

# **Assessment of the Level of Awareness of Substance Abuse Among Senior Secondary School Students in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria**

## **ABSTRACT**

There is limited data on the assessment of substance abuse awareness among secondary school students in Nigeria. This study aims to evaluate the level of awareness regarding substance abuse among secondary school students. The research was conducted in secondary schools in Benin City, encompassing both single-gender and mixed-gender institutions. Data collected from the survey were analyzed descriptively. Out of 195 secondary school students surveyed, 20.5% were aged 17-19, 77.9% were aged 14-16, and 1.5% were aged 11-13. Among the respondents, 1.5% attended boarding schools, 97.9% attended day schools, and 5% attended schools offering both day and boarding options. Furthermore, 29.2% attended all-boys schools, 10.3% attended all-girls schools, and 60.5% attended mixed-gender schools. In terms of religious affiliation, 90.8% practiced Christianity, 8.2% practiced Islam, 0.5% were traditional practitioners, and 0.5% followed other religions. Regarding substance abuse education, 4.6% had not been exposed to it, while 95.4% had received education on substance abuse. Therefore, the findings reveal that there is a high level of awareness of substance abuse among secondary school students in Benin City, Nigeria.

**Keywords:** *Substance abuse awareness, Nigerian education, Secondary school students, descriptive analysis*

## **Introduction**

The prevalence rates of illicit substance use have become a cause of concern to policy actors and governments worldwide. As such, the 2013 World Drug Report estimates that of the adult population, illicit substance use was being perpetrated by between 167 million (3.6%) and 315 million (6.9%) people aged 15 to 64 years in the preceding year. In the same report, it is estimated that there was an overall 18% increase in illicit substance use in 2012 compared to the level of illicit substance use by people in 2008 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC, 2013). Reports from the World Health Organization (WHO, 2017) indicated that for year 2000, worldwide deaths accounted for by consumption of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs combined, stands at 12.4%. Many socioeconomic problems today can be linked to substance abuse, some of which are domestic violence, aggression-related fights, and deaths, as well as numerous medical conditions (Burke et al., 2005). In the view of Heydarabadi et al. (2015), societal

problems of lower life expectancy, mental problems, unplanned pregnancy, accidents, incidence of sexual aggression and other crimes are some of the offshoots of the intake of addictive drugs. Drug abuse and addiction has attracted considerable scholarly attention all over the world in the past three decades or more (Omagbe, 2012), drug dependence in its various forms and contexts has emerged as one of the most salient discourses in Social Sciences. Evidently, the issue of drug abuse and addiction has become one of the various social problems whose consequences are seen with increasing frequency by caregivers, family members and the broad spectrum of people around the globe (Faloore, 2012).

Drug abuse among teenagers has been a great concern across the globe due to increasing risks involved in abuse itself as well as other adverse physical and psychosocial outcomes (Lewinsohnet al., 1999). In 2003, the statistics showed that alcohol, tobacco and drugs use are in decline among the youths, but the trend is less among the teenagers, perhaps reflecting a generational shift (Johnston et al., 2004). Moreover, the age at which teenagers enter excessive drinking and drug abuse is becoming alarming (Degenhardt et al., 2000). Although, it was discovered that early onset of drug use is often associated with both greater likelihood of continuation (Chen & Kandel, 1998) and greater long-term harm and dependence (Grant & Dawson, 1997). Worldwide, substance abuse and addiction among high school students have become a crucial issue that stakeholders-governments, drug addicts, drug addicts' relations, health care practitioners, and Non-governmental Organizations frequently ask questions about; and, which in contemporary debate is yet to attract sufficient information as far as the role of education in handling substance abuse amongst adolescents. In the case of Nigeria, drug abuse and addiction is becoming increasingly widespread and a substantial percentage of the national budgetary health allocation is utilized for treatment and rehabilitation of people with substance use problems.

The various reports of rapid situation assessments of drug abuse and addiction in the country show a picture of widespread consumption of cannabis (10.8%), followed by psychotropic substances (mainly the benzodiazepines and amphetamine-type stimulants) 10.6% and to a lesser extent heroin (1.6%) and cocaine (1.4%) in both the urban and rural areas. The use of volatile organic solvents (0.53%) is reported to be becoming popular, especially among the street children, in school and women. Thus, concerns for the control of drug abuse and addiction have become a major issue which urgently needs attention. The fact that issue of drug abuse and addiction has generated many questions of which a larger percentage are yet to be answered does not signify that there is a dearth of research works in the area, but there is a gap which need to be covered. One major aspect that should be considered in assessing the level of influence of drug abuse in Nigeria is to assess the level of substance abuse among adolescents. Therefore, this research is aimed at assessing the level of awareness of substance abuse among secondary school students in Benin-City area of Edo State, Nigeria.

