

EXPOSURE TO SCHOOL-BASED IEC MATERIALS ON DRUG ABUSE AND ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN LAGOS AND OGUN STATES

NWAOLIKPE, Onyinyechi Nancy, Ph.D

Department of Mass Communication, Caleb University Imota,
Lagos State

Abstract

This study investigated the exposure of undergraduate students to school-based information, education and communication (IEC) materials on drug abuse, and to find out their attitude and practice towards drug abuse due to the exposure. The study employed survey research method; 387 copies of questionnaire were administered to undergraduate students of Caleb and Babcock Universities. Findings showed that majority of the students (84%) were exposed to IEC materials on drug abuse; most (81%) of them will inform others about the consequences of drug abuse and most (84%) of them will try to convince other students not to get involved on the abuse of drug. Findings from the study further revealed that exposure to IEC materials on drug abuse helped most of the students (82%) to know and believe that the abuse of drugs is harmful to their health and this helped some of them (63%) to stop the use of drug abuse. The study concluded that exposure of information, education and communication (IEC) materials on drug abuse is necessary among students in higher institutions because these materials can positively change the perception, attitude and practice of drug abuse among university students. The study recommends that, school-based IEC materials on drug abuse should be developed in Nigerian universities

to create awareness of the consequences, change attitude and behaviours of students towards drug abuse.

Keywords: Exposure, School-Based IEC, Drug Abuse, Attitude, Practice

INTRODUCTION

Information, Education and Communication (IEC) programmes combine strategies, approaches and methods that enable individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities to play active roles in achieving protecting and sustaining their own health. Information, Education and Communication is an approach which attempts to change or reinforce a set of behavior in a target audience regarding a specific problem in a predefined period of time. It creates awareness, increases knowledge and changes attitude and it ensures feedback mechanism (World Health Organisation, 2017). An important aspect of IEC is the process of learning that empowers people to make decisions, modify behaviors and change social conditions. The influence of underlying social, cultural, economic and environmental conditions on health are also taken into consideration in the IEC processes. Channels of IEC might include interpersonal communication (such as individual discussions, group discussions or community meetings and events.) or mass media communication (such as radio, television, and other forms of communication - flyers, leaflets, brochures, and booklets.

IEC intervention aims to address prevalent issues, and it requires a detailed plan which leads to monitoring and evaluation of the plan. It informs the target groups about the cause of problem and how to prevent the problem, educates the target groups about techniques of disease prevention and communicates. It motivates and help people to adopt and maintain healthy practices by using

techniques to spread the knowledge on the disease prevention and health promotion.

There has been an array of IEC materials to educate members of the general population and law enforcements officials across Nigeria on the nature of drug abuse and dependence as well as drug use prevention and care (DPTC). Too often drug abuse especially among adolescents is treated as a criminal act, rather than a health challenge that reinforces stigmatization towards drug users and lowers the expectation and reintegration into the society (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2017).

The United Nations reported that around 185 million people globally over the age of 15 were consuming drugs by the end of the 20th century (WHO, 2014). The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has expressed concern over the increasing level of drug abuse and drug trafficking among Nigerian youth. According to the NDLEA (2014), the situation got worst by the affordability of substance abuse such as cough syrups, Lizard wastes, gums, and cannabis sativa popularly known as Indian Hemp. Drug abuse remains a major threat to national growth and development considering the delicate and sensitive position of the young ones in Nigeria.

Young people develop certain habits for the sake of acceptance in a group. They resort to dangerous habits such as smoking, alcoholism and drug taking for so many seasons such as; helping them to cope with the problems, fear and pressure of everyday life (Brook, Brook, De La Rosa, Whiteman, Johnson and Montoya, 2001). Some use drugs as a means of escape from realities in life, to reduce anxieties, out of curiosity, while some turn to it in a bid to challenge authority. Teenagers may be involved with legal or illegal drugs in various ways. Experimentation with drugs during adolescence is common. Unfortunately, teenagers often do not see the link between their actions today and the consequences tomorrow. In most countries,

cannabis is the most widely used drug, both among the general population and among young people. Excessive abuse of drug may cause physically or psychological dependence or both may coexist in one and also create conflict within user and his social environment. Drug abuse is one of the major social problems being faced today by the youths, it accounts for a large portion of problems and it has raised health issues for social welfare agencies (Ejikeme, 2010).

