

CAUSES OF DRUG ABUSE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS. A CASE STUDY OF ZENGEZA 4 HIGH SCHOOL, CHITUNGWIZA, ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to identify the main causes of drug use and abuse at Zengeza 4 High School in Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe. The research design for this study was a descriptive survey design. The study employed a mixed method approach. The study used interviews and surveys as data collection tools. The study revealed that peer pressure, family problems, experimenting and exposure are the major causes of drug use/abuse by adolescents in schools. The study recommended that parents and teachers should strongly educate and encourage adolescents in school to desist from all forms of drug use or abuse for whatever reasons. Basically, adolescents should seek parental help whenever they face any challenges in life.

KEYWORDS

Adolescents, Drug abuse, High School, Education

INTRODUCTION

The world over the parent has a concern that his/her child should excel in his education but due to certain circumstances some children are succumbing to substance abuse which might affect them psychologically, physically and emotionally. The use of illegal drugs has spread at a high rate and has penetrated every part of the world. No nation has been spared from the devastating problem caused by drugs and substance abuse.

The streets of urban areas are awash with drugs of all kinds: from marijuana or Mbanje to broncleer, Histalix, Cocaine, Cordain, musombodhiya, Tegu-tegu, katsotsi, soldier, zed, double punch, Heroin, Mangemba, (ZCLDN 2014). It is estimated that 60% of the youth are on illicit drugs in Zimbabwe. The Voice of America (VOA) Africa, in 2015 estimated the unofficial number of addicts in Zimbabwe to be between a million and 1.2 million countrywide has also indicated that the police were recording more than 100 cases of drug abuse every month in Harare alone while statistics from the Anti- Drug Abuse Association of Zimbabwe (ADAAZ) said up to 43 per cent of students know of schoolmates found in possession of cigarettes. The Herald, dated August 14 2014 reported that 65% Zimbabwe youths suffer drug-induced mental problems. Chitungwiza Central Hospital reported in 2016 that 60% of its mental patients are youths between 15 and 24 years old. Seven school girls in Manicaland from Dangavhura and St Joseph's High School were arrested in 2016 for smoking mbanje which is an illegal substance in the country. According to the Ministry of Health and Child Care Minister's report of 2017 at a

workshop at Harare Central Hospital, 45% of all mental cases in Zimbabwe are triggered by substance and alcohol abuse. The mental manager in the Ministry of Health and Child Care also said statistics showed that 57% of all admissions in psychiatric institutions are due to drug and substance abuse.

The youth encounter several particular problems and considerations. This is the period of adolescence which has many difficulties such as stress of physiological and physical change, competition in school and life in general, generation gap, unjust and cruel world among other problems. Psychologically, adolescents have serious developmental tasks to handle such as peer identification and individualization from their family. Sexual identification; societal and vocational; role identification and negotiating issues of authority power and independence are major (Young, (2007).

According to the statistics reported by the United Nations World Drug Report of 2014 indicated that 39.1% of substance abusers are high school adolescents. The substance abuse problem in South Africa is very serious, with drug usage reported as being at twice the world norm. According to the South African Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use report, March 2017 Shelly Andersen said Tanzania, is the second country after Kenya in east Africa with an increasing number of drug users mainly school going adolescents. The Drug Control Commission (DCC) report of 2011 states that the actual number of drug addicts was on the increase. Said (2010) reported that 12% of all South African learners had used at least one illegal drug and this figure is the highest in the African Region.

The economic situation in the country has contributed in the developments which showed a great increase in the number of working mothers. As reported by the Central Statistics office (2008:8) the participation rates of female has increased significantly from about 50% in 1982 to about seventy percent in 2016. These female workers include those formerly employed, vendors, and cross boarder traders. The increase in the number of working female means that children are unattended or maids are the ones who are looking after the children in the absence of mothers. This economic situation in Zimbabwe resulted in breakdown of families and to some extent can be regarded as a contributing factor why adolescents are abusing drugs (Abdu-Raheem, 2013). According to the Zimbabwe Republic General Headquarters Statistical Bureau (2008) total count of substance abuse increased from one thousand six hundred and eighty-seven (1687) in 2008 to three thousand one hundred and thirty-six (3136) in 2009.