## **2. Methodology**

The research design employed in this study is the descriptive research. These design forms the full basis upon which the data shall be analyzed and then generalized in attempt to make inferences.

**Inclusion Criteria:** Students between the ages of 11 to 19

**Exclusion Criteria:** Respondents that refused to complete the questionnaire.

## **2.1 Population and Sampling**

The population of this study comprises secondary school students in Egor Local Government in Benin City, Edo State. Simple Random Sampling Method is chosen during this study, this is due to the fact that simple random technique is a sample selection method whereby every member or element of the population has an equal and known chance of being selected. However, the ultimate purpose of simple random sampling, then, is to ensure that a set of elements is drawn from the study population in such a way that the statistics computed from the sample data will accurately portray the population from which the elements were selected. Besides, it ensures the sample chosen is free from bias and partiality.

## **2.2 Sample size and Data Source**

One hundred and ninety-five (195) respondents were considered appropriate as sample size. This sample cut across the target population. One hundred and ninety-five (195) questionnaires will therefore be developed and administered to targeted study areas. The sources of data employed for this study is the primary data.

## **2.3 Research Instrument**

The research instrument for this study consists of a structured questionnaire consisting of two sections. Section 1 includes the demographic-data of respondent. While Section 2 contain options which the targeted respondents have a choice to choose from. This is to obtain first-hand information and adequate answers from the respondents.

## **2.4 Validity of the instrument**

To determine if the instrument was capable of measuring what it was designed to measure, it was subjected to a series of content validity assessments by my supervisor in the Department of Clinical Pharmacy at the University of Benin, Benin City, who made comments and submissions where necessary.

## **2.5 Data collection method and Analysis**

The questionnaire was self-administered to the students, and they were given sufficient time to complete and return the questionnaire. All data were analyzed using the statistical package for the social science version 22 (Chicago: SPSS Inc.). Mean of the sample, standard error of mean, variance and standard deviation were used to find the average data results and then the data were presented in percentage for easier assessment.

### 3. Result

#### 3.1 Respondents demographic characteristics

The demographic characteristics of our respondents are presented in the tables below:

Age	Frequency	Percent (%)
11-13 years	3	1.5
14-16 years	152	77.9
17-19 years	40	20.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 1:** The table above shows the age of respondents in secondary schools in Benin-City, Edo State.

Sex	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	103	52.8
Female	92	47.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table.2:** The table shows the sex of the respondents in secondary schools in Benin-City, Edo State.

#### 3.2 Respondents Educational Background and Substance Abuse Response

Nature of school	Frequency	Percent (%)
Boys	57	29.2
Girls	20	10.3
Mixed	118	60.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3:** The table shows the nature of the secondary schools in Benin-City, Edo State.

Category of school	Frequency	Percent (%)
Boarding	3	1.5
Day	191	97.9
Day and boarding	1	0.5

<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100.0</b>
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**Table 4:** The table shows the category of the secondary schools where the survey was carried out.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
No	20	10.3
Yes	174	89.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 5:** The table shows the data of secondary school students in Benin-City who live with their parents.

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Christianity	177	90.8
Islam	16	8.2
Traditional	1	0.5
Others	1	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6:** The table shows the religion of the respondents in the secondary schools in Benin-City, Edo State.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
No	9	4.6
Yes	186	95.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 7:** The table shows the respondents exposure to substance abuse education in secondary schools in Benin-City.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
No	21	10.2
Yes	174	89.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100</b>

