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Research Article

Study on the Factors Associated with Drug Abuse Amongst Youths in Futo Owerri Imo State Nigerias

Izuchukwu Francis Eberendu *, Ezinne Linda Njoku, Adaugo Vera Udenze, Increase Tochukwu Obianozie

Department of Public Health, Imo State University Owerri, Nigeria.

*Corresponding Author: Izuchukwu Francis Eberendu, Department of Public Health, Imo State University Owerri, Nigeria.

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Abstract:

This research was a study on the factors associated with Drug Abuse amongst youths of Federal University of Technology Owerri. The study was conducted to investigate the reasons why undergraduates use drugs. The study employed cross sectional survey study designed. The sample size was 400 of which 64% were male and 36% were female. A descriptive study was undertaken in 8 schools in Federal University of Technology, Owerri. Both qualitative and quantitative data were used in the study. The major research questions include what determines the prevalence of drug abuse among undergraduate of Federal University of Technology, Owerri? What is the socio-demographic factors associated with drug abuse among undergraduate in Federal University of Technology, Owerri? What lifestyle factors predisposes undergraduate to drug abuse? To what extent does drug abuse affect academic performances of undergraduate in Federal University of Technology, Owerri? Questionnaires was administered for the collection of the data. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic method whereas quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics frequency and percentages. The research finds revealed that the factors associated with drug abuse are poor parenting (77.7%), peer pressure (94.5%), availability of drug peddlers within the university (72.3%). Most of the students involved in this habit are only aware of the concept but not it medical or social implications. The study makes a number of recommendations which include introduction of drug education as a general study course, and the need for enlightenment of the effect of drug abuse at all level of education. The study concludes that social and economic factors are the main factors which can be used to explain the use of drugs amongst undergraduate in Federal University of Technology, Owerri.

Key words: drug abuse; youths; futo owerri

Introduction

Drug misuse is becoming a major public health concern worldwide. People have utilized drugs for medical, social, religious, and recreational purposes. More medications have been created and discovered as a result of man's ongoing quest to find a solution for every sickness that plagues him. University drug-taking behavior is determined by the interplay between drugs and their users [1]. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), drug abuse is defined as the deliberate misuse or excessive use of drugs, whether they are prescription medications or illegal substances, that negatively affects a person's physical, mental, and social well-being. It comprises the use of medications for non-medical, recreational, or compulsive purposes without following the recommended dosages or uses [2]. Many substances, including stimulants (like cocaine and amphetamines), depressants (like alcohol and benzodiazepines), hallucinogens (like LSD and psilocybin), opioids (like heroin and prescription painkillers), and

cannabis, can lead to drug addiction. Abuse of these medications can result in dangerous behaviors, poor judgment, psychological problems, and strained relationships with others. Understanding the many types of drugs that children abuse is essential to understanding the unique hazards and repercussions connected to drug usage [3]. Because it has never been feasible to keep medicines in their original location, drug misuse has always been a global issue. Drug abuse has become a major public health concern in many parts of the world, particularly for young people. In recent years, drug use in Nigeria has had a major impact on people's health and well-being, both individually and collectively [4]. In Nigeria, the burden of drug abuse is on the rise and becoming a public health concern. Nigeria, which is the most populous country in Africa, has developed a reputation as a center for drug trafficking and usage mostly among the youths. The first large scale, nationwide national drug use survey in Nigeria showed that one in seven persons (aged 15-64years) had used a drug in the past year, thereby rendering drug abuse among youths as a

