

# Analyzing the Elements and Ramifications of Substance Abuse among Secondary School Students: A Case of Six Selected Secondary Schools in Chibombo District of Central Province, Zambia.

Chisebe Sylvester and Sibanda Linda

\*Corresponding author: Sylvester Chisebe

## Abstract

This research examining the factors and consequences of drug abuse among secondary school pupils: a case of six selected secondary schools in Chibombo district of central province, Zambia. The study aimed at shedding light on the underlying factors contributing to drug abuse and its impact on the pupil's population. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods; empirical data was collected from pupils, teachers, school head teachers and education officer through questionnaire guides. The researcher used purposive and simple random sampling, whereby the researcher selected 200 respondents as drowned out from the research population; this included 2 officers from the ministry of education, 6 head teachers, 60 teachers and 132 pupils in six selected secondary schools in Chibombo district of Central province, Zambia. The data which was collected was analysed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS version 25 to produce outputs according to the research objectives. Therefore, the study found out that the burden of substance abuse is still high in our study population and the prevalence was significantly higher among students who had not received any formal teachings on the subject. It therefore becomes imperative to incorporate teachings on substance abuse into the national school curriculum for secondary school students. The National School Health Policy needs to be expanded to incorporate this vital issue. The law enforcement agents regulating drug trafficking in and out of Zambia should begin to beam their search lights on secondary school students.

## 1.1 Introduction

The escalation of drug abuse among secondary school pupils in the Chibombo District has become a matter of growing concern. This study to comprehensively explored the factors contributing to this phenomenon and examine the resultant effects on the students and the broader community. By understanding the intricacies of substance abuse in secondary schools, recommendations were drawn to address and mitigate its impact.

A drug is any medical or chemical substance that when taken into the body by any means causes a change in the body. Drug abuse is the sporadic or persistence and excessive use of any chemical or substance for any reason other than its acceptable medical purposes which may lead to dependence on drugs (Henry and Kobus, 2007). Resulting from the interaction between a living organism and a drug characterized by behavioural and other responses that always include a compulsion to take the drug on continuous or periodic and sometimes to avoid the discomfort of its absence. An addict is someone who cannot stop using drugs.

Drug abuse is one of the social problems that affect everyone, everywhere, either directly or indirectly and pupils are no exception. Drug abuse attraction may be cultivated from the beginning of children lives, either indirectly during pregnancy life or directly during post-natal life. The interaction theory centres around the assumption that through interaction with peers and social learning is when the child learns on his own will on how to use drugs and other anti-social behaviours which are in the surrounding environment where the child lives (Lynskey, 2002). Complications of substance abuse by young people are grave including:

increased odds of engaging in risky sexual behaviour, personality disorders, sexual violence, criminal tendencies and drug dependence among others.

Stevanovic et al, (2015) opines that substance abuse especially among adolescents has become of great concern in the scientific, political as well as public spheres. While many studies have been conducted on substance abuse, the menace of this social anomaly has remained unabated particularly among the youths. The study at hand was specially designed to examine the causes of drug abuse among pupils in three selected secondary schools in Chibombo district of Central province, Zambia. The study is very beneficial for the government and all stakeholders as it provides solutions or treatments to solve the problem of drug abuse among secondary school pupils.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

This research aimed at examining the factors and consequences of drug abuse among secondary school pupils in secondary schools in Chibombo district of central province, Zambia. Muoti (2014) reported that young people in consumption countries were the most vulnerable section of the population especially those in the periods of early and late adolescence who are mostly unable to resist peer pressure and who are so inquisitive to experiment with drugs both inside and outside school. By identifying the key factors contributing to substance abuse and understanding its impact, the study sought to provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, educators and community stakeholders to develop targeted interventions. This study focused on examining the factors and consequences of substance abuse among secondary school pupils: a case of six selected secondary schools in Chibombo district of central province, Zambia.

### **1.5 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was examining the factors and consequences of substance abuse among secondary school pupils: a case of six selected secondary schools in Chibombo district of central province, Zambia.

### **1.6 Objectives of the study**

This study was guided the following objectives:

1. To identify the factors contributing to drug abuse among secondary school pupils in the Chibombo District.
2. To establish effective intervention measures of drug abuse among secondary school pupils in Chibombo District.

### **1.7 Research questions**

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the primary factors leading to drug abuse among secondary school pupils in the Chibombo District?
2. What are the possible intervention measures that can be put in place in controlling and preventing drug abuse among secondary school pupils?

### **1.8 Significance of the study**

The study was considered as significant and timely because it could help the Government, School administrators, teachers and community members to curb with ways that could address challenges that were a threat. In addition, not only to the school pupils who were using drugs, but to the economic and social development of the country. The research could be an eye opener to the young generation who want to experiment with drugs and they could learn from the effects of abusing these drugs. The findings of this study could help to address the challenges of drug abuse in the community at large, as well as in the schools by the ministry of education including institutions such as Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC).

