
Substance Abuse Among Students in Selected Secondary Schools in Akure South LGA, Ondo State: Prevalence and Associated Factors

David Kehinde Ogundipe

BNSc, RN, RM,

Faculty of Nursing Science, University of Medical Sciences, Ondo-City, Ondo State, Nigeria

Bridget Omowumi Akin-Otiko

MPH, PhD, RN, RM, RNE, FWAPCNM

Faculty of Nursing Science, University of Medical Sciences, Ondo-City, Ondo State, Nigeria

Osuolale John Makanjuola

MSc (Nursing), MSc (Gerontology), RN, RMHPN

Faculty of Nursing Science, University of Medical Sciences, Ondo-City, Ondo State, Nigeria

doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/ijhpr.13/vol12n23846>

Published July 06, 2024

Citation: Ogundipe D.K., Akin-Otiko B.O. and Makanjuola O.J. (2024) Substance Abuse Among Students in Selected Secondary Schools in Akure South Lga, Ondo State: Prevalence and Associated Factors, *International Journal of Health and Psychology Research*, Vol.12, No.2, pp.38-46

ABSTRACT: *Substance abuse is the abuse of psychoactive substances; such as, alcohol and illegal narcotics. Drug misuse has become a worldwide epidemic, posing a serious threat to public health on a global scale. It is associated with increasingly frightening physical, psychological, social and economic consequences; however, there is limited study on prevalence and associated factors of substance abuse among secondary school students in Akure South LGA Ondo State, which is the objective of this study. This study utilized a descriptive cross-sectional methodology. Multistage sampling technique was used to select the schools and a Taro Yamane formula to determine sample size of 365 pupils. Proportional sample was calculated for each school and participants selected randomly. The results revealed a substance abuse prevalence of 16.4%, with palm wine and coffee being the most commonly used substances. Other substances included, cough mixture, local gin, alcohol, codeine (cough syrup), cannabis, cigarette, Rohypnol and tramadol. The key influencers of substance use among the respondents included to boost energy (38.6%), to think and read more clearly (31.5%), recreational purposes (25.5%), use by friends and colleagues (24.4%) and to forget about problems (20%). Multiple substance use was higher among older male students and those living with their fathers only. All users of alcohol and cannabis reportedly took them whenever they felt like; so also, did high percentages of users of the local gin, palm wine, tobacco, and Rohypnol. Substances taken mostly twice a day were cough mixture and coffee; and cigarettes once a day. School nurses and counsellors in Akure South LGA, and stakeholders in adolescent health and development, should consider the high prevalence and pattern of substance use reported in this study in planning context-relevant interventions in their locations. This will promote all-round health of their students, and the safety and security of their community.*

KEYWORDS: substance abuse, students, secondary schools, prevalence, associated factors

INTRODUCTION

Substance abuse, which can include both legal and illegal substances like alcohol and narcotics, is defined as the harmful or dangerous use of psychoactive substances by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2014). Abuse of substances, often referred to as drug abuse, involves use of drugs in ways that are injurious to the user or to people around them. Drug and alcohol abuse have become a worldwide epidemic, posing a serious threat to public health on a global scale (Alhyas, et al., 2015). Drug misuse, which is particularly pervasive among young people, is a growing problem. Consequences of substance misuse among young people include increased risk-taking in sexual activity, personality problems, sexual violence, criminal tendencies, and drug dependence, among others; making this, a major public health concern (Alex-Hart, et al., 2015). At least 15.3 million people around the world are estimated to be dealing with a substance use disorder, and 3.3 million deaths can be attributed to excessive alcohol consumption each year (WHO, 2023).

