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**DRUG ABUSE IN OUR SOCIETY TODAY**

To start with, What is Drug? Drug is a medicine or other substance which has a physiological effect when ingested or otherwise introduced into the body or a chemical substance used in the treatment, cure, prevention, or diagnosis of disease or used to otherwise enhance physical or mental well-being. What is Drug Abuse? 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 large amounts. Drug abuse may lead to social, physical, emotional, and job-related problems.

Those who abuse drugs and alcohol are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors, have a higher co-occurrence of mental disorders, and are more likely to be incarcerated for crimes committed than non-drug using individuals. The burden in terms of costs, trauma, and influence on the nation’s youth is substantial. Drug abuse is associated with higher rates of foster care child placements, child abuse, college sexual assaults, prison sentences, and lost productivity coupled with increased work-related injuries.

Those closest to a drug-addicted individual are the hardest hit. Common patterns emerge within families where at least one individual is addicted to drugs. These patterns include high levels of criticism or negativism within households, parental inconsistency, or in the case of parents coping with a drug-addicted child, denial. Misdirected anger between drug-addicted and non-addicted family members is common as is self-medication as a strategy in coping with family dysfunction. Similarly, families with at least one drug-addicted parent are more likely to end up homeless or in poverty and are less likely to have adequate health care, representing a common barrier in obtaining treatment for the addiction.

In some individuals, the onset of drug use can be from untreated psychiatric issues including anxiety and depression. The rush of pleasure from using drugs can provide temporary solace from suffering, which can stem from many mental health or other issues. For most people, the initial decision to take drugs is voluntary. But as they are swept up into the cycle of addiction, the neural pathways in their brain change so they are less able to control their behavior and resist their intense impulses. The brain becomes wired for addiction. Eventually, one’s tolerance may build so much that addictive behavior no longer provides any pleasure, and using drugs simply becomes a way to avoid withdrawal. They need drugs just to keep feeling normal.

The sad truth is that more deaths, illnesses, and disabilities are caused by substance abuse than by any other preventable health condition. Prolonged drug dependence interferes with just about every organ in the human body, and while different drugs have different damaging effects. Some of the effects are; Damaged immune system, which increases susceptibility to infection, Cardiovascular conditions, including heart attacks and collapsed veins, Nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain, Liver overexertion or liver failure, Seizures and strokes, Widespread brain damage that can interfere with memory, attention, and decision-making, as well as permanent brain damage.

Some of the worst effects of substance abuse aren’t even health related. Drug abuse can have a number of damaging consequences on an addict’s social and emotional well-being. Many problems can be reversed or minimized by getting sober, but there may be some health and emotional issues that simply won’t heal with time. The best way to prevent permanent damage is to seek professional treatment ASAP to overcome the addiction.

The extent of the drug addiction problem in Nigeria is reviewed. Drugs such as L.S.D.,morphine and heroin are not very widely abused, though amphetamines are used temporarily by the students, and more permanently by the northern labourers. There is a need for collecting accurate statistical data about drug-related accidents, crimes or diseases so that researchers might be able to document the seriousness of drug-related problems to the Government.

The Government of Nigeria already has the necessary infra-structures and only needs to recognize the seriousness of the problem and make it a national priority. This paper reviews the available literature on the epidemiology of Drug abuse in Nigeria.