

Relationship between Substance Abuse and Suicidal Ideation among Youths in Kaduna North Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract. The study investigated the Relationship between Substance Abuse and Suicidal Ideation among Youths in Kaduna North, Kaduna State. 140 participants were selected using purposive sampling technique for the study. Survey research design was used. Their age range was between 16-30 years. Two instruments used in the study were substance abuse scale and suicidal ideation scale. Two hypotheses were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Independent T-Test. The result of the first hypothesis revealed a statistical significant positive relationship between Substance Abuse and Suicidal Ideation Among Youths in Kaduna North $r(138) = 0.314$, $P < 0.01$. The second hypothesis result revealed no significant difference in Substance Abuse between the Younger and the Older participants in the study $t(138) = 2.535$, $P < 0.05$ but a statistically significant difference between Younger and Older on Suicidal Ideation $t(138) = -1.567$, $P > 0.05$. We therefore, concluded and recommended that there is a great relationship between Substance Abuse and Suicidal Ideation among Youths in Kaduna North. There should be measures in place to curb this menace due to its adverse effects on our youths and by implication the nation at large.

Keywords: Substance Abuse and Suicidal Ideation.

1. Introduction

Worldwide, there has been an increase in drugs and substance abuse especially amongst young adults, with no exclusion to Nigeria. In 2011 the United Nations office on drugs and crime reported that Nigeria was top on the chart in drug or substance abuse in Africa and was also reported that Nigerians are the largest abusers of cannabis in Africa. Indeed, youth in many urban and even rural areas are being identified as victims of substance abuse. There are thriving Indian hemp cultivation in the South West and South-South geopolitical zones of Nigeria. While the North West, North-East and North Central zones of the country have been bedeviled by the same malaise and the wanton abuse of drugs, including Indian hemp, psychotropic substance and solvents, with the South East and some parts of South – West having significant prevalence of trafficking (Thisday, 2016).

Substance abuse is a major problem all over the world both public health and our societies at large. The use and abuse of substances especially among youths have become one of the most disturbing health related phenomena in Nigeria and other parts of the worlds (NDLEA, 1997). Substance abuse occur at all economic levels of society, from the wealthy to the impoverished, and among young people as well as adults. These substances are abuse by youths and are over-dependence or misuse of one

particular substance with or without a prior medical diagnosis from qualified health practitioners. The impact of substance abuse among Nigerian Youths has been hallmark of a morally bankrupt, decadent and wasted generation and loss of our societal values and ideas. Drugs are chemicals, because of their chemical structures, can affect the body in different ways. In fact, some drugs can even change a person's body and brain in ways that last long after the person has stopped taking drugs, maybe even permanently (Aluede, 2000). Most abused drugs directly or indirectly target the brain's reward system by flooding the circuit with dopamine. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter present in regions of the brain that regulate movement, emotion, cognition, motivation, and feelings of pleasure. When drugs enter the brain, they can actually change how the brain performs its jobs. These changes are what lead to compulsive drug use, the hallmark of addiction.

According to Lindberg et al (2000), over ninety percent of the teenagers who drink regularly also do other things that can put them or those around them at risk of having such behaviours include the use of anti- social behaviours like suicide, illegal drugs, fighting, carrying weapons, and having unsafe sex. Nigeria Epidemiological Network on Substance Users (NENSU, 2015) data states that 93.3% of drug abusers are male, 85.3% of those in treatment were brought by family members and average age of admission ranged from 27 to 32 years, while average age of first use ranged from 18.6 to 22 years. Thousands of years ago, people were using natural substances such as plant and herbs for purposes as diverse as pain relief, healing or to create feelings of wellbeing, energy or relaxation. Many of these substances are now considered to be illegal drugs (Efere, 2005).

Suicide remains a significant problem, causing almost half of all violent deaths and resulting in roughly one million fatalities every year, as well as an economic cost of billions of financial resources (World Health Organization, 2004).

Suicidal ideation refers to thoughts of engaging in behaviour aimed at ending one's life. Suicide plan means formulation of a specific method and

preparations towards ending one's own life. Suicide gestures are seen as act of self- harm unlikely to result in death. For example, people may slash their wrists but not deep enough to bleed or they take an overdose of vitamins. Suicide gestures are cries for help the persons are desperate but do not know how to ask for help for others suicide gestures is an attempts to manipulate or control people around them. For an example an individual abandoned by a lover may make a suicide gesture in an attempt to get the lover back. Though and plan about suicide are called suicide ideation. This may reflect a plea from people who wish to live and should not be dismiss lightly suicide ideation is related to suicide gesture (World Health Organization, 2004).