Many television critics say that most teenagers are prone to adopt features of the models, because the adolescent is at an age period of doubt and insecurity. This period is a time of acceptance; it is when many social relations are discovered for the first time (Egbochuku et al 2009). Significant portion of previous studies indicates that the media, especially television can be of importance to adolescent socialization. Faces and images of the young, on television can be strong factors in other young people socialization (Harwood & Anderson, 2002).

The Zimbabwe Republic General Headquarters Statistical Bureau (2017), in representative sample in hospitals reports that most people become abusers from self-treatment of physical ailment and could result in ignorance for they do not know the accurate dosage which can affect him/her mentally. Chitungwiza Central Hospital reported in 2016 that 60% of its mental patients were adolescents between 15 -24 years and these are shocking figures which need everybody's attention.

Chitungwiza is the largest high density town in Zimbabwe, it is popularly known for its hospital named Chitungwiza Central Hospital which is located in Zengeza 4 a suburb in Chitungwiza. Chitungwiza came into existence in the late 1970s with most black people who stayed in oldest high density towns like Highfield migrating to Chitungwiza. Chitungwiza has several suburbs. The oldest of the suburbs is St Mary's which is divided into two sections, Manyame Park (New St Mary's) and Old St Mary's, St Mary's is popularly known for being the oldest suburb in Chitungwiza. There is Zengeza, which is divided into 5 sections which are Zengeza 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Zengeza 4 is relatively the largest section.

Statement of the problem

Rapid sharp rising cases of drug abuse in secondary schools are now a global concern. What causes the rising of drug abuse in schools? The purpose of this study was to identify causes of drug abuse by students in secondary schools at Zengeza 4 High School.

Objective

To establish causes of substance abuse in high schools

Research Question

What are the types of substance and drugs are being used by adolescents at Zengeza High Schools?

What motivates high school adolescents to abuse drugs/substance in Zengeza High Schools?

METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study was a descriptive survey design. The study employed a mixed method approach. The population under study was derived from Zengeza 4 with a total of 30 target population of Zengeza 4 High School adolescents, parents, and teachers. The sample of this study was selected among students, teachers and parents. Stratified sampling technique was used on quantitative data and purposive sampling was used on qualitative data. Survey data was collected from 25 adolescents (students) while interviews were conducted with 5 teachers and 5 parents.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study wanted to establish causes of drug use and abuse by adolescents. The following results were obtained:

Table 1: Causes of drug use/abuse according to adolescents N=25

Cause	Response %
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Availability of money	16
Peer pressure	52
Family background	12
Negligence by parents or guardians	12
Experiment	12
Stress relief	12

