

Drugs and Substance Abuse among the Secondary School Students in Korogocho: Implications for Behaviour and Performance

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ABSTRACT

Globally, Drugs and substance abuse continues to be a challenge, especially among the youth in school and out of school. It impacts negatively on the academic, social psychological and physical development among the abusers. This paper examines the effects of drugs and substance abuse on social conduct and academic performance among the students as well as the mitigating measures. It is based on a study carried out at Korogocho slums. A total of 102 students and 15 key informants were sampled. Questionnaire and interview guide were used to collect data. The study revealed that marijuana, miraa, alcohol and cigarettes are the most abused drugs by secondary school students and had eroded the core values hence affecting their social skills development and academic performance. The study concluded that slum life, peer pressure, congestion as well as poverty are the recipe to drug and substance abuse among students. The study recommends increased public awareness campaigns on dangers posed by drug and substance abuse involving media, civic education and all the stakeholders; and proper policy formulation and implementation.

Key Words: Drug and Substance Abuse, Students, Secondary School, Slums, Kenya.

Introduction

The use of drugs and substances has been in existence for thousands of years and has been an integral part of societies [1]. It has penetrated all segments of the society from the urban professional snorting cocaine in a down town night club; the glue-sniffing street children in the slums of the developing world; the farmer addicted to the opium, and the teenage ecstasy user in a comfortable home [2]. However, some drugs and substances, when properly administered become a blessing to human beings. People have always used herbs, roots, barks, leaves and all kinds of plants to relieve pain and help control diseases. Unfortunately, such drugs and substances produce enticing side effects such as euphoria, a sense of feeling good, elation, serenity and power such that what begins as means of relaxation evolves over time into a problem of dependence and abuse [3].

UNODC estimated that in 2009, between 149 and 272 million people used illicit substances at least once in the previous year and about half that number was estimated to be current drug users by the time of this study [4]. Cannabis is by far the most widely used illicit drug, consumed by between 125 and 203 million people worldwide. Reports have shown a steady upward trend in drugs and substance abuse and mostly among the youth. Consistent high rates of serious riots, fires and other violent disturbances in educational institutions have caused a great deal of public concern and the explanations for frequent occurrences of these problems have been associated with consumptions of drugs and other substances [5].

Recent trends of drug use and abuse among young people in Kenya, particularly students is on the rise. Statistics provided by the Anti- Dangerous Drug Organizations (1995), revealed that 62% of the drug users countrywide are young people aged below 30 years. In addition, the use and abuse of drugs and substances in secondary schools in Kenya is rampant. A preliminary survey of drug and substance abuse conducted among secondary school students in Kenya confirmed that drug and substance abuse was quite prevalent, for instance up to 10% of students drink alcohol more than three times a week, 16% smoke cigarettes more than three times a week, nearly 14% had smoked cannabis (bhang) and 16% admitted taking other drugs especially tranquillizers. This is due to the easy availability of these drugs and substances in the schools' neighbourhoods [6].

Various strategies have been introduced to control drug and substance use and abuse at both international and national level. At the international level, the United Nations Conventions on Narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances by all UN member states in control of illicit drugs and substances was implemented. Conventions that have been passed and ratified by the members include the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961) and the Convention against Illicit Traffic of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 [7]. United Nations Drug Control Program was also established in 1991 to provide leadership in international drug control with the mission to work with the nations and peoples of the world to tackle the global drug problems and its consequences. In 1997, Office of Drug Control and Crime Prevention was established to deal with international crime followed by the 1998 General Assembly which came up with a declaration on guiding principles of drug demand reduction to bring demand and supply to equilibrium [8, 9].

At the local level, the Government of Kenya, in response to the rising trends of drug and substance abuse has introduced various measures involving drug control, legislation and legal framework under which treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers take place. The Kenyan government has ratified the three major International Drug Control treaties namely; Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol, Convention on psychotropic substance 1971 and United Nations Convention against illicit traffic in narcotic

drugs and psychotropic substances of 1988. It has also enacted the law on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances (control) Act, 1994. There is also the office of National Coordinator for the Campaign against Drug Abuse (NACADA) with a mandate of coordinating and harmonizing drug abuse prevention education activities to create awareness aimed at achieving behaviour and attitude change and eventually reduction on demand and abuse of substances [10]. The Ministry of education has integrated drug education components into the existing school curricular and has also emphasized the provision of training in drug education to heads of schools, teachers and quality assurance officers through in-service courses. These courses are aimed at creating awareness of the dangers of drug abuse and its consequences, mobilizing school children to participate and take a leading role in fighting drug and alcohol abuse and increasing teachers' capacity to intervene through counselling and preparation of materials for drug education [11].

