

Drug abuse/addicts in schools; the role of school counsellor

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Abstract: Nigerians were countries in the sixties and seventies, but cannot be said of today where they use and abuse drugs like narcotic and psychoactive. The consequences of these acts can pose a threat to the nascent democracy. The purpose of this paper is to discuss among other things what motivates youths to take drugs. Explain drug abuse/addiction and its effects on individual, home and the society and examine the role of school counselor in that direction in term of alleviating the problem. It was recommended that, information about drug use and consequences should disseminate to the youth who are mostly affected. Getting them more involve in school based and non school based activities will do a lot of good in lowering incidence of drug use and getting drugless.

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Introduction

A nation that struggle to meet the world economic development must joint hands together with other Nation in fighting against drug abuse. Nigerians in the past were aware of drug addiction as being witness today. This could be attributed to many factors.

1. Development OF Education
2. Neglect of cultural/moral training
3. Shifting in emphasis on values
4. Scientific and population advancement
5. Influence of T.V programmes and foreign culture

Every drug is a potential poison depending on its usage. Drugs are helpful when they are properly used and destructive when they are misused or abused. Most youths are guilty of drug abuse, since one finds a large number of the population of youths walk into the shop to buy drugs without any physician's prescription. Drug abuse started becoming a serious problem in Nigeria in the 1960s. During the period, various professionals such as drivers, farmers armed robbers, and hardened criminals used to abuse drugs such as Marijuana, Indian hemp, and Alcohol etc. (Christine,2009), reported that the use of drugs and other pharmacologically active substances dates back to time of our forefather, several centuries ago. Their uses have been on preventive and curative grounds and also for social and recreational purposes. In the past, choice of such substances was limited to those easily available in the environment of the users, but in the present era, the use of various types of drugs has gone beyond those drugs produced and available in the immediate environment.

The use has reached an alarming stage of abuse by adult, youth and children. In recent times, apart from alcohol, the hard drugs which include

Barbiturates, Valium, pethidine, Narcotics, Cocaine and Heroin have become rampant.

In the recent past, many Nigerians were not conscious of narcotic drugs until during the regime of Buhari/Idiagbon when the first set of narcotic barons were publicly executed in Lagos. Nigeria was only a courier of narcotic drugs but that can not be said of today. They are both couriers and consumer of these dangerous drugs. They had even made the world to focus on Nigeria which sometimes to humiliation for travelling Nigerians. According to Isah, (2007:123), all hands must be on deck in the success of this new democratic experiment. The effect on this nascent democracy can be devastated if not checked. The punitive measures embarked upon by the military seemed not to have much effect on drug trafficking and use the rate is still alarming hence creating awareness by psychologist to help the situation. The term drug relate to any substance that when taken by living organism, may modify one or more of its functions. William (2007) sees drugs as those substances intended for use in the diagnosis, cure or prevention of disease, Payne and Hann (2002) defined the word drug as any substance natural or artificial other than food, that by it's chemical or physical nature, alters structure or function in the living organism. To a physician as a medicine in the treatment of physical or mental disease.

Nnubia, (2003) defined drug abuse as the use of any drug to the point where it interfered with an individual's health or with his economic and social adjustment sizer-Webb, (1999), asserts that the abuse of drug is the taking of drug for non-medical purpose and in a manner that can affect or damage a person's health. Drug abuse consist of the use of a substance in a manner, amounts or situations such that the drug abuse causes problems or greatly increases the chances

of problem occurring the problem could be social, occupational, psychological or physical. Drug abusers are viewed by National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), (2003) as potentially harmful to the society because they can be hostile, maladjusted immature and dependents. In view of the involvement rate of the youth in drug abuse and drug related crimes, there is urgent need to check this habit because of the impact it has on academic achievement of youth as leaders of tomorrow.

One may hooked emotionally, psychologically, and may have a physical dependence, where one has a drug addiction problem, whether to legal or illegal drug, there is a craving for it. The individual wants to use the drug again and again, and if it stopped, there are usually unpleasant physical reactions. While it is not everyone who uses drug that becomes addicted, many people do. Drug addiction involves compulsively seeking to use a substance. Certain drugs, such as narcotics and cocaine, are more likely to cause physical dependence, than other drugs (Kobiowu,2006;1).Drug abuse among adolescents and young adults, which embrace university students increased, significantly in the United States of America in the late 60s and early 70s Kobiowu.(2006), Little was known about hard drug and their usage in Nigeria in the 60s. However, as far back as 1973, an expatriate staff at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, reported a substance purported to be cocaine, which was used by some students, but the authenticity of the substance was not precisely established. Although the law-enforcement agencies and the government, were not aware of the development, because of the rampant use of and emphasis on Indian hemp, it was not until may 1983, when the guardian newspaper of Nigeria, first related the story of the arrival of the drug known variously in the united states as 'snow' or angel-dust that awareness began to rise. And this a crescendo between 1984 and 1985, when the federal government of Nigeria promulgated a decree (Decree number. 20 of 1984), which prescribes death penalty for possession of hard drugs.