## **2 Literature Review**

Browne-Miller (2009) a drug is any chemical substance which affects a living organism. Such a substance may be used to fight infections and illness or minimize pain, fatigue, anxiety or at times to achieve certain level of ecstasy. On the other hand, drug abuse is any use of drugs for non-medical purposes almost always

for altering consciousness. Drug abuse denotes substances that change the mental or physical state of a person and that may be used repeatedly for that effect leading to abnormality. Blandford (1998) stated that drug dependence is a state arising from repeated administration of a drug on a periodic or continuous basis in order to experience its psychic effect and sometimes to avoid the discomfort of its absence.

WHO (2009) stated that “engaging in drug use can increase the risks of being both a victim and/or a perpetrator of violence, while experiencing violence can increase the risks of initiating illicit drug use.” Drug-related violent crime has been classified both as violence arising from the effects of substances and violence associated with the interaction of a psychiatric illness and drug use. Violence can also be linked to the acquisition of drugs and violence connected to disputes between drug users, drug dealers and drug gangs (Dogra, et al. 2011).

However, experience shows that drug abuse has been on medical and non-medical drugs. The difference ought to be made to avoid any confusion that might be related with. For the medical drugs, using them without prescription of the medical personnel or using them contrary to the prescriptions of the medical personnel is considered as abusing the medical drugs. For example, use drugs for four times instead of three times or three times instead of two times per day. For the non-medical or illicit drugs, they include heroin, cocaine, cannabis and opium (Chege et al, 2017).

Ghodes (2003) highlighted that drug and substance abuse amongst the youths may be influenced by several factors. They range from poor parentage, peer pressure, ease accessibility of drugs, poverty, unemployment, need to relief stress, influence of western culture, influence of social media and weak laws among them. In a bid to address the dangers posed by the drugs to the pupils, a number of intervention measures have been put in place. They include: creating awareness on the negative impacts of drug and substance misuse through public meetings, counselling the youth, creating activities to keep the pupils busy, prosecution of those using and peddling drugs among others (Kombo, 2005).

## **2.1 Most commonly abused drugs in schools**

Alcohol is the most abused drug. Zambia like many African countries is facing a problem of drug and alcohol abuse among the youth. Alcohol and marijuana are reported to be the most abused drugs followed by volatile solvents and hard drugs such as heroin and cocaine (INCB, 1993). According to Lusakatimes.com dated 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2009 States that, The Drug Enforcement Commission, DEC, says Cannabis remains the most abused drug among youths in the country.

## **2.2 Causes of drug abuse among pupils**

Drugs and substance abuse is caused by a complex, interacting network of sociological, psychological and biological variables. When pupils abuse drugs many reasons are given as justification for indulging in such destructive behaviour at such a young age. These reasons range from dealing with anxiety and uncertainties of becoming adults to dealing with everyday challenges and problems (Awake, 2003). In addition, factors that might be beyond an individual’s control such as personality, genetics as well as the environment are also fundamental determinants of drug abuse.

Arata (2003) remarked that parents help share or shape child’s behaviour by means of their selective encouragement or discouragement of particular behaviour, by discipline and the amount of freedom they allow, the time, quality of parent’s response also help shape good or bad behaviour. Barret and Turner (2005) discovered that the absence of parental affection in terms of parental concern, involvement and modelling are key factors that play a significant role in the family’s influence on an individual’s inclination to abuse drugs. Therefore, family influence accounted for more than twenty per cent of variance in drug abuse.

Colder and Chassin (2013) contend that a variety of parenting deficiencies while raising children contribute to pupil’s drug abuse. Goldstien and Brooks (2006) argued that pupils who portray a negative attitude towards themselves in different aspects of life, for instance social or academic, often find themselves engaging in drug and substance abuse. Challenges with the pupil’s self-confidence are made worse by the

individual pupil's supposed disagreement with parents on their behaviour. The improved family relationships would effectively foster improved self-esteem in the pupils.

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

Descriptive design was considered appropriately for it allowed more flexible techniques for data collection in order to answer research questions. The study also used mixed methods approach which is qualitative and quantitative data. Creswell (2002) observes that a descriptive research design is used when data is collected to describe persons, organizations, settings or phenomena. The study aimed at collecting data from the respondents on an investigation into the causes and effects of drug abuse among pupils in secondary schools: a case of six selected schools in Chibombo district of central province, Zambia.

#### 3.2 Location of the Study

The research was conducted in Chibombo District of Zambia at six selected secondary schools from which respondents were sampled

#### 3.3 Population, Sample and Sampling procedure

The population comprised of Headteachers, Teachers and Pupils from selected schools. The target population was 2000 from targeted schools. The sample size of this study was 200 which include sixty (132) pupils or children, six (6) Head teachers, 2 officers from the district (DEBS), sixty (60) Teachers inclusive guidance teachers were interviewed from selected schools. The study used purposive and simple random sampling on different categories of participants from selected school.

