on the victims' academic performance and mental health as law abiding citizens of the country. The increasing wave of criminal activities like kidnapping, armed robbery, violent demonstration, thuggery, as well as the health implications like cancer of the lungs, respiratory problems and infectious disease are all associated with the ease of obtaining and using drugs illicitly. Drug abuse is a prevalent issue among students in tertiary institutions and should be addressed.

I suggest that government, religious bodies, non- governmental organizations and the media should either collectively or separately embark on a campaign against the illicit use of drugs. Such enlightenment campaigns should include an awareness of the effects of drug abuse. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the National Agency For Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), the senate and house committees (ministries of health, justice, women, youth and social welfare) on drugs and narcotics should work assiduously towards mitigating the high rate of drug abuse by setting penalties for drug abusers and traffickers.

The government should establish more treatment and rehabilitation centers for treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts and their re- integration into society as an effective strategy in the control of drug abuse.

Competing Interest

The authors have declare that no conflicting interest exist in this manuscript.

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