



Counselling Intervention on Predisposition to Psychoactive Substance Use among Young Adults in South - South Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The use of psychoactive substance among Nigerian young adults is increasingly a source of concern due to its negative impact on them. This research analyzed the literature on predisposition to psychoactive substances in Nigeria, with a focus on young people in the South-South region of Nigeria. The notion and idea of psychoactive substances were discussed, as well as several popular psychoactive substances used by young adults, such as alcohol, cigarettes, amphetamines, tranquillo sedatives and hypnotics, mild CNS stimulants, and marijuana. Furthermore, predisposing factors such as peer pressure, socioeconomic status, and family history of psychoactive substance use, accessibility and availability of psychoactive substances, cultural and religious beliefs, mental health disorders, and myths about their use were investigated. The effects and symptoms of its use in young adults were also investigated. The research proposed certain counselling intervention strategies to reduce their use, such as talk therapy/behavioural change, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, and Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy, among others. Finally, various recommendations were made, such as education and awareness, positive peer influence, parental participation, and government policy measures.

Keywords: Counselling, Mental Health Disorders, Peer Pressure, Psychoactive Substances, Young Adults

INTRODUCTION

The use of psychoactive chemicals, particularly by young people in Nigeria, has recently drawn the attention of the general public, parents, educators, and the government. Young adults who use psychoactive substances risk having major conduct behaviours that are dangerous to society, as well as a risk to their health and overall wellness. Nowadays, Nigeria is experiencing a wave of youth unrest, kidnappings, armed robberies, and fraudulent activities that, in Nigerian parlance, sprang from things like "419" (getting money and material possessions by deception), yahooyahoo, and yahoo plus, among other things. Some students in Nigerian institutions indulge in these illicit activities, which limits meaningful use of time, energy, and creative thought. Moreover, it leads to resource waste and renders youngsters useless members of society.

Perhaps, one of the reasons why young people use psychoactive drugs especially in Nigeria may come from the erosion of family principles, exposure to western lifestyle and technology. This is to say that one of the ways previously used in entertaining visitors and family members was merely through conversation. Unfortunately, that channel changed long ago when television programmes became a source of entertainment to friends and family members. Experience has shown that, the advent of the television preempted such valuable family interaction time, resulting in the socialization of young people in the way of the television; but with the assumption by parents that the young people will automatically adopt parental values. Unfortunately, the television made them to believe through advertisements, that if one is not asleep within some minutes, he could take 'pro plus', if things are not going well, take 'Gulder', 'Panadol extra' or 'Stout. If you will smoke some cigarettes or take alcohol, you can talk boldly and convincingly to a girl you like, and so on. Unfortunately, the same cigarette company also warns in its advertisement that 'cigarette smoking is dangerous to health', and that 'smokers are liable to die young'. Therefore, since the media presents such psychoactive substances to be sources of solving problems and

interactions, the young people may have imbibed the idea. Conversely, the same cigarette advertisement were also making a factual statement which was contradictory to the initial advertisement made. Therefore, young people who may have been entrenched in the practice of smoking cigarettes, may find it difficult to stop the practice. In order to devise ways of minimizing the issue, it is crucial to look at some of the variables that predispose these youngsters to using psychoactive substances in order to proffer counselling interventions.

Predisposition according to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, refers to the tendency to behave in a particular way or suffer from a particular illness. It also means behaving in a particular way because of the kind of person you are or the attitudes that you have. Predisposing factors to psychoactive substance use in Nigeria are numerous and can vary from individual to individual. Understanding these factors is essential in developing effective strategies to prevent psychoactive substance use and addiction. This paper provides an in-depth review of the predisposing factors to substance use in Nigeria.

Psychoactive Substance Usage Idea

Psychoactive substance refers to a pattern of use in which the users consume the substance in quantities that are harmful to themselves and others (Abubakar, Abubakar, Sufiyan, Balogun, Awosan, Raji, Usman, Abdullahi, Njidda, Bala, Kaoje, Nguku & Shehu, 2021). In other words, they are substances other than food, which when taken in excess, affects the structure and functioning of the body system in ways that sometimes are beyond control; and which makes people unable to reason accurately and perform their daily activities in a normal way. Although psychoactive substances could have beneficial effects, such as preventing pain, or treating ailments, they are sometimes misused and abused by people to the extent of changing their mood, body and mind function. Psychoactive substances include certain drugs when taken, exert major action on the brain, and produces effects such as sedation, stimulation and changes in mood or behaviour (Bello, Aina, & Aina, 2020).

