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Impact of drug abuse on mental health of secondary school students in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of drug abuse on the mental health of secondary school students in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State. The study utilized a descriptive survey research design. Simple random sampling was used to select six (6) public secondary schools in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State. Data was collected using a questionnaire tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis involved mean, standard deviation, and t-test statistics at a 0.05 significance level. The study examines prevalent types of drugs among secondary school students, the impact of drug abuse on mental health, and gender differences in drug abuse among secondary school students. Findings indicate that the study identified several prevalent types of drug abuse among secondary school students in Abakaliki. The study revealed that a significant relationship exists between drug abuse and the mental health of secondary school students in Abakaliki. The study further revealed that male students engage in drug abuse more than female students in secondary school in Abakaliki. The study, therefore, recommended that adequate and proper sensitization programs should be put in place to educate the students on the dangers of drug abuse and its effects on the socio-economic development of society. This can be done with the help of religious organizations, civil societies, as well as government agencies. Deliberate efforts should be made to encourage family life and proper parental guidance in society.

Keywords: Drug Abuse, Mental Health, Secondary School Students, Survey Design.

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1. Introduction

Drugs are substances that affect the functioning of the body or mind when consumed. For example, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), "Drugs, substances, and certain chemicals used to make drugs are classified into five (5) distinct categories or schedules depending upon the drugs' acceptable medical use and the drug abuse or dependency potential." [1] The World Health Organization (WHO) defines drugs as "any substance or product that is used or intended to be used to modify or explore physiological systems or pathological states for the benefit of the recipient" and as "an active substance that interacts with the body ... [having] ... a curative or preventive effect ... prolong[ing] ... life span and improv[ing] its quality"[2].

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) described drugs as "chemical substances that affect the central nervous system, altering brain function and leading to changes in perception, mood, consciousness, cognition, and behavior" [3]. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) stated that "drug is any chemical substance that produces a psychoactive effect, altering perception, mood, consciousness, cognition, or behavior" [4].

Drug abuse refers to the habitual misuse of any substance, legal or illegal, for the purpose of altering one's mood or state of consciousness. This behavior often leads to negative consequences, both physically and mentally, impacting various aspects of an individual's life.

A study by Smith and Johnson [5] highlighted the escalating rates of drug abuse among teenagers, attributing it to social and peer influences coupled with easy access to drugs. This underscores the importance of preventive measures and early intervention strategies. According to a report published by the National Institute on Drug Abuse [6], it emphasized the role of genetic predisposition in susceptibility to drug addiction. This finding underscores the need for personalized approaches in addiction treatment and intervention programs.

A comprehensive review by Ferrer-Pérez et al. [7] explored the neurobiological mechanisms underlying drug addiction, shedding light on how chronic drug use rewires the brain's reward circuitry, leading to compulsive drug-seeking behavior and loss of control. There was a growing concern over the emergence of synthetic drugs and designer substances [7]. These substances pose unique challenges due to their constantly evolving chemical compositions, making regulation and detection difficult. Collectively, these insights from recent years highlight the multifaceted nature of drug abuse, encompassing social, genetic, neurobiological, and regulatory factors. Addressing this complex issue requires a holistic approach that integrates prevention, treatment, and policy interventions.

One of the signs and symptoms of drug abuse persists in the use of pills despite experiencing a terrible series of the course of or after use. Often, a man or woman will blame other people or circumstances for his or her problems rather than realizing that the difficulties result from drug use. People with this illness may also believe that they drink normally or that "everyone takes drugs." These false beliefs are referred to as denial, and denial is part of the illness. Drug abuse can also manifest through various signs and symptoms. According to a study by Bashir et al. [8], common indicators include changes in behavior such as increased secrecy, sudden mood swings, and social withdrawal. Physical signs like dilated pupils, slurred speech, and impaired coordination may also be present [9].

Furthermore, individuals struggling with drug abuse may neglect responsibilities at work, school, or home and show a decline in hygiene and grooming habits [10]. These signs collectively suggest a need for intervention and support to address the underlying issue. In addition to behavioral and physical changes, signs and symptoms of drug abuse can vary depending on the type of substance being abused. For instance, stimulant abuse, like cocaine or methamphetamine, can result in increased energy, insomnia, and erratic behavior [11]. Conversely, opioid abuse may lead to constricted pupils, drowsiness, and slowed breathing [12].

