



**COUNSELLING STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING  
SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL  
STUDENTS IN OGIDI EDUCATION ZONE OF  
ANAMBRA STATE.**

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**Abstract.**

*Substance abuse is one of the health challenging problems across the world especially with the adolescents. This study sought to determine the causes, consequences and counselling strategies that could be used to reduce this pandemic. The descriptive survey was adopted for this study. Three research questions guided the study. The population of the study comprised all the 103 school counsellors in Anambra state (P.P.S.S.C. Awka, 2021). Since population is few, there is no need for sampling. The researchers used structured "Causes, Consequences and Counselling Strategies in Reducing Adolescent Substance Abuse Questionnaire" (CCCSRASAQ). The reliability co-efficient were established by subjecting the instrument to trial test while their internal consistency was determined using Cronbach alpha. The reliability co efficient was 0.74. Face to face method of administration was employed. Response to these questions was analyzed using mean scores. Findings include that cultural influences, Peer pressure, curiosity, thirst for new experience, Permissive parenting style, and seeking revenge especially cult groups were the causes of adolescent substance abuse and the consequences of substance abuse include poor academic achievement, road accident, poor relationship, risky behaviours among others. While counselling strategies are dissemination of information about the effects of these substances and introduction of drug education amongst others. Based on the findings, recommendations were made among which are introduction of drug education to create awareness for the students and government should step up law enforcement strategies to reduce substance abuse such as policy on substance abuse.*

*Key words: Adolescence, Substance abuse, Addiction, Prevention, Counselling.*

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## **Introduction**

Adolescent is an individual between the end of late childhood and the beginning of adulthood. Sawyer (2018) defined adolescent as the individual transiting from childhood to adulthood. While Ashok (2018) defined adolescent as a person who is no more a child and yet not adult. Therefore, adolescents are boys and girls within 10 to 19 years of age. They are neither children nor adults. Adolescent transition into adulthood is characterized with independence from parents and older adult towards attachment with peers and friends. These adolescents are vulnerable as they experience storm and stress entrenched with identity confusion, physiological changes, exploration, experimenting of new ideas, life styles, choice of career that may not be easy to surmount. In the heat of these uncertainties, the adolescents become confused, the adolescents may resort to diverse means to solve their problems which may invariably endanger their life or create chains of problems for them and society. Some of these adolescents may likely resort to substance abuse as an escape route to solve their problems (Nwokolo and Anyamene 2015).

Substance abuse also known as drug abuse is the use of certain chemicals for the purpose of creating pleasurable effects on the brain. Substance abuse occurs as a wrong use and purpose of using drugs not recommended by physicians or medics. It can also be seen as the use of drugs in which the user consumes the substance in amounts or with methods which are harmful to them or others (UNODC 2018). These substances or drugs includes stimulants like cocaine, depressants like alcohol, opium related painkiller like heroin and hallucinogens which contains lysergic acid diethylamide found in alcoholic drinks, tobacco among others. Research has indicated that tobacco and alcohol are the gateway for the use of other drugs. Abusers seem to start trial of these substances with tobacco and alcoholic drinks which are readily available unlike hard drugs that may not be easy to procure and tolerate in the body . As the individuals continues to use these drugs without considering the effect on the body. The body becomes tolerant to these drugs and withdrawal becomes problematic when reduced or stopped. The individual concerned may resort to more intake of these substances in other to create the same pleasurable effect as it was

initially. Hence, the individual depends on its use and becomes addict. Drugs alter the body functions of the individual like perceptions, mood, thought process, feelings and behaviour. Thus these substances are known as psychoactive drugs (Barerah 2019).

Drugs are classified into two major types. Legal and illegal drugs, the legal drugs are those which are manufactured, produced, bought and sold within the confines of law while illegal drugs are those which are abused. As the individuals engage in consumption of these substances, they may engage in behaviours that may damage their educational options, psychological stability and social development (Hall WD, Pattoon G,S Lockings E, Weier M, Lynskey M, Morley K.I 2016)

The alarming rate of substance abuse by these adolescents in Nigeria has gone out of imagination. Crimes and violent behaviors committed are traceable to substance abuse consumption. Majority of adolescents are still in school system. The school being the next home of these violent adolescent are not safe as they carry out different crimes such as fighting, willful destruction of school properties, insult and assault of teachers. The Researchers observed that many adolescents abuse these substances at any where and at any time . Some of these abusers whom are badly affected are nuisance to the society as they engage in risky behaviours that negatively affect them and society (Jiloha, 2021).