Psychoactive substance use refers to the consumption of psychoactive substances that alter the normal functioning of the brain and can lead to addiction and other adverse health effects (Fernandes, Silva, Vilarinho, Seabra & Feitosa, 2017). In Nigeria, the most commonly used psychoactive substances include alcohol, tobacco, and various illicit drugs, such as cannabis, cocaine, and heroin. Substance use is prevalent among different age groups, gender, and socioeconomic classes in Nigeria. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2018), a national survey conducted in 2018, shows that (14.4%) of Nigerians aged 15-64 reported using one or more psychoactive substances in the past year. The use of psychoactive substances in Nigeria has been associated with various social and economic problems, including crime, violence, and poor health outcomes.

Common Psychoactive Substances Used by Nigerian Young Adults

Alcohol, beer, cigarettes, cannabis, amphetamines, tranquillo-sedatives, hypnotics, mild CNS stimulants, inhalants, anabolic steroids, opiates, heroin, cocaine, and tramadol are just a few examples of the various forms of psychoactive substances. The most popular psychoactive substance consumed everyday by adults and students in Nigeria is alcohol (Forge, 2010). This assertion was confirmed in a study carried out in Rwanda, where it was found that 56% of its youths depended on alcohol. Furthermore, another study corroborating this fact reported that the most currently used psychoactive substances in ascending order included mild stimulants, alcohol, sedatives, and tobacco (Mkanjuola, Daramola & Obembe, 2007). Moreover, it found that a higher proportion of male than female students were involved in psychoactive substance use, with some being either short term or life users respectively. Similarly, a study carried out among university students reported that the proportion of female to male students involved in substance use was (58.9%) as against (41.1%) respectively (Adesida, Quadri & Adedeji, 2022). In line with this finding, for example, the use of mild sedative was considered necessary in helping the students to read for their examinations (Makanjuola, Daramola, & Obembe, 2007). Furthermore, another study found that lifetime use of psychoactive substances among young people ranges from (20%) to (98%) (Eneh & Stanley, 2003). A brief description of the commonly used psychoactive substances in Nigeria will give an understanding into their differences.

- i. **Alcohol:** this is a potent substance in liquid form and it is widely used by youths, adults and others. It includes spirit, wine, whisky and locally brewed drinks such as palm wine, 'ogogoro', 'pito', 'burukutu', 'oguro and 'kwaya'. Alcohol is the most used due to its availability and social tolerance. It is reported by Moreno and Whitehill (2014) that youths indulge in alcohol consumption so as to belong to a group or to be regarded as sociable, as it is used for relaxation. According to their study, Gorgulu, Cakir, Sonmez, Cinar and Vardar (2016) found that alcohol was the most commonly used psychoactive substance by male adolescents, and that its frequency of use among young adults was associated with their having higher amounts of pocket money arising from parents who were in conflict in their relationship, with some of their parents being well educated and having higher income.
- ii. **Tobacco:** it refers to dry leaves of tobacco plant. Its different forms include cigarette, pipes, snuff and cigar. The youths have coined some names for it, some of which are 'reg', 'ciga', 'stick' and 'taba'. The most potent ingredient in tobacco is 'nicotine'. It is an addictive substance, and it is used by young adults in social gatherings. Similarly, tobacco was found to be in active use by adolescents as the second in order of priority (Gorgulu et al, 2016).
- iii. **Amphetamines:** These include pro plus used by school children; and it is referred to by students as 'pep' or 'superman pill'. It increases alertness and the user's activities. Students use them particularly during their examination period, to keep them alert. Heal, Smith, Gosden and Nutt (2013) maintained that although it has a beneficial effect for treating ADHD in children, adolescents and adults who are experiencing behavioural problems, it is often abused for recreational purposes.
- iv. **Tranquillo Sedatives and Hypnotics:** These substances are used to induce sleep and relieve anxiety and tension. Examples include Lexotan, Librium, Valium and Actifed. They are cheap and readily available. They are often called 'depressants', used to slow down the action of the brain. They are said to have legitimate uses, although regular uses lead to 'drug tolerance' In other words, the body may adjust to it, making it difficult to achieve its benefit except very high doses are used (Harvard Health Publishing, 2022).
- v. **Mild CNS Stimulants:** These may not entirely be perceived as psychoactive substances, because they exert a mild effect on the central nervous system. They include kolanut, coffee, tea and cold drinks. They are mind altering drugs, and although most of them are used medicinally, they have a high rate of abusers. The reasons are obvious, especially because this set of psychoactive substances are very popular and commonly used in Nigeria (Ohwovoriole, 2021).
- vi. **Marijuana:** This is also called 'indian hemp', 'igbo', 'grass weed', 'wee-wee', etc. It is a tall plant that grows mostly in the tropics. When cut, they are air dried, crumpled and used to produce a tobacco-like material which is rolled into cigarettes and smoked. This substance is said to possess both hallucinogenic and sedative-hypnotic tendencies (Collins Cobuild Advanced Learners' Dictionary 2023).. The most active chemical is found only in cannabis; it is soluble in fat and stored in the body tissues, including the brain for weeks. When weed is smoked its effect is noticeable in one to five minutes.