#### 3.4 Data analysis

The data that was collected using semi-structured interview schedule was qualitatively analysed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS version 25 to produce outputs according to the research objectives. Data which was recorded from interviews was transcribed, edited, segmented and tabulated. Qualitative data that was collected mainly from semi-structured interviews (Zulu, 2019) will be analysed thematically.

#### 3.5 Ethical Consideration

In this study, three critical aspects of ethics were considered. These were informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality and confidentiality and conflict of interest. The researchers gave the participants a full understanding of the purpose of the study. The researchers also informed the respondents that those who had agreed to participate, had done it voluntarily and the respondents were informed to feel free to pull out of the study at any stage according to their wish.

### 4. Results and Discussion

The following findings and discussion were presented according to the research objectives.

#### 4.1 To identify the factors contributing to drug abuse among secondary school pupils in the Chibombo District.

Table 1: Factors contributing to drug abuse among secondary school pupils.

Variables	NO. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Genetic	18	19%
Depression	10	10%
Peer Pressure	55	57%
Curiosity	14	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 above shows the factors which were identified to be responsible for drug abuse among pupils in secondary schools. Therefore, these include: experimental curiosity, peer pressure, poor socio-economic condition at homes and the need for extra energy for daily activities among others. However, the learning theory says that drug abuse occurs as a result of conditioning, social or instrumental learning. Barnes (2013) pointed out that perceived adult drug use was one of the reasons why adolescents end up getting into drug abuse. Peer pressure is the major contributor to abuse of drugs by most students. More respondents do concur that peer pressure is the most cause of drug abuse compared to the other causes which are genetic, curiosity and depression.

Most students were in agreement that they were into drugs so they were accepted by their peers. The responses also indicate that some students are into drugs because their parents or guardians use drugs. Heavy headedness, harsh treatment, lack of freedom and student failure to have their grievances addressed creates stress which can lead to drug abuse. Gross (2005) peer pressure was normally embedded with wider network of peer groups peer groups reaffirm self-image, and enable pupils to experience a new form of intimacy and learn social skills, they also offer the opportunity to expand knowledge, develop the new identity, and experiment away from the watchful eyes of the family.

Abdu-Raheem (2013) is also supportive of that perceived adult drug use led to drug or substance abuse. Teenagers who are left along for long periods of time or who are allowed to come and go as they please undoubtedly have greater opportunity for exposure to drugs. Most teens used drugs and alcohol when going to friends' homes, spending the night out or when attending parties. It was suggested that parents or guidance should be aware of their kids' movements such as to ask them where they are going and contact information so they can be contacted when outside their home.

#### **4.2 Effective intervention measures of drug abuse among secondary school pupils in Chibombo District.**

There had been an increasingly growing concern by educators, parents and the public in general to curb the menace of substance abuse among pupils in secondary schools of Chibombo district. A number of pupils involved in drug use and eventually became addicted posing a threat to their health and safety. Situational measures like guidance and counselling, talks during assembly, use of strict school rules, punishments, verbal reprimands, expulsion and suspension are common measure used by Schools in curbing drug abuse.

However, other measures, such as peer counselling, summoning parents, and inviting experts such as Drug Enforcement Commission officers. The integration of drug abuse education in other subjects, classroom lessons, rehabilitation, calling the police and social activities like sports which keep the youths busy, as key preventive measures to curb drug abuse. Schools to adopt measures relevant to their circumstances or environment thus they may be unique to each school. The country lacks collective effort to fighting drug abuse as stakeholders are not equally involved.

#### **5. Conclusion**

The main aim of this study was to examining the factors and consequences of drug abuse among secondary school pupils in secondary schools in Chibombo district of central province, Zambia. The study recorded that there were a number of causes leading to drug abuse by pupils hence affecting their academic performance and these were, peer pressure, genetic, depression and curiosity. Drug abuse is a social problem that has spread like a wild fire across our educational institutions especially among our secondary school students. In secondary schools today, this social mal adaptation is considered an issue of serious concern as it adversely affects the lives and performance of students involved as well as the harmonious functioning of the entire society. Drug abuse and other associated problems were inimical to the survival and effective functioning of human societies. A significant number of health hazards, untimely deaths, and accidents have been linked with the activities of persons under the influence of one drug or the other.

#### **Recommendations**

Regarding to the results of the study, the use of drugs in secondary schools has been on a rampart increase due to a number of causes. The following recommendations have been made to address these causes:

1. School authorities to employ more social workers and school psychologists to work with children who are victims of drug abuse and help them out of their conditions.
2. Teachers should receive special training in drug and alcohol abuse preventive education.
3. The head teachers should foster an open and loving environment for students and teachers to feel free to talk about drug abuse in the school environment.
4. Schools to work closely in with the police forces to try to eliminate in coming of drugs into the schools.

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