The use of these substances is on the increase that it becomes necessary to explore the underlying risk factors that enhance the cause of substance abuse in Ogidi education zone of Anambra state . Research has indicated that environmental factors have a powerful influence on individuals behaviour (Bandura,1986). Some research has suggested factors such as availability of these drugs, less expensive, cultural influences , peer influence, permissive parenting, vulnerability of adolescents, academic failures, experimental curiosity, community disorganization and quest for extra energy (UNODC,2018, Lawal and Aliyu,2020).

The atrocities and crimes being perpetuated under the influence of substance abuse is suspected to cause consequences on both the abusers and the society. The impact of substance abuse has been a feature or scenario of morally degraded country with wide spread horrible activities as observed in Nigeria. In secondary schools and tertiary institutions the activities of cult groups are a menace to the students and outsiders killings and destroying lives and properties

as the case may be in all the states of federation. Along the streets are mad or lunatic patients terrorizing passersby (Staff,2012).Some researchers has suggested consequences associated with substance abuse such as accidents, fighting, poor relationships, poor academic achievement, criminal tendency, drug addiction, unwanted sexual activity, disease burden and waste of human resources among others though this is the case with East Africa. (Cheloti, Okoh &Obae 2018).The researchers suspected that substance abuse may also have its consequences on the abusers and the society if verified.

Guidance and counselling as an education support service is a helping profession in charge of human development through its main three pillars like educational, vocational and personal social guidance and counselling services. The counsellor provides these services to the adolescents in order to guide and enhance their normal development and functionality in the society. The school counsellor ensures normal development of these students and offer remedial strategies where there is need. To achieve the above mentioned goal .The counsellor is both proactive and preventive in providing guidance services to achieve the aim of modifying undesirable behaviour to desirable behaviours.

The school is the next home that accommodate both abusers and non abusers that attend school. The abusers are likely to influence non abusers through peer conformity and attraction. This necessitate the counsellor to identify adolescent abusers early enough to offer counselling services to avert substance abuse consequences before it escalates. According to Abijo, Huzili and Hanif (2018) citing Lambai and Rokutani there are different warning signs to identify substance abuse. They are listed below.

- 1.Change in school performance.
- 2.Change in peer group.
- 3.Breaking rules at homes, school and community.
- 4.Extreme mood swing.
- 5.Sudden increase or decrease in activity.
- 6.Changes in physical appearance.
- 7.Red watery glassy eye , running nose, not due to allergies or cold.
- 8.Lack of motivation, interest in the things or other teenagers enjoy.
9. Lying, stealing, hiding things.
10. Cigarette smoking.
11. Withdrawal from family, keeping secret.

12. Using street/drug language or possession of drugs paraphernalia or items. With identification of these signals, the counsellor engage on the journey of providing counselling strategies to reduce substance abuse through individual and group counselling .The counsellors are trained and equipped with different skills and techniques that enhances behaviour modification such as cognitive behaviour therapy, anger management, role playing, problem solving skills and shaping ,refusal skills to mention but a few.

The counsellor being aware of the dangerous consequences of substance abuse could adopt counselling strategies such as information dissemination, preventive education, alternative activities , problem identification, community based process to mention but a few in changing undesirable behaviours to desirable behaviours as was obtainable in Western world. Unfortunately there is inadequate number of guidance counsellors in Ogidi education zone of Anambra state that could offer guidance and counselling services to contain substance abuse in this area. Where there is guidance counsellor they are loaded with other school engagement that hinder their professional assignment especially where principals that are not guidance and counselling friendly. Coupled with this, teachers and principals lack the necessary skills and techniques to eradicate substance abuse consumption. Hence many adolescents in this zone engage in substance abuse consumption with its attendant consequences on both the abusers and the society. The need arose to find a lasting solution to eradicate this problem.

Guidance and counselling as indicated by research has shown its potential in eradicating undesirable behaviours. From this stem the problem of this study which is to determine the causes, consequences and counselling strategies to reduce substance abuse in Ogidi education zone of Anambra state.

### **Statement of problem**

Adolescent substance abuse has been a social and health problem across countries of the world as the youths who are leaders of tomorrow are misbehaving and consuming these substances without considering the effect. The consequences has resulted to loss of lives and properties .If this situation continues chaos and lawlessness will be the other of the day. Different efforts have been made to checkmate this situation such as banning the sales and consumption of these products and establishment of an agency to track the

consumers and distributors . Yet substance abuse continue to escalate with its attendant consequences to the abusers and the society. The need arose to find a lasting solution to substance abuse .Guidance and counselling being a helping profession has the potential to change undesirable behaviours to desirable behaviours through group guidance, individual and group counselling using different counselling strategies.

However there is no literature evidence on causes , consequences and counselling strategies for reducing substance abuse in Ogidi education zone. It is against this backdrop that the researchers embarked on this study.

### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of this study is to determine the counselling strategies to reduce substance abuse among secondary school adolescents in Ogidi education zone . The study sought to determine

- 1.the causes of adolescents substance abuse.
- 2.the consequences of adolescents substance abuse.
- 3.the counselling strategies for reducing adolescents abuse.

### **Research question**

- 1.What are the causes of adolescents abuse.
- 2.What are the consequences of substance abuse.
3. What are the counselling strategies in reducing adolescent substance abuse.

### **Methodology**

The descriptive survey design was adopted in this study. The descriptive survey is the one in which group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. The population of the study comprised of 120 counsellors from public secondary schools in Anambra state.(P.P.S.S.C. Awka ,2020)..Since the population is few there is no need for sampling . All the counsellors were used in carrying out the research. The instrument used for data collection is a structured questionnaire on the “causes, consequences and counselling strategies in reducing adolescent substance abuse” (CCCSRASA)in Ogidi education zone. The questionnaire is to extract and elicit information from the

respondents. A four point rating scale format was used namely Strongly Agree(SA) Agree(A),Disagree(D) and Strongly Disagree(SD).

On the spot administration was embarked upon whereby the researchers visited the counsellors during their monthly meeting and administered the questionnaire which was collected by the end of their meeting .At least 100 questionnaire were completed, collected and used for data analysis. The data collected in the study were analyzed using mean. The critical point were calculated as follows the median mean value as 2.5, the decision rule, therefore is that any of the response item for which the mean score is 2.5 and above was taken to mean that the respondent agreed while any response item for which the mean score is below 2.5 was taken as disagreed.

**Table 1: Counsellors responses on causes of substance abuse by adolescents.**

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	Availability of drugs, alcohol , cigarettes' and tobacco	3.5	Agree
2	Less expensive	3.0	Agree
3	Cultural influences	2.9	Agree
4	Peer influence	3.5	Agree
5	Permissive parenting	3.2	Agree
6	Vulnerability of adolescent	2.9	Agree
7	Academic failure	2.9	Agree
8	Community disorganization	2.9	Agree
9	Revenge	2.7	Agree
10	Cultism		
11.	Experimental curiosity	3.0	Agree
12.	Substance use by parents	3.1	Agree

A Look at the above table shows that the respondents on the average responded affirmatively to all the items regarding the causes of substance abuse as they score higher than the mean rating above 2.50.

Table 2: Counsellors response on consequences of substance abuse by adolescents in schools.

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	DECISION
13.	Accidents	2.9	Agree
14.	Poor relationship	3.0	Agree
15.	Poor academic achievement	3.5	Agree
16.	Drug addiction	3.0	Agree
17.	Criminal tendency	3.5	Agree
18.	Unwanted sexual activities	2.9	Agree
19.	Poor healthy living	3.0	Agree
20.	Vulgar/Dirty language	2.8	Disagree.

The table 2 indicated that all the items were agreed to be consequences of substance abuse with mean scores 2.9, 3.00, 3.5, 3.0, 3.5, 2.9, 3.0 and 2.8. This was because their mean scores were above the criterion mean 2.5. This implied that poor academic achievement, accident, poor relationship, drug addiction, criminal tendency, unwanted sexual activities, poor healthy living and vulgar are likely consequences of substance abuse among adolescents.

Table 3: Counsellors responses on counselling strategies for reducing in school adolescents substance abuse

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	DECISION
13.	Information dissemination.	3.50	Agree
14.	Prevention education	3.02	Agree
15.	Alternative activities	3.00	Agree
16.	Problem identification.	3.02	Agree
17.	Community based process.	3.00	Agree
18.	Environmental approach.	2.90	Agree
19.	Building family bond.	2.80	Agree
20.	Referral refusal skills.	2.60	Agree
21.	School connectedness	3.00	Agree
22.	Peer counselling	2.80	Agree
23.	Expulsion.	2.30	Disagree

Table 3: revealed the responses on counselling strategies adopted by school counsellors in Ogidi education zone. The data indicated that all the items were agreed by the counsellors as the counselling strategies for reducing substance abuse. This was because their means are greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This means that counsellors in Ogidi zone apply these counselling strategies to checkmate substance abuse.

### **Discussion.**

The major findings of the study are briefly discussed as follows. Causes of adolescents substance abuse are availability of drugs, less expensive, cultural influences, peer influence, permissive parenting, vulnerability of adolescents towards drug use, academic failure, community disorganization, cultism and experimental curiosity and substance use by parents. This concurs with the findings of other researchers (Bashir 2018, World Health Organization 2018, Lawal and Aliyu 2020) who found that the main cause of adolescent drug use is the parent use of drugs. Parents who use drugs expose and initiate their children into use of drugs earlier than non abusers. These adolescents start with imitating their parents through trial, experimenting and finally perfecting. While other adolescents consciously and unconsciously imitate their peer, as peer exerts a powerful influence on their age mates through conformity with their group and attraction. This also agrees with findings of (Jiloha, 2021) who found that where members use substance abuse others members may likely join into use of these substances consciously or unconsciously as they want to look attractive to their members. This begins with experimentation to addiction if there is no intervention, whereas being a member of drug free club may reduce the tendency to use drugs as members are exposed to danger of these substances. This may serve as a protective factor towards use of drugs as was found by other researchers (Gariki, H.G 2014 & Jiloha R.C 2021).

