

# **SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF USMANU DANFODIYO UNIVERSITY, SOKOTO**

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## **Abstract**

*This study examined the substance abuse among the undergraduate students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto. The first objective of this study is to find out whether UDUS undergraduate students engage in substance abuse. Secondly, to find out the most commonly drug abused and gender difference of the study population. Third, to examine the frequency of drug abuse by respondents. Fourth, to identify the reasons why students engage in substance abuse. Fifth, to identify the most common sources of these drugs and lastly to find out the problems of substance abuse to the students and society at large. The questionnaires were administered to 400 respondents and 272 responded engaging in substance abuse. Four faculties were selected using simple random procedure. One department was selected from each faculty using same method and a total of 100 questionnaires were administered with 25 administered to each level. The analysis yielded the following result: Students on campus abuse substance like alcohol, kolanut, tobacco, marijuana, cocaine, codeine, amphetamines, inhalants and solvents with gender difference in all the substances abused. Students mostly use substances every day; students use substances because of parental influence, school friends and sibling influence, relieve stress and enhance sex. Students mostly get their substances from friends, underground agents, chemist and other sources within and outside the campus; respondents believe substance abuse to have medical, psychological, financial, academic and other problems. Based on the findings the study recommends among others the need to organize awareness programmes to educate students that substance abuse can alter their brain and psychological make-up, which will affect their learning. The study further recommends that the university authority should put in place severe disciplinary measures to stem the tide of substance abuse.*

## Introduction

According to Abdullahi (2005), substance/drug abuse has been subjected to different definitions and interpretations by different people from different perspectives. This accounts for multiplicity of meanings given to it in the literature. For the purpose of this research, the researcher sees substance abuse as the use of any substance for the purposes other than that for which it is normally prescribed or recommended by a medical practitioner or agency.

It has been observed that majority of substance abuse start during the adolescence stage, especially so far the 'gateway' drugs, alcohol and cigarettes, this brought the need to check this bad practice in the universities campuses. Alcohol and cigarettes are described as 'gateway' because they are usually, the first substances that are used before other drugs are tried out (Indian Preventive Resource Centre, 2003). According to Okaza and Aluede (2009) substance abuse by students can lead to sharp decline in student's academic performance, increase reports of truancy and expulsion from school. It can also lead to addiction (increased desire for drugs without which normal life processes is disturbed), and increased appetite and libido. Social vices such as stealing, fighting and raping may also be caused by substance abuse as a result of alteration in the brain chemistry of the abusers.

Continued abuse of substance over a prolonged period of time often leads to drug tolerance and physiological reaction in which the body requires larger doses in

order to experience the same effects (Baron and Kalsher, 2008). Patterns of substance abuse may vary greatly around the world and overtime. In the United States, the use of many consciousness-altering substance increased in the 1990s (Baron and Kalsher). According to Ekey (1997) and Fatoye and Morakinyo (1997), the abuse of substance became very rampant in Nigeria in the 1990s. This shows that from 1990s to date, there is increased in drug abuse among youth and students in both western world and Nigeria.

In a study conducted by Eneh and Stanley (2004) on the patterns of substance abuse among one thousand and forty nine (1049) students of four secondary schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria using self-administered questionnaire revealed that 87% of the respondents were using at least one substance, at the time of the survey while 3% were past users in the last one-year. The substances commonly used included alcohol 65%, kolanut 63.1%, cigarettes 61%, paracetamol 41.5% and cannabis 26%. Others included tetracycline 25.7%, ampicillin 24.3% and valium 24%. Those that were least used include heroin, cocaine, latex, petrol and ativan. The study found that substance abuse among youth is assuming dangerous dimension and hence a need for immediate eradication.

A study conducted by Okaza and Aluede (2009) on drug abuse among students of Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma found the substance/drug used by respondents to include alcohol 25%, kolanut 8%, tobacco 7%, marijuana 32%, Librium 2%, valium 1%, Dexamphetamine 9%, Reactivan 2%, mandrax 1%, Chinese

capsule 4%, cocaine 9% and nobody abuse LSD.