Factors Predisposing Young Adults to Substance Use in Nigeria 1. Peer Pressure

Peer pressure refers to the influence that peers or friends have on an individual's behaviour, decisions, and attitudes. It is a prevalent phenomenon that affects youths worldwide, and Nigeria is not an exception. Peer pressure is one of the most significant predisposing factors to substance use in Nigeria. Adolescents and young adults are particularly vulnerable to the influence of peers who use substances. Studies have shown that young people who have friends who use drugs or alcohol are more likely to engage in substance use themselves (Uzoegwu & Uzoma, 2016). In Nigeria, peer pressure is often linked to a desire to fit in or to gain social acceptance.

The use of substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and drugs is a significant public health concern in Nigeria. According to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (2018), Nigeria is one of the largest transit and destination countries for drug trafficking in West Africa. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2018) reported that the prevalence of drug use among Nigerian youths has been on the rise,

noting that (14.4%) of youths aged 15-64 had used drugs in the past year. Peer pressure is one of the primary factors that contribute to this trend.

Studies have shown that Nigerian youths who have friends or peers who use drugs are more likely to engage in substance use than those who do not. In a study conducted by Oshodi, Aina and Onajole (2016), (86%) of the respondents reported that peer influence was the primary reason for their substance use. Similarly, another study by Fausat, Akeem and Olabisi (2019) found that peer pressure was the leading cause of drug abuse among secondary school students in Lagos State. Peer pressure has a significant impact on substance use among Nigerian youths. It increases the likelihood of experimentation and eventual addiction to substances. Peer pressure can lead to substance use through various mechanisms, such as direct offers, exposure, and perceived social norms. When youths are exposed to peers who use substances, they are more likely to view substance use as acceptable and normative behaviour, leading to their initiation of substance use.

Socio-economic Factors

Socio-economic factors refer to the social and economic conditions that influence the well-being of individuals or groups of people. Poverty, unemployment, low education level, and income inequality are some of the significant socio-economic factors that predispose individuals to substance abuse in Nigeria. These factors are often associated with stress, anxiety, and depression, which can lead to substance use as a coping mechanism (Ikwuka, Igwe, Ojinnaka & Okeke, 2017). Moreover, individuals who lack opportunities for personal growth and development are more likely to engage in substance use as a way to escape their problems. Poverty is one of the most significant socio-economic factors that contribute to substance abuse in Nigeria. Poverty is widespread in Nigeria, with over 40% of the population living below the poverty line. Poverty can lead to a lack of employment opportunities, inadequate access to resources, and limited economic opportunities, increasing the likelihood of substance abuse. For many people living in poverty, substance abuse is seen as a way to cope with the stress and challenges of daily life. Poverty is also linked to other risk factors for substance abuse, such as social exclusion, family conflict, and trauma.