Moreover, frequent drug abuse can cause tolerance and dependence, leading to withdrawal symptoms when the substance is not used. These withdrawal symptoms can range from mild discomfort to severe reactions, depending on the substance and the individual's level of dependence [10]. It's essential to recognize these signs promptly to facilitate early intervention and prevent further harm. Recognizing the symptoms is crucial for early intervention and treatment of drug abuse. Seeking help from healthcare professionals or support groups can provide the necessary assistance and resources for individuals struggling with drug addiction. Mental health refers to a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It encompasses how men and women think, feel, and behave, as well as how they cope with stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is essential for overall health and quality of life, as it influences how individuals deal with life's challenges, shape relationships, and make decisions. Mental health is "a state of well-being in which each individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the everyday stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to his or her community." This definition emphasizes not just the absence of mental illness but also the presence of positive attributes such as resilience and the ability to thrive [13].

Drug abuse among secondary school students can have profound effects on their intellectual health. According to Lander et al. [14], extended substance use throughout formative years can lead to an elevated danger of psychiatric disorders such as depression and anxiety. Additionally, Tambari et al. [15] highlight that drug abuse can impair cognitive functions and academic performance, contributing to feelings of low self-esteem and inadequacy among students. Furthermore, substance abuse can disrupt normal brain development, potentially leading to long-term psychological consequences [16]. Therefore, addressing drug abuse among secondary school students is essential not only for their academic success but also for their overall mental well-being. Drug abuse among secondary school students is a growing concern worldwide, as it has detrimental effects on their mental health. The prevalence of drug abuse on the mental health of secondary school students has been documented in various studies, highlighting the negative impacts on their cognitive abilities, emotional well-being, and behavioral issues. Several factors contribute to drug abuse among secondary school students, including peer pressure, family dynamics, societal influences, and individual vulnerabilities. Adolescence is a critical period of development marked

by significant physical, emotional, and psychological changes, making teenagers more susceptible to the allure of drugs as a coping mechanism for stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues. The use of drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, ecstasy, and prescription medications has been associated with a range of mental health functions, leading to poor academic performance, social difficulties, and risky behaviors. Research studies have shown a clear link between drug abuse and mental health problems among secondary school students. For example, a study by Ford [17] found that adolescents who reported using drugs were more likely to exhibit symptoms of depression and anxiety compared to non-users. Other studies reported that substance use in adolescence was associated with an increased risk of developing mental health disorders later in life [18-20]. Furthermore, the impact of drug abuse on the mental health of secondary school students extends beyond individual well-being to academic achievement and societal outcomes. Students who abuse drugs are more likely to experience academic difficulties, drop out of school, engage in criminal activities, and have a higher risk of developing addiction problems in adulthood.

In conclusion, the influence of drug abuse on the mental health of secondary school students is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a comprehensive approach involving preventive measures, early intervention strategies, and access to mental health services. It is imperative for educators, parents, and policymakers to address the underlying causes of drug abuse among adolescents and provide support and resources for those struggling with mental health issues. By promoting positive coping mechanisms, healthy lifestyles, and positive social support networks, we can enhance the mental well-being of secondary school students and promote their overall development and success. In addition to the direct effect on mental health, drug abuse among secondary school students can exacerbate present social and emotional challenges. Teens who have interaction in substance abuse are extra probably to trip strained relationships with peers and family members, leading to feelings of isolation and loneliness [21]. Moreover, drug abuse can contribute to impulsive conduct and poor decision-making, increasing the danger of attractiveness in risky things to do or criminal behavior [22]. These findings underscore the importance of early intervention and comprehensive guidance systems to address the complex interplay between substance abuse and mental fitness amongst secondary school students.

In recent years, there have been reports of the occurrence of drug abuse among secondary school students, as evidenced by numerous studies [23-28]. While the immediate consequences of drug abuse are widely recognized, such as academic decline, behavioral issues, and social problems, there remains a pressing need to discover its intricate relationship with the mental health of these students. Despite efforts to tackle drug abuse through education, prevention programs, and policy initiatives, the effect on mental health outcomes, such as depression, anxiety, psychosis, and suicidal ideation, remains inadequately understood. This knowledge gap is particularly concerning given the potential long-term consequences on the overall well-being and prospects of secondary school students. Therefore, this study will address the impact of drug abuse on the mental health of secondary school students, seeking to identify risk factors, protective factors, and effective interventions to mitigate detrimental outcomes and promote mental well-being in this vulnerable population. The objectives of this study include ascertaining the prevalent types of drug abuse among secondary school students in Abakaliki; determining the impacts of drug abuse on the mental health of secondary school students; and examining the gender differences in the impact of drug abuse on the mental health of secondary school students in Abakaliki.

2. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study is designed to determine the impact of drug abuse on the mental health of secondary school students in Abakaliki. For well-detailed analyses, the study used a quantitative approach in gathering objective opinions of the respondents. The study was carried out in Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, found in the Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The residents are primarily of the Igbo tribe of Nigeria and boast a population of 978,675 inhabitants. Christianity is the widely practiced religion, with Igbo as the widely spoken language.

In this study, a simple random sampling technique was adopted. This is because it gave everyone an equal opportunity to be selected. First, the eighteen (18) public secondary schools in Abakaliki LGA, namely: Abakaliki High School, Abakaliki; Urban Secondary School, Abakaliki; Presco Secondary School, Abakaliki; Government Technical College, Abakaliki; Government Secondary School, Nkwagu; Girls' Secondary School, Azuiyiokwu; Comprehensive Secondary School, Abakaliki; Izzi Secondary School, Abakaliki; Army Day Secondary School, Nkwagu; Abakaliki Day Secondary School; Urban Girls' Secondary School, Abakaliki; St. Patrick's Secondary School, Abakaliki; Onuenyim Community Secondary School, Abakaliki; Amike Aba Community Secondary School, Abakaliki; Ezza Road Secondary School, Abakaliki; IzziUnuhu Community Secondary School, Abakaliki; Ndiagu Community Secondary School, Abakaliki; and Ndieze Secondary School, Abakaliki were listed in alphabetical order, and a simple random sampling technique was used to select six public secondary schools from the sampling frame. Secondly, from the six (6) public secondary schools selected, the sample size, which is three hundred and eighty-four (384), was divided equally among the six (6) public secondary schools using a simple random sampling technique, with each selected public secondary school having sixty-four (64) sample size representations. We used a questionnaire containing items that evaluate the impact of drug abuse on the mental health of secondary school students in Abakaliki for data collection. For effective and reliable information, the instrument for data collection will be a well-structured questionnaire designed to gather information for the study.

Validity expresses the degree to which a measurement measures what it purports to measure. The validity test is categorized into two broad components, namely, internal and external validity. Internal validity refers to how accurately the measures obtained from the research quantify what they were designed to measure, whereas external validity refers to how accurately the measures obtained from the study sample describe the reference population from which the study sample was drawn.

The questionnaire was validated using face validity. This is a measure where people who understand your topic go through your questionnaire and check if your questionnaire has effectively captured the topic under investigation. Additionally, experts in questionnaire construction review your questionnaire for double, confusing, and misleading questions. For this purpose, to ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was validated by lecturers in the Guidance and Counselling Department of Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Nigeria.

To measure the reliability of the questionnaire, test-retest reliability was used. Test-retest reliability is a measure of consistency between two measurements (tests) of the same construct administered to the same sample at two different points in time. If the observations have not changed substantially between the two tests, then the measure is reliable. The correlation in observations between the two tests is an estimate of test-retest reliability. Thirty copies of the questionnaire were administered to the same thirty sample respondents two consecutive times, and the relative index yielded 0.78. Data collected were analyzed using average, standard deviation, and inferential statistics. The data were processed with version 25 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and analyzed using descriptive statistics. However, the mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected to answer the research questions, while the t-test was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Any item in the instrument with a mean rating of 2.50 and over was considered Agreed, while any item with a mean rating of 2.49 and below was considered not Agreed.

3. Results

3.1. Prevalent Types of Drug Abuse among Secondary School Students in Abakaliki

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation of the prevalent types of drug abuse among secondary school students in Abakaliki. Data in Table 1 revealed that all 8 items had their mean ratings, ranging from 2.57 to 3.25, and were above the cut-off point of 2.50. This indicated that the respondents agreed on all the prevalent types of drug abuse among secondary school students in the area. The standard deviation of all the items ranged from 0.54 to 0.81, which showed that the respondents were not too far from the mean and opinion of one another in their responses regarding the prevalent types of drug abuse among secondary school students in the area.