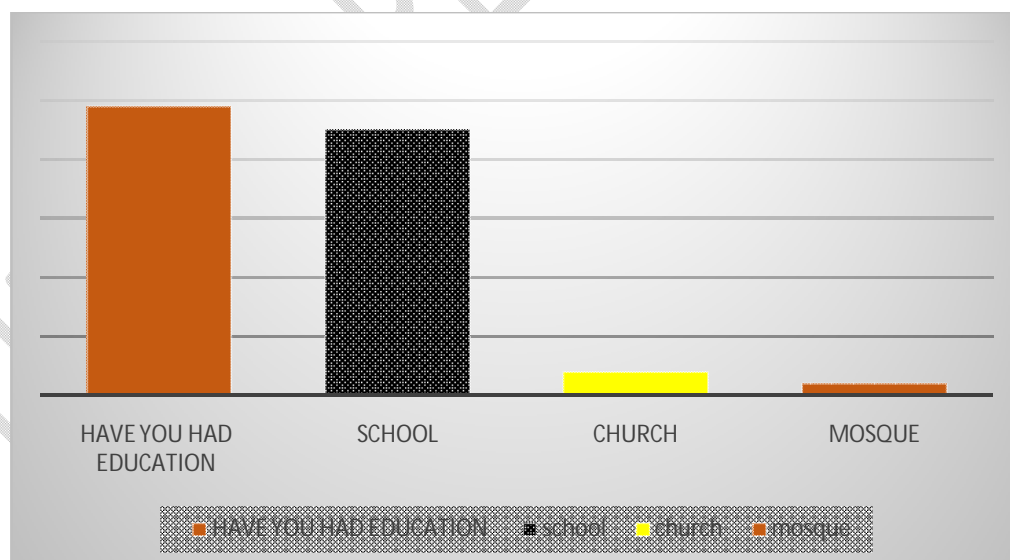
**Table 8:** The table shows the exposure of secondary school students in Benin-City to substance abuse education in school.

Respondents	Frequency	Percent (%)
No	178	91.3
Yes	17	8.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100</b>

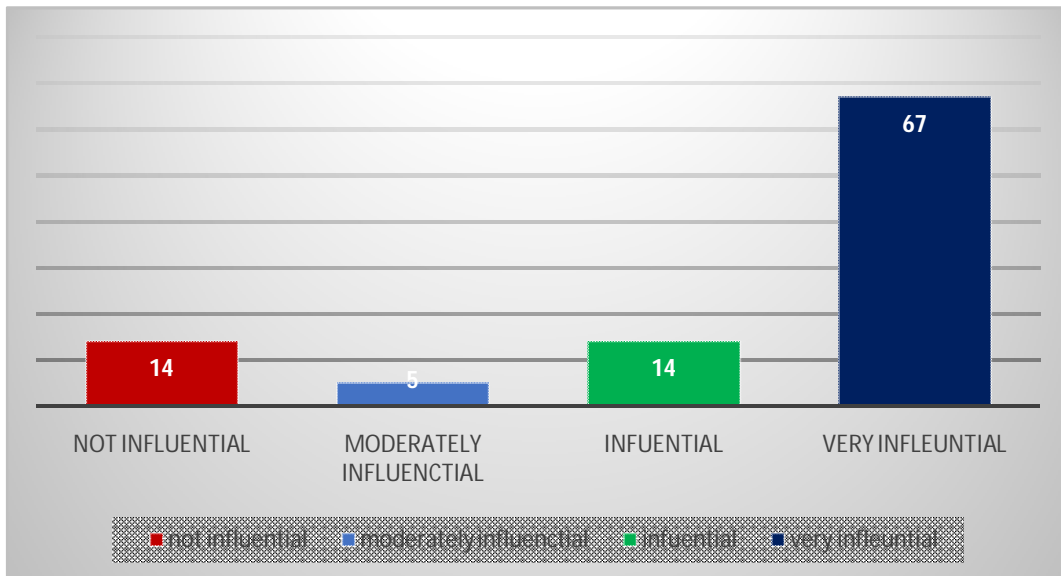
**Table 9:** The table shows the exposure of secondary school students in Benin-City to substance abuse education in school.

Respondent	Frequency	Percent (%)
No	189	96.9
Yes	6	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100</b>