Unemployment is another significant socio-economic factor that contributes to substance abuse in Nigeria. Nigeria's unemployment rate is high, particularly among young people, who are most at risk of substance abuse. Unemployment can lead to boredom, frustration, and feelings of worthlessness, which can increase the likelihood of substance abuse. Unemployed individuals may also lack the financial resources to seek treatment for substance abuse, which can make it challenging to break the cycle of addiction. Low education level is another significant socio-economic factor that contributes to substance abuse in Nigeria. Individuals with lower levels of education are more likely to engage in substance abuse than those with higher levels of education. Low education levels are associated with a lack of awareness of the risks of substance abuse, poor decision-making skills, and limited access to employment opportunities. More so, women with lower levels of education are particularly at risk of substance abuse in Nigeria (Bello, Aina, & Aina, 2020).

Income inequality is another significant socio-economic factor that contributes to substance abuse in Nigeria. According to Christensen and Lelourec (2023), Nigeria has one of the highest levels of income inequality globally, with the top 10% of the population earning over 40% of the country's income. Income inequality can lead to frustration, anxiety, and depression, increasing the likelihood of substance abuse. Individuals from low-income households may also lack access to resources and support systems, making it challenging to seek treatment for substance abuse.

Family History of Substance Use

Family history of substance use is another significant predisposing factor to substance use in Nigeria. Family history of substance use refers to the occurrence of substance use in one or more family members. Studies have consistently shown that family history of substance use is a strong predictor of substance use in children and adolescents (Schofield, Denson, & Conger, 2017; Vakili, Merikangas, & Ma, 2020). Children who grow up in households where one or both parents use drugs or alcohol are more likely to engage in substance use than those without such a history (Adelekan & Odejide, 2016). In Nigeria, family history of substance use has been identified as one of the major risk factors for substance use among young people (Odekunle & Adelekan, 2020; Adeniyi, Akodu, & Ajiboye, Adeniyi, 2017). A study

conducted in Lagos, Nigeria, found that family history of substance use was a significant predictor of substance use among adolescents (Adeniyi et al., 2017). Another study conducted in Ibadan, Nigeria, found that children with parents who abuse drugs or alcohol are more likely to engage in substance use (Odekunle & Adelekan, 2020).

Furthermore, substance use disorders have been found to have a hereditary component, with individuals who have a family history of substance use being more likely to develop a substance use disorder themselves (Cleveland Clinic, 2023). Research has shown that genetic factors contribute to about 50-60% of the risk for developing a substance use disorder, with environmental factors playing a role in the remaining 40-50% (Kendler, Ohlsson, Edwards, Sundquist, & Sundquist, 2018). There are a number of genes that have been identified as potentially contributing to the development of substance use disorders. For example, genes involved in the dopamine, serotonin, and opioid systems have been linked to substance use disorders (Cleveland Clinic, 2023). However, it is important to note that genetic factors alone are not sufficient to cause a substance use disorder, but environmental factors also play a crucial role.

Accessibility and Availability of Psychoactive Substances

The accessibility and availability of psychoactive substances, particularly alcohol and tobacco, have been identified as significant predisposing factors to substance use in Nigeria (Oshodi, Aina, Onajole, & Oshodi, 2018). Easy access to substances makes it easier for individuals to experiment with and develop dependence on them. In Nigeria, the availability of drugs and alcohol is widespread, with many street vendors selling these substances openly. The accessibility and availability of psychoactive substances in Nigeria have contributed to the high prevalence of substance use among young people. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) reported that cannabis, which is one of the most commonly abused psychoactive substances in Nigeria, is cultivated and sold in almost every state in the country (NDLEA, 2018). Additionally, the lack of effective regulation of pharmaceutical drugs has led to the availability of prescription drugs, such as tramadol and codeine, in the open market, contributing to their abuse by young people.