The consequences of substance abuse as shown on table 2 indicated that adolescents who abuse these substances may be involved in road accidents, poor relationship, drug addiction, criminal tendency, unwanted sexual activities, poor healthy living and drug free. This findings agree with other researchers (Obinna 2014, Ogunsola O & Fatusi A.O 2016, Sharma S, Sharma G & Barkataki B 2016) who maintained that substance use and criminal behaviours are inter related, the greater the use of drugs the more violence the adolescents

become. The findings also concur with Jiloha (2021) who found that drug crime is correlated with substance consumption such as cannabis with murder, inhalant with rape and opioids with snatching related crime.

The findings of the study on table 3 revealed that information dissemination, prevention education, alternative education, problem identification and referral, community based processes, environmental approach, building family bond, school connectedness and peer counselling are the counselling strategies, counsellors used to mitigate against substance abuse of the adolescents. This concur with findings of (Leah 2021, Oliha J.A 2014, Cheloti, Okoth & Obaei 2018) who found that dissemination of information is an eye opener to these students who are ignorant of the effect of these substances. This information could help to reduce the initial trial of these substances and the risk of developing substance abuse disorder. Counsellors teaching students critical personal and social skills may enhance healthy living devoid of substance abuse as well as provision of healthy activities that meet the needs that are usually filled by alcohol, tobacco and other drugs use may reduce substance abuse. The findings is also agreement with Reno, Holder, Marcus & Leary (2020) who are of a view that problem identification and referral involves recognizing adolescents who have substance abuse tendency and initiate psychotherapy for them. The counsellor work in corroboration with the community in reducing substance abuse through training of community members and agencies in substance abuse education and prevention. Environmental approach is about promoting policies that reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors. The counsellor enhance family bond to enable the parents communicate better with their adolescent children whom they serve as models. This agree with the findings of other researchers (Maseko, Ngwenya and Mauganudze (2014), Brown S.M and Shillington M (2017), who maintained that parents have powerful influences on the lives of their children through words and actions, they can provide guidance on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs that can reduce their experiment with these substances. Parental disapproval of delinquency and drug abuse can contrast the peer pressure of youngsters experience to engage in these activities. Peer counselling is a counselling strategies employed by the counsellors in enhancing substance abuse prevention especially where professional counsellors are inadequate.. This is in agreement with the findings of other researchers (Obloh S & Obloh J) who posited that individuals with the

same characteristics and age brackets influences each others. Non abusers can prevent the abusers tendency to abuse these substances through use of refusal skills.

Other researchers are of view that students who are invested in school curricular activities shun antisocial behaviours unlike those who are not invested in school curricular activities. This agree with the findings of Nwokolo and Anyamene (2015) who found that bonding with school reduces engagement with anti social behaviours.

### **Counselling Implication**

Adolescents engage themselves with substance abuse as a result of risk factors that enhances their consumption of these substances. Therefore, counselling programmes could be initiated to increase protective factors as to reduce substance abuse.

Adolescents abusers face different consequences and counselling can offer professional help to eradicate or reduce substance abuse. The counselling programme could start with what these substances are and their effect on the abusers and the society.

The counselling strategies should therefore begin with the counsellors identify the signs and symptoms of abuse, establish a therapeutic relationship, liaise with the family, school and community in order to help the adolescent with substance abuse.

### **Conclusion.**

The work explored the causes, consequences and counselling strategies to reduce substance abuse in Ogidi education zone. Adolescents substance abuse is as a result of the following factors; availability of these substances, less expensive, cultural influences among others. The consequences of consumption of these substances are poor academic achievement, criminal tendency, poor healthy living among others.

Counselling strategies can be applied to eradicate this problem of substance abuse among adolescents.

### **Recommendation.**

Consequent to the findings of this study the researchers made the following recommendations:

1. Professional counsellors should be trained and post into secondary schools to main guidance and counselling unit.
2. Drug education should be injected into the secondary school curriculum.
3. Guidance counselors should be posted to non school setting to reach adolescents who are not in school to teach about the issue with substance abuse.
4. The school, family and community should work together to stage a fight against substance abuse.
5. Government should mount an enlightenment campaign in different angles against substance abuse.

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