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GENDER DISPARITY IN THE PREVALENCE OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN ALIMOSHO LOCAL GOVERNMENT, LAGOS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the prevalence of substance abuse among male and female adolescents in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State. The study used a binary view of gender, recognizing only male and female genders as relevant to Nigerian society. The study was guided with two research questions and two hypotheses. The descriptive survey design was adopted and a self-developed questionnaire title Gender Disparity and Substance Abuse Questionnaire (GDSAQ) was distributed to 450 respondents in Alimosho Local Government Area. The questionnaire contained demographic information and items related to the hypotheses. The researchers used a four-point rating scale and the test-retest method to ensure reliability of the instrument. The calculated cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.86. Chi square analytical tool was used to test all stated hypotheses. The data was analyzed using inferential statistic of chi-square tool at 0.05 level of significance. The findings shows that there was no disparity in alcohol abuse among male and female adolescents, there was a significant difference in marijuana abuse, with males being more likely to abuse it. The study recommended that both genders should be given equal access to information on substance abuse and related risks.

Keywords: Gender Disparity, Substance abuse, Adolescents

Introduction

In the past, research on substance abuse and disorders has been predominantly focused on men. However, recent reports and reasons have led to an increase in female involvement in substance abuse (McHugh et al., 2018). The term "gender" in this study refers to the societal expectations and determination of the two established sexes, male and female (McHugh et al., 2018). Budgeon (2014) conceptualizes gender traditionally as binary, consisting of masculinity and femininity, but acknowledges that there are many other variations. Alcohol and marijuana are the most commonly abused substances, with

men having a higher frequency of indulgence in marijuana than women (Cuttler, Michler & Sexton, 2016). Substance abuse has been viewed as a male problem, with women's involvement perceived as social deviance in traditional African societies. However, recent research has focused on women's substance abuse, with many women describing their substance use as a form of empowerment and sexual liberation (Romo, et al., 2009).

Historically, substance abuse has been commonly associated with men, and the traditional African society views women's involvement in it as a social deviance. However, recent studies have highlighted the prevalence of substance abuse among women. Some women have even described their substance use as a means of empowerment and sexual liberation (Romo, et al., 2009). According to several studies, the traditional gender-based discrepancy in the prevalence of substance abuse between males and females is rapidly decreasing. Additionally, it is important to note the existence of gender diverse individuals, such as the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Community (LGBTQ), who are recognized in society and have been found to be highly susceptible to substance abuse, particularly marijuana (Legeleye et al., 2014; Day, 2017).

Today, there are numerous challenges that individuals face, causing them to deviate from traditional culture, norms, and behaviors, resulting in the emergence of novel social problems. According to Frick (2016), it is not unusual to witness people flaunting social problems such as prostitution, political corruption, substance abuse, theft, and truancy. Substance abuse has become a global public health crisis and a topic of significant concern because it is linked to physical and mental illnesses, in addition to having adverse social and economic effects (Butler et al., 2016). Saunders et al. (2021) defines substance abuse as a pattern that involves harmful use of any substance for mood altering purposes. Over time, research has shown that substance abuse affects individuals of all ages, races, and genders. Nevertheless, the impact on individuals, families, and communities is significant and cumulative, contributing to costly social, physical, and mental health problems.

According to Mojtabai et al. (2016), there has been a significant increase in the statistics of individuals, especially adolescents, tilting towards substance abuse. This could be attributed to the prevalence of mental health issues among adolescents in recent years. Unhealthy behaviors often begin during adolescence, leading to major public health challenges such as school dropouts, engagement in criminal activities, and peer pressure from negative influences (Volkow, 2018). Meanwhile, Adolescents and young adults are the largest abusers of illicit substances and the most vulnerable to the negative effects of drug abuse due to their developmental stage (Kempen, 2020). Cannabis, also known as "Igbo" in Nigeria, is the most commonly abused drug globally, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2020). It is prevalent among adolescents and young adults and ranks higher than other age

groups. therefore, the prevalence of substance abuse among adolescents and young adults is a significant public health concern. There is a need for policies and programs aimed at curbing drug abuse and addressing mental health issues among adolescents to prevent the negative consequences associated with this behavior.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate gender disparity in prevalence of substance abuse among male and female adolescents in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Other Purposes of this Study are:

1. To assess the prevalence of Male and female Gender in the abuse of alcohol among Adolescents in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State?
2. To examine the abuse of Marijuana between Male and Female Adolescents in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State.