Studies have shown that the availability and accessibility of psychoactive substances increase the likelihood of substance use (Oshodi et al., 2018; Onyeka, Ogbuagu, Ndu, & Nwosu, 2019). In particular, the study conducted in Lagos State, Nigeria, found that the availability of illicit drugs was a significant predictor of substance use among adolescents (Oshodi et al., 2018). The other study conducted among undergraduate students in a Nigerian university revealed that the availability of psychoactive substances was a significant predictor of substance use (Onyeka et al., 2019). These findings suggest that the accessibility and availability of psychoactive substances play a crucial role in substance use in Nigeria.

Cultural and Religious Beliefs

Cultural and religious beliefs also contribute to substance use in Nigeria. Some cultural and religious practices promote the use of psychoactive substances, such as alcohol and tobacco, as a way to celebrate or mark significant events (Igwe, Ojinnaka, Emechebe, & Ugwuoke, 2017). Additionally, some individuals may use substances as part of their spiritual or religious practices, traditional marriages, naming ceremonies, chieftaincy coronation, just to mention a few. Cultural beliefs in Nigeria vary among different ethnic groups, but some beliefs are widely held. For instance, traditional beliefs such as the use of herbs and roots for medicinal purposes, like the treatment of malaria, are prevalent in some parts of the country. Additionally, there are cultural practices such as the use of alcohol, and tobacco (locally called snuff) in social gatherings and ceremonies. In some cultures, alcohol or "kai-kai", as it is locally called in the riverine areas in Nigeria, is believed to have spiritual and healing properties, and it is used for ritual purposes. For instance, experience has shown that in the riverine areas, parents use the locally made gin, known as 'kaikai' to treat measles in children. However, excessive alcohol consumption can lead to alcohol use disorder.

Moreover, cultural beliefs may also influence the perception of substance use. Some cultures believe that the use of drugs or alcohol is acceptable as long as it is not done in excess or does not lead to harm. This perception can lead to a lax attitude towards drug and alcohol use and ultimately contribute to substance use disorder. Religious beliefs on the other hand also play a significant role in shaping attitudes towards drug and alcohol use in Nigeria. The country is predominantly religious, with

Christianity and Islam being the two major religions, and a few proportion practicing African traditional religion (ATR), where alcohol plays a major role in their worship. The Christian and Islamic religions prohibit the use of drugs and alcohol and promote abstinence. However, some adherents of these religions do not strictly adhere to these beliefs, and substance use can be seen as a violation of religious principles.

Mental Health Disorders

Mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are also predisposing factors to substance use in Nigeria. Substance use is often used as a coping mechanism for individuals experiencing mental health challenges (Famuyiwa, 2019). A study conducted in Nigeria found that individuals with mental health disorders were more likely to engage in substance use compared to those without (Gureje, Degenhardt, Olley, Uwakwe, Udofia, Wakil, & Adebayo, 2019). Several studies have established a relationship between mental health disorders and substance use in Nigeria. According to a study by Fatiregun and Adeyemi (2016), mental health disorders are prevalent among substance users in Nigeria, with depression, anxiety, and psychotic disorders being the most common. The study further revealed that substance use often worsens pre-existing mental health conditions, leading to a vicious cycle of addiction and mental illness. Furthermore, a study by Adeniji et al (2019) found that individuals with mental health disorders were more likely to engage in substance use compared to those without mental health disorders. The study also revealed that substance use was more prevalent among individuals with severe mental health disorders.