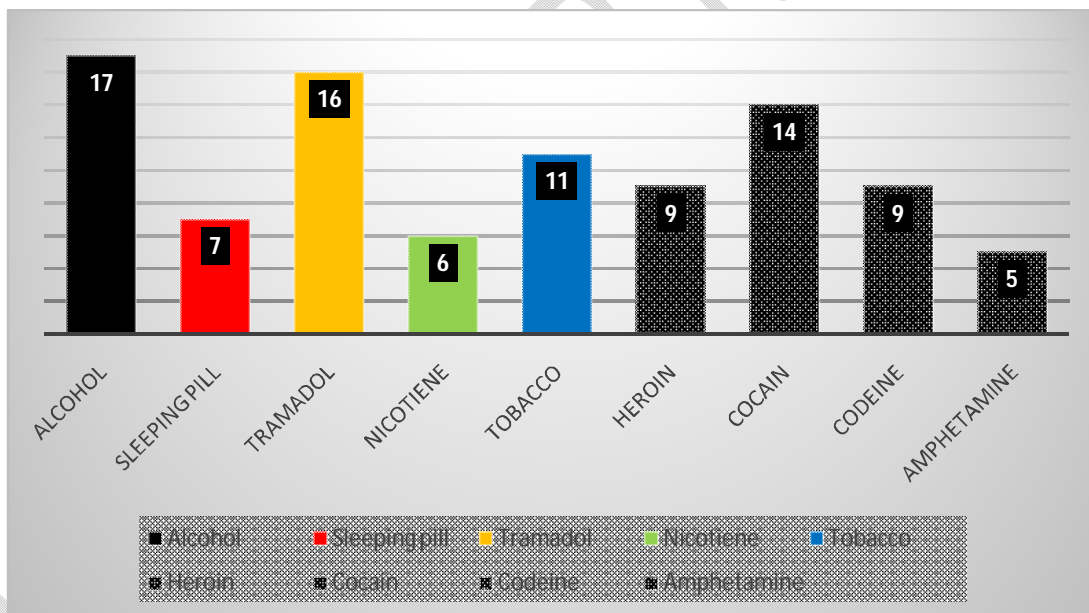
**Table 10:** The table shows the exposure of secondary school students in Benin-City to substance abuse education in school.



**Figure 1:** The figure above shows the level of education and level of awareness of substance abuse amongst secondary school students in Benin-City, Edo State.



**Figure 2:** The figure above shows the influence of peer pressure on secondary school Students in Benin-City, Edo state.



**Figure 3:** The figure shows the level of commonly abused drugs among secondary school students in Benin-City, Edo State.

### 3.3: Statistical Analysis Report Based on Respondents Response

Variables	N	Range	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
1. To keep respondent awake to as to read more	195	3	2.50	.092	1.278	1.633
2. Stress at home e.g. lack of school fees	195	3	2.52	.084	1.177	1.385
3. Influence of mass media	195	3	2.61	.091	1.277	1.631
4. Availability of drugs e.g. availability of money to buy	195	3	2.64	.084	1.178	1.387
5. School Failure	189	3	2.75	.088	1.210	1.464
6. Family Background e.g. parent also drink	195	3	2.86	.087	1.210	1.464
7. Frustration at home e.g. family break up, conflict with parents	193	3	3.03	.085	1.179	1.390
8. Peer Pressure	195	3	3.32	.078	1.090	1.189

**Table 11:** The table shows the descriptive Statistics of factors that make secondary school students engage substance abuse in Benin-City, Edo State.

Variables	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
1. Strained relationship with other students	195	2.44	.095	1.332	1.773
2. Truancy	195	2.50	.095	1.333	1.777
3. Lack of Interest in Extra curriculum Activities	195	2.56	.093	1.304	1.701
4. Low concentration span	191	2.58	.099	1.362	1.855
5. Declining grades	195	2.62	.098	1.366	1.867
6. Theft	195	2.75	.094	1.309	1.712
7. Bullying	195	2.78	.091	1.266	1.603
8. School Drop Out	195	2.85	.095	1.333	1.777
9. Lack of Interest in studying	194	2.90	.089	1.242	1.544

**Table 12:** The table shows the descriptive Statistics of effects of substance abuse among secondary school students in Benin-City, Edo State.

Variables	N	Range	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
1. Chest pains	194	3	2.16	.093	1.297	1.682
2. Nervousness	195	3	2.26	.092	1.279	1.635
3. Anxiety	195	3	2.29	.095	1.321	1.744
4. Confused	195	3	2.37	.096	1.339	1.792
5. Headache	195	3	2.38	.095	1.320	1.743
6. Loss of appetite	195	3	2.39	.095	1.329	1.766
7. Vomiting	195	3	2.42	.095	1.330	1.770
8. Lack of Co-ordination	195	3	2.42	.096	1.338	1.791
9. Red eyes	192	3	2.48	.097	1.346	1.811
10. Sleepy	194	3	2.52	.095	1.328	1.764

**Table 13:** The table shows the descriptive Statistics of side effects of substance abuse on secondary schoolstudents in Benin-City, Edo State.