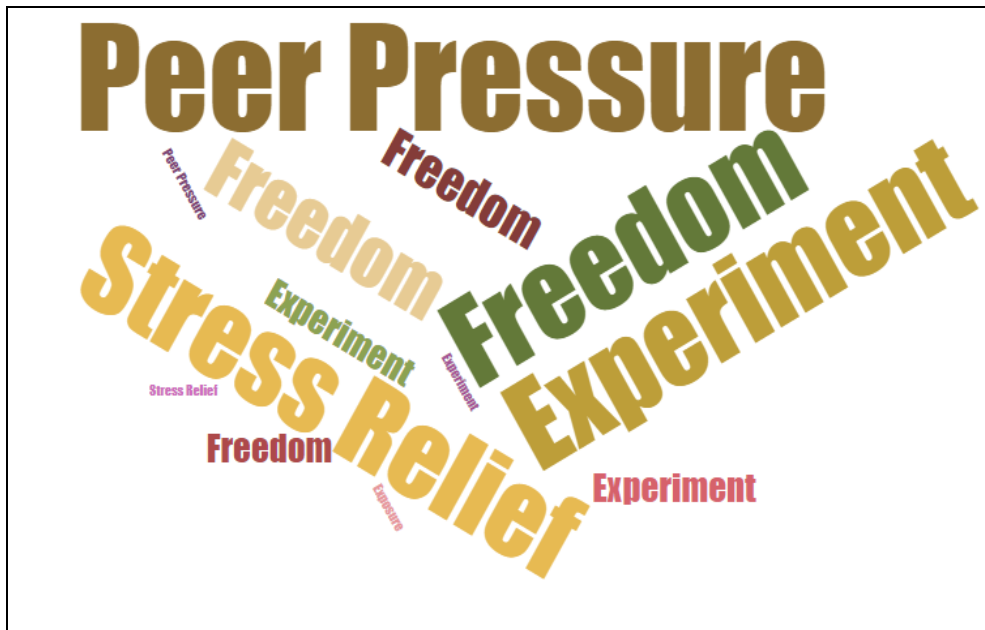
Source: Primary data

Peer pressure is the major contributor to abuse of drugs by most students. 52% of the respondents do concur that peer pressure is the most cause of drug abuse compared to the other five causes which are availability of money, negligence by parents or guardians, experiment family background and stress relief which all have scored the same response. Most students were in agreement that they are into drugs so they are accepted by their peers. The responses also indicate that some students are into drugs because their parents or guardians use drugs. Heavy headedness, harsh treatment, lack of freedom and student failure to have their grievances addressed creates stress which can lead to drug abuse.



Source: Primary data

Figure 1: Causes of drug use/abuse according to parents



Source: Primary data

Figure 2: Causes of drug use/abuse according to teachers

It came to light that most adolescents are given too much freedom and are being left alone in the home while their parents or other adults are at work. Teenagers who are left along for long periods of time or who are allowed to come and go as they please undoubtedly have greater opportunity for exposure to drugs. Most teens used drugs and alcohol when going to friends' homes, spending the night out or when attending parties. It was suggested that parents or guidance should be aware of their kids' movements such as to ask them where they are going and contact information so they can be contacted when outside the home. Let them know that at any time, a parent could call or drive and pick them up.

The situation in Zimbabwe is even getting worse because of the economic conditions. The financial constraints pose serious constraints on addressing certain issues which are required by both parents and students.

There are quite a number of reasons why adolescents get into drug or substance abuse. One of the reasons is parents using drugs as indicated by Newcomb, Maddahian and Bentler (2009). In his study, Barnes (2013) pointed out that perceived adult drug use was one of the reasons why adolescents end up getting into drug abuse. This was supporting Huba and Bentler (2011) who had also indicated this in their study. Newcomb Abdu-Raheem (2013) is also supportive of that perceived adult drug use led to drug or substance abuse.

Other reasons indicated by different scholars include peer use (Newcomb, Maddahian and Bentler 2009), poor school grades (Phillips, Lewis and Gossett 2015; Noyes and Mills 1984; Newcomb, Abdu-Raheem, 2013), poor relationships between adolescents and parents (Newcomb, Maddahian and Bentler 2009), low self-esteem, depression, and psychological distress (Kaplan 2008; Aneshensel and Huba 2014; Newcomb, Maddahian and Bentler 2009), unconventionality and tolerance for deviance (Jessor and Jessor 2012; Newcomb, Maddahian and Bentler 2009).

FINDINGS

The study revealed that peer pressure, family problems, experimenting and exposure are the major causes of drug use/abuse by adolescents in schools. Other causes identified were relieving stress, academic failures and freedom.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is crucial need to address drug related problems affecting adolescents among all stakeholders. Therefore, the ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in conjunction with the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare should review curriculum with the aim inculcating more value and morals among adolescents.

Parents and teachers should strongly educate and encourage adolescents in school to desist from all forms of drug use or abuse for whatever reasons. Basically, adolescents should seek parental help whenever they face any challenges in life.

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