Prevalence rates of substance misuse are also rising in Nigeria. According to the results of the first ever national study on drug usage in Nigeria, 14.3 million persons (14.4 percent of the population between the ages of 15 and 64) reported abusing psychoactive substances within the previous year (UNODC, 2018). Substance abuse can have serious physical and mental effects on young people; yet, Ogunsola & Fatusi (2016) found that almost two-thirds of in-school adolescents in rural and urban Osun State, Nigeria, had used substances. In a study by Anyanwu et al. (2016), alcohol was shown to have the highest frequency of abuse (32.9%) among secondary school students in Abakaliki; and, substance misuse was more common among men, older pupils, those from broken homes, and the young. Among secondary school students in Oyo State, Nigeria, Tramadol was the most often abused substance besides alcohol, with 35.5% of users believing that it would improve their academic performance (Idowu, et al., 2018). Among youths in Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria, the incidence of alcohol usage alone was 11.6%, cannabis use alone was 12.8%, and use of both cannabis and alcohol was 6.25% (Okunrinboye, 2017).

Physical, mental, social, and financial repercussions of drug misuse among youths are on the rise and disturbing (Ajibade, et al., 2016). Youths substance misuse causes mental health issues and increases the likelihood of poor and immoral behaviours; including, theft, bullying, domestic violence, gang rape, and participation in secret cults, all of which have negative effects on the reputation of the family and its members. Drug use among Nigerian adolescents and young adults was associated with nonattendance, lower academic performance, strained relationships with friends and family, and run-ins with the law (United Nations Office of Drug and Crime, 2018; Makanjuola, et al., 2014). The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency boss in Nigeria identified drug abuse as the main driver of insecurity in the country (Marwa, 2024). The unfavourable connection between substance misuse and bad behaviours, with the criminal repercussions and threat to security, motivated the study. While there have been a number of studies on substance abuse among secondary school students, little is known about the prevalence of substance abuse or the factors that may contribute to it among students in the

Akure South Local Government Area of Ondo State; hence, the need for such study in the area. The study was aimed at answering the following research questions:

1. What is the prevalence of substance abuse among students in the selected secondary schools in Akure South Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria?
2. What are the factors influencing substance abuse among the students in the selected secondary schools in Akure South Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria?
3. How frequently are substances used by the secondary school students in the selected secondary schools in Akure South Local Government Area of Ondo State Nigeria?

RESEARCH METHODS

This study utilized a descriptive cross-sectional methodology. Multistage sampling technique was used to select the schools and a Taro Yamane formula to determine sample size of 365 from a total population of 1949 senior secondary school students, in the two conveniently selected secondary schools – one a boys-only school and the other a co-educational school. The students were further stratified according to levels and the proportional sample determined per each level in each school; the participants were selected randomly. Senior secondary students with significant physical or mental handicap, which could affect their ability to respond validly to the study instrument, were however, excluded from the study. Face and content validity of the instrument were ensured by experts in test and measurement, and a researcher in substance abuse. Ethical approval for the study was secured from the University of Medical Sciences Ethics committee and permission to conduct the study was obtained from the State Ministry of Education and Heads of the selected schools. Individual participants also gave his / her consent. Data was collected using the structured self-administered questionnaire distributed to the respondents.

FINDINGS

Demographic characteristics of the students

All the students were at the senior secondary school (SSS) level with 142 (38.9%) in SSI, 128 (35.1%) in SS2 and 95 (26%) in SS3. The students were aged 12 to 20 years with a mean age of 15.2 years. Those aged 15-17 were 221 (60.5%), followed by 12-14 years (120; 32.9%) and 18-20 years 24 (6.6%). Majority (263; 72.1%) of them were males; while, 102 (27.9%) were females. Almost three quarters (269; 73.7%) of the students lived with both parents; 74 (20.3%) lived with their mothers only; while, the remaining lived with fathers only, siblings, etc. The students were either Christians (86%) or Muslims (14%); and they were mostly of the Yoruba tribe (82%), followed by Igbos (9.9%), Hausas (0.8%), and the others came from other tribes in the country.

Research question 1: What is the prevalence of substance abuse among students in the selected secondary schools in Akure South Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria?