There is general belief that the problems of drug abuse has medical, physical, psychological, social, educational, and economic implications and can be from experimenting substance to drug dependence. According to Abdullahi (2005), drug abuse lead to high rate of crime, fuel conflict, cultism in the university campuses, religious intolerance, truancy, rape, suicide, etc. Amstrong (2011) is of the view that, drug abuse problem is manifesting serious and negative consequences in Nigerian universities with Usmanu Danfodiyo University students inclusive. Several drugs like cocaine, heroin, amphetamines, marijuana, cocaine and codeine are abused by students of Nigerian universities (Okaza and Aluede, 2009). The scale of these problems calls for urgent scholarly and policy attention to prevent situation from getting out of hand. This made the researcher interested in the area as findings from this research work will help the individuals, parents, university management and government on the best way of tackling the problem of drug abuse in university campuses and how it affects the society at large. The first objective of this research work is to find out whether students of UDUS engage in substance abuse. Secondly, to find out the most common substance abuse and gender difference of abusers. Thirdly, to examine the frequency of substance abuse among the undergraduate students of UDUS. Fourthly, to explain the reason why undergraduate students engage in substance abuse in UDUS. Fifthly, to identify the most common sources of these substances and finally to highlight

the problems of substance abuse among the study population. Thus, this study was intended to answer the following questions:

Do you engaged in substance abuse?

What are the most common substance abused and the gender difference of the students?

What is the frequency of substance abuse among the undergraduate students of UDUS?

What are the reasons for substance abuse among university students?

What are the most common sources of substance by the students?

What are the problems of substance abuse among the undergraduate students of UDUS?

## **Methodology**

### **Population of the Study**

A total of 400 students were selected through multi-stage proportionate sampling technique from a total population of 22,379 undergraduate students enrolled in Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto.

### **Sources of Data**

This research is purely quantitative. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire (survey). The first part of the questionnaire had information on personal data. The other sections had items eliciting information on whether students engage in substance abuse, the types of substances they abused, the frequency of the abuse, causes of substance abuse, problems of the abuse and difference between male and female undergraduate students in

substance abuse. The instrument was validated by an expert in Sociology.

### Sampling Techniques

Simple random sampling was used to select four faculties from the eleven faculties of the university. A lottery method was employed where papers were given numbers to represent faculties and was shaken where four faculties were randomly selected. The faculties are: Social Sciences, Education, Art and Islamic studies and Faculty of Science. The selection of the departments was also based on lottery method of simple random sample, where one department was selected at each of the four faculties. In the faculty of social sciences department of Political Science was selected; in the faculty of Education, department of Primary Education was selected; in the Faculty of Art and Islamic Studies, department of History was selected; finally the department of Biology was selected in the faculty of sciences. These departments were selected using simple random sampling. At each of these departments, 100 questionnaires were administered with 25 questionnaires at each level. The administration of the questionnaires was done by the researcher while lectures were taken place with the aid of the research Assistant. The researcher took permission from the lecturers and administered questionnaires using systematic sampling at the interval of five to 25 respondents from level one to four. The completed copies of the questionnaires were collected on the spot and a full per centage of return was recorded. Despite differences in number of students in each faculty, the researcher administered 100 questionnaires

to ensure that all faculties were equally presented.

### Techniques of Data Analysis

Since the research is purely quantitative, the statistical method for the analysis of the data collected was used for the questions as well as the per centages of respondents to each. At the bottom of each, a brief explanation was made for the statistical figure recorded in the table.

### Results

**Research Question One:** Do you engage in drug abuse? The respondent's scores on whether yes or no were analysed. The summary of the analysis is presented in Table 1:

**Table 1: Respondents view on whether they engaged in Substance abuse?**

Response	Frequency	Per centage
Yes	272	68%
No	128	32%
Total	400	100%

**Source: Field work, 2012**

Based on the survey 272 of the students representing 68% responded they engaged in substance abuse. Another 128 of the students representing 32% responded they do not engaged themselves in substance abuse.

**Research Question Two:** Most common substance abused and gender difference of the respondents. The respondent's scores on the substances they used were analysed. The summary of the analysis is presented in Table 2:

**Table 2: Most common substance abused and gender difference of the respondents**

Substance	Frequency	MALE			FEMALE	
		Per centage	Frequency	Per centage	Frequency	per centage
Alcohol	15	5.5%	13	86.7	0	13.3
Kolanut	05	1.8%	05	100%	-	0%
Tobacco	33	12.1%	33	100%	-	0%
Marijuana	51	18.8%	47	92.2	04	7.8
Amphetamines	42	15.4%	27	64.3	15	35.7
Inhalants	10	3.7%	08	80%	02	20
Codeine	103	79.9%	43	41.7%	60	58.3
Cocaine	04	1.5%	03	75%	01	25%
Solvents	09	3.3%	08	88.9%	01	11.1%
Lysergic acid Diethylamide (L.S.D.)	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	272	100%				

**Source: Field work, 2012**

The above data revealed that 15 of the students representing 5.5% abuse alcohol, while 5 students representing 1.8% abuse kolanut, and 33, students representing 12.1% abuse tobacco. Also, 51 students representing 18.8% abuse marijuana also known as Indian hemp, and 42 students representing 15.5% amphetamines similarly, 10 students representing 3.7% abuse Inhalants, while 103 students representing 37.9% abuse codeine. Furthermore, 4 students representing 1.5% abuse cocaine and 9 students representing 3.3% abuse solvents.