Suicide ideation or suicide thinking is the contemplation of ending one's own life. These types of thoughts may happen in people who feel completely hopeless or believe they can no longer cope with their life. Situation – suicide ideation can vary greatly from fleeting thoughts to preoccupation to detailed planning. Most people with ideation do not carry out an actual attempt, but some do. For every 25 attempts, there is one death. (National Institution of Mental Health, 2003). While destructive behaviour including all manners of either directly or indirectly that may lead to death. For example risky sexual behaviour, dangerous drug, alcoholism, non- compliance with drugs prescription or hospital regiment. In addition, the World Health Organization defines (WHO) defines suicide as the act of killing oneself, deliberately initiated and performance by the person concerned in the full knowledge or expectation of its fatal outcome.

Substance abuse also play role in suicide ideation. According to Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2014) Patients with substance abuse cases face an extraordinary high risk of suicide ideation and suicide attempt. One study showed that 73% of patients with substance abuse cases have attempted suicide with the average patient having 3.4 attempts.

Suicide ideation has been conceptualized as a continuum from suicidal ideation to attempts

and complete suicides. Risk factors and Suicide ideation and suicide attempts are common among young people and are important factors for completed suicide and longtime ranging from substance abuse, depression to PTSD (Brown, Beck, Steer & Grisham,2000).

National Institution of Mental Health (2003) maintained that better understanding of the prevalence suicidal ideation and other symptoms of affective disorder in adolescence and young adults is of special interest, given efforts to increase identification and treatment of men's substance abuse. Suicide ideation according to Ani (2010) is the least commonly endorsed substance abuse cases among adolescents experiencing an episode.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Substance abuse is currently a universal problem; it is no longer isolated within cultural groups and geographical region, but has permeated various natural and continental boundaries with no exception to Kaduna. The problem is so worrisome that efforts to curb its spread and possibly eradicate it have assumed a diplomatic dimension, resulting in multilateral and bilateral treaties (Thoresen & Mehlum, 2008). More recently drug abuse especially among the young generation of Nigeria has constituted a major social problem that impedes effective personal and social development.

The efforts of the various organs of government in Nigeria and especially the area of our study (Kaduna) particularly the national drug law enforcement agency (NDLEA) to curb the problem appears to have come to naught (Oshikoya & Alli, 2006).

Within Kaduna State and most especially Northern Kaduna, substances abuse has also been linked to an increase in the number of cases of suicidal ideation, cultism, violence and mental disorders among the youths (Park, 2001). The situation now appears to be such that no one can claim ignorance of what is happening. We cannot sit on the fence and criminally pretend on the menace of substance abuse among our young people and how we are losing our youths by

committing suicide or having the intention of suicide.

However, there are no enough data to determined suicide rate among veterans, recent reports suggest that male youths are twice as likely to die by suicide as non- male. As such, there is paucity of research regarding epidemiology of suicide rate in Nigerian youths. Most of the incidents of suicide in Nigerian youths reported by social Medias which are not well verifiable and documented. Hence, the means of collecting data from such is not easily available. This is partly attributed to Nigeria as a less developed country, with inadequate poor record of death and its causes.

1.2 Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between Substance Abuse and Suicidal Ideation among Youths in Kaduna North?
- Will there be difference in Substance Abuse and Suicide Ideation between the Younger and the Older participants in Kaduna North?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The research has the following objectives:

- To examine the relationship between Substance Abuse and Suicidal Ideation among Youths in Kaduna North.
- To determine the difference in Substance Abuse and Suicide Ideation between the Younger and the Older participants in Kaduna North.

1.4 Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested in the study:

- There will be a significant relationship between Substance Abuse and Suicidal Ideation among Youths in Kaduna North.

- There will be a significant difference in Substance Abuse and Suicide Ideation between the Younger and the Older participants in Kaduna North.

2. Literature Review

“It is not unusual for ‘normal’ individuals to experience occasional suicidal thoughts” (Ruddell & Curwen, 2002). However, frequency and severity varies depending on the individual. Severity of suicidal ideation can vary greatly from a single fleeting thought, to occasional curiosity, to extensive thoughts, to detailed planning. In a cross-national study that examined the prevalence of suicidal ideation, plans, and attempts, they found that lifetime prevalence of suicidal ideation was 9.2%, suicidal plans was 3.1%, and suicidal attempts was 2.7% (Nock et al., 2008). However, other studies have found lifetime rates of suicidal ideation to vary between 2.09 and 25.4% depending on age, culture and geographic location (Bertolote et al., 2005). Nock et al. (2008) found that the prevalence of having suicidal ideation differs by socio- demographic factors (i.e., age, sex, race/ethnicity, education).