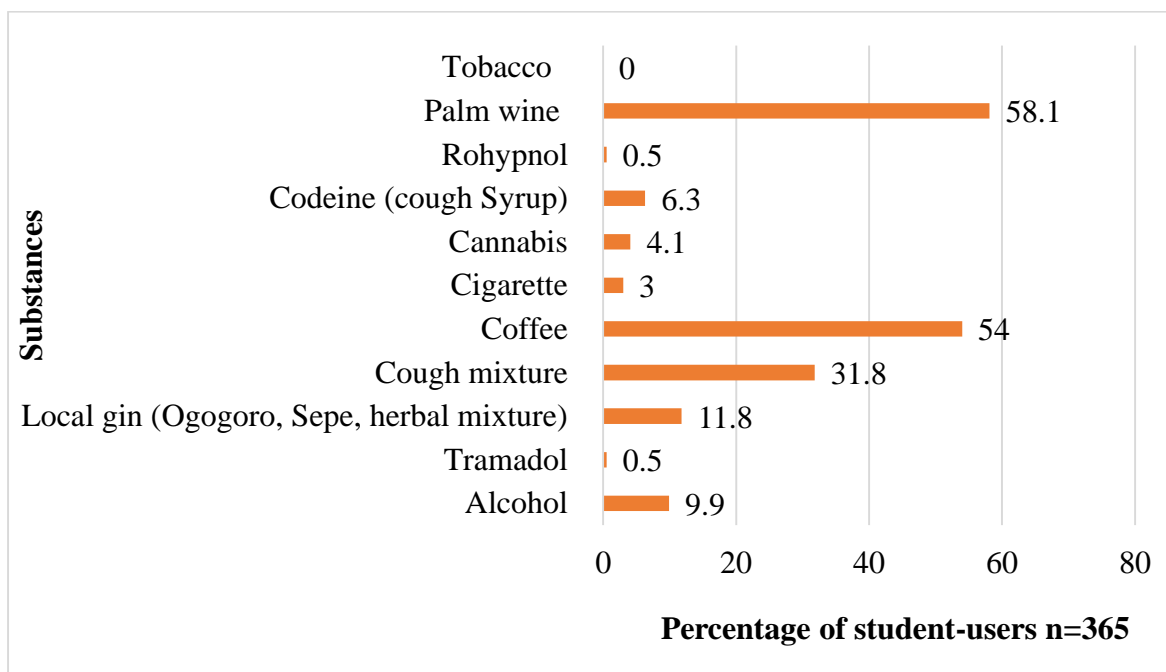


Figure 1: Types of substances and percentage of students who indicated current use
 The prevalence of substance use was 16.4% among the students. Palm wine was the most used substance with more than half (212; 58.1%) of the students indicating use, followed by coffee (197; 54%) and cough mixture (116; 31.8%); while, none of the students indicated current use of tobacco (Figure 1).

Table 1: Use of substances among the students by age, class, gender and carer

Category		Number of Substances indicated as used by students			Total (%)
		0 – 2 (%)	3 -5 (%)	6 - 8 (%)	
Age	12 -14	82 (68.3)	38 (31.7)	0	120 (100)
	15 -17	178 (80.5)	40 (18.1)	3 (1.4)	221 (100)
	18 -20	11 (45.8)	13 (54.2)	0	24 (100)
	Total	271 (74.3)	91 (24.9)	3 (0.8)	365 (100)
Class (SS Level)	SS1	101 (71.1)	41 (28.9)	0	142 (100)
	SS2	98 (76.5)	28 (21.9)	2 (1.6)	128 (100)
	SS3	72 (75.8)	22 (23.2)	1 (1)	95 (100)
	Total	271 (74.3)	91 (24.9)	3 (0.8)	365 (100)
Gender	Male	192 (73)	68 (25.9)	3 (1.1)	263 (100)
	Female	79 (77.5)	23 (22.5)	0	102 (100)
	Total	271 (74.3)	91 (24.9)	3 (0.8)	365 (100)
Carer (Person student lives with)	Father only	2 (50)	2 (50)	0	4 (100)
	Mother only	66 (89.2)	7 (9.5)	1 (1.3)	74 (100)
	Both parents	189 (70.3)	78 (29)	2 (0.7)	269 (100)
	Sibling	7 (70)	3 (30)	0	10 (100)
	Others	7 (87.5)	1 (12.5)	0	8 (100)
	Total	271 (74.3)	91 (24.9)	3 (0.8)	365 (100)