Myths Relating to the Usage of Psychoactive Substance in South-South Nigeria

In some spheres, especially among Africans generally and Nigerians specifically, there are certain beliefs pertaining to the use of psychoactive substances that either make people feel high or overtly dependent on them. In Nigeria, experience has shown that some families and certain people especially living around the riverine areas in the South-south region have been implicated in the usage of psychoactive substances, which is tied to their tradition. This justifies why the researchers are concentrating on the area. The socialization of youths in these areas is a point to consider when they are socialized into the values of their parents, they tend to imbibe the habit from their homes. The researchers believe that the usage of psychoactive substances in the riverine areas of the Niger Delta may probably have their roots in the cultural and traditional practices of the people. There is hardly any community in these areas where the use of illicit wine, cigarettes or kolanuts are not introduced and provided by families especially during traditional marriages, chieftaincy coronation, childbirth, etc. This is heightened by their beliefs that drinking illicit wine, alcohol or smoking cigarettes drives away cold and keep them warm. Some others erroneously believe that smoking enables them to free their bowels, or to have a sound sleep especially at night. Therefore, for the young adults who have been so indoctrinated, they believe, and may be driven by their beliefs to graduating into using stronger psychoactive substances. Furthermore, it was reported that a Nigerian young lady remarked that marijuana had a positive force in helping her to manage anxiety attacks and daily pressure of work and stress (Akinwande, 2021). Similarly, another male youth in Lagos believes that his involvement in the use of marijuana stems from his conviction that marijuana has helped him to get through his busy day. While another student from the University of Lagos submits that the schools 'no drug use' forced him to eat weeds with noodles (Akinwande, 2021).

Unfortunately, when the youths are not properly guided, they take the habit as a normal practice and may not be ready to imbibe correction. Although parents may not understand the implication on their growing children, some have been blinded by tradition, even to the extent of dropping a minute quantity in the mouth of a baby who is less than a year old (personal communication). Moreover, the idea of parents dosing young children with substances such as cough syrup so that the children will fall sleep in order to give them time to finish their household chores leaves one wondering if they are actually ignorant of the effects such may have on the children. This practice was more prevalent among mothers; while personal experience shows that some teachers of toddlers in private schools were also involved in this practice of dosing children who were perceived to be overactive so that they can also rest from running around with the children or talking too much. These substances are referred to as 'sedatives'. According to Harvard Health Publishing (2022), sedatives depresses the central nervous system and slows down the brain. Literature suggests that when families make use of psychoactive

substances in treating certain ailments without medical consultation, they are invariably reinforcing the youths to receive further attraction to such medicines. To this end, it is believed that the level of psychoactive substance consumption in Nigeria is the greatest drug culture on earth by a wide margin' (Bello, 1998).

In recent times, the usual demonstration of love through entertainment of guests with strong drinks like alcohol and the usual native drink called 'akpeteshi', 'kaikai' or 'ogogoro', with which most youths learnt from their families have been overtaken by events. Most of the myths associated with taking psychoactive substances have no scientific proof. For instance, literature has shown that some youths take psychoactive substances to help them overcome shyness, stress and work pressure. Whereas, there are better and safer ways of relaxing the mind than depending on substances.

Effects of Psychoactive Substance Use

The effects of substance use are varied, just as the types used also vary. Some of the deleterious consequences include delinquency, family crises and dysfunction, a drain on families' finances, stigmatization, mental health problems such as depression, and personality disorders. Others include suicidal thoughts, learning difficulties, car accidents, declining grades and absenteeism, raping of minors, criminal involvement and most recently ritual killings. Nigeria has witnessed so many killings, and it is unfortunate to realize that majority occur under the influence of drugs and psychoactive substances. The impact of smoking weed becomes apparent within one to five minutes, leading to various detrimental effects such as impaired social judgment, decreased concentration and attention span, confusion, apathy, impaired memory, heightened suspicion, depression, diminished interest in academic or professional pursuits, and a lack of concern for social norms, ultimately contributing to the development of psychological disorders (Archie & Cucullo, 2019). Moreover, high concentrations of inhalants in the body could cause suffocation by oxygen being replaced in the lungs or by depressing the central nervous system (CNS), to the point that breathing stops. Repeated sniffing of certain substances over a long period of time can permanently damage the CNS. Others include behavioural issues such as aggressive tendencies, domestic violence, etc. For example, literature posits that nearly 80% of domestic violence are related to the use of psychoactive substance. In other words, high usage of substances make young people vulnerable to violence against their partners. As reported in literature, young adults who experience physical dating violence are more likely to have mental health and substance use disorders (Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2019).

