PREVALENCE & RISK FACTORS FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN KAMPALA, UGANDA

Main Author: **Nwanna Uchechukwu Kevin***

Public Health Department: Victoria University Uganda

Sulayman Ademola. A

Department of Pharmacology, Habib Medical School, IUIU Uganda

Ilori Oluwole

Behavioural Science Department, Habib Medical School, IUIU Uganda

Afolabi Kamaldeen Kolawole

Public Health Department: Cavendish University Uganda

Grace Komuhangi

Nursing Department, Victoria University Uganda

Stephen Lawoko

Faculty of Health Sciences, Victoria University Uganda.

*Corresponding Author : Nwanna Uchechukwu Kevin, Public Health and Nursing

Department, Victoria University Uganda, Email: uchenwanna1@gmail.com,

uche4score@yahoo.com.

 Tel: +256778092462; +256755512527.

ABSTRACT

Background: Uganda has weak and poorly enforced laws on drugs and substance abuse, thereby providing a fertile ground for an increase in the availability and accessibility of substance abuse

Objectives: The general objective of this study is to determine the prevalence and factors influencing substance abuse among University students in Kampala Uganda.

Method: Descriptive cross-sectional study design with quantitative method was used. 399 Universities' students were sampled**.** Cluster and simple random strategies were used in sampling the respondents from the Universities. Descriptive, bivariate and multivariate analyses were done.

Results: The study revealed that 105 (30%) of 350 Students sampled practice substance abuse. The distributions of the substances abused were: Alcohol (35%), Tobacco (15%), Cigarette smoking (15%), Marijuana (15%), Khat chewing (15%), Heroine (5%) and Sihsa smoking (5%). The output revealed that: Age (X^2=8.728, P-value=0.026), religion (X^2=17.967, P-value=0.001) and employment status (X^2=8.236, P-value=0.041) were the social determinants associated with substance abused. However, students within 21-26 years (AOR =2.4), 15-20 years (AOR =1.3) and Students who are employed (AOR=3) were more likely to practice substance abuse. Students who practice Catholic (AOR =1.3,) and Islam religion (AOR =2) were less likely to practice substance abuse.

Conclusion: 3 out of every 10 students in Uganda practised substance abuse, the prevalence is averagely high. Attributes of social determinant have a strong relationship with substance abuse**.**

Keywords: Substance Abuse, Students, Risk Factors and Prevalence

INTRODUCTION

In Uganda, a study noted that among the youth, 19% of the secondary school students and about 35% of the students in tertiary institutions including the medical school smoked cigarettes (Lukwiya M, 2000). This was attributed to a lot of tobacco products being advertised in relation to style/fashion; and due to peer influence. The mean initiation age for smoking was 13.4 years with a range from 6 to 22 years in Jinja district (Mpabulungi and Muula, 2004). In Uganda, a country with more than 32 million people, substance abuse is so rampant it was observed that alcohol dependence is among the main causes of psychiatric morbidity (Ministry of Health in Uganda, 2005).

Statistics from Kiswa Primary Health Centre in Kampala indicate that 10% out of 17% of adult male patients aged between 35 to 44 years screened for alcohol-related problems had a higher possibility of being diagnosed with alcohol dependence (Kullgren, et al., 2009). Other studies also found a high rate of alcohol dependence among men and among older populations (Tumwesigye and Kasirye, 2005). In northern Uganda, among the internally displaced people due to war, alcohol dependence is known to be twice as prevalent among adult males (10%) as among women 5%; (Roberts et al., 2011).

Substance abuse has been one of the major problem and challenges faced by the students of the tertiary institution. A study in Kampala found that 22 percent of students used and abused drugs; alcohol, marijuana, and khat (mairungi) being the most abused in that order. The report further found that no school was free of drug abuse (UHRN, 2013). Youthful exorbitant tends to disturb tertiary institution students to the extent of taking drugs to be hyperactive in all their activities. Uganda not only lacks a clear national substance abuse policy but has weak and poorly enforced laws, thereby providing a fertile ground for an increase in the availability and accessibility of alcohol and other substance abuse (Uganda Youth Development Link, 2008). Hence, the need for this study to assess the factors influencing the prevalence of substance abuse among university student in Kampala Uganda.

METHODS

Research design

The study design used in this study was a descriptive cross-sectional study. A cross-sectional study investigation makes all her measurements on a single occasion and draws a sample from the population looking at the distributions of variables within that sample. It utilized only quantitative methods of inquiry. The quantitative

approach was used to capture data in quantifiable patterns.

Sample size

The sample size was derived from the study population which is 124,561 (Uganda Bureau of Statistics) being the population of University student in Kampala. The sample size was calculated using sloven's formula from a target group of 124,561 respondents who are the entire university students in Uganda, the sample size was 399.

Sampling strategies and Procedures

Cluster and simple Random sampling techniques were used in this study to gather the information from the respondents. The universities were clustered and a simple random technique was used to sample the respondents from the selected universities.