Based on the table, 13 males students representing 86.7% and 2 females students representing 13.3% abuse alcohol and 5 male students representing 100% of the respondents abuse kolanut, while all the 33 respondents representing 100% are male and abuse tobacco. The result shows that, 47 male students representing 92.2% and 4 female students representing 7.8% abuse marijuana. Again, 27 male students

representing 64.3% and 15 female students representing 35.7% abuse amphetamines. Similarly, another 8 male students representing 80% and 2 female students representing 20% abuse inhalants. Furthermore, 43 male students representing 41.7% and 60 female students representing 58.3% abuse codeine and 3 male students constituting 75% and 1 female student representing 25% abuse cocaine. Finally, 8 male students representing 88.9% and 1 female student representing 11.1% of the respondent abuse solvents. Furthermore, none of the students abuse Lysergic acid Diethylamide (L.S.D.).

**Research Question Three:** What is the Frequency of Substance Used by the respondents? The respondent's scores on the frequency of their substance used were analysed. The summary of the analysis is presented in Table 3:

**Table 3: Frequency of Substance Abuse by the Respondents**

Substance	Everyday		About once a week		About once in a month	
	Frequency	Per centage	Frequency	Per centage	Frequency	per centage
Alcohol	10	66.7%	03	20%	02	13.3%
Kolanut	03	60%	01	20%	01	0%
Tobacco	24	72.7%	08	24.2%	01	3.1%
Marijuana	26	50.9%	14	27.5%	11	21.6%
Amphetamines	11	126.2	21	59%	10	23.8%
Inhalants	02	20%	94	40%	04	40%
Codeine	42	40.8%	5.4	52.4	07	68%
Cocaine	-		01	25%	03	75%
Solvents	04	44.4%			05	5.5%
Lysergic acid Diethylamide						
TOTAL	272	100%				

**Source: Field work, 2012**

Based on the table, 10 students representing 66.7% admitted everyday use of alcohol, 3 student's representing 20% admitted once in a week use of alcohol and 2 students representing 13.3% admitted once a month in the use of alcohol. The table shows that 3 students representing 66.7% use kolanut every day, 1 student representing 20% admitted using kolanut once in a week and another 1 student representing 20% admitted using kolanut once in a month.

The study also revealed that 24 students representing 72.7% use tobacco every day, another 8 students representing 24.2% admitted using tobacco once in a week and 1 student representing 3.1% of the respondents admitted using tobacco once in a month. Also 26 students representing 50.9% of the respondents admitted using marijuana every day, 14 students representing 27.5% of the respondents admitted using marijuana once in a week and 11 students constituting 21.6% of the

respondents admitted using marijuana once in a month.

Furthermore, 11 students constituting 26.2% admitted using amphetamines every day, 21 students constituting 50% admitted using amphetamines once in a week and 10 student constituting 23.8% of the respondents admitted using amphetamines once in a month. Again, 2 students constituting 20% of the respondents admitted using inhalants every day, 4 students constituting 40% of the respondents admitted using inhalants once in a week and another 4 students constituting 40% of the respondents admitted using inhalants once in a month. Also, 42 students representing 40.8% of the respondents admitted using codeine every day, 54 students constituting 52.4% of the respondents admitted using codeine once in a week and 7 students constituting 6.8% admitted using codeine once in a month. Moreover, 1 student constituting 25% of the respondents

admitted using cocaine once in a week and 3 students constituting 75% of the respondents admitted using cocaine once in a month. Finally, 4 students constituting 44.4% of the respondents admitted using solvent every day and 5 students constituting 55.6% of the respondents admitted abusing solvents once in a month. Finally, none of the students abuse Lysergic acid Diethylamide (L.S.D.).