cause of many criminal offences such as theft, burglary, sex work and shoplifting. In hospital-based studies, a pattern of psychiatric morbidity implicating cannabis (Indian hemp) abuse demonstrated by researchers of whom were psychiatrics. What the researchers found was that high proportions of patients admitted into hospitals because of acute psychotic reactions had histories of cannabis abuse. Most of these patients were young students, unemployed urban residents, and low - skilled workers [5] Drug usage among young people has been linked to a number of things. Peer influence has been shown to be a crucial element in the start and continuation of drug misuse behaviors. Young people are more prone to consume drugs when they are around peers who support and participate in such activities [6] Teenage drug usage has serious ramifications and effects on both the person and society. Drug misuse can have negative effects on one's physical health, including an increased chance of overdose, cardiovascular difficulties, respiratory problems, and infectious infections like HIV/AIDS. Drug misuse can psychologically result in the emergence of mental health conditions such depression, anxiety, and psychosis, harming cognition and general wellbeing [7] The menace of "area boys" across the towns and cities, problems of armed robbery, delinquency among students in institutions of learning, especially students of higher learning, indiscriminate violence in social amusement parks, disloyalty to age mates, elders, parent and even constituted authority by breaching its laws and orders, are some of the social vices which may be related to drug misuse/abuse. Ignorance among the populace and lack of awareness on the use of various drugs and their effects on the body give room for self - medication that may lead to drug abuse [8] Nigeria is an enormously diverse country with well over 400 ethnicities and many religious groups. Drug abuse is therefore viewed within a broader context in Nigeria, due to its multicultural nature. For instance, most societies do not consider the use of drugs which do not produce behavioral changes as drug abuse. Despite the multicultural nature of the Nigerian population, there is a consistent outcry from the public, the police, preachers, the health practitioners, the teachers, and parents on the growing concern of drug abuse in the country [9]. There is also the proliferation of patient medicine stores where any type of drugs can be bought whether such drugs are supposed to be over the counter drugs or prescription types, and at times those dispensing the drugs lack necessary training and experience in line with pharmaceutical security risks to the health of the populace through the possibility of drug misuse and abuse [10].

Peer pressure is also considered to be one of the major contributing factors to a country's drug problems. Both inside and outside of the school, students may be seen wandering around in groups. Their ambition is usually focused on how to break the rules at home and at school, and the most accessible way to do this is by using drugs, which provide them with additional cover to accomplish their goals. Indiscriminate drug usage is caused by these and numerous more variables. Therefore, it is necessary to make advice and counseling in schools mandatory [11]. Drug addicts are more easily identified. Television, news stories, or simply strolling through the streets of any big city or town can reinforce images of young males, particularly students, squatting and injecting heroin, sniffing cocaine, or being intoxicated beneath arches. Similar to how those with drug and alcohol-related issues have health consequences, those who are infected will eventually destroy and stop them from accomplishing their objectives, which will result in death. Drug misuse is a common problem in Nigeria today, and it is growing at an alarming rate, necessitating an immediate solution. Students who use drugs have been connected to numerous crises in higher education, including rampant activities at these institutions [12]. These problems which cuts across age groups 10 - 40 and that mostly the youth especially students are involved since the youth are the future leaders, they will replace the older one and whatever the characteristics they develop now will manifest in the future.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

The research design adopted in this study was the cross-sectional survey method aimed at finding out to what extent undergraduates abuse drugs. The factor associated, the effect it has on them and how to prevent such occurrence. The target population for this study will be undergraduates in Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria.

Area of Study

This study was carried out in Imo State, which is situated in the southeastern region of Nigeria. The state is situated in the southeastern vegetation belt of the country and lies between latitude 4^0 45'N and 7^0 15' N and longitude 6^0 50'E and 7^0 25' E.

Population of Study

The populations of the study cover all the undergraduates' student of FUTO. Students of the ten schools in the main campus with a population of 400 students out of which 64% were male and 36% female purposely sampled for the research.

Ethical consideration

A letter of Consent was obtained from the Department of Public Health, Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO) and was presented to the President of each student association in each school.

The Letter of Consent also ensured that questions and responses gotten from the participants would be confidential and it was only used for the purpose of the research

Sampling Method

Considering the large size of the population, 8 schools were selected out of 10 schools to represent the study population. Out of these schools, 50 students were selected at random from each school as respondents.

By and large, a non-probability sampling (using voluntary response sampling) technique procedure was used. This allowed us to estimate accurately the extent to which our sample is representative of the population by using the statistical inference.

The steps we took in order to get the sample of the total students in Federal University of Technology, Owerri, were as follows:

1. 8 schools out of the 10 schools in FUTO were purposely selected.