Table 1.
Mean and standard deviation on the prevalent types of drug abuse among secondary school students in Abakaliki.

S/N	Item Statement	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remark
1	Alcohol is the most abused substance among teenagers, leading to risky behavior.	2.75	0.60	Agreed
2	Cannabis is the most widely used illicit drug among young adults, due to its psychoactive effects	2.57	0.54	Agreed
3	Prescription painkillers, such as codeine and tramadol, are frequently abused to get high or self-medicate.	2.88	0.83	Agreed
4	Inhalants, such as glue and solvents, are commonly abused due to their easy accessibility.	2.65	0.58	Agreed
5	Secondary school students often abuse over-the-counter medications.	2.62	0.56	Agreed
6	Illicit drugs like heroin and cocaine are also abused by some secondary school students.	3.11	0.82	Agreed
7	School students may abuse drugs to cope with academic pressure	3.17	0.77	Agreed
8	The use of drugs by secondary school students can also have long-term effects on their brains.	3.25	0.81	Agreed

Note: SD = Standard Deviation of the respondents and $\overline{X}$ = Mean of the respondents.

3.2. Impacts of Abuse on the Mental Health of Secondary School Students in Abakaliki

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of the impacts of abuse on the mental health of secondary school students in Abakaliki. Data in Table 2 revealed that all 8 items had their mean ratings ranging from 2.53 to 3.27 and were above the cut-off point of 2.50. This indicated that the respondents agreed that drug abuse negatively impacts the mental health of secondary school students in the area. The standard deviation of all 8 items ranged from 0.50 to 0.85, which showed that the respondents were not too far from the mean and the opinions of one another in their responses regarding the impacts of abuse on the mental health of secondary school students in the area.

Table 2.
Mean and standard deviation on impacts of abuse on the mental health of secondary school students in Abakaliki.

S/N	Item Statement	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
1.	Drug abuse among secondary school students leads to increased stress, anxiety, and depression.	2.75	0.60	Agreed
2.	The use of drugs by secondary school students negatively affects their self-esteem and body image.	2.53	0.50	Agreed
3.	Drug abuse among secondary school students can lead to suicidal thoughts and attempts.	2.97	0.85	Agreed
4.	The mental health of secondary school students who abuse drugs is more likely to be affected by trauma.	2.60	0.49	Agreed
5.	Drug abuse among secondary school students can lead to social isolation.	2.62	0.57	Agreed
6	The use of drugs by secondary school students can impair cognitive function, leading to poor academic performance and decreased motivation.	3.20	0.83	Agreed
7	Drug abuse can lead to a lack of motivation among secondary school students.	3.16	0.76	Agreed
8	The use of drugs by secondary school students can lead to a sense of hopelessness.	3.27	0.82	Agreed

Note: SD = Standard Deviation of the respondents and $\bar{X}$ = Mean of the respondents.

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the impacts of abuse on the mental health of secondary school students in Abakaliki. Data for testing hypothesis 1 are presented in Table 3. Data in Table 3 revealed that all the items had their p-values ranging from 0.03 to 52 and were greater than the alpha-value of 0.05. This implied that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the impacts of abuse on the mental health of secondary school students in Abakaliki. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean responses of the two groups of respondents on the male and female students on the impacts of abuse on the mental health of secondary school students in Abakaliki was not rejected.

Table 3.
t-test analysis on the impact of abuse on the mental health of secondary school students in Abakaliki.

S/N	Items statement	$\bar{X}_m$	S_m	$\bar{X}_f$	S_f	Sig.	Rmk
1	Drug abuse among secondary school students leads to increased stress, anxiety, and depression.	2.60	0.49	2.71	0.53	0.47	NS
2	The use of drugs by secondary school students negatively affects their self-esteem and body image.	2.66	0.48	2.33	0.47	0.52	NS
3	Drug abuse among secondary school students can lead to suicidal thoughts and attempts.	2.91	0.74	3.00	0.89	0.06	NS
4	The mental health of secondary school students who abuse drugs is more likely to be affected by trauma.	2.61	0.75	2.59	0.49	0.30	NS
5	Drug abuse among secondary school students can lead to social isolation.	3.12	0.33	2.35	0.49	0.03	NS
6	The use of drugs by secondary school students can impair cognitive function, leading to poor academic performance and decreased motivation.	3.21	0.80	3.22	0.84	0.15	NS
7	Drug abuse can lead to a lack of motivation among secondary school students.	3.10	0.74	3.12	0.80	0.07	NS
8	The use of drugs by secondary school students can lead to a sense of hopelessness.	3.12	0.94	3.35	0.74	0.09	NS