**Research Question Four:** What are the reasons why students engaged in substance abuse?

What cause students in the university to engage in substance abuse? To answer the question, the respondent's scores on the question were analysed. The summary of the analysis is presented in Table 4:

**Table 4: Reasons for Substance Abuse**

Reasons	Frequency	Per centage
To feel good	12	4.4%
Availability of drugs	25	9.2%
Parental influence	42	15.4%
Sibling influence	04	1.5%
To relieve stress	38	14%
School friends influence	90	33.1%
To sleep	15	5.5%
To keep awake	14	5.1%
To enhance sex	30	11.0%
No reason	02	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2012**

Based on the above table, 12 students representing 4.4% respondents choose to feel good as the reason why they engaged in substance abuse, 25 students

constituting 9.2% of the respondents stated that the availability of drugs as the reason why they engaged in substance abuse. Another 42 students representing 15.4% reveals that the influence of parent as the reason why they are in substance abuse. Similarly, 4 students constituting 1.5% of the respondents admitted sibling influence as the reason why they are into substance abuse. Another 38 students constituting 14% of the respondents were into substance abuse to relieve themselves from stress. Furthermore, 90 students representing 33.1% of the respondents viewed school friend's influence as the reason why they are into substance abuse. Other 15 students constituting 5.5% of the respondents admitted they abused substance in order to sleep, 14 students constituting 5.1% in order to keep awake, 30 students constituting 11.0% in order to enhance sex and 2 students constituting 0.8% admitted no reason why they engaged in substance abuse.

**Research Question Five:** Where did you source your substance/drug from? To answer the question, the respondent's scores on the questions were analysed. The summary of the analysis is presented in Table 5:

**Table 5: Where Students Mostly Source their Drugs from**

Sources	Frequency	Per centage
From friends	60	22.1%
Mammy market	15	5.5%
Underground agents	51	18.6%
From school mini market	20	7.4%

From hostel mini market	13	4.8%
From chemists	59	21.7%
From the villagers	10	3.8%
From the securities	25	9.2%
From other places in the town	19	6.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2012**

The above data revealed that 60 students constituting 22.1% source their substance from friends, 15 students constituting 5.5% source their substance from mammy market, 51 students constituting 18.6% get their substance from the underground agents, 20 students constituting 7.4% sourced their substance from school mini-market, 13 students constituting 4.8% get their substance from hostel mini-market, 59 students constituting 21.7% of the respondents get their substance from chemists, 10 students constituting 3.8% get their drugs/substance from the villagers, 25 students constituting 9.2% admitted sourcing their drugs/substance from the university securities and 19 students constituting 6.9% of the respondents sourced their drugs from other places in Sokoto metropolis.

**Research Question Six:** What are the problems associated with Substance Abuse? To answer the question, the respondent's responses on the question were analysed. The summary of the analysis is presented in the Table 6:

**Table 6: Problems of Substance Abuse**

Problems	Frequency	Percentage
Medical	61	22.4%
Crime	39	14.3%
Academic Problems	72	26.5%
Conflict	23	8.5%
Causes cultism	20	7.3%
Mental disorders	31	11.4%
Financial problems	26	9.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field work, 2012**

The above table revealed that, all the respondents that engaged in substance abuse associated it with several problems. Of all the respondents that engaged in substance abuse, 61 respondents constituting 22.4% believed it leads to medical problems, 39 students representing 14.3% responded it leads to crime, 72 students representing 26.5% responded it affects the academic performance of the abuser. Similarly, 23 students representing 8.5% responded it causes conflict, another 20 students representing 7.4% responded it encourages cultism, and 31 students representing 11.4% responded it leads to psychological disorders. Finally, 26 students representing 9.6% responded substance abuse leads to financial problems.

### Discussion of Major Findings

The findings revealed that 272 respondents representing 68% of the sample responded they engaged in substance abuse and another 128 students representing 32% do not engaged in substance abuse. The data shows that more than half of the

respondents are in abuse of various substances.

The research further revealed that 5.5% of the undergraduate students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University who engaged in substance abuse used alcohol. From the literature evidence, alcohol is a depressant and large doses of alcohol interfere with coordination and normal functioning of our sense. The findings of this study are in disagreement with the findings of Engs and Tyllingen (1997), Obot (2001) Eneh and Stanley (2004), Okaza and Aluede (2009) where they found high consumption of alcohol among the students of secondary and post-secondary schools. This may be attributed to cultural and religious differences between where the previous researches were conducted and the study area. The finding of this research is in agreement with the findings of Eneh and Stanley (2004) and Okaza and Aluede (2009) which found a prevalence of tobacco and marijuana abuse among students. Marijuana whether smoked or eaten in foods disrupts memory formation and interferes with immediate recall (Smith, 1995).

The findings also showed that 1.8% of the students in substance abuse take kolanut. The finding also shows that only male students engaged in taking kolanut. This may be attributed to the fact that many young university girls will not want to take kolanut because it may discolour their teeth and body.