Data Collection Methods

- **Questionnaire**

Systematically designed questionnaires which had closed-ended questions printed on the piece of paper was used and answered by university students in Kampala. The printed questionnaires were given out to the selected respondents who could understand the questions clearly and also the research assistance interpreted the questionnaire to those who didn't understand the English language

- **Documentation and library**

The researcher also gathered information from other related literature from various documentations concerning factors influencing the prevalence of substance abuse among university student in Kampala Uganda.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was done using SPSS. The descriptive, bivariate and multivariate analysis were done to analyze the data. Descriptive was used to express the percentage of categorical data such as the prevalence of drug abused and as well the types of drug abused. The bivariate analysis was done to test the association of the variables against the dependent variable using chi-square and P-value as the determinants. Thereafter, the odds ratio was determined by the multivariate analysis at 95% confidence interval.

Ethical considerations

An approval letter to carry out the study was obtained from the Stafford University Uganda research and ethical committee. Thereafter; approvals were obtained from the selected University. In addition, the following guidelines were adopted and

emphasized in the questionnaire; the purpose of the study was explained to participants by means of the information sheet. The participants were assured of the strict confidentiality of any information they would provide. The entire participants were treated with dignity and respect. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to the participant by using codes for identification instead of their names. The participants were given the liberty to take part or not in the study and any attempts to opt out of this exercise will not stop them from receiving all services that they normally get.

RESULTS

350 responses out of 399 questionnaires distributed were retrieved making 87.7% response rate.

Alcohol 35(33%) is the substance with the highest number of abuse among the student, shisha 5(5%) and Heroine 5(5%) were the least substance abuse among the students. The distributions of the type of substance abuse among the students are Alcohol (35%), Tobacco (15%), Cigarette smoking (15%), Marijuana (15%), Khat chewing (15%), Heroine (5%) and Shisha smoking (5%).

The study found out that out of 350 students sampled, 105 practice substance abuse. The prevalence of substance abuse among the university student in Uganda is 30%.

Social determinants influencing substance abuse among university students in Kampala

Age (X^2=8.728, P-value=0.026), religion (X^2=17.967, P-value=0.001) and employment status (X^2=8.236, P-value=0.041) were the social determinants influencing the prevalence of substance abuse among university students in Kampala. Students within the age of 21-26 years (AOR =2.4, CI=25-1.11) and 15-20 years (AOR =1.3, CI=5.7-1.34) are more likely to practice substance abuse as well student between the age of 34-40 years (AOR =0.24, CI=0.75-0.15) are less likely to practice substance abuse. Students who practice Catholic (AOR =1.3, CI=3.2-1.11) and Islam religion (AOR =2, CI=10-1.34) are more likely to practice substance abuse as well student who are born again (AOR =0.45, CI=0.66-0.023) are less likely to

practice substance abuse. Students who are employed (AOR=3, CI=15-1.34) are more likely to practice substance abuse while those who self-employed (AOR=0.445, CI=0.53-0.11) are less likely to practice drug abuse.

Table1: Demographic data of the respondents

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age group	15-20	100	29
	21-26	100	29
	27-33	80	23
	34-40	70	19
Marital status	Single	215	61.4
	Married	100	28.6
	Divorced	35	10
Religion	Muslim	99	28.3
	Protestant	110	31.4
	Catholics	92	26.3
	Born again	45	12.9
	Others	4	1.1

Table 2: Type of substance abuse among the university students in Kampala Uganda

Substance Abused	Frequency	Percentage
Alcohol	35	33
Tobacco	15	14.3
Cigarette smoking	15	14.3
Marijuana	15	14.3
Khat chewing	15	14.3
Heroine Cocaine	5	5
Shisha smokers	5	5
Total	105	100

Table 3: The Prevalence of substance abuse among universities students

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Substance abuse among the university student	Yes	105	30.0
	No	245	70.0

Variable	Categories	Yes	No	X^2	P-value	Adjusted Odd ratio	Confidence interval 95%
Age				8.728	0.026		
	15-20	58(23.7)	25(23.1)			1.3	5.7-0.34
	21-26	119(48.6)	43(39.8)			2.4	25.0-1.11
	27-33	42(17.1)	22(20.4)			1	
	34-40	26(10.6)	18(16.7)			0.24	0.75-0.15
Marital Status				0.899	0.44		
	Married	213(86.9)	84(77.8)				
	Single	24(9.8)	20(18.5)				
	Divorced	6(2.4)	1(0.9)				
Religion				17.967	0.001		
	Islam	145(59.7)	59(54.6)			2.0	10.0-1.34
	Catholics	49(20.2)	9(8.3)			1.3	3.20-1.11
	Protestants	36(14.8)	28(25.9)			1	0.75-0.15
	Born again	13(4.3)	10(9.3)			0.45	0.66-0.023
	Others						