Note: $\bar{X}_m$ = Mean of Male students, S_m = Standard deviation of male students, $\bar{X}_f$= Mean of female students, S_f= Standard deviation of female students, Sig = Significant value = P≥0.05, S = Significant, NS= Not significant and Rmk = Remark.

3.3. Gender Difference in Drug Abuse among Secondary School Students In Abakaliki

Table 4 presents the average and standard deviation of the gender differences in drug abuse among secondary school students in Abakaliki based on gender. Data in Table 4 revealed that all 8 items had their average mean ratings to be 3.04 for male students and 2.73 to 3.28 for female students, which were above the cut-off point of 2.50. This indicates that the mean responses, which are all different, especially that of males, are higher than those of females in all the responses. The results therefore suggest that male students engage in drug abuse more than female students in secondary schools in the area based on gender.

Table 4.
Mean and standard deviation on the gender difference in drug abuse among secondary school students in Abakaliki based on gender.

S/N	Items	Mean		Standard Deviation	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
1	Male secondary school students are more likely to engage in illicit drug use compared to their female counterparts.	3.54	3.00	0.49	0.03
2	Female students tend to use prescription drugs non-medically more often than males.	2.50	2.16	0.50	0.37
3	Peer influence plays a significant role in drug abuse among male students in secondary schools, often contributing to higher rates of experimentation.	3.14	2.84	0.81	0.90
4	Gender-specific stressors, such as body image concerns, can lead to different patterns of drug abuse among female secondary school students.	2.60	2.51	0.49	0.50
5	Male students in secondary schools often exhibit risk-taking behaviors linked to drug abuse more frequently than females.	3.27	2.01	0.44	0.08
6	Protective factors such as parental monitoring and family support have been shown to impact drug abuse.	2.92	3.16	0.85	0.69
7	Drug abuse among secondary school students has been linked to decreased attendance.	3.00	3.18	0.74	0.67
8	There is a strong correlation between drug abuse and poor concentration in class.	3.34	3.01	0.94	0.82
	Average Pooled Mean =	3.04	2.73		

4. Discussion

The responses of students on the prevalent types of drug abuse among secondary school students, the result indicated that all the 8 items were all rated above the cut–off point of 2.50; this showed that drug abuse impacts negatively on the mental health of secondary school students in Abakaliki. The standard deviation of all the items ranged from 0.54 to 0.81, which showed that the respondents were not too far from the mean and opinion of one another in their responses on the prevalent types of drug abuse among secondary school students in Abakaliki. The finding of the above study agrees with the view of Kurtzman et al. [29], who stated that inhalant abuse among adolescents is a significant concern, with substances like glue, thinner paint, and aerosol sprays being the most frequently abused. Additionally, Narayanan et al. [30] found that secondary school students often misuse stimulants like caffeine pills to stay awake longer for studying or to manage heavy academic workloads. Furthermore, LaBossier and Hadland [31] indicated that the misuse of stimulants among adolescents continues to be a concern, with some students resorting to illicit drugs like cocaine or methamphetamine for their stimulant effects, risking serious health consequences. The views and observations of the authors cited on the prevalent types of drug abuse among secondary school students helped to justify the findings of the study.

The opinion of students on the impacts of drug abuse impact on the mental health of secondary school students, the result indicated that all the 8 items were all rated above the cut – off point of 2.50; this indicated that the respondents agreed that drug abuse impacts negatively on the mental health of secondary school students in Abakaliki. The standard deviation of all 8 items ranged from 0.50 to 0.85, which showed that the respondents were not too far from the mean and opinion of one another in their responses on the impacts of abuse on the mental health of secondary school students in Abakaliki. The finding agreed with the observations of Belfiore et al. [32] and Ciucă Anghel et al. [33] who recorded that drug abuse causes mental illness, through alteration of brain chemistry and neural pathways, leading to changes in mood, cognition, and behavior and these alterations can manifest as symptoms of mental disorders or exacerbate existing psychiatric conditions. More so, the outcome is in line with the findings of Volkow and Blanco [34]; Richert et al. [19], and Mohamed et al. [35] who revealed that substance use disorders significantly increased the risk of developing various psychiatric conditions, including depression, anxiety, psychosis, and personality disorders. The views and observations of the authors cited on the impacts of drug abuse on the mental health of secondary school students has helped to validate the findings of the study in Table 2.