The indiscriminate use of various kinds of substance by adolescents is a global problem. Drug abuse is a major public health problem all over the world (UNODC, 2005). Adolescents are more likely to perceive social benefits of drug use than they are to evaluate the negative effects. Substance abuse affects brain development of teens and can cause among other things, wasted academic opportunities, late start in chosen career path, unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (Addiction Center, 2020). Several In-school 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. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate undergraduate student's exposure to IEC Materials on Drug Abuse and their attitude and practice towards drug abuse in Lagos and Ogun States.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the level of exposure on drug abuse through IEC materials among undergraduates in Lagos and Ogun States?
2. To what extent did the IEC materials influence undergraduates' attitudes and practices of drug abuse?

REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Almost every country in the world is affected from one or more drug being abused by its citizen's. (UNODC, 2007). Iorfa, Ugwu, Ifeagwazi, and Chukwuorji (2018) citing Williams (2016) maintained

that, over 6 million bottles of codeine are sold on a daily basis in the North-West part of Nigeria. A global estimate, produced by UNODC, (2016) based on available data from 130 countries, suggests that, 13.8 million young people (mostly students) aged 15–16 years, equivalent to 5.6 per cent of the population in that age range, used cannabis at least once in the last 12 months. Those in that age group who are still at school may not be representative of their age range regarding drug use behavior; they may be part of an elite exhibiting lower drug use than those who are no longer at school. Cannabis (marijuana) appears to be the most commonly abused drug by the adolescents (UNODC, 2011).

According to UNODC (2018), in Nigeria, one in seven persons aged 15-64 years had used a drug (other than tobacco and alcohol) in the past year, and among every 4 drug users in Nigeria, one is a woman. Cannabis is also the most commonly used drug and 10.8 per cent of the population had used Cannabis in the past year, while the average age of initiation of cannabis use among the general population was 19 years. Lawal and Aliyu (2020) revealed that peer pressure and the desire for pleasure/enjoyment were the major causes associated with abuse of drugs among the youth in North West Nigeria. Tobacco was found out to be the most commonly abused substances by them followed by Codeine, Marijuana (Indian Hemp) and Cola nut.

A study by Ongwae (2016) in selected secondary schools in Starehe Sub County, Nairobi found that 63% of students who hailed from urban areas abused drugs as compared to their rural counter parts. This is because the students in urban centers especially in big towns like Nairobi have easier access to these drugs. UNODC (2019) carried out a National Drug use survey to determine the prevalence of drug use in Nigeria. The report shows that there is a gap in meeting the needs for treatment and care for people with drug use disorders. Based on data collected from 38,850 respondents in the household survey and

9,344 high risk drug users across all states of the country, the report provides for the first time, robust data on the prevalence of drug use in Nigeria at the national level and also by geo-political zones and states.

With close to 3 million Nigerians living with some level of drug dependence, the extremely limited availability of drug counseling and treatment services exacerbates this health crisis. The report explains the true extent of prescription opioids use-- mainly tramadol and cough syrups for non-medical purposes; with 4.6 million people using these in the past year in Nigeria. This places Nigeria among the countries with high estimates of non-medical opioid use globally. While cannabis is the most widely used drug globally and in Nigeria, use of opioids are responsible for most of the negative health impacts of drug use.