Presenting a paper on social origins of drug abuse, Odejide, (1990) blamed the society for the phenomenon nothing that drug abusers and traffickers are made and created by society and are sustained by the social conditions of the society. Apart from the tragic consequences to the individual, drug trafficking have other serious effect such as disruption of family life, corruption of government and governmental agencies, poor academic achievement , contribution to industrial and road accident and indulgence in serious criminal activities (Odejide and Ohaeri, 1990, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA 1992, 1993).

Causes of drug/addiction

The insistence on drugs by man is the need to find measure to combat disease, which has always been as important to man's survival as his need for food and shelter. The abuse of drugs has been a growing problem among youths and students in secondary schools in Nigeria.

Counselling psychologists are of the opinion that if a person engages in substance abuse it may be due to a combination of factors that are either biological (hereditary or train processes), psychological (emotional turmoil) or relationship difficulties or social. Drugs are taken for various purposes like physiological, psychological and social reason. A drug user finds it difficult to stop using drugs for many reasons. Macmillan Family Encyclopedia (1980) in Isah (2007) defines half-life as the time taken to eliminate half of a standard dose of drug if continuously taken it build up in the body for the period in use. During this period the concentration remains the same in the body because the clearance by the body balances the intake of the drug. If the drug is stopped, the concentration in the body falls and the user experiences what is termed withdrawal symptoms. These varies with the type of drug for example, stimulant, depressant, hallucinogen, sedative e.t.c. such symptoms are characterized by pain, anxiety, excessive sweating, shaking e.t.c. the inability of the drug use to tolerate the symptoms motivate to continue.(Macmillan family Encyclopedia, 1998, in Isah, 2007).

According to Isah (2007:126) people take drugs to wade off boredom arising from monotony of life activities. The initial dosage level is always small and tolerable; prolong taking of drugs leads to progressive increase of the dosage level in order to produce the same effect. Youth like experimenting, the first experience may produce a state of arousal such as happiness and pleasure which in turn motivates them to continue. Dusek Girdano (1978). Argued that drugs may be taken at abusive level in an attempt to meet basic need. Some basic need might not be met as a result of pressure from discrimination like social class, religion, handicap, sex, age e.t.c.

According to National Drug Law Enforcement Agency NDLEA, (2007.2) Many reasons have been adduced to drug abuse, some of the common predisposing factors in Nigeria are:-

- a. Social pathologies such as unemployment and parental deprivation.
- b. Emotional and psychological stresses such as anxiety, frustration and economic depression.
- c. Peer group pressure characterized by the desire to be accepted among friends or in social circles.
- d. The desire to achieve success in a competitive world.

e. Warped (materialistic) value system in the society such as the crave to get rich quick

Effects of drug abuse

It has been widely documented in several related literature, like (Cooms, Strong and Devecout 2002), that the consequences of drug abuse, which causes problems on physical, psychological and social levels of an individual, his family, friends and the society. Most drug users are fully aware of the fact that drugs disrupt the key motivational circuits in the brain. This explains the irrational behaviors of the addict; despite mounting evidence that they are harming themselves they continue to consume the drugs. They also become unfriendly to the most important people in their lives. The consequences of drug abuse is like a person borrowing money to buy elegant clothes, drive latest cars, live in exotic houses etc and eventually, the creditors come for their money. According to Agudu (1988:646) alcoholic drinks when used moderately and occasionally as it was used in traditional African societies may not be so harmful, but when used in excess, frequently over several years it can cause considerable damaged to health and socio economic life of the individual, his family and society and a lot of money is committed to the treatment and rehabilitation of the alcohol abuser.