The following Research Questions were Answered in the Study

1. Will there be significant difference between Male and female Gender in the abuse of alcohol among Adolescents in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State?
2. Will there be significant difference between Male and Female Gender in the abuse of Marijuana among Adolescents in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State.

The following Hypotheses were tested for the Study

1. There will be no significant difference between Male and female Gender in the abuse of alcohol among Adolescents in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State.
2. There will be no significant difference between Male and Female Gender in the abuse of Marijuana among Adolescents in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Research Method

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study to investigate the relationship between the variables under examination, conduct hypothesis testing, and establish generalizations. The population consisted of male and female adolescence in Alimosho Local Government Area, Lagos State. A total of 450 adolescents were selected using a simple random sampling technique from three areas: Igando-Ikotun Local Council Development Area, Egbe-idimu Local Council Development Area, and Ijegun-Isheri Local Council Development Area. The research instrument used for this study was a self-developed questionnaire titled Gender Disparity and Substance Abuse Questionnaire (GDSAQ). The questionnaire was divided into two sections: A and B. Section A contained respondents' demographic information while Section B was structured to test the hypotheses. The questionnaire adopted a four-point attitudinal scale which consists of

four options: Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD. The content, construct and face validity of the questionnaire was ascertained in the Department of Human Kinetics, Sports and Health Education, by a panel of three experts for content, construct and criterion related validity to ensure a thoroughness which indicates that the instrument measures what it is intended to measure in relation to research questions and hypotheses.

The test-retest method of reliability was adopted. This requires the researcher to administer ten copies of the validated instruments to ten respondents in the Ojo Local Government Area to determine the reliability of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was tested using the Chronbach's alpha technique with r-value of 0.76. A total of 450 questionnaires were administered with the help of three trained research assistants to the respondents. Data collection lasted for our weeks and daily review meetings were held to monitor the progress. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages, were used for demographic data while inferential statistic of Chi-square ($\chi 2$) was used to test all stated hypotheses at a 0.05 alpha level of significance. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23 was used to analyze the data collected.

Presentation of Results

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

	Gender	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	222	49.3
	Female	228	50.7
	Total	450	100.0

Table 1 shows that a total of 222 (49.3) % were male and a total of 228 (50.7) % were female.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

	Years	Frequency	Percent
Valid	10-13	229	50.9
	14-16	221	49.1
	Total	450	100.0

Table 2 shows that a total of 229 (50.9) % were between the age range of 10-13 years while 221 (49.1) % were in the age range bracket of 14-16 years.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents Education

	Education	Frequency	Percent
Valid	No formal Education	86	19.1
	Primary Education	135	30.0
	Secondary education	151	33.6
	Tertiary Education	78	17.3
	Total	450	100.0

Table 3 shows that a total of 86 (19.1) % had no formal education, 135 (30.0%) had primary education, 151 (33.6) % had secondary education while 78 (17.3) % had tertiary education.

Hypothesis One: There will be no significant difference between Male and female Gender in the abuse of alcohol among Adolescents in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State.

A Chi-square statistical test was conducted with a significance level of 0.05. The findings are displayed below.

Table 4: Chi-Square (X^2) on gender disparity In Alcohol abuse.

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	57.023[a]	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	75.744	3	.121
Linear-by-Linear Association	54.863	1	.356
N of Valid Cases	450		

a. 4 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .49.

Hypothesis Two: There will be no significant difference between Male and Female Gender in the abuse of Marijuana among Adolescents in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Based on the results, the Pearson Chi-square test produced a statistic of $\chi 2 = 57.023$, with a p-value of ≤ 0.05, indicating that the null hypothesis of no significant gender difference in alcohol abuse among adolescents in the Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State is accepted. The second hypothesis, which proposes that there is no significant disparity in marijuana misuse between male and female adolescents in the same region, was also tested using the Chi-square statistic at a 0.05 level of significance, and the results are presented below.