Variables	N	Range	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
1. Respondent use drugs because of home problems	195	4	1.95	.108	1.504	2.261
2. Respondent use drugs to cope with stress	195	4	1.96	.107	1.492	2.225
3. Respondent take drugs because parents take	195	4	2.05	.113	1.574	2.477
4. Respondents take drugs to belong to friends	195	4	2.07	.118	1.647	2.712
5. Respondents take drugs to gain strength	195	4	2.20	.119	1.661	2.759
6. Respondent Friends Take drugs	195	4	2.61	.115	1.606	2.580
7. Perception of approval of drug using behaviors	192	4	2.95	.119	1.649	2.720
8. Infective Classroom teaching	195	5	2.99	.124	1.726	2.979
9. Poor communication between students and the administration	195	4	3.03	.115	1.600	2.561
10. Conflict between students and teachers	195	4	3.14	.116	1.627	2.646

11. Poor role modelling by teachers	194	4	3.17	.117	1.634	2.670
12. Failure in school academic performance	195	4	3.59	.111	1.545	2.387

**Table 14:** The table shows the descriptive Statistics of reasons for substance abuse by secondary school students in Benin-City, Edo State.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

From the results obtained in this research, the age distribution of respondents indicated that 20.5% were between 17-19 years old, 77.9% were between 14-16 years old, and 1.5% were between 11-13 years old (Table.1). Additionally, 52.8% of respondents were male and 47.2% were female (Table 2). Regarding the type of school attended, 29.2% attended boys' schools, 10.3% attended girls' schools, and 60.5% attended co-educational schools (Table 3). Among these schools, 1.5% were boarding schools, 97.9% were day schools, and 5% had both day and boarding facilities (Table 4). Furthermore, 10.3% of respondents did not live with their biological parents, while 89.2% did (Table.5). In terms of religion, 90.8% practiced Christianity, 8.2% practiced Islam, 0.5% practiced traditional religions, and 0.5% practiced other religions (Table.6).

Regarding substance abuse education, 4.6% of respondents had not been exposed to it, while 95.4% had (Table 7). Among those educated on substance abuse, 89.2% received this education in school (Table.8), 8.7% in church (Table.9), and 3.1% in the mosque. Based on this data, it is evident that most secondary school students (95.4%) are aware of substance abuse, with the majority being educated in schools. This highlights the critical role schools play in educating adolescents about substance abuse. The role of religious institutions in educating students about substance abuse is minimal. Despite being learning platforms for adolescents, churches and mosques lag in this regard. The data indicates a high level of awareness of substance abuse among secondary school students in Benin City, suggesting that the issue is not due to a lack of awareness. Therefore, further research is needed to understand why students engage in substance abuse. Findings of Nte (2008, as mentioned in Ekpenyong, 2012), revealed that 37% of the students in Bayelsa State were abusing tobacco products. A report by NAFDAC (2008) noted

that the abuse of licit and illicit drugs is becoming students' way of life in Nigeria. Statistics of findings also revealed that one in every three secondary school students in Nigeria 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. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (2000) alcohol is the majorly abused psychoactive drug in the United States with approximately 90% of the students taking it before graduating from high school. Alcohol is the most highly abused drug in Nigeria with about 61% of the population consuming it (NAFDAC, 2008). The need for acceptance by peers, often stemming from self-esteem issues, leads students to engage in various activities, including substance abuse.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The research findings indicated that secondary school students are well informed about substance abuse with their awareness obtained mainly from the school. Furthermore, Peer-pressure plays a significant role in the reason secondary school students engage in substance abuse.

### **5.1 Recommendations**

1. More awareness programme should be organized in religious settings to educate students on the subject of substance abuse to help them make informed decisions.
2. Parents who use drugs should be discrete, to avoid negative influence on their children.
3. Secondary school authorities should put in place severe disciplinary measures on students who engage in substance abuse.
4. Guidance and Counseling services should be provided in all religious settings to make student understand themselves as well as minimize behaviours such as smoking and drug use. This means that all sections of the National Policy on Education concerned with counseling should be implemented without delay.
5. Guidance and Counseling programmes of secondary schools and religions should incorporate courses which deal with drug education. Campaigns designed to highlight the dangers of substance abuse should be mounted by Federal and State Ministries Health.
6. Just as there is a concerted effort to include sex education in the curriculum of secondary schools and religious settings, substance abuse education should also be considered.

7. Television and radio advertisements that encourage substance abuse should be discouraged.

### **Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)**

Author(s) hereby declares that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of manuscripts.

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