The study also found out that 15.4% of the respondents who abused drugs take amphetamines. These amphetamines have different categories (Rochi, Valium,

Paranol, etc.) and can affect the mental and physical condition of the abusers.

The research revealed differences between both sexes in some drugs. Based on the data, no female student takes kolanut and tobacco. Furthermore, there are more males abusing alcohol, marijuana, amphetamines, inhalants, cocaine and solvents. With respect to consumption of codeine, the study reveals that, 58.3% of the female students and 41.7% of the male students abused codeine. This shows that, there are increasing female participation in substance abuse with more female undergraduate students abusing codeine than the males and with more undergraduate students abusing codeine than any other substance. This agreed with NDLEA report in (2012), youth in the northern Nigeria abused codeine and marijuana than their southern counterparts. They further stated that, codeine is produced by companies in the southern Nigeria but mostly patronized and abused in the north. Furthermore, Magaji (2012) attributed excessive abuse of codeine to some cultural and religious beliefs in the north where many youth sees any substance that is not alcohol as not mentioned in the holy book. The study is in agreement with those of Fatoye and Morakinyo (1997), Eke (1997), Obot *et al* (2001), Eneh and Stanley (2004), and Okaza and Aluede (2009) that found differences between male and female students who abused substances.

On the frequency of substance abuse among the respondents, the findings revealed that majority of the respondents abused substances every day, once in a week and few respondents abused drugs

once in a month. The findings are not pleasant as it portends danger for the school system and the society at large. No matter the drug students abused, the adverse consequences involved emotional, crash involving anxiety, depression and fatigue (Baron and Kalsher, 2008). The study agreed with the findings of Eneh and Stanley (2004) and Okaza and Aluede (2009) in which frequency of substance abuse was also established.

Furthermore, the study also revealed that 4.4% of the sampled respondents admitted to feel good is the reason why they engaged in substance abuse, 9.2% because of the availability of drugs, 15.4% because of parental influence, 1.5% because of sibling influence, 14% in order to relieve stress, 33.1% school friends influence, 5.5% in order to sleep, 5.1% to stay awake, 11.0% and 0.8% responded to no reason why they engaged in substance abuse. These findings are in line with social learning perspective which contends that peer groups and other groups influenced on individual, to engage in drug abuse. In line with this, individuals especially adolescents and young adults, use consciousness – altering drugs because they are generally vogue (Baron & Kalsher, 2008).

Findings on the sources of substance by the students showed that they get their drugs from friends, mammy market, underground agents, school mini-market, hostel mini-market, chemist, from villagers, from university securities and other places in the town. The major sources from the data are from friends with 22.1% and chemist which had 21.7%. This may be linked to peer-group influence

in causing substance abuse and the responses that shows respondents to be abusing codeine which is mostly available in chemist than other places.

The study revealed that, all the respondents engaged in substances abuse believed it causes family, financial, psychological, educational, medical and criminal problems. This agrees with the findings of Abdullahi (1991), Bennett (2000) and Karofi (2005) who sees substance abuse as causing damages to the abusers and society at large.

### **Implication for Practices**

The 272 that abused drugs abused different substances ranging from alcohol, kolanut, tobacco, marijuana, amphetamines, inhalants, codeine, cocaine and solvents. On the frequency of substance abuse, the research revealed frequent use of drugs everyday with other taken once in a week and month. That to feel good, availability, parents, siblings, peers, influences, to relieve stress, to sleep, to enhance sex and to stay awake as the reasons why they engaged in drug abuse. The study further revealed that the use of substance is assuming dangerous dimension as even the abusers believed it has academic, medical, financial, psychological and criminal problems. This necessitated the need to call for immediate and enduring measures to curb this disturbing trend of substance abuse among our students. For the purpose of this research, the following recommendations are important:

1. An awareness programme should be organized in the university campuses at permanent site, city campus, school of

- matriculation and UDUTH to educate the students that neuropsychological alterations originated as a result of substance abuse and would tamper with their learning. When such information are well internalized, student's interest in taking hard drugs may be reduced.
2. Parents who use drugs should be discrete, to avoid negative influence on their children. University authorities should put in place severe disciplinary measures on students who abused substance.
  3. The parent should monitor the kind of friends their children interact with while in the university campus. This can be achieved through monitoring them on phones and contacting their lecturers and guardians in the university.
  4. The selling of codeine, amphetamines, marijuana in the university environment at mini-markets, the secret agents and even the securities must be stopped. The university must take severe measures in relation to that.

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