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	63.550	1	.121
Likelihood Ratio	85.576	1	.140
Linear-by-Linear Association	63.408[c]	1	.628
N of Valid Cases	450		

The Pearson Chi-square statistics (X2= 63.55, and p is 0.05) were obtained at the 0.05 level of significance, as can be seen from the information above. As a result, the hypothesis that there is no discernible difference between the genders when it comes to teenage alcohol usage in Alimosho

Local Government Area of Lagos State is refuted.

Discussion

Hypothesis one posited that there is no significant distinction between male and female adolescent alcohol misuse in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State. The research findings revealed that there were no apparent gender differences in alcohol misuse among teenagers in Alimosho LGA, Lagos State. The statistical analysis of Pearson Chi-square (X2 = 57.023, p 0.05) was conducted at a significance level of 0.05, as indicated. As a result, the study concluded that there is no observable variation between male and female adolescents in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State concerning their alcohol consumption. Therefore, these results are consistent with research by Koyejo et al. (2018) that found no appreciable difference between male and female HIV carriers in Nigeria in terms of drug misuse rates or indulgence. According to Roerecke, Hassan, and Rehnm (2018), both sexes have hormones, testosterone for men and oestrogen for women, which are linked to an increase in alcohol abuse. Additionally, Paupathy, Duhart, and Queen's (2022) research on South Korean dramas that prominently feature excessive alcohol consumption in South Korea revealed that alcohol has ritualistic significance as a stress reliever and a relationship-building tool, serving as a unifying factor for both genders to enjoy equal predisposition to alcohol abuse.

According to Hypothesis two, there is no significant difference between male and female teenagers in Alimosho Local Government Area in Lagos State who consume marijuana. The study found no discernible gender differences in the usage of marijuana by teenagers in Alimosho LGA, Lagos State. The study found no discernible gender differences in the usage of marijuana by teenagers in Alimosho LGA, Lagos State. The Pearson Chi-square statistics (χ^2 = 63.550, p> 0.05), which were obtained at the 0.05 level of significance, could be shown. Since there is no discernible difference between male and female misuse of marijuana among adolescents in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos state, the null hypothesis is hereby accepted.

The finding is consistent with the study conducted by Hawke, Koyama, and Henderson (2018) explored the mental health characteristics and sex differences of individuals aged 14 to 24 at the Center for Addiction and Mental Health. The research revealed that while males tend to misuse marijuana more frequently than females, women are more susceptible to substance addiction and, consequently, at a higher risk for mental health issues. This finding is consistent with the present study. Assari et al. (2018) conducted a concurrent study that examined gender variations in the bidirectional relationships between marijuana use and depression symptoms in African American adolescents over a three-year period. The study included 681 black adolescents, comprising 335 boys and 346 girls, and accounted for gender differences

in socioeconomic position, parental support, and friend drug use associated with depressed symptoms and marijuana use. The results of the study indicated that men tend to misuse marijuana more frequently than women. However, providing parental support to teenagers can significantly reduce the incidence and prevalence of drug use and the associated health risks.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, it was concluded that there was no noteworthy discrepancy between male and female adolescent alcohol abuse in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State. It was also concluded that there was a significant difference between male and female adolescent marijuana abuse in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government and other supported agencies should create and promote an awareness campaign to educate parents about the need of educating their children against substance misuse.
2. Adolescents and young adults should be given equal amounts of knowledge on subjects and concerns related to substance addiction because both genders are vulnerable and face various dangers.
3. Finally, authorities and government parastatals in charge of educational curriculum development should instill and promote fundamental drug abuse education in schools at an early stage to assist create a firm basis in the battle against substance addiction in the coming days
4. Established good counselling unit in all Local Government in Lagos State for educating the adolescent and also establishment of counselling unit in all our secondary schools and employment of good counsellors to all secondary schools in Lagos State
5. Health educate the adolescent on the danger associated with substance abuse and its consequences in the body.

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