The opinion of students on the gender difference in drug abuse among secondary school students in Abakaliki. This indicates that the mean responses, which are all different, especially that of males, are higher than those of females in all the responses. The result, therefore, suggests that male students engage in drug abuse more than female students in secondary schools in Abakaliki, based on gender. The findings are also in line with Cosma et al. [36] and McHugh et al. [37], who highlighted that the growing trend of stimulant abuse among adolescents is greater in male students than in female students. Additionally, the result conforms with the outcome of Ghaderi et al. [38] and Umukoro et al. [39] who noted that drug abuse is more prevalent among males than females, and its common indicators include changes in behavior such as increased secrecy, sudden mood swings, and social withdrawal. The views and submissions of the authors cited on the gender differences in drug abuse among secondary school students in Abakaliki have helped to justify the findings of the study in Table 4.

5. Conclusion

From the research work, it is discernible that drug abuse impacts negatively on the mental health of secondary school students in Abakaliki. The burden of substance abuse is still high in our study population, and the prevalence was significantly higher among the male students who had not received any formal teachings on the subject. Secondary school students take drugs to help them stay awake at night to study for their examinations. The problem of drug addiction contributes to the disorganization of society and affects urbanization. Students who are unable to obtain the things of modern life have no alternative but to take drugs for solace. Students, most of the time, use drugs out of ignorance. Anti-sleep tablets, which are supposed to have the power to keep the students awake to enable them to study at night extensively, even when they are mentally or physically exhausted, invariably have serious side effects on the lives of those students. Drug use by students has hampered education and management in Nigerian secondary schools. In Nigeria and Ebonyi State specifically, recent statistics suggest that one in every three secondary school students consumes alcohol. Another 8.3% smoke cigarettes, while almost one in every ten (9.1%) chew miraa. About 3% smoke bhang and use hard drugs like heroin, cocaine, mandrax, and tranquilizers. Drugs have varied physiological effects. Some have adverse consequences, which include insomnia, prolonged loss of appetite, increased body temperature, greater risk of hepatitis and HIV/AIDS infection, death, various forms of cancer, ulcers, and brain damage. Other physiological effects of drugs include increased heartbeat, speeding in the peripheral circulation of blood, alteration of blood pressure, breathing rate, and other body functions. Drug abuse also affects the brain, resulting in a major decline in its functions. Drugs can affect a student's concentration and interest in school and extracurricular activities; this, therefore, leads to increased mental issues, absenteeism, and dropouts. It therefore becomes imperative to incorporate teachings on substance abuse into the national school curriculum for secondary school students.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been made:

i. Adequate and proper sensitization programs should be put in place to educate the students on the dangers of drug abuse and its effects on the socio-economic development of society. This can be done with the help of religious organizations, civil societies, as well as government agencies.
ii. Deliberate efforts should be put into encouraging family life and proper parental guidance in society.
iii. Civil society organizations and religious bodies should be encouraged to regularly inform parents of how important it is to inculcate the right moral and societal values into their children.
iv. The government should enforce legal sanctions on the abuse of drugs by members of society; sanctions such as jailing producers and retailers of such drugs should be strengthened and publicized to the general populace to deter engagement in such merchandise.
v. School administrators should set up a monitoring committee that should monitor the activities of the students in the school premises to ensure that drug abuse is checked.
vi. The Ministry of Education should include drug abuse as a subject in the curriculum. By doing so, sufficient awareness will be created among the students about the dangers of abusing drugs.
vii. Learning centers should be mandated to set up effective and functional guidance and counseling units that will take care of drug abuse cases among students. This can assist those already involved in drug abuse to give up the habit.
viii. In addition, rehabilitation centers should be established to help manage and rehabilitate individuals struggling with drug addiction and assist them in beginning a new and healthy lifestyle free from substance abuse.

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