In Nigeria, youths’ suicidal ideation and suicide is resulting from posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, substance abuse and other psychological problems that increase the risk of suicide (Tanielian & Jaycox, 2008). “The increased rates of suicidality recently noted among the youths may be due to the drug abuse (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2011). Prevalence of suicidal ideation among youths has been identified to range from 6.5% to 45.9% in clinical samples and from 2.3% to 21.2 % in nonclinical samples (Lemaire & Graham, 2011; Mavandadi et al., 2013). These statistics indicate that up to nearly half of substance abusers among youths who seek help have experienced suicidal ideation and up to one fifth of non-treatment seeking youths have experienced suicidal ideation. The truth is that even these alarming statistics may not fully capture the number of veterans that experience suicidal ideation. This is largely due to the stigma placed on having suicidal ideation, which causes many veterans not to openly share these thoughts.

Since these studies tend to utilize self-report measures, these numbers only capture those who are willing to admit to having suicidal thoughts (Corson et al., 2013).

Research on youths’ suicidality (i.e., suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, suicide completions) has identified several factors that have been associated with an increased risk of suicidal ideation. These factors include PTSD (Guerra & Calhoun, 2011), physical problems, (Braden & Sullivan, 2008), depression, PTSD, and substance abuse problems (Kang & Bullman, 2008). Although several socio- demographic traits are associated with a greater risk of suicidal ideation in the general population, there are mixed conclusions on whether these factors are predictive of suicidal ideation among veterans (Corson et al., 2013). These mixed conclusions are due to several studies examining the same demographic factors and all finding different results. Although not found in every study, some studies have found that demographic factors such as age, gender, and ethnicity do influence the risk of suicidal ideation among youths (Corson et al., 2013). Research now indicates that youths at the highest risk of suicidal ideation may be those diagnosed with two or more psychiatric disorders (Corson et al., 2013).

The alarming increase in the suicide rate among youths suggests that substance use is likely an important factor that contributes to suicidality in youths. Substance abuse has been linked to not only completed suicides and suicide attempts, but has also been shown to be associated with suicidal ideation among youths (Bryan et al., 2015). In fact, recent studies have found a stronger association between substance abuse and suicidal ideation than PTSD and suicide attempts (Maguen et al., 2012). Jakupcak et al. (2011) studied suicidal ideation in and substance use and found that substance abusers’ levels were significantly higher among those with suicidal ideation.

In the general population, there have been many studies that have demonstrated that certain demographic factors do increase the risk of suicidal ideation (Nock et al., 2008).

Age. When examining demographic factors, age has been found to be one of the more significant predictors of suicidal ideation and suicidality in the general population (Crosby et al., 2011). He also found that the prevalence of suicidal ideation was highest among adults aged 18-29 years when compared to the overall U.S. adult population. The risk for this age range seems troublesome since those aged 20-29 represent the majority of the youths who seek care within the system (Brenner et al., 2008). However, despite this risk, many studies among the youths have indicated that there is no relationship between age and suicidal ideation (Guerra & Calhoun, 2011). Although less common, a few studies have found some general relationships between age and suicidal ideation. A study that examined socio-demographic variables (gender, age, race/ethnicity, years of education, marital status) between youths with and without suicidal ideation found the only significant variable to be age (Jakupcak et al., 2009). These results found that subjects in the suicidal ideation group were older than those in the no suicidal ideation group. Ling, and Southwick (2011) found similar results indicating that youths who have suicidal ideation were older than non-contemplators.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

The research design that used in this study was survey design. There was no attempt to manipulate the variables since a survey design presumes that the data are collected after the events of interest have occurred. The researcher decided to adopt this design for this study because the independent variable has taken its effect among the participants used for this study.

3.2 Participants

The sample that will be used for the study will comprise of one hundred and forty (140) participants purposively selected in Kaduna North and all of them were males with their age range from years 16- 30 were employed. The religions of the respondents were Christians,

Table 1: Relationship between Substance Abuse and Suicidal Ideation among Youths

Muslims and traditionist selected. This area is selected for the study consequently upon time and financial constraints as well as the wider knowledge of the area.

3.3 Instruments

The instruments for this study were Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire (SIQ) and Substance abuse Questionnaire. **Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire** was developed by Beck, Kovacs, & Weissman, (1979). Suicidal ideation was assessed using self-report items to measure severity, duration. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The SIQ has been shown to have acceptable validity and excellent test-retest and internal reliability with the Cronbach's alpha on SIQ items as 0.93 (Brenner et al., 1992).

Substance Abuse Scale: The SAS instrument contains 11 items and was measured in 5-Point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. A pilot study was conducted to determine the validity and reliability of the instrument. Thirty (30) participants from selected from different location in Kaduna North were sampled for the study. A Cronbach's Alpha of .605 was obtained for the instrument and .721 for Suicidal ideation validation.