Table 1 shows percentage of multiple substance users to be highest among the 18-20 years age group; while, there does not seem to be much difference according to levels except for the increased number of substances up to 6-8 among the SS 2 and SS 3 students. Only males indicated using up to 6-8 substances; while, in terms of carer, percentage of multiple users was highest among those living with fathers only, followed by those living with siblings. Those living with mothers only, seemed to use fewer substances.

Research Question 2: What are the factors influencing substance abuse among the students in the selected secondary schools in Akure South Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Factors influencing substance abuse among the respondents (n=365)

SN	Influencers of Substance abuse	Frequency	Percentage
1	To boost energy	141	38.6
2	To think and read more clearly	115	31.5
3	Recreational purposes	93	25.5
4	I have friends / colleagues that consume substance	89	24.4
5	Forget about problems	73	20
6	Social environment	65	17.8
7	I have easy access to substance in my area	54	14.8
8	Peer group	43	11.8
9	I have family member(s) that consume substance	41	11.2
10	Family with routine alcohol intake	26	7.1

Ten influencers of substance misuse among secondary school students reported by the students are arranged in order of frequency in Table 1. The highest five influencers were to boost energy, followed by to think and read more clearly, recreational purposes, have friends who consume substance and to forget problems.

Research Question 3: How frequently are substances used by the secondary school students in the selected secondary schools in Akure South Local Government Area of Ondo State Nigeria?

Table 3: Frequency of substance use reported by the students

SN	Substances	How often substance is used by users			Total
		Two times daily	One time daily	Anytime I feel like	
		Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	
1	Alcohol	-	-	47 (100)	47 (100)
2	Tobacco	-	2 (28.5)	5 (71.5)	7 (100)
3	Tramadol	2 (22.2)	2 (22.2)	5 (55.6)	9 (100)
4	Local gin	4 (10.5)	2 (5.3)	32 (84.2)	38 (100)
5	Cough mixture	26 (37.7)	13 (18.8)	30 (43.5)	69 (100)
6	Coffee	30 (20)	55 (36.7)	65 (43.3)	150 (100)
7	Cigarette	2 (3.2)	48 (77.4)	12 (19.4)	62 (100)
8	Cannabis	-	-	7 (100)	7 (100)
9	Codeine	-	4 (44.4)	5 (55.6)	9 (100)
10	Rohypnol	2 (18.2)	2 (18.2)	7 (63.6)	11 (100)
11	Palm wine	4 (2.8)	12 (8.5)	125 (88.7)	141 (100)

Students who ever used the substances responded to the question on how often they used the substances as in Table 3. All users of alcohol and cannabis reportedly took them whenever they felt like; so also, did high percentages of users of the local gin, palm wine, tobacco, and Rohypnol Table 3. Substances taken mostly twice a day were cough mixture and coffee; and cigarettes once a day Table 3.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The mean age of the students was 15.2 years; close to 15.9 years observed by Oshodi, et. al. (2010), but less than 16.3 years recorded by Idowu, et. al. (2018). In line with the report of the first ever national survey on drug use in Nigeria, which indicated that 14.4 percent of the population between the ages 15 and 64 years reported abusing psychoactive substances within the previous year (UNODC, 2018), this study confirmed the use of drugs and harmful substances among students. Both male and female students were involved in the study; and substance users were in both groups. As indicated by Marwa (2024), the involvement of females and young people in substance abuse in the country has assumed a frightening dimension.