A study by Ibrahim, Mahmud, Abubakar, Harazimi, and Abdulkadir (2016) found that 70% out of hundred 100% of drug users are influenced by their peers to abuse drugs which shows that counter materials are key to educating undergraduates on the need to stop drug abuse. Dorcas, (2012) opines that effective counseling programmes and campaign can be used to tackle drug abuse among Nigerian students. Udama (2013) buttresses that drug abuse emotionally, psychologically, socially, and economically affect the user, relations and the society. Drug abuse affect the young ones most because they are more vulnerable than the older people and drug can impact on their changing body chemistries more than the older ones due to their fragility. Udama (2013) recommends that materials for school-based awareness and prevention strategies for elementary and secondary school students need to be developed. Idowu, Aramu, Olumide & Ogunlaja (2018), found out that in South West Nigeria, Tramadol was the most commonly abused substance among the students apart from alcohol. Most (35.5%) of the students consumed alcohol believing it

will enhance their academic performance and students who have not received any education on substance abuse, abused drugs more.

Effect of Drug Abuse on Youth Development

Drug abuse has greatly affected the youths and their social, mental and physical development. Adolescents are impressionable and can easily be influenced and coerced into taking substances which might lead to addiction. The effects of hard drugs ranges from sudden deaths, terminal diseases like cancer, risky sexual behaviors leading to teen pregnancy and school dropouts, dependency that leads to crimes like prostitution and robbery among many others (Roy, 2015). According to WHO (2013), the effects of drugs and substances abuse in Nigeria for example range from formation of criminal gangs, drop out of schools, involvement in social evils like prostitution and same sex marriages, lawlessness and many more.

However, Nathaniel (2014) argues that, the various consequences of the drug abuse or drug addictions are so devastating and very shameful to the extents that both the national and international organizations all over the world are also worried about the spread of this scourge among youths. The consequences of drug abuse include: Social violence among youths, armed robbery, mental disorder, 419, syndrome, social miscreants (area boys and girls). Others include lawlessness among youth, lack of respect for elders, rape, many more of the social evil. If left unaddressed, escalating rate of drug and substance abuse puts the country at a risk of losing generations as well as underdevelopment owing to the diversion of resources to address among others; these issues. Lawal and Aliyu (2020) revealed that the youth in North West Nigeria perceived that madness and aggressive behaviours are some of the negative effect of substance abuse.

According to UNODC (2019), studies have revealed that the adverse health consequences of drug use are more severe and widespread than previously thought. 2019 report on world drug use revealed that globally, some 35 million people are estimated to suffer from drug use disorders and these people require treatment services. Drug abuse is injurious to the health of the user, as result has a lot of social and psychological problems. According to National Institute on Drug Abuse (2003) drug abuse has serious consequences in our homes, schools, and communities. Prevention programs are most effective when they employ interactive techniques, such as peer discussion groups and parent role-playing, that allow for active involvement in learning about drug abuse and reinforcing skills. Reducing the harmful use of alcohol is a keystone in sustainable development (WHO, 2018).

Drug abuse can affect a student's concentration and thus interest in school and extracurricular activities, which can lead to increased absenteeism and drop outs. Most psychoactive drugs affect the decision making process of students, their creative thinking and the development of necessary life and social skills (Ekpenyong, 2012). Alcohol and other psychoactive drugs play a key role in violent death for teenagers, including homicide, suicide, traffic accidents, and other injuries. Drug use can also lead to a range of possible detrimental consequences such as violent behavior; delinquency; psychiatric disorders; risky sexual behavior, possibly leading to unwanted pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases; impulsivity; neurological impairment among adolescents (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2004).

In the same vein, Agbonghale & Okaka (2014) in their study on the effects of drug abuse on academic performance of students found out that drug abuse has effects on the academic performance of students, they do not concentrate as studies are going on, come late to school or may not come at all. As youth abuse alcohol and illicit drugs,

they may establish a continuing pattern of behavior that damages their legal record, educational options, psychological stability, and social development. Drug use (particularly inhalants and solvents) may lead to cognitive deficits and perhaps irreversible brain damage among youth. Adolescents who use drugs are likely to interact primarily with peers who use drugs, which might affect relationships and make them to keep going back to the use of drug (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2004). According to NIDA (2003), long-term drug abuse impairs brain functioning chronic exposure to drug abuse disrupts the way critical brain structure interact and may lead to addiction. Ekpenyong (2012) confirms that drug abuse causes injury to the brain and often irreversible alterations in the central nervous systems.