In Nairobi County secondary schools, just like in other cities in Africa, the risk age of drug and substance abuse has dropped to fourteen years from previous seventeen years posing a serious challenge to anti-drug use crusaders and the government [12]. NACADA [13] indicated that half of the students in secondary schools have taken drugs and up to 30 to 40% in class seven, eight and form one have taken drugs at one time or another. In particular, drug and substance abuse is rampant among students in secondary schools in slum settlements, a trend that is fuelled by proximity to drug peddlers, high levels of poverty, ease in availability and slum life which make many students vulnerable to the allure of drugs [14; 15].

Korogocho slums are among the largest informal settlements in Nairobi and are estimated to house between 100,000 and 120,000 people on a small area of about 1.5 square kilometres. Like any of the other slum settlements, it has a large poor population living largely in structures made out of temporary and recycled building materials. Open spaces are few, thus limiting recreation and other forms of leisure opportunities for young people. The high unemployment rates among the youth due to lack of necessary skills and education for formal employment makes them engage in the sale of drugs and substances and in the process, end up using and abusing the substances that they sell [16]. A study conducted by Africa Population Health and Research Centre (APHRC) in Korogocho slums in 2002 observed that drugs and substance abuse is high among the youths in and out of school and the most commonly abused drugs in slum areas amongst the youths are cigarettes (65%), marijuana (52%) and others (25%) [17].

In view of the foregoing background, this paper sought to investigate drug and substance abuse among the in and out-of-school youths in Korogocho slum with respect to its influence in their behaviours. The quest was guided by the three objectives: to determine the effects of drug and substance abuse on social conduct of students within the school environment; to examine the effects of drug and substance abuse on students' academic performance in secondary schools in slum settlements; and to find out the mitigating measures provided by the school authorities in management of drugs and substance abuse in secondary schools.

Methodology

As mentioned earlier the study focused on the influence of drug and substance abuse on behaviour among students in Korogocho slums, Nairobi County. The Korogocho slum is among the largest informal settlements in Nairobi, after Kibera, Mathare, Valley, and MukuruKwaNjenga. It is located in the Kasarani Division, in Eastern Nairobi, approximately 11 kilometres from the central business district. It is estimated to house between 100,000 and 120,000 people on a small area of about 1.5 square kilometres of land owned by the Government of Kenya. It borders the largest dumping site in Nairobi – the Dandora dumping site – posing environmental health and security risk to the residents and surrounding settlements.

Korogocho slums popularly referred to by locals as 'Koch' have five villages namely Highridge, Grogan, Kisumu Ndogo, Nyayo and Giathuru. Each of these villages has unique forms of crime ranging from petty to hard-core. Grogan is home to hard-core criminals who wield deadly guns. The area also deals in hard drugs and substances and serves as storage for stolen goods. Highridge is known for illicit sex (commercial), selling of children and drunkenness. Kisumu Ndogois is known for guns and sword-wielding criminals who rob visitors even during daytime. Nyayo and Giathuru are comparatively better and happen to be the main business areas though dominated with pickpockets.

The entire population of the secondary school's students in Korogocho Slums was 3000 by 2015 though the sample frame was drawn from form three and forms four in three secondary schools (500). The target population for the study was approximately 3000 students from all the five (5) mixed secondary schools in Korogocho slum, Nairobi county out of which one (1) is public, one (1) is church owned and three (3) are individually owned. The study targeted form three and four students because they have been in school for some

time and were likely to be more familiar with drug abuse problems and better placed to give the required information. The study also targeted head teachers, deputy head teachers, school counsellors and class teachers.

The sample frame was drawn from the total number of students from the three secondary schools as shown as:

Table 1: Sampling frame and size

Name of School	Population (n)	Sample size (20% of n)
Our Lady of Fatima	250	50
St. Francis	140	28
Kochland	120	24
Key informants	-	15
Total	500	117

Source: Field data (2015)

Form three and four students were selected because they have been in school for some time and were more familiar with drug abuse problems and better placed to give the required information. In addition, they are mature enough to suggest ways of dealing with the issue from their own experiences and make suggestions for improvement. Further, the study used systematic sampling to identify student respondents from each class. The sampling started by selecting an element in the class register list at random and then every k^{th} element in the frame was selected.

The purposive sampling method was used to select 15 key informants from the school. This included guidance and counselling teachers because of their key role in dealing with the drugs and substance use issues in the school environment. The head teachers and their deputies were also selected because as administrators of the school, they play a key role and have crucial information on drugs and substance use in school. Class teachers were included because of their knowledge on students who abuse drugs and substances and the effects this has on the academic progress of the students.

Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were applied. Structured questionnaires with both open and closed-ended questions were used to collect quantitative data from the student respondents. Questionnaires were appropriate for the collection of data from a large group of respondents and getting their views on the drugs and substance abuse in schools. Structured personal interviews were carried out using an interview guide with the key informants. The interview guide enabled probing and corroboration of issues which came out during data collection using questions, it also enabled clarifications on major issues. Interview guides are open and this characteristic was pertinent to this study because unwilling respondents were easily and flexibly convinced to answer all the questions.

The data from the entire sample of students from the selected secondary schools was tabulated to generate frequencies, proportions or percentages and analysed with respect to the three objectives of the study. Frequencies and standardization with proportions or percentages were also used to indicate the overall characteristics, academic progression and challenges

The analysis of the structured items was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Unstructured items were organized into themes, summarized into narratives and statements to complement quantitative information. Conclusions were drawn from the analysed data, leading to recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

Results and Discussion

In order to assess the effect of drugs on behaviours of students, which was the main focus of the study, it was necessary to first assess whether students knew of the existence of drugs and the reasons for their use.

Knowledge of students abusing drugs and substances

Respondents were asked whether they knew of students who abuse drugs either in their school or neighbourhood. Results revealed that 73.68% knew while 26.32% did not.

This means that drug and substance abuse was a prevalent common phenomenon in secondary schools in the slums and the neighbourhoods. This finding is in line with a study done by Kiambuthi[19] which revealed that drug and substance abuse is more prevalent in day schools and in situations where the neighbourhood public easily walks into school to sell their commodities.

When the respondents were asked if they had ever abused illegal drugs before, the majority of them (66.7%) agreed while only 33.3% disagreed. The most abused drugs revealed were Marijuana and Miraa with 55.9% of the respondents reporting in affirmative, followed by alcohol and cigarettes which was indicated by 20.6% of the respondents. A small percentage of the respondents (3.9%) said cocaine and heroin are also used by some students as shown in figure 1.

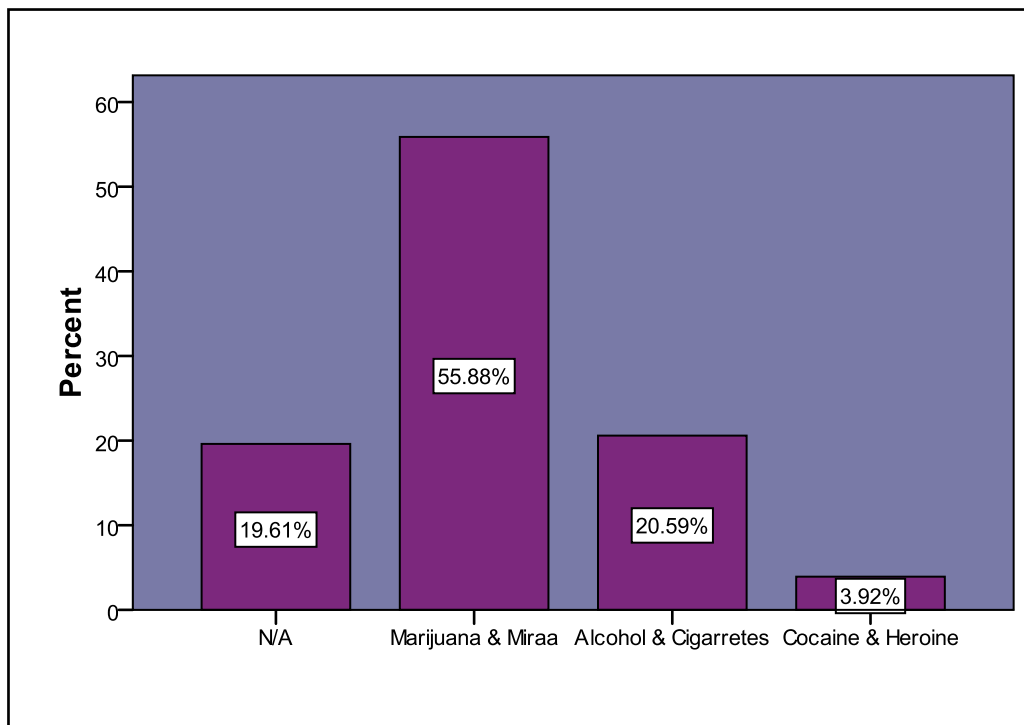


Figure 1: Common drugs abused according to students

Source: Field data (2015)

The key informants had varied views on the commonly abused drugs and substances by students and the level of awareness of drugs and substances amongst the students. One of the guidance and counselling teachers indicated that:

“All students knew of the drugs and substances used in schools, but some of them could not acknowledge this as they thought they would be victimised or said to be the ones using the drug. He further indicated that this group of students feigned innocence” (Key informant).