Signs of Substance Use in Young Adults

Subtle behavioural indicators can reveal substance use among young adults, with secretive behaviours being one such sign. Changes in personality or mood, declining academic performance, the abandonment of old friendships in favour of new ones that aren't introduced to parents, and reduced involvement in extracurricular activities are all deviations from the norm that can be linked to substance use. The intensity of these signs varies depending on the level of substance use. Alcohol intoxication is marked by signs such as slurred speech, difficulty expressing thoughts clearly, lack of coordination, impaired balance, and feelings of nausea, excessive sweating, and the presence of alcohol odour in the breath or sweat (Smith & Saisan, 2010). On the other hand, signs of amphetamine use include elation, shaky hands, restlessness, rapid speech, possible incoherence, hyperactivity, insomnia (periods of sleeplessness followed by prolonged periods of catching up on sleep), and reduced attention span. Inhalant use, on the other hand, is characterized by aggressive or hostile behaviour, violent outbursts, lethargy or appearing drugged, slurred speech, difficulty focusing, stupor and lack of coordination, seizures, vomiting, impaired movement, and difficulty speaking clearly (Smith & Saisan, 2010).

Counselling Intervention Techniques to Stop Young Adults from Using Psychoactive Substance

Attitudinal or behaviour change is one of the most effective ways of assisting young people engaged in chronic psychoactive substance use. One way of doing this is through the use of talk therapy. In this situation, a counsellor introduces talk therapy in order to see through the mindset of the young person. Perhaps, he might be having an emotional problem or something else. For example, it allows a client to open up and discuss freely what has been stored in his mind, making him become dependent on

it. One other way is by using the Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT), which involves helping a client to overcome his irrational beliefs, by making him to be more rational. For example, irrational behaviours could make an individual to take a wrong step while believing that he is on the right path.

Lastly, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) may also be employed. According to McHugh, Hearon and Otto (2011), CBT has the potency as part of combination treatment for helping people to overcome the menace of psychoactive substance use and disorder. It has the power to change the cognition through the application of motivational elements and skills building intervention. For example, CBT has been used successfully in the past for smoking cessation (McHugh, Hearon, & Otto, 2011). Additional strategies encompassed in this context are self-monitoring, handling peer pressure, self-control, clarifying personal values, and employing thought-stopping techniques. When considering counselling implications or the primary target of intervention, it is crucial to prioritize young adults, as extending these interventions to the factors that contribute to their substance use may not be feasible. In areas lacking community rehabilitation or counselling centres, there is a necessity to establish such facilities, while empowering existing ones where possible.

CONCLUSION

Peer pressure is an important factor contributing to drug use among Nigerian youth. Peer pressure can be reduced using various interventions such as peer education initiatives and strict rules and policies. To reduce the widespread nature of substance use in Nigeria is of the utmost importance to continue to raise awareness about the dangers of substance use among young adults and to promote healthy behaviours. Poverty, unemployment, low educational attainment, and financial inequality are all significant risk factors for substance misuse in Nigeria. Addressing these variables through policies and interventions targeted at enhancing economic opportunities, increasing access to quality education and healthcare, and decreasing income inequality is critical in reducing the prevalence of substance misuse in Nigeria. A family history of substance use is a key risk factor for its use among Nigerian youth. According to the information, genetic and environmental factors may have a role in the link between a family history of substance use and substance dependence. Prevention and intervention programmes aimed at reducing substance use should examine the role of substance use in the family. Family-based interventions and prevention initiatives in schools incorporating families and parents may be useful in reducing substance use among young people with a substance use history. Reducing the impact of family history of substance use as a predisposing factor to substance use in Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach that involves increasing public awareness, early intervention, family-based interventions, school-based prevention programmes, and support services for families affected by substance use disorders. The ease of access to and availability of psychoactive substances in Nigeria has contributed to the high prevalence of substance abuse among young people. Addressing this issue necessitates a multifaceted approach that includes government action, community-based initiatives, and individual accountability. We can minimize the prevalence of substance abuse in

Nigeria and promote healthy behaviour by working together. In Nigeria, cultural and religious beliefs have a vital role in defining attitudes about substance usage. These beliefs can either be a risk factor for substance use disorder or a protective factor against it. Addressing the issue of illicit substance use in Nigeria necessitates a multifaceted strategy that takes cultural and religious views into account. Nigeria can effectively address the issue of substance use disorder by offering education, involving religious and traditional leaders, and boosting access to treatment and rehabilitation facilities. In Nigeria, mental health disorders are substantial risk factors for substance abuse. Given the negative effects of substance abuse on individuals and society, increasing investment in mental health services, public education campaigns, and integrated treatment are required to address this issue. Furthermore, tightening substance control measures will assist to minimize the availability and accessibility of illicit drugs, lowering the chance of substance use and the negative consequences that come with it.