Intervention Programmes on Drug Abuse

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable because of the strong influence of peer pressure, and are more likely than adults to engage in risky or illegal behaviours to impress their friends and express their independence from parental and social rules NIDA (2014). Ekpenyong (2012) citing NAFDAC (2008) stated that the abuse of licit and illicit drugs is forming a student sub-culture in Nigeria. According to UNODC (2004), education for drug abuse prevention in schools should be both formal and informal educational programmes, policies, procedures that contribute to the goals of preventing drug use and abuse.

School-based education of youth can reduce child and youth use and abuse of drugs; education intervention programmes can increase cognitive-behavioral skills, decreases the motivations to use drugs, and decreases vulnerability to social influences that promote drug use. It is assumed that educational intervention materials can also help to reduce consumption of drugs which will result to a decrease in the negative consequences of drug use in schools such as, poor academic performance, negative attitude to class attendance and other illegal activities in the school. Martin (2013) indicated that drug and

substance abuse has an influence on education performance in Bangladesh. And that, academic performance of the youth, level of economic performance by the youth and teenage pregnancy are closely linked and influenced by the use, abuse and taking of drugs in Changamwe's Bangladesh slum.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Health Belief Model

This study draws inspiration from the Health Belief Model (HBM). The Health Belief Model is a psychological model that attempts to explain and predict health behaviors. This is done by focusing on the attitudes and beliefs of individuals. The HBM was first developed in the 1950s by social psychologists Hochbaum, Rosenstock & Kegels working in the U.S. Public Health Services. The model was developed in response to the failure of a free tuberculosis (TB) health screening program. Since then, the HBM has been adapted to explore a variety of long- and short-term health behaviors, including sexual risk behaviors and the transmission of HIV/AIDS.

The HBM posits that people will take action to prevent illness if they regard themselves as susceptible to a condition (perceived susceptibility), if they believe it would have potentially serious consequences (perceived severity), if they believe that a particular course of action available to them would reduce the susceptibility or severity or lead to other positive outcomes (perceived benefits), and if they perceive few negative attributes related to the health action (perceived barriers).

The Health Belief Model is best suited for this study because it helps in promoting individual preventive behaviours. The theory also focuses on the beliefs and perceptions of the individual, and also focuses on the importance of highlighting both the negative

consequences of the current behaviour and the positive consequences of alternative, suggested behaviour. The intervention programmes on drug abuse in form of school based IEC materials are supposed to change the perceptions of the students on drug abuse and also positively influence and change their attitudes and behaviours towards drug abuse.

METHOD

The study used survey method to collect data. The population for this study was 11,801 undergraduate students of Babcock (9,293) and Caleb (2,508) Universities of 2018/2019 session which was gotten from the Registry Departments respectively. This study was carried out by administering questionnaire to 400 students on the influence of IEC materials on drug abuse among adolescents in Lagos state. The sample size of this research 387 was calculated using the Taro Yamane formula with 95% confidence level. The students were selected through multi stage random technique from Babcock and Caleb Universities. Face, construct and content validity were employed to validate the instrument for collecting data.

To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was pre-tested using 30 respondents from students of University of Lagos where the pilot study was conducted. Internal consistency reliability was used to know whether items or questions in the questionnaires were consistent with one another and Cronbach's alpha as an index of reliability was analyzed and calculated as 0.75. This indicates that the instrument is strong enough to use as a reliable instrument to collect data from the target respondents. Data collected was analyzed with the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0 and presented in frequency tables.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Three hundred and forty-one copies of questionnaire were properly filled and retrieved from the student. Therefore, this study is based on those three hundred and forty-one questionnaires (341) retrieved from respondents with the response rate of 85%.

Table 1: Information, Education and Communication Materials on Drug Abuse.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
SD	30	9%
D	22	6%
A	179	52%
SA	110	32%
Total	341	100%

Table 1 above shows that majority of the students have been exposed to Information, Education and Communication Materials on Drug Abuse.