Educational Level				4.728	0.260		
	Dip. & cert.	48 (63.2)	124 (50.4)				
	Bachelor	18 (23.7)	95 (38.6)				
	Masters	6 (7.9)	17 (6.9)				
	PhD	4 (5.3)	10 (4.1)				
Employment status				8.236	**0.041**		
	Employment	58(23.7)	25(23.1)			**3**	**15.0-1.34**
	Self-employed	119(48.6)	43(39.8)			**0.445**	**0.53-0.11**
	Unemployment	68(27.7)	40(38.1)			**1**	
Monthly pocket money				4.002	0.555		
	0- 150,000	45 (23)	55(38.2)				
	150,000-300,000	55 (28)	11(7.6)				
	300,000-750,000	33(17)	36(25)				
	750,000-1million	44(22)	35(24)				
	1million and above	20(10.2)	7(4.7)				

DISCUSSION

The prevalence of substance abuse among the university students in Kampala Uganda

The study found out that the prevalence of substance abuse among the university student in Uganda is 30%, accounting 3 out of every 10 students that practice substance abuse. The prevalence is averagely high which expose most of the students to chronic disease and low academic performance. The distributions of the type of substance abuse among the students are Alcohol (35%), Tobacco (15%), Cigarette smoking (15%), Marijuana (15%), Khat chewing (15%), Heroine (5%) and Shisha smoking (5%). This is in line with the study of J.Balawa (2015) that found 25 % prevalence of substance abuse among young adults in western Uganda. He found cigarette as the major substance that people abuse in western Uganda, followed by Alcohol, tobacco and others. Another study in Kampala city found the prevalence to be 10% (Kitunzi et al., 2011) which is a bit lower to the prevalence we got. Most of the findings from the studies have close proximity with others.

Social determinants influencing substance abuse among university students in Kampala

Age was found to have an influence on the prevalence of substance abuse among university students in Kampala. A student within the age of 21-26 years and 15-20 years are more likely to practice substance abuse as well student between the age of 34-40 years are less likely to practice substance abuse. The findings are in line with the findings of Otieno (2009) who carried out a study in Kisumu and reports that gender, age and peer pressure affect drug abuse. Substance abuse has permeated all strata of society with the youth being the most affected. Most users fall between 16-26 years of age with experimentation beginning much earlier, even at 4 years (Gaccicio, 2001). Majority of the students are at the adolescent stage. This is a stage of transition from childhood to adulthood. Also, according to Kiambuthi (2005), drug abuse is slightly higher (39.8%) for students" aged between15-17 years than 18 and above (31.7%). Although some studies show that age is significant in drug abuse (Otieno et al., 2010)

Religion was found to have an influence on the prevalence of substance abuse among university students in Kampala. A student who practice Catholic and Islam religion are more likely to practice substance abuse as well students who are born again are less likely to practice substance abuse. This is in line with the several surveys that have

indicated religious beliefs and attitudes have an association with drug use and abuse. There are more drug addicts who are Christians those who are Muslims (Muchiri, 2005). However, according to Kiambuthi (2005), more atheists abuse drugs than Muslims and Christians are the least abusers. The study shows the following rates: atheist (100%), Muslims (60%) while Christians (35.2%). But, Christians have different beliefs and habits in their subgroup (NACADA, 2004).

Employment status was found to have an influence on the prevalence of substance abuse among university students in Kampala. Students who are employed are more likely to practice substance abuse while those who self-employed are less likely to practice drug abuse. This is in line with Studies have shown that employment status is associated with drug use and abuse (Muchiri, 2005). Naskar (2004) reports that occupation of parents is associated with drug abuse among children. Naskar also highlighted that drug abuse is higher among tertiary student who is as well employed that this may be due to their financial stand. So as well, a study by Karim et al (2011) found no significant relationship between employment status and substance abuse. The low economic region generally tends to be occupied by people of low education and lowly rated occupations contrary to high-income areas.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that the prevalence of substance abuse among the university student in Uganda is 30%, accounting 3 out of every 10 students that practice substance abuse. The prevalence is averagely high. The distributions of the type of substance abuse among the students are: Alcohol (35%), Tobacco (15%), Cigarette smoking (15%), Marijuana (15%), Khat chewing (15%), Heroine (5%) and Shisha smoking (5%)

Age, religion and employment status were the social determinants influencing the prevalence of substance abuse among university students in Kampala. A student within the age of 21-26 years and 15-20 years are more likely to practice substance abuse as well student between the age of 34-40 years are less likely to practice substance abuse. A student who practice Catholic and Islam religion are more likely to practice substance abuse as well students who are born again are less likely to practice substance abuse. Students who are employed are more likely to practice substance abuse while those who self-employed are less likely to practice drug abuse.

RECOMMENDATION

- Timely sensitization and orientation should be part of the school activities to be done to ensure all the students got to understand the adverse effects of abusing substances

- A module on effects of substance abuse should be added to the course module of the school; this will enhance the health education and allow students to learn appropriately what substance abuse entails

- Law enforcers should be inside the school always to stop students from all forms of substance abuse and students misbehaving due to substance abuse should be avoided from accessing school facilities till he/she got normal back.

- Social clubs, gatherings, voluntary organization and movements promoting the campaign against substance abuse should be encouraged within the school environments, so as to reduce the menace of drug abuse.

- Rehabilitation and rehabituation centre should be provided inside the school. Prompt and immediate attention will be given to students whose resulting effects of substance abuse are found to be with.

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