2. Each school was visited every week and average of 50 students were met for my sample.

3. The students were either in their lecture halls, practical labs or hostels.

4. Got 50 undergraduates from each school which makes it total number of 400 students to volunteer to answer my questionnaire.

5. Compiled these results to get my sample size.

Validity of the instrument

The questionnaire are the instrument of data collection, was developed by the researcher and addressed to the students and submitted to the project supervisor for proper scrutiny in order to ensure that the questionnaires meet the objective. Before the distribution of questionnaires for reliability testing, the objectives and questionnaire were accessed by three lecturers in public health department and corrections was made.

Reliability of Instrument

Reliability of the instrument was determined using test-to-retest method. 50 copies of the questionnaire was given to some respondents at different schools in Federal university of Technology, Owerri, Imo state.

Method of Data Collection

The major instrument used in the data collection for this study was the questionnaire In addition, a set of personal interview was designed for the interviewers in the areas responses in the questionnaires were insufficient to arrive at conclusions. The questionnaire was designed on the basis of our stated objectives in chapter one. The questions which is of two type: open ended and multiple choice. A sample of the questionnaire was reproduced in the appendix.

The questionnaire was written both in Google forms and hardcopy paper which was distributed to undergraduates in different schools. I used four volunteers in the distribution of the questionnaire both online and offline.

Statistical analysis

Qualitative and quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The quantitative data was from the questionnaire. The questionnaires were sorted out and checked for consistencies using an online editor tool. Also, online questionnaires were created for data entry using Google forms and responses stored on Google sheet.

The response in Google sheets was transferred to Microsoft Excel software package, version 2019 which was used to analyze the data from gotten from Google forms. Frequencies and percentages were used to facilitate the understanding of the data. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic theme. Quantitative data were presented using tables and graphs while quantitative data was presented in narrative form.

Results

From the findings, 64% of the total respondents were males while the remaining 36% comprises of females. The findings also revealed that the age group 21 – 25 years had the highest proportion of respondents (193; 48.3%) while there were 104 (26%) students who were still adolescents among the respondents (Table 4.1). 375 (93.7%) of the total respondents reported to be affiliated with the Christianity religion while 21 of them (5.3%) were Islam (Table 4.1). The ethnic distributions of the respondents showed that majority of the respondents (367; 91.7%) were from the Igbo tribe; 18 (4.5%) women were Yoruba's and 8 (2.0%) were Hausa's/Fulani's (Table 4.1). About half of the total number of students (152, 38%) reported that they were 100 level students (year one) and only 34 students (8.6%) reported that they were in their final years (500 level). 71 (17.8%) of the total number of students were from the School of Health Technology (SOHT) followed by 56 (14%) of the total respondents who indicated that they were from the School of Agriculture and Agricultural Technology (SAAT) as shown below:

Gender distribution of the respondents

Variable	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	256	64
Female	144	36

Table 4.1: Distribution of socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

This table shows socio-demographic distribution of the respondents. There were total of 400 respondents, 144 females which makes 36% of the respondents and 256 males which make 54% of the respondents.
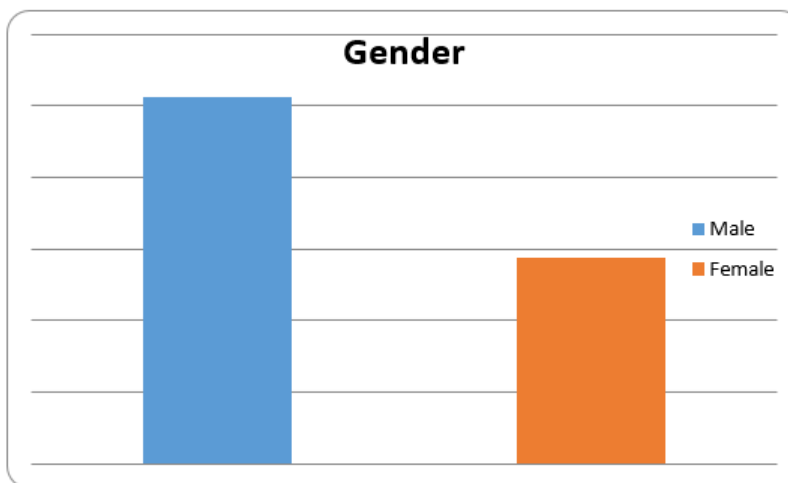

