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DRUG ABUSE AMONG NIGERIAN TEENAGERS

Every year, at a quickening rate, social progressions determined by engineering impacts us individually as well as our family, group, city, country, and the world. What does this need to do with Drug use and/or misuse? Exactly as gadgets persistently develop, drug use takes after comparable way of development. Individuals in the public arena use drugs to adapt to the pressure exuding from the social change, other get dependent by sitting in drug abusing society, number of them get impact by media, and the vast majority of them get compulsion by modeling their guardian. A drug is a chemical modifier of the living tissues that could bring about physiological, sociological and behavioural changes (Nnachi, 2007; Okoye, 2001) NAFDAC (2000) as cited by Haladu(2003) explained the term drug abuse as excessive and persistent self-administration of a drug without regard to the medically or culturally accepted patterns. It could also be viewed as the use of a drug to the extent that it interferes with the health and social function of an individual.

Drug abuse among Nigerian teenagers has been a scourge to the overall sustainable development of the nation. It is a major public health, social and individual problem and is seen as an aggravating factor for economic crises; hence, for Nigeria's poverty status. While teenagers are supposed to be the major agent of change and development, some of them have been destroyed by drug abuse. Drug abuse has become a global concern in Nigeria because of its effect on teenagers. Educational stakeholders like parents, teachers and the society at large are worried over the prevalence of drug abuse and its causes and consequences on the teenagers. Drugs are produced for a variety of different reasons including those associated with ensuring a state of wellbeing, curing illness, and sustaining mental and physical stability. If properly administered, drugs can assist human beings in many positive way. The use and abuse of drugs by adolescents have become one of the most disturbing health related phenomena in Nigeria and other parts of the world (NDLEA; 1997).Several school going adolescents experience mental health programme, either temporarily or for a long period of time. Some

become insane, maladjusted to school situations and eventually drop out of school.

The issue of drug abuse has now become the main topic of discussion in our societies today. Drug abuse does not only destroy the affected person or individual but also have a negative effect on those that are connected to the individual (relatives, friends etc.) Some of the Nigerian adolescents ignorantly depend on one form of drug or the other for their various daily activities such as social, educational, political, and moral enhancement. Such of drugs taken by these adolescents include: Tobacco, Indian hemp, cocaine, morphine, Heroin, Alcohol, Ephedrine, Madras, Caffeine, Glue, Barbiturates, Amphetamines. Drug abuse are associated with a wide range of short- and long-term health effects. They can vary depending on the type of drug, how much and how often it's taken and the person's general health. It can also lead to multiple behavioural problems, both in the short and long term which can include: paranoia, aggressiveness, hallucinations, addictions, impaired judgement, impulsiveness, loss of self control e.t.c These effects of drug abuse have serious consequences, like addiction, missed work, punishable offenses, accidents and injuries. However, no single factor could be identified as solely responsible for the abuse of drugs but the following factors explained have been frequently found among both Nigerians and other nationalities to be reasons why teenagers take drugs:

Firstly, Lack of parental supervision or advice. Many parents have no time to supervise their sons and daughters. Some parents have little or no interaction with family members, while others put pressure on their children to pass exams or perform better in their studies. These phenomena initialize and increases drug abuse. Parental impacts have likewise been discovered to be noteworthy indicators of teenager tobacco, alcohol, and drug use, counting the way of parental supervision and observing (David. 2005). Most of the time parents get so busy in their official and house chores that they could not be able to give proper attention and care to their children which can bring a wide gap between parent child relation and the child ultimately get prone to vulnerable society.

Another cause of drug abuse among youths is peer group Influence. Peer pressure plays a major role in influencing many adolescents into drug abuse. This is because peer pressure is a fact of teenage and youth life. As they try to depend less on parents, they show more dependency on their friends. In Nigeria, as other parts of the world, one may not enjoy the company of others unless he conforms to their norms. Seeing smoking in movies by teens their age can just increase the risks three times more that an immature will have a go at smoking. In an investigation on teenagers, the individuals who saw the most measure of smoking in motion pictures were 2.7 times more prone to have a go at smoking contrasted with the individuals who saw the slightest measure of smoking.

Furthermore, Personality Problems due to socio-Economic Conditions are also a major cause of drug abuse among adolescents. Adolescents with personality problems arising from social conditions have been found to abuse drugs. The social and economic status of most Nigerians is below average. Poverty is widespread, broken homes and unemployment is

on the increase, therefore youths roam the streets looking for employment or resort to begging. These situations have been aggravated by lack of skills, opportunities for training and re-training and lack of committed action to promote job creation by private and community entrepreneurs. Frustration arising from these problems lead to recourse in drug abuse for temporarily removing the tension and problems arising from it.

In addition to that, the need for energy to work for long hours has also been found as a reason why teenagers indulge in drug abuse. The increasing economic deterioration that leads to poverty and disempowerment of the people has driven many parents to send their children out in search of a means of earning something for contribution to family income. These children engage in hawking, bus conducting, head loading, scavenging, serving in food canteens etc and are prone to drug taking so as to gain more energy to work for long hour

Experimental Curiosity has also been found as a cause of drug abuse. In order to experiment the unknown facts about drugs thus motivates adolescents into drug use. The first experience in drug abuse produces a state of arousal such as happiness and pleasure which in turn motivate them to continue and eventually turning into addicts. If a drug is however stopped, the user experiences what is termed "withdrawal symptoms". Pain, anxiety, excessive sweating and shaking characterize such symptoms. The inability of the drug user to tolerate the symptoms motivates him to continue and eventually turning into addicts.

The menace of drug abuse has eaten deep into the fabrics of our society; however, with effective counselling programmes, the problems can be tackled through campaign against drug abuse by government and other relevant authorities. Drug control counselling centres should be established in every community and qualified health counsellors should be employed in helping drug addicts by giving them special advice on how to go about the withdrawal system. Drug awareness units to be set up in all states by the federal, state and local government not to try people who use drugs as criminals, but to help solve their socio-psychological problem. Parents and adults should also refrain from using drugs indiscriminately in the presence of youngsters and they should discourage their wards/children from associating with "unknown" gangs or suspicious neighbourhood peer groups.