This was confirmed by another guidance and counselling teacher who said:

“On average five to six cases of drugs and substance use are reported to me in a month. The cases are mainly about cigarettes, bhang, miraa and alcoholic drinks. It is believed that there are many unreported cases as students have perfected ways of evading the school rules” (key informant).

From these findings, it is clear that most students are aware of the drug and substance abuse in their schools and neighbourhoods. Marijuana, Miraa, alcohol and cigarettes are the most prevalent and abused drugs by secondary school students in Korogocho. This is because such drugs are found or sold cheaply in the slum areas

neighbouring the schools exposing students to drug abuse at an early age. The findings are in line with a study carried out by Kaguthi[20] who observed that students abuse drugs such as alcohol, cigarettes, bhang, khat and other illegal substances more than prescription drugs. The findings also agree with those of NACADA [21] which found that alcohol, khat and tobacco were the commonly abused drugs. This possibly reflects the overall current situation of drug abuse among the youth in the country.

As indicated by one of the key informants:

“Alcohol is the most abused substance around because of its availability and ease of concealment. The students prefer the second generation illicit brews which are packed in plastic bottles as they are easy to carry around. These are also cheap and affordable to the students. Miraa is also widely used because of the belief that it can keep people awake” (Key informant).

It was further found that the use of drugs such as alcohol, khat and tobacco is culturally, socially and legally acceptable in Kenya and these drugs are locally produced. Such factors have compounded the problem of substance abuse and dependence among the youth including students.

Reasons why students abuse drugs

Out of the respondents who had abused drugs at one or more points in their lives, 28.4% indicated that they used drugs for pleasure, while 11.8% used them because of peer influence, 13.7% used them in order to keep stress at bay, 26.6% used because they could easily access them while 19.5% stated other reasons.

One of the Principals noted that:

“Drugs and substances are readily available to the young people. Some of them do not even consider things like miraa, alcohol and cigarettes as drugs...students are selling drugs such as alcohol...use drugs because of they believe that drugs will make them better and have the guts to put across their grievances. So in this area drug and substance abuse among students is very common...”(key informant).

The misconception based on the belief that people who use or abuse substances are bold, confident or courageous and the ‘feel good’ effect informed drug abuse and addiction in Korogocho. The need for young people to belong to a social group (peer group) was revealed as one main reason why students indulge in drug and substances use. This revelation is in agreement with a research carried out by Gathumbi[22] which posited that peer influence contributed significantly to substance abuse among students.

It was also revealed that a higher number of students abuse drug and substances because of stress brought about by several individual factors such as poor academic achievement and low academic aspirations. First, adolescents who perform poorly in school may feel that they are failures; this feeling may be reinforced by teachers’ and/or parents’ responses to academic failure. They also turn to drug and substance use to alleviate the distress this causes, as was put across by one of the guidance and counselling teachers:

“Some of the students who abuse drugs and substances do so because of stress that either emanates from home or school, for instance there was a student who used to abuse alcohol when we probed further, he revealed that his academic performance was not appealing to his parents and elder siblings who insult him and even canes him, this has led him to take alcohol to make him cope with the hurdles he faces at home...” (Key informant).

Effects of Drug and Substance Abuse on Students Social Conduct

The first objective of this study was to determine the effects of drug and substance abuse on the social conduct of students within the school environment. Its indicators were: Students’ conduct while in school; the relationship between students and their teachers; Students involvement in the conflict with their teachers and other staffs; Aggression and hostility among students who abuse drugs; Drug abuse causing strikes; and vandalism among students.

Students’ Conduct while in School

In an attempt to find out the state of students social conduct while in school, respondents were asked to rate the state of student social conduct in their schools. A total of 9.8% of students indicated that the student conduct in their schools was very satisfactory, 22.5% indicated that students conduct was satisfactory, 8.9% indicated that

the students conduct was moderate, while 49.0% of students indicated that the students conduct was unsatisfactory with 9.8% indicating that the students conduct was very unsatisfactory.

This means that the students' social conduct while in schools is questionable and that drug and substance abuse have adverse effects on consumers particularly in the decision making process, creative thinking and the development of necessary life and social skills. This finding is in agreement with research that was done by the Republic of Kenya [23] which noted that drug abuse contributes to loss of interest in academic work and indiscipline among students.

One of the deputy principal noted that:

“Students conduct in our school is very unsatisfactory, the students are indiscipline and do not obey the school rules and regulations, they always take teachers for granted and ridicule them, they cannot be corrected by any teacher. They are the students who determine which subjects to be taught and at what time they want to be taught...when we become strict on them, some students go to the extent of threatening us” (Key informant).