Figure 1: Graphical representation of the Gender distribution of the respondents

Variable	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)
Age		
15-20	104	26
21-25	193	48.3
26-30	85	21.3
31-35	18	4.4

Table 4.1.2 Age Distribution of Respondents

This table shows the age distribution of the respondents. They are aged between (15-35) years with (15-20) years which account to 26% of the respondents, (21-25) years which accounts to 48.3% of the respondents, (26-30) years which account to 21.3% of the respondents and (31-35) years which accounts to 4.4% of the respondents of which (21-25) years has the most
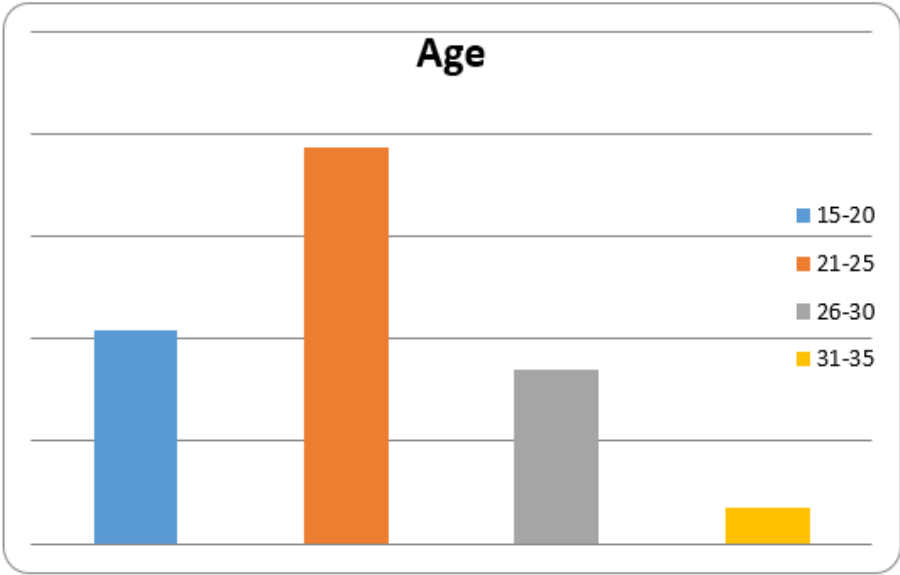
percentage.

Figure 2: Graphical representation of the Age distribution of the respondents

Variable	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)
Religion		
Christianity	375	93.7
Islam	21	5.3
Traditional	4	1.0
Others	-	-

Table 4.1.3 Religious Distribution of Respondents

This table shows the religion of the respondents with N = 375 (N being the frequency) accounts to 93.7% of the respondents being Christians, N= 21 which accounts to 5.3% of the respondents who are Muslim. Hence Christianity has the highest percentage.