The prevalence of substance abuse among the study population was high (16.4%); although lower than 22.5% (Mbachu et. al 2022) and 32.9% (Anyanwu et. al, 2016) reported in South Eastern Nigeria. Of the eleven substances examined in the study, palm wine (an alcoholic substance) was the most used. Palm wine used by 58.1% was listed differently in this study, from alcohol indicated by 9.9% and local gin by 11.8%; because, palm wine is not often seen as alcohol by users. Idowu, et al. (2018), also in Southwest Nigeria, reported that alcohol and tramadol were the most commonly abused substances. Similar studies conducted in Southeastern Nigeria by Anyanwu, et al. (2016) and Mbachu, et. al. (2022) also revealed that alcohol was the most commonly abused substance among the respondents. Over a decade ago, Oshodi, Aina, & Onajole (2010), in Southwest Nigeria, reported that caffeine (kolanut and coffee) was the most frequent substance used by the respondents; this aligns closely with coffee, the second most frequently used substance documented in this study and may be suggestive of a shift in the preference of the adolescents.

The major factors influencing substance abuse among the respondents were to boost energy, to think and read more clearly, and for recreational purposes. Similarly, Oshodi, et. al. (2010), reported that students used substances to relieve stress, stay awake to study at night or self-medicate when sick. In the same vein, Idowu, et al. (2018), reported that most of the substance abusers in their study did so because they believed it could enhance their academic performance. Other influencers identified in this study included influence of friends who were also users, the social environment, easy access and peer pressure. Adolescents are at the stage of role identification; hence, it becomes problematic to guide them on substance abuse when the celebrities they admire are featured in advertisements for substances that are unhealthy for them.

Multiple (3-5) substance use was higher among the older students, the male students, and students living with their fathers only; but, similar in the three classes (SS1-SS3). Substance abuse was also reportedly more amongst males, older students, persons from divorced home and orphans (Anyanwu, et. al., 2016). Similarly, Oshodi, et al. (2010) documented higher use among males than females. On the other hand, Mbachu, et. al. (2022) observed no relationship with age, class, and gender; but, with the type of school, being higher among students in public school, day students and those of low economic status. The schools involved in this study were public and day schools. According to the study by Anyanwu, et al., (2016), alcohol, kola and cigarette were significantly lower among those who participated frequently in religious activities. Although this study revealed that the students practiced either Christianity or Islam, religious influence was not documented in this study. Alhyas, et al. (2015), also documented the relevance of religion in control of the use of alcohol and other harmful drugs. Substance use was observed to be significantly higher among students who had not received any formal education on the topic at school compared to those who had (Idowu, et. al., 2018). This brings to fore the important role of stakeholders in schools, including nurses, in the counseling, education and rehabilitation of students.

All the abusers of alcohol and cannabis took the substances whenever they felt like; while, the frequency of use of other substances varied from daily, twice daily to whenever users felt like taking them. Students with no definite means of income and having such high frequency of consumption of substances are prone to committing crime to satisfy their desires. Marwa (2024) described drug abuse as the fuel and driver of insecurity in the country.

Implication for Nursing

As in previous studies and national survey reports, the result of this study showed wide abuse of substances among the secondary school students. Formal education on substance abuse at school, has been shown to reduce the prevalence among students. As members of the healthcare team and the society at large, nurses need to ensure that adequate information is provided for adolescents, on the dangers of drug abuse. Context-relevant content, in line with the findings of this study could be developed by nurses for enlightenment and educational activities in secondary schools, in Akure South Local Government Area of Ondo State and similar settings. Students need to be empowered on more effective and healthy approaches to achieving the expectations they sought through the influence of the substances. Carers (parents and guardians) should be involved in school health and counseling programmes aimed at addressing substance abuse among students. Collaboration with relevant agencies of government, non-governmental agencies, religious and social institutions is important for far reaching and sustainable results. Demystifying mental health services is also essential to promote good help and health seeking behaviours among students, and ensure prompt and effective intervention where indicated.

CONCLUSION

Substance misuse remains a major problem among adolescents; the group the study population belongs to. Mental, social, physical and spiritual consequences of substance abuse is a threat

to individuals, families, communities and the nation; more so, that drug use has been rightly described as the driver and fuel of crimes and insecurity in the country. Teachers and the healthcare team have a responsibility to educate pupils and relevant stakeholders about the potential risks associated with using these substances.