3.4 Ethical Consideration

The code of ethical principles was strictly followed in this study, some of which include: voluntary participation of participants; informed consent was obtained from all participants that participated and were protected from discomfort; and finally, all research data were treated with utmost confidentiality.

4. Results

The presentation was done through the analysis and interpretation of data collected from the field. SPSS v20 was used to analysis the data. The descriptive statistics used were frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation while the inferential statistics used to test the hypotheses were independent sample t- test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Variables	M	SD	Df	R	Sig.
Substance Abuse	35.97	5.221	138	0.314	0.011
Suicidal Ideation	83.21	19.227			

Source: Field Work 2019 $r(138) = 0.314, P < 0.01$.

The table above showed that the M= 35.97, SD= 5.221, for Substance Abuse, M= 83.21, SD= 19.227 for Suicidal Ideation. The result revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between Substance Abuse and Suicidal Ideation among Youths in Kaduna North $r(138) = 0.214, P < 0.01$. In other words, the hypothesis was confirmed in the study.

Table 2: Difference in Substance Abuse and Suicide Ideation between the Younger and the Older participants in Kaduna North.

Variables	N	M	SD	Df	t-test	Sig.
Substance Abuse: Younger	70	34.16	5.017	138	2.535	0.009
	Older	70	36.63			
Suici Ideation	Younger	70	38.52	138	-1.567*	0.139
	Older	70	88.65			

Source: Field Work 2019

Sig. Level: * $P < .05$; ** $P < .01$

The analysis revealed no statistically significant difference between Younger and Older on Substance Abuse $t(138) = 2.535, P < 0.05$ but a statistically significant difference between Younger and Older on Suicidal Ideation $t(138) = -1.567, P > 0.05$. In other words, the hypothesis was confirmed in this study for substance abuse but not confirmed for suicidal ideation. The results revealed the mean scores for younger on substance abuse and suicidal ideation as 34.16 and 38.52 respectively while older had mean scores for substance abuse and suicidal ideation as 36.63 and 88.65 respectively.

5. Discussion

Unlike some findings Tanielian and Jaycox (2008) posits that in Nigeria, youths' suicidal ideation and suicide is resulting from posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, substance abuse and other psychological problems that increase the risk of suicide. The first hypothesis states that there will be a relationship between substance abuse and suicidal ideation was confirmed. Other studies supported the hypothesis in this study. "The increased rates of suicidality recently noted among the youths may be due to the drug abuse (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2011).

The second hypothesis looked at the differences between substance abuse and suicidal ideation between the younger and older youths. The result revealed no statistically significant difference between Younger and Older on Substance Abuse, but a statistically significant difference between Younger and Older on Suicidal Ideation. In other words, the hypothesis was confirmed in this study for substance abuse but not confirmed for suicidal ideation. Supporting the finding in this study, Bryan et al (2015) confirmed the alarming increase differences in the suicide rate among younger youths than older ones but no differences in substance abuse among the two groups. This is likely an important factor that contributes to suicidality in youths. Substance abuse has been linked to not only completed suicides and suicide attempts, but has also been shown to be associated with suicidal ideation among youths.

6. Conclusion

From the Forensic psychological point of view, the relationship between substance abuse and suicidal ideation among youths in Kaduna North can be regarded as a catalyst that can accelerate the suicide and criminal tendency among the

youths in our societies. Many parents are eager to learn all they can about children's development. The calculation of these norms and values become strong and independent, despite the law of dynamism, the changing cannot be too radical because of the early adopting healthy self-esteem.

7. Recommendations

It is from the discussion so far on the relationship between drugs abuse and suicidal ideation among youths in Kaduna North the following recommendations are therefore put forward:

- Professional counsellors should organize an effective regular training on life-long skills for the adolescents to divert their attention from engaging in drugs, suicidal ideation and psychosocial behaviours.
- As Psychological services is seen as a supportive relationship and modelling of human behaviour, care, help and support should be extended towards those youths as well as other people engaging in drug abuse.
- Government on their own part should make available funds through valuable agencies to enable Psychologists in our communities assist their children to develop themselves and boost their self-esteem as well as life performance in general.
- There is need for counsellors and therapists to design an effective intervention programmes for these youths to eradicate or bring to the minimum these anti-social behaviours of these youths
- However, Psychological intervention should be proactive in order to be administered not only to adolescent with anti-social behaviours, but also to be used in preparing and preventing unwanted behaviours in Nigeria.
- It is also recommended that parent-child relations be strengthened to avoid tensions which ultimately lead to youths' substance abuse and suicide, for

example, parents need to have time to talk to their growing children about substances, suicide and their effects.

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