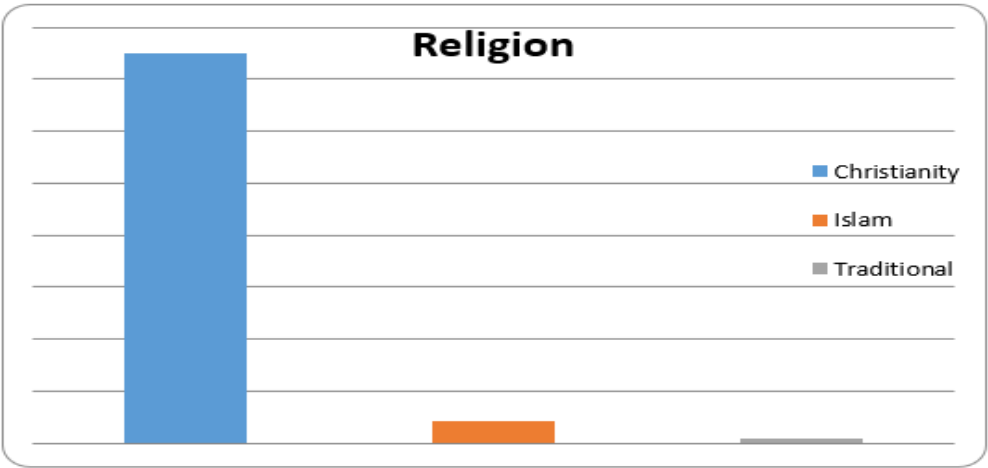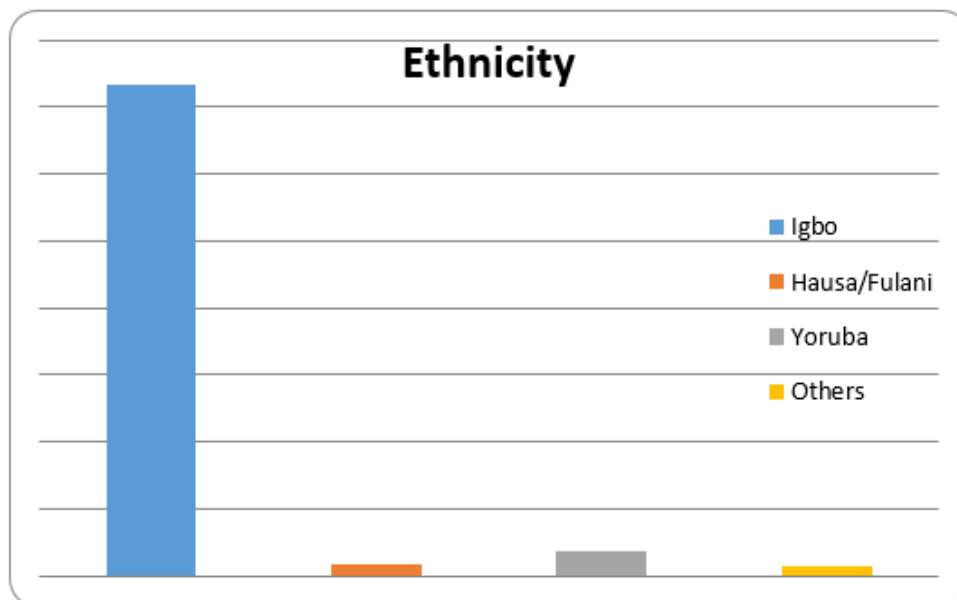**Figure 3:** Graphical representation of the Religious distribution of the respondents

Variable	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)
Ethnicity		
Igbo	367	91.7
Hausa/Fulani	8	2.0
Yoruba	18	4.5
Others	7	1.8

**Table 4.1.4** Ethinicity Distribution of the Respondents

This table shows the ethnic distribution of the respondents with Igbo 91.7% and a frequency of 367 respondents, while the Hausa/Fulani has a percentage of 2.0% and a frequency of 8 respondents, and Yoruba 4.5% with a frequency of 18 respondents.

Figure 4: Graphical representation of the Ethnicity distribution of the respondents

Variable	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)
Students Level		
100 level	152	38
200 level	98	24.5
300 level	65	16.3
400 level	51	12.8
500 level	34	8.6