When the respondents (key informants) were further asked to explain their ratings, 23.5% indicated that they were satisfied with the students social conduct because students were compliant to school rules, 14.7% indicated that they were satisfied with the students social conduct because according to them only students who abuse drug and substance were indiscipline while 61.8% were not satisfied with the students social conduct because most of the students are indiscipline and do not adhere to school rules.

It's evident from the findings that, drug and substance abuse has eroded the core values in students such as honesty, tolerance, peace, responsibility, hence affecting their social skills development. This is in concordance with a study by Kerachio[24] which found that drug abuse among the youth leads to socially unacceptable sexual adventures, academic underachievement, poor study habits, serious misunderstandings between teachers and students which leads to students' expulsions from schools and even students dropping out of school.

It was also noted that student conduct in school is determined by several factors including school factors such as ineffective classroom management, failure in school performance, truancy, affiliations with deviant peers, peers around deviant behaviour and perceptions of approval of drug using behaviour in the school.

One of the class teachers noted that:

“Some of the teachers in our school are not paid well and are not even paid in time... some of them resort to drinking alcohol because of frustrations. Therefore it is hard for the teacher to discipline students who abuse drug and substances in school because students see them using the drugs, sometimes when you try to correct a student then they always make reference to such teachers... thus addressing the issue of drug and substance abuse remains an issue in this area” (Key informant).

The Relationship between Drug Abusers and their Teachers

In finding out how students who abuse drugs relate with their teachers and other staffs in school, 35.29% of the key informants indicated that such students try to behave well since they do not want to be known as drug abusers, 62.75% said that such students do not behave well with their teachers while only 1.96% indicated that they do not know. This means that drug and substance abuse leads to poor interpersonal relationships.

When the respondents were further asked if students who abuse drugs tend to be hostile and aggressive, 75.5% confirmed that students abusing drugs are very hostile, rude, and aggressive, and like picking fights with either teachers, fellow students or staff members in school. Such hostility and aggressiveness among students who abuse drugs have been the major cause of students' unrest and indiscipline among youths in many secondary schools in the recent past. For instance, this was reported by one of the respondents:

Many of those students who abuse drugs and substances in our school tend to be very aggressive, like picking fights with fellow students, our teachers and even other school staffs. There was a time one of them got suspended because of drugs and the rest of his friends became restless and started disrupting other students from their classes (Key informant).

Another key informant noted that:

Students who abuse drug and substances especially in this school are abusive, violent and nagging and always ready to fight...even as teachers we fear them because some of them are hard-core criminals,' day time they take cover in schools and at night they are gangsters and they have friends around...so most of the time we just look at them (Key informant).

This was later confirmed when it was investigated if students who abuse drugs were ever in conflict with their teachers, other staffs and even fellow students, where 67.65% confirmed that such students are rude with teachers and like picking fights with fellow students, while 24.51% argued that there was no any kind of conflict between such students and teachers. Seven per cent (7.84%) indicated that they did not know what was happening.

Students' Abusing Drugs indulge in Stealing and Vandalism

The respondents were also asked if they had ever experienced incidences where students who abuse drugs were involved in vandalizing and stealing school properties as well as other students' items while in school. A majority of the respondents (66.7%) agreed that students abusing drugs tend to steal from home and school as well in order to get money for drugs and substances. However, 31.4% stated that they had never experienced such in their schools. For instance, this was said by one of the students interviewed:

Most of the students who abuse drugs are always caught up into problems with teachers because of theft either from home or at school...they have become addicted to drugs and so they need to steal so as to get money for drugs (Student respondent).

It was therefore evident that those students who abuse drugs and substances engage in undesirable and shameful habits e.g. cheating, stealing, prostitution and doing odd jobs in order to obtain money to buy the drugs and sustain their addiction This, in the long run, interferes with their social and career achievements. This finding was supported by one of the deputy principals who indicated that:

...most of the students from this area come from poor families who can barely afford the basic needs in life and therefore for the students to sustain their drinking habit, they have to look for money to buy the drugs and substances; most of them are forced to either steal from home or from their fellow students, some of them especially girls resort to prostitution...

It was noted that drugs and substance abuse is associated with crime and misconduct among students that disrupt the maintenance of an orderly and safe school atmosphere conducive to learning. It leads to the destruction of school property and classroom disorder. It has also been linked to law breaking and involvement in other forms of crime. Drug users engage in fights, distraction and disrespect to others; and some steal from family members and friends.