Table 2: Exposed to leaflets, fliers, posters pamphlets in the university on drug abuse.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
SD	22	6%
D	49	14%
A	166	49%
SA	104	30%
Total	341	100%

Table 2 above indicates that majority of the students have been exposed to leaflets, fliers, posters pamphlets in the university on drug abuse.

IEC Materials and Its influence on Adolescent's Attitudes

Table 3 Influence IEC materials on abstinence

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
SD	24	7%
D	39	11%
A	188	55%
SA	90	26%
Total	341	100%

Table 3 above shows that majority of the students will inform others not to get involved in drugs because of the IEC materials they have been exposed to.

Table 4 Influence IEC materials on remedy seeking behaviour on drug abuse

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
SD	28	8%
D	25	7%
A	182	53%
SA	106	31%
Total	341	100%

Table 4 above showed that majority of the students who have been exposed to IEC materials on drug abuse will inform a person involved in drug abuse to seek help

Table 5 exposure to IEC materials and knowledge of adverse effect of drug intake

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
SD	26	8%
D	43	13%
A	172	50%
SA	100	29%
Total	341	100%

Table 5 above implies that students who have been exposed to IEC materials in the universities cannot use harmful drugs because of the adverse effect of drug intake.

Table 6 Exposure to IEC materials and believe that drugs are harmful to health.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
SD	20	6%
D	39	11%
A	172	50%
SA	110	32%
Total	341	100%

Table 6 above indicates that majority of the respondents after seeing the IEC materials believe that drugs are harmful to their health.

IEC Materials and Its influence on Adolescent's Practice of Drug Abuse

Table 7 Exposure to IEC materials and adolescent's practice of drug abuse

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
SD	51	15%
D	76	22%
A	149	44%
SA	65	19%
Total	341	100%

Table 7 above shows that majority of the respondents stopped drug abuse use due to IEC materials they were exposed to

Table 8 Exposure to IEC materials and respondent's thoughts on consumption of drugs

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
SD	64	19%
D	61	18%
A	124	36%
SA	92	27%
Total	341	100%

Table 8 indicates that majority of the respondent's thoughts on consumption of drugs was positively affected.

Table 9: Exposure of IEC materials and reduction in the abuse of drugs.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
SD	48	14%
D	75	22%
A	136	40%
SA	82	24%
Total	341	100%

Table 9 implies that exposure of IEC materials to majority of the respondents have reduced the way they abuse drugs.

Table 10 Exposure to IEC materials, and respondents abstinence from drug use.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
SD	44	13%
D	58	17%
A	142	42%
SA	97	28%
Total	341	100%

Table 10 indicates that after exposure to IEC materials, majority of the respondents now abstain from drug use.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings emanating from the result indicate that the students have been exposed to IEC materials on drug abuse, in their schools. Majority agreed to this and have also been exposed to IEC materials on drug abuse in their schools like, leaflets, flyers, posters and pamphlets. According to UNODC (2004), education for drug abuse prevention in schools should be both formal and informal educational programmes, policies, procedures that contribute to the goals of preventing drug use and abuse. Information, education and communication materials in schools can be used to expose students on drug abuse and educate them on the consequences of drug abuse.

Drug abuse affect the young ones mostly because they are more vulnerable than the older people and drug use can affect their well-being, exposure to IEC materials on drug abuse is a necessity for students in higher institutions. It can be deduced from the findings that school based awareness campaign on drug abuse will expose students on drug abuse by educating and informing them on the dangers involved in the use of drug.