Table 4.1.5 Students Level Distribution of the Respondents

This table shows the level of each respondents, 38% of the respondents are 100 level students, 24.5% of the respondents are 200 level students, 16.3% of the respondents are 300 level students, while 12.8% are 400 level students and 8.6% are 500 level students. From the table 100 level students have the highest frequency, (N = 152).
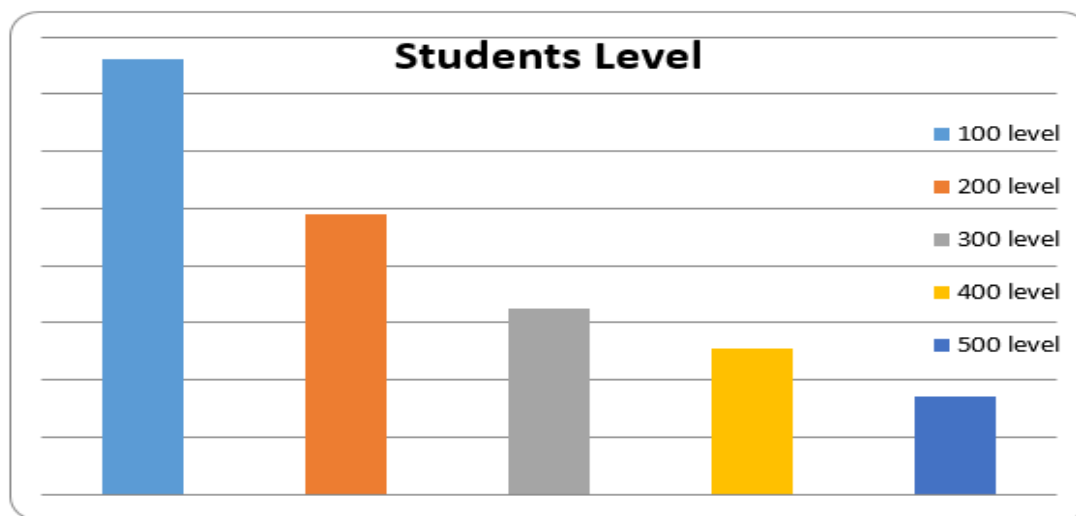
Figure 5: Graphical representation of the Students Level distribution of the respondents

Variable	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)
Students Faculty		
SOHT	71	17.8
SOBS	44	11
SEET	45	11.3
SOES	42	10.5
SAAT	56	14
SCIT	39	9.7
SOPS	44	11
SMAT	59	14.7

Table 4.1.6 Students Faculty Distribution and Respondents

This table shows the faculty of the respondents with majority from the School of Health Technology (SOHT) with a frequency of 71 and a percentage of 17.8% followed by a total of 56 respondents that are from the School of Agriculture and Agricultural Technology (SAAT) with a Percentage of 14%.
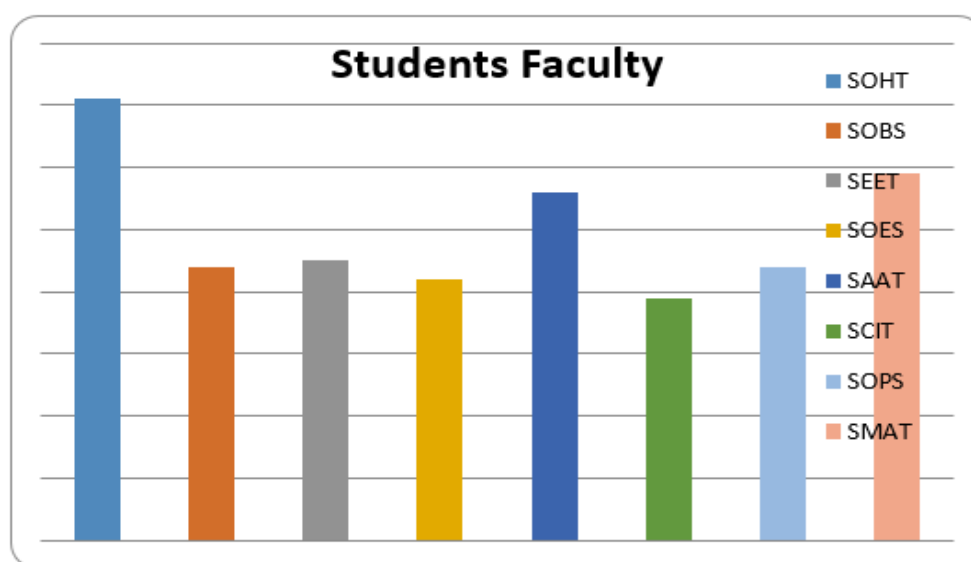
Figure 6: Graphical representation of the Students Faculty distribution of the respondents