Suggestions

In view of the foregoing, the following suggestions were made:

- 1. Education and Awareness:** Educating young people and their parents about the dangers of substance abuse and the power of peer pressure can be an effective strategy to address the

issue. Substance use education can be integrated into school curricula, and parents can discuss the dangers of substance abuse with their children. There is also a need to raise public awareness regarding the link between substance abuse in children and adolescents and family history. Public health campaigns, community engagement initiatives, and instructional initiatives can help achieve this. .

2. **Family-based interventions:** Family-based therapies, such as counselling for families, should be included in Nigerian substance abuse prevention and treatment programmes. These therapies have been found to be successful in reducing substance use among children and adolescents with a drug use history. Educating young people and their parents about the dangers of substance abuse and the influence of peer pressure can be an effective strategy to address the issue. Parents can help their children prevent substance abuse by setting a good example. They can keep an eye on their children's activities, promote open communication, and establish clear expectations and boundaries. Parents can also provide positive reinforcement for good choices by modelling healthy behaviours.
3. **School-based prevention programmes:** Evidence-based preventive measures engaging parents and families should be carried out in schools. These initiatives have been found to be beneficial in reducing youth substance use. Furthermore, positive peer impact should be encouraged. Education and Public Awareness: Educating young people and their parents about the dangers of substance misuse and the influence of peer pressure can be a useful technique for dealing with the problem. Substance abuse education can be integrated into school curricula, and parents can talk to their children about the repercussions of substance addiction. There is also a need for increased public awareness about the link between children and adolescent substance misuse and family history. This may be achieved through efforts to promote public health, neighbourhood involvement operations, and educational initiatives. Positive peer interactions and behaviours can help to build an encouraging environment that discourages substance use. Drug education can be integrated into school curricula, and parents can discuss the dangers of substance abuse with their children.
4. **Government Intervention:** Addressing the issue of psychoactive substance accessibility and availability requires a holistic approach. The government ought to implement policies and regulations that govern the manufacture, distribution, and sale of psychoactive substances, as well as enhance financing for drug education, provide access to rehabilitation establishments, and enforce laws that limit the sale of psychoactive substance. Its goal should be to reduce young people's substance abuse by enhancing funding for drug education and giving access to rehabilitation facilities. To limit the availability and accessibility of illicit drugs, which are often associated with substance use and mental health worries, the NDLEA must strengthen its enforcement of drug laws and increase public awareness campaigns about the dangers of substance use.
5. **Community-Based Initiatives:** Peer education initiatives, for instance, can play a significant part in raising awareness about substance use and promoting healthy behaviour in the community. Community leaders may also work together with law enforcement to identify and report drug dealers and traffickers in the vicinity.
6. **Cultural and Religious Beliefs:** Religious and traditional leaders should be engaged in attempting to minimize the consumption of substances. They can play an important role in promoting substance use prevention and treatment by providing their members with education, support, and resources. Also, since the use of these medicines does more harm than good, they should be restricted to traditional ceremonies.
7. **Public Education:** There is a need for public education on the harmful effects of substance use, especially its effect on physical and mental health, social and economic consequences, and legal consequences. To ensure that the message is received and understood, education should be tailored to particular cultural and religious beliefs.
8. **Support for Substance Use Treatment and Services:** Increased access to substance use rehabilitation and treatment services is essential, especially in rural areas where cultural and religious beliefs may be more entrenched. The government should prioritize funding for

counselling and rehabilitation facilities and make sure they are accessible to everyone. Increased investment in mental health services is needed in Nigeria to improve access and fill the treatment gap. This will ensure that those who have mental disorders receive swift and proper treatment, lowering the chance of abusing substances.

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