Effects of Drug and Substance Abuse on Students' Academic Performance

The second objective was to examine the effects of drugs and substance abuse on students' academic performance in secondary schools in an informal settlement. Its indicators included: Effects of drug abuse on academic performance; Drug abuse and class attendance, Drug abuse and performance in class activities.

Drug abuse and academic performance

In an attempt to find out the effects of drug abuse on students' academic performance, the respondents were first asked if there were some students among them whose performance had dropped because of taking drugs and substance. Majority of them (89.2%) confirmed that the academic performance of such students had dropped tremendously and that some of them had been sent home on academic grounds, while only 10.8% said that drug abuse among students had not affected their academic performance.

The study found out that drug and substance abuse leads to poor academic performance which may, in the long run, lead to school drop-out, juvenile delinquency among other things. Conversely, adolescents who are heavily involved in alcohol and other drugs placed little value on academic performance, as the urge to drink and use drugs took on the primary importance. It also made the abusers to lose interest in school activities and school work. This finding was in line with the Republic of Kenya [23] which noted that drug abuse contributed to the loss of interest in academic work and indiscipline among students.

As it was put across by one of the key informants of the study:

Drug abuse leads to minimal concentration among students during class lessons causing a lot of absenteeism and lateness which finally results in poor academic performance (Key informant).

One of the class teachers noted that:

The students who use drugs and substances are usually lagging behind in academic performance. This is because they do not complete their assignments in time, they are always drowsy and lazy and do not like struggling. Majority of students who have realised that they cannot perform better always seek solace in drugs and substances, therefore, waste a lot of time, making them perform poorly in their school assignments (Key informant).

Another class teacher noted that:

Students who persistently abuse substances often experience an array of problems, including academic difficulties, health-related problems, poor peer relationships and involvement with the juvenile justice system...they lose interest in school work including extra curriculum activities leading to a decline in grades, absenteeism from school and other activities, and increased potential for dropping out of school (Key informant).

It was revealed that drugs and substances drastically reduced the students' concentration span and boredom set in much faster for drug users than the non-users. Again, the student lost interest in school work including extra curriculum activities. Due to this, cases of absenteeism in school were rampant, resulting in one taking too long to complete studies. Some drugs also affected the decision-making process of the students, creative thinking and the development of the necessary life and social skills. They also interfered with the awareness of an individual's unique potential and interest thus affecting their career development. The study revealed that behavioural problems experienced by abusers interfere with their academic performance and also present obstacles to learning for their classmates leading to poor performance in academics.

Drug Abuse and Students' Class Attendance

The study also sought to find out the effects of drug and substance abuse on students' class attendance. The majority (69.6%) of the respondents agreed that students who abuse drugs and substance did not attend classes regularly. A total of more than eighteen per cent (18.6%) disagreed that drug abuse made students not to attend their classes regularly, while only 11.8% stated that they were not sure.

As a result, therefore, the study revealed that many times students who abuse drugs and substances do not go to school in time, and do not attend classes regularly since drug use leads to impaired mind, less endurance, absenteeism, poor health, poor performance in examinations and eventually school dropouts. This was noted by one of the class teachers:

Students who abuse drugs do not come to school regularly, they are usually late and do not know how to manage their time. Some of them come to school but are not able to concentrate in class because of the hangovers; some are very rowdy and interrupts others forcing us to send them home (Key informant).

The study further revealed that drug and substance abusers had a low commitment to education and higher truancy rates. Consequently, students who were heavily involved in alcohol and other drugs, placed little value on academic performance, as the urge to drink and use drugs took on the primary importance. They did not also see the need of going to school regularly and on time because they looked down upon themselves as failures. As indicated by one of the school principals:

Some students who abuse drug and substances have lost hope in life, and hence do not see the need for education, this makes them not to come to school but even when they come to school they are not sober in mind, making it very difficult to catch up with fellow students...some of them leave home in the morning to come to school but ends up in drinking dens... (Key informant).

Drug and substances abuse was found to be closely tied to being truant and dropping out of school. Those using drugs were most likely to skip school. This is supported by Trusts(2013) that found that dropouts were almost twice as likely to be frequent among drug users.

Drug Abuse and Participation in Class Activities

When the respondents were asked if drug and substance abuse made students not to participate in class activities, a total of 49.1% agreed with the statement, while 36.2% disagreed as 14.7% stated that they were not sure.

The was study found that those involved in drugs and substance abuse tended to be withdrawn and kept to themselves thus limiting them from participating in class and extra-curriculum activities that would involve others as a team, leading to poor performance in class work. One of the key informants stated:

Students who abuse drugs tend to experience truancy, being absent-minded and resulting in low concentration in class. There is also a lot of absenteeism, the incompleteness of class work and generally poor performance in academics among such students. As a result, quite a lot of students involved in drug and substance have been sent home on academic grounds leading to school drop-outs (Key informant).