Variable	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)	Chi-Square/P-value
Poor parenting and social vices in the family contributes to the use of illegal drugs by the students			**233.56 (0.001)**
Strongly agree	311	77.7	
Agree	12	3	
Undecided	3	0.8	
Disagree	26	6.5	
Strongly disagree	48	12	

Table 4.2.1: Factors that predisposes the undergraduates to drug abuse

Variable	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)	Chi-Square/P-value
Availability of drug peddlers and selling shops within the university have promoted drug abuse in FUTO			**212.7 (0.001)**
Strongly agree	289	72.3	
Agree	33	8.3	
Undecided	8	2	
Disagree	54	13.5	
Strongly disagree	16	4	

Table 4.2.3

Variable	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)	Chi-Square/P-value
Bad peer groups have contributed to the use of illegal drugs in FUTO			**337.9 (0.001)**
Strongly agree	378	94.5	
Agree	11	2.8	
Undecided	-	2	
Disagree	-	-	
Strongly disagree	1	0.2	

Table 4.2.4

Variable	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)	Chi-Square/P-value
Community members participate also in smuggling drugs to the students			**67.4 (0.042)**
Strongly agree	198	49.5	
Agree	57	14.3	
Undecided	12	3	
Disagree	50	12.5	
Strongly disagree	83	20.7	

Table 4.2.5

Variable	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)	Chi-Square/P-value
Poor management and administration of the University encourages drug abuse in FUTO			**84.5 (0.056)**
Strongly agree	202	50.5	
Agree	106	26.5	
Undecided	4	1	
Disagree	43	10.8	
Strongly disagree	45	11.2	

Table 4.3: Reasons for drug abuse

The tables above show the factors that predispose the undergraduates to drug abuse. From the tables, it was seen that from the responses of respondents, majority of the respondents strongly agreed that poor parenting and social vices in the family contributes to the use of illegal drugs among undergraduates in the Federal University of Technology, Owerri. 72.3% of the respondents also strongly agreed that availability of drug peddlers and selling shops within the university have promoted drug abuse in FUTO. 378 respondents representing 94.5 percent indicated that bad peer groups have contributed to the use of illegal drugs in FUTO. 83 respondents representing 20.7 percent of the total respondents strongly disagreed that community members participate in smuggling drugs to the students. The relationships were statistically significant.

Reasons	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)	Chi-Square/P-value
Curiosity	198	49.5	**122.7 (0.003)**
To feel good	157	39.3	
Improve my memory before exams	62	15.5	
Sex performance	206	51.5	
To gain confidence	33	8.3	
To relax	49	12.3	
To get away from worries	41	10.3	

Table 4.4.1: Effect of drug abuse on academic performance

Variable	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)	Chi-Square/P-value
Drugs are the major contributors of absenteeism from lectures			**134.8 (0.003)**
Strongly agree	342	85.5	
Agree	21	5.3	
Undecided	4	1	
Disagree	13	3.3	
Strongly disagree	20	5	

Table 4.4.2

Variable	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)	Chi-Square/P-value
Drugs are the major contributors of School dropout			**671.6 (0.001)**
Strongly agree	392	98	
Agree	8	2	
Undecided	-	-	
Disagree	-	-	
Strongly disagree	-	-	

Table 4.4.3

Variable	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)	Chi-Square/P-value
Drugs are the major contributors of poor academic performance			**84.5 (0.042)**
Strongly agree	268	67	
Agree	44	11	
Undecided	14	3.5	
Disagree	36	9	
Strongly disagree	38	9.5	

Table 4.4.4

Variable	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)	Chi-Square/P-value
Drugs are the major contributors of violence, rampages and occultisms in the university			**198.5 (0.001)**
Strongly agree	391	97.8	
Agree	7	1.8	
Undecided	-	-	
Disagree	2	0.4	
Strongly disagree	-	-	