REFERENCES

- Ajibade , B. L., Ebele, U. M., Akinpelu , A. O., Adeleke, M. A., Fabiyi, B. O., & Akinlabi, T. (2016). Factors influencing substance abuse amongst selected commercial motorcyclists in Ogbomoso metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Health and Psychology Research*. 4:3, 1-27.
- Alex-Hart, B. A., Opara, P. I., & Okagua, J. (2015). Prevalence of alcohol consumption among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Southern Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Pediatrics*, vol 42; 39-45.
- Alhyas, L., Al Ozaibi, N., Elarabi, H., EL-Kashef, A., Wanigaratine, S., Almarzouqi, A., . . . Al Ghaeri, H. (2015). Adolescents' perception of substance use and factors influencing its use: a qualitative study in Abu Dhabi. *PubMed*.
- Anyanwu, O. U., Ibekwe, R. C., & Ojinnaka, N. C. (2016). Pattern of substance abuse among adolescent secondary school students in Abakaliki. *Cogent Medicine*, 3:1, 1-7.
- Idowu, A., Aremu, A. O., Olumide, A., & Ogunlaja, A. O. (2018). Substance abuse among students in selected secondary schools of an urban community of Oyo State, South West Nigeria: implication for policy action. *African Health Sciences* Sep;18(3):776-785
- Makajuola, A. B., Aina, O. F., & Onigbogi, L. (2014). Alcohol and other psychoactive substance use among tanker drivers in Lagos, Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal*. 10:15, 545-559
- Marwa, B. (2024). Drug abuse fueling insecurity in Nigeria *Vanguard News – Vanguard* March 1, 2024 <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/03/drug-abuse-fueling-insecurity-in-nigeria-marwa/>
- Mbachu, C. N. P., Ebenebe, J. C., Mbachu, I. I., Ndukwu, C. I., Elo-Ilo, J. C., Azubuike, C. M., Ofora, V. C., and Uwakwe, R. (2022) Sociodemographic profile of psychoactive substance use among selected secondary school students in rural Nigeria *Int J Adolesc Med Health* 34: 5, 275–280
- Ogunsola, O.O, Fatusi A. O. (2016) Risk and protective factors for adolescent substance use: a comparative study of secondary school students in rural and urban areas of Osun State, Nigeria. *Int J Adolesc Med Health* Jan 29;29(3)
- Okunrinboye, H. I. (2017). *Use of alcohol and cannabis among adolescents in Owo, Ondo state*. Presented at 25th World Summit on Psychology, Psychiatry & Psychotherapy. Held on October 19-20, 2017. San Francisco, USA <https://www.walshmedicalmedia.com/proceedings/use-of-alcohol-and-cannabis-among-adolescents-in-owo-ondo-state-nigeria-40049.html>
- Oshodi, O. Y., Aina, O. F., & Onajole, A. T. (2010). Substance use among secondary school students in an urban setting in Nigeria: prevalence and associated factors *Afr J Psychiatry (Johannesbg)*. Mar;13(1):52-7.

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK

Rabie, M. , Shaker, N. M. , Gaber, E. , El-Habiby, M. , Ismail, D. , El-Gaafary, M. , Lotfy, A. , Sabry, N. , Khafagy, W. , Muscat, R. (2020). Prevalence Updates of Substance Use Among Egyptian Adolescents. *Middle East Current Psychiatry* Vol. 27, no. 1 pp. 1 – 8

UNODC (2018) *Drug Use in Nigeria* Vienna. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/Drugs/Drug Use Survey Nigeria 2019 Exsum.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/Drugs/Drug_Use_Survey_Nigeria_2019_Exsum.pdf).

WHO (2014). *Substance Abuse* www.who.int/topics/substance_abuse/en/

WHO (2023) *Substance Abuse* <https://www.afro.who.int/health-topics/substance-abuse>