It was revealed that drugs reduced students' concentration span, leading to boredom and loss of interest in school work including extra curriculum activities. Due to this, absenteeism was prevalent in school and resulted in one taking too long to complete studies. Also, the decision making process of the students, creative thinking and the development of the necessary life and social skills were stunted.

The study further showed that drugs and substance abuse lowered performance and productivity. In some cases, some of the youngsters resorted to embezzlement, forgery, corruption, bribery and extortion in order to meet their drinking habits. Prolonged abuse of drugs and substances in some situation leads to psychiatric disorders such as delusional state and chronic dementia. It may lead to death from, for example, alcoholic poisoning.

Strategic Measures in Managing Drugs and Substances

The study looked at the measures adopted by the school authorities in the management of drugs and substance abuse in secondary schools. Its indicators included: Mitigating measures on drugs and substance abuse; and preventive measures on drug and substance abuse.

Mitigating measures

In finding out the mitigating measures adopted by school authorities when dealing with drug and substance abuse in school, the respondents were first asked what their teachers do to the students found abusing drugs and substances. Out of 102 students who were interviewed, 44.12% of them stated that such students were sent to guidance and counselling teachers in school, 25.49% stated that such students were referred to rehabilitation centres, 5.88% said that teachers sought more information from parents, whereas 24.51% said that such students were either suspended or expelled from school.

Guidance and counselling emerged as the most preferred measure with 44.12% of the students indicating that this intervention was in use in the school, followed by 25.49% who indicated that students who abuse drugs and substances were sent to rehabilitation centres, 24.51% indicated that drug and substance abusers were either suspended or expelled while summoning and involving parents/guardians was named by 5.9% of the students. This is in line with findings of several studies [25; 26; 27; 28] which found out that school authorities placed emphasis on guidance and counselling as a measure of tackling drugs and substance usage. Additionally, there are many other avenues that teachers utilize to ensure that their schools are drug-free as argued by one of the school principals:

We employ different measures since no single measure can be effective. Upon looking at the case at hand, one can decide which strategy to use. Most of the time, we use guidance and counselling especially on students who are willing to change. But in extreme cases where the student is not willing to change, they are expelled subject to approval from the Board of Governors (Key informant).

When asked about other measures adopted by school authorities when dealing with drug abuse in school, 45.1% stated that their school authority created awareness on effects of drugs through peer educators. More than thirty-two per cent (32.4%) indicated that school authority imposed punitive measures on students found abusing

drugs, while 4.9% stated that their school authority did nothing about the challenge, with 17.7% indicating that they did not know what happens with such cases.

This means that peer counselling and guidance is being used as a major way of reaching out to students on the effects of drug and substance abuse. The peer counsellors are mainly respected students and non-student leaders from various social groups who have been trained on listening skills and how to talk to youths on effects of drugs abuse on their learning behaviour and their life by engaging peer influence and their participation. Thus, creating awareness among students is crucial as it ensures conscious and responsibility with regard to the decision on whether to use or not to use the drugs. One of the guidance and counselling teachers indicated that:

Peer guidance and counselling component tackle the drug problem in general by discussing the causes and dangers of drug and substance use in addition to how one can avoid falling into the drug trap. Through peer counselling, students who abuse drugs feel free to talk about their indulgence habits because they feel that they cannot be victimised and again some of the peer counsellors are reformed addicts this gives the abusers an opportunity to share with them how they can change their habits, peer counsellors also acts as role models because majority of abusers would want to imitate them(Key informant).

Key informants were asked how they identified and diagnosed students who engaged in drugs and substance use. It was found that a number of signs of drugs and substance use set those who used drugs and substances apart. They included red eyes, slurred and heavy speech, and staggering among others as stated by one guidance and counselling teacher:

Students abusing drugs can be identified by their red eyes, slurred and heavy speech and in extreme cases staggering. We also look out for blackened nails and burnt fingers some of the students also tend to be withdrawn and very rude when asked a question; basically, those students who abuse drugs tend to misbehave(Key informant).

Preventive Measures

The study was interested in finding out if the students were aware of the existence of any program used as a preventive measure against drug and substance abuse both inside and outside their schools. During the interview, 84.3% of the respondents indicated that they were aware of the existence of those programs, whereas only 15.7% of the respondents said they were not aware of such programs. This means that the creation of awareness on the fight against drug and substance abuse among students has been successful since the majority of students confirmed that they were aware of such preventive measures. This is contrary to findings by Simatwa, Odhong, Juma and Choka[29] which indicated that lack of awareness coupled with unavailable accurate information on the adverse consequences of indulgence habits leave the problem of drug and substance abuse to permeate communities throughout Kenya.