From table 3 to table 4.4.4 shows that undergraduates take substance of abuse for several reasons. In the present study, majority of the substance abusers take these substances just to feel good, other reasons are curiosity, to improve memory before exams, to last longer in bed, to gain confidence, to relax and lastly to get away with worries. The main reasons why the students took drugs were mainly to keep them awake and alert, to read and pass their examinations, to make them feel happy/high, to get them out of depression, to cope with life problems and to reduce stress, which are problems of adolescents (NIDA 2003), the result of this present study corroborates the reports of Ajibola et al 2018 which identify improving intellectual/improve memory as the major reason undergraduates engage in substance abuse. Idris & Sambo, 2009, also reported that experimentation/curiosity is one of the major reasons for substance abuse among undergraduates in Zaria, Kaduna State. However, there is no documented literature to show positive correlation between substance abuse and improved academic performance.

Drugs	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)
Alcohol	241	60.3
Tramadol	157	39.3
Codeine	143	35.8
Shunk	110	27.5
Shisha	97	24.3
Marijuana	49	12.3
Palm wine mixture	41	10.3
Herbal bitters	88	22
Coffee	37	9.3
Cigarette	58	14.5
Elele	23	5.8
Eluku	45	11.3
Larinka	22	5.5
Soakaway fumes	14	3.5
Emzor tablet	29	7.3
Skushi	46	11.5
Cocoa mixture	32	8
Sokudale	11	2.8
Pawpaw leaf	37	9.3

Table 4.5: Common Drugs Abused

Alcohol (60.3%), tramadol (39.3%), codeine (35.8%), were the most commonly abused substances. Other substances of abuse as revealed by this study are skushi, elele, eluku, shisha, coffee, pawpaw leaf, sokudale, palm wine mixture, emzor tablet and cocoa mixture. This is consistent with the reports of National bureau of statistics 2018, Adeyemo et al (2016) and Advisory council on the misuse of drugs 2006.

Majority of the respondents who abused drugs picked up the habit when they get to the university. Further analysis also revealed that there is an association ($\chi2 = 84.5$, P-value > 0.01) between the university environment and drug abuse. It is sad that our university which is supposed to be the breeding ground for academic and moral excellence is now a fertile land for drug abuse. The relationship between the university environment and drug abuse could be attributed to its proximity to areas like eziobodo and umuchima where substances are heavily abused by the residents.

Discussion

The study found out that majority of the student were aware about alcohol, tramadol, marijuana, codeine. This was due to the drugs being easily available and commonly used.

Alcohol, codeine and tramadol were revealed as the most commonly used drugs by the drug users [13].

According to the report, students primarily obtain drugs from local sellers when they are on campus. However, the students were shown to be drug carriers [14,15,16]. Drug misuse among students most frequently occurs in bushes, remote areas, the school grounds, dorms, and at nighttime get-togethers with friends.

The goal of the study was to identify the characteristics that influence drug use among adolescents. The respondent indicated the elements that contribute to drug use. The study identifies these important factors [17,18]. First of all, the majority of student drug misuse was readily accessible. such as marijuana, codeine, alcohol, and tramadol.

Secondly, these drugs are affordable. Thirdly, the use of drugs can be due to the personality and social factors of respondents agreed that the need to experiment peer pressure, stress, lack of self control, frustration with education are all contributing factors [20].

Conclusion

The study area's respondents have a high prevalence of substance misuse. The substances that these undergraduates most frequently abuse are alcohol, marijuana (weed), cigarettes, skushi, tramadol, shisha, pawpaw leaf, and herbal bitters such sabi, alomo bitter, baby oku, koboko, yahoo, daberu, and bajinatu. This investigation revealed several newly introduced substances of abuse, including palm wine mixture, emzor pill, cocoa combination, papideen, sokudale, eluku, larinka, kolo, and elele. According to the respondents, people abuse these substances for a variety of reasons, including feeling good (euphoric), being curious, improving memory before tests, enhancing sex performance, gaining confidence, relaxing, and, finally, escaping troubles.

It is also concluded that poor parenting, the school environment, community members and bad peer group are the predisposing factors of substance abuse identified by this study.

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DOI:10.31579/2690-4861/854

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