Findings also show that school based materials on drug abuse also changed the attitude of most of the respondents. Most of them will inform others about the consequences of drug abuse and most (84%) of them will try to convince them not to get involved on drugs and to seek help for those who have been addicted and are finding it difficult to stop. This shows that effective campaign programme on drug abuse can be used to tackle drug abuse among Nigerian students. Udama (2013) confirming this, opines that school based campaign on drug abuse should be conducted in elementary and secondary schools to prevent students from involving themselves in drug abuse. Evidence from this study agrees with WHO (2017) that information, education and communication materials create awareness, increases knowledge and changes attitude and ensure feedback mechanism, and since according to Ibrahim, Mahmud, Abubakar, Harazimi, and Abdulkadir (2016), majority of drug users are influenced by their peers, IEC materials on drug abuse should constantly be exposed to students in higher institutions to equip them with important information on drug abuse.

Findings further showed that the drug abuse materials the students have been exposed to helped most of them to know and believe that the abuse of drugs is harmful to their health and this helped some of them to stop the use of drug abuse. It also positively affected the thoughts of some of them on the consumption of drugs. This study agrees with the Health Belief Model, which suggests that people will adopt differential health behaviour based on knowledge of risks. The findings indicate that exposure to IEC materials, made the students to know the danger in abusing drugs, the health consequences and the negative outcomes in abusing drugs. Knowledge through IEC materials helped them to stop the negative habit of abusing drugs and thoughts of consuming hard drugs.

The study also found that school based IEC materials on drug abuse have reduced most of the respondent's abuse of drugs and some of them due to exposure to the materials have started abstaining from the use of hard drugs and drugs without prescription that can endanger their health. This is in line with the health belief model which highlights how programs need to consider individual beliefs about the problem being addressed and the costs and barriers associated with changing behaviour. The health belief model has been used to develop effective interventions to change health-related behaviors by targeting various aspects of the model's key constructs. Interventions based on the health belief model may aim to increase perceived susceptibility to and perceived seriousness of a health condition by providing education about prevalence, individualized estimates of risk, and information about the consequences of the health issue.

The IEC materials exposed the students to the fact that most psychoactive drugs affect the decision making process of students, including their creative thinking and the development of necessary life and social skills (Ekpenyong, 2012). It can also result to risky sexual behavior, possibly leading to unwanted pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases; and neurological impairment among adolescents (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2004); this will influence the student's attitudes towards the abuse of drugs positively. The effect of drug abuse on the academic performance of students as suggested by Agbonghale & Okaka (2014), which includes not concentrating as studies are going on, coming late to school or outrightly missing school, was moderated by exposure to IEC materials.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to ascertain the influence of IEC materials on drug abuse among adolescents in Babcock and Caleb Universities, it was discovered that drug abuse is a re- occurring issue among the students in school. Although IEC materials were put in place in order

to reduce the abuse of drugs in the environment, more and more adolescents abuse drugs every day, and not enough is being done about it by both higher institutions and government. It is not enough for these students to know about these materials, it is only relevant and effective if it influences their attitude and behavior towards the abuse of drugs. These IEC materials can change the way the students behave in terms of their attitudes and behaviours towards the abuse of drugs.

It can therefore be deduced from the findings that school based IEC materials on drug abuse have positive influence on adolescent's attitude towards drug abuse, but more awareness needs to be created through these school based materials on drug abuse. There is the urgent need to discourage drug abuse through intensified national public awareness campaign that will provide information directly to parents and the public on the grave dangers of drug abuse to the nation. School-based IEC materials create awareness and prevention on drug abuse for students in primary, tertiary and higher institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the research recommends the following:

1. Since the study found out that most adolescents are aware of school based IEC materials, it is recommended that more school based IEC materials on drug abuse should be used to create awareness of the consequences, change attitude and behaviours of students in our primary, tertiary and higher institutions.
2. Thus considering the different reasons why adolescents abuse drugs, it is important that Universities should constantly educate and inform their students on the impact of drug abuse which will encourage them to pay more attention to their lifestyles as the materials could positively influence them and change their thoughts and attitudes towards the abuse of drugs.

3. Higher institutions should have rehabilitation centers for these adolescents and instead of expulsion when they get caught using drugs they should be sent there.
4. Universities should design and have printed materials like leaflets, stickers and booklets on drug abuse that should be distributed to students as they arrive in the school, these materials will encourage them to live a fulfilled life.

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