The study further sought, from the respondents, opinions whether those preventive programs were effective and helped in the reduction of drug and substance abuse among the students. Out of the 102 respondents who participated in the study, 70 (68.6%) agreed that such programs were effective in creating awareness on the effects of drug abuse among students. Only 18 (17.6%) of the respondents did not agree and stated that the programs were not effective since many students who abuse drugs were still using them. The remaining 14 students (13.7%) stated that they did not know what happened.

Therefore, creating awareness on the effects of drug and substance abuse among the youth has been a successful campaign towards reducing the menace in secondary schools. Knowledge on the effects of drug and substance abuse is assumed to be common which is not the case given the magnitude of drug abuse in schools and the larger society and hence the need to have quality information about such effects.

Conclusion

Based on the findings discussed previously, it can be concluded that students from Korogocho slum are well versed with drugs given their proximity to and the conditions of their residence. Marijuana, Miraa, alcohol and cigarettes are the most prevalent drugs that they know of or/and use. These drugs have become part of their living as some in fact sales them together with their parents in order to earn a living. They abuse them for reasons that include: relaxation, feeling good, for strength, and for combating stress among others. Peer

pressure, slum life, poor living standards and proximity to drugs and substances are identified factors that caused drugs and substance use.

Drugs and substance abuse was found to affect students' social life and students' academic performance. Conflicts between teachers and students, reported by the study, are clear evidence of prolonged use and adverse effects of drugs in the social conduct of the students. This has also implied on their academic performance in that students take longer to complete school despite the prescribed four years of study in secondary education. Again, the impact on the willingness and efforts by teachers to teach, thus resulting in poor coverage of syllabus and revision.

Further, it can be concluded that a number of strategies have been adopted by schools in order to mitigate the drug situation in their schools. They range from guiding and counselling, creating awareness, punitive punishments, the involvement of parents among others. This implies that even as the situation of drugs and substance abuse worsens and as it continues to permeate the society, administrations are doing what can be done in attempts to manage. For instance, the study revealed that there are programs that have been tailored at combating drug abuse menace that has been successful especially in creating awareness among students within and outside the school.

The implication to Research and Practice

The information on Drugs and substance abuse is of tremendous importance to the researchers and other concerned entities. To begin with, the researchers can base on what has been found at Korogocho slum to research on drugs in other parts of the country, Kenya, and outside. Having an understanding of what surrounds life in slums with regards to drugs and others substances is paramount for researchers who are interested in researching on the social life of children and recommending best practices for handling school going children, specific to slums.

Organisations such as NACADA and others can also use this information in coming up with mechanisms to curb the menace that are specific to certain areas such as slums because it provides light into the life in slums area. Governments too can benefit from such information in knowing the country well and is the important inequitable distribution of resources within the country given the magnitude of the need for rehabilitation. Further, this information can inform the government's decision in coming up with infrastructure for learning e.g. technical colleges and polytechnics in that slum areas require attention in addressing issues of idleness and illegal businesses. This will make drugs and other substances inaccessible to students as dealers are preoccupied in other livelihood-making activities that are legal.

Recommendations

In line with the findings, the study makes the following recommendations as a precursor to mitigate drug use among secondary school students in informal settlements:

Awareness and sensitization programs should be organized in secondary schools to educate students on the dangers of drug and substance use. These efforts need to take different and sustained forms such as guidance and counselling inclusion in the curriculum, role modelling, and use of drama, music and sports.

There should be a clear policy on how to deal with drug and substance use in schools. Such a policy should also spell out the action to be taken against students who are found to be abusing drug and substances and also to those found selling the drugs to students.

There is also a need for parents and guardians to be in the forefront in the upbringing of their children and not totally delegating the parenting role to teachers. Measures to be taken should include monitoring their children movements and the social group outside the school environment

There is a need to equip all teachers with knowledge of how to deal with drug substance use cases in schools. The Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission needs to put in place training of all teachers in order to achieve this. Another alternative is to ensure that all secondary school have professional counsellors.

The media also needs to be actively involved in strategies aimed at curbing drug and substance use among youths in and out of school. The media needs to stop adverts portraying the picture that, being involved in drugs use is normal and that, taking drugs and substances makes people feel good.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the finding, conclusions and recommendations, further research can be done on:

- a. The influences of family structure on drug and substance abuse among secondary school students in informal settlements
- b. The effectiveness of professional guidance and counselling in controlling drug and substance abuse among secondary school students in informal settlements
- c. The factors influencing drug and substance abuse among youths from high socio-economic status and youths from low socio-economic status (A comparative research).

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