Violence witnessed in various communities and tertiary institutions leading to blood letting, rape. Stealing is a product of drug abuse and cultism. Human and material sources lost during violence have their tolls on the stability of the nation. Dishonesty, bribery and corruption, forgery, gambling, prostitution etc. are characteristics of drug abuse. These have consequences on the unfolding democracy. All these scare away investors from the country. Huge amount of money spent on maintaining arrested drug traffickers and replacing damaged properties can be directed to better programmes that will benefit all and sundry in the country.

Solution and the role of the school counsellor

Awareness is one of the most important steps to be taken by school counselor. Information about drug use and consequence should be disseminated to the youths who mostly affected. These can be done on the assembly ground and social gathering at the secondary school levels. While posters and handout on the same topic can be distributed during lectures organized for the purpose. Biblicounseling, that is a cognitive method in which a counselor educates his client with prepared handout. In it, emphasis is laid on the danger in drug abuse and practical ways (self management techniques) that can assist in averting drug abuse/addiction can be use. This prepared the students for future activities and for sustainable democracy. Teacher, parents and guardians can be trained in the act of identifying drug addicts. Signs such as violence,

un-cooperative attitude, sudden and dramatic change in discipline, academic work and attendance, neatness, negative attitude e.g irrational flare-ups etc. (Adeson and Crewell, 1980). Drug abusers identified should be refer to counseling psychologist through drug free club, counseling psychologist can educate and actively engage youths. Various activities on drug use, problem and dangers should be organized. Specialist e.g. National Drug Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in this areas should be invited to talk to students. Drug that are being abused also have proper uses that can benefit human beings. Counselling psychologist therefore should exploit these by informing youths to employ these uses e.g. marijuana plants is used for making ropes and cloths, tobacco for disinfectant and insecticides etc (Isah 2007).

The electronics and print media should be used in informing the people, radio television jingles should be produced and sponsored by philanthropist. Chemist and drug hawkers should be educated on dangers inherent in drug abuse. Some patent medicine stores sell drugs that are not prescribed by experts and should not be sold to them. Proper education might reduce drug abuse in the country. Sports men and also should be educated on the type of food and drug they should take or not take, to avoid being banned for taking performance enhancing drugs. Other ways include display of relevant information on bill boards, embarking on excursion of enough recreation activities for youths in school and public places, intervention at early stage by counselors when they are detected.

Getting adolescent more involved in school based and non school based activities lower incidence of drug use and getting drugless. Robert Cloning (1991) found that three traits are present 1. Easily bored, needing constant activity and challenge

2. Drive to avoid negative consequences of action

3. Craving immediate external reward for effort. Cloning advises parents who notice theses traits in their children and young adolescents to ensure that children have a structured, challenging environment and to provide them with considerable support.

A strong family support system is very important just as school based programme in which adolescencents discussed related issues with peers (Wodarski and Hoffman, 1984). Therapy may include working with other family members, peer group discussion and specific behavioral techniques. Matching treatment programme to the particular problem. Some adolescents may be help more through family therapy, others through peer counseling, and yet other through intensive behavioral strategies depending on the type of drinking problem and the social agents (Magui, Zuker and Fitzgerald 1995).

Prevention and intervention

Joy Dryfoos (1990,1997) put forward the following preventive measures

1. Intensive individual attention: where high risk youth are attached to a responsible adult who gives the youth attention and deal with the child specific needs (nation and others 2003).

2. Community- wide collaborative approaches where a number of different programmes and services have to be place that include policy changes and media campaigns are more effective when they are coordinated with family, peer at school components (Wanders Man floor, 2003).

3. Early identification and intervention-reaching children and their families before children developed problem, or at the beginning of their problems, is a successful strategy (Botrin, 1999; Ripple and Zyler 2003).

Conclusion

Educating and guiding youth on drug use and the danger inherent in drug abuse will go a long way in enhancing developmental growth in all aspect of the nation. Every nation is striving to stamp out the effect of drug menace among youth. Some drugs are not harmful when taken at certain dosage level, while some are at any dosage level. Psychoactive drugs chemical substance which when administered alters state of consciousness and behavior.

Many factors can motivate youth to take drug e.g. pleasure and excitement seeking curiosity, frustration need etc. if a person drinks with other people we may suspect social motives, if alone, we may suspect person try to deal with personal problem. If not properly managed drug abuse/addiction can derail any democratic setting knowledge on way adolescent use drug, how pervasive it is, what are the nature and effects, what factors contribute, will go greatly in designing intervention strategies at an early stage of drug use. And the best way to answer the why question is to look for consistency in the situation in which the behaviour occurs (when and where).

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