

Prevalence and Perceived Psychosocial Effects of Substance Abuse among Undergraduates of a Tertiary Institution in South-West Nigeria

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Substance abuse is a significant public health concern, particularly among university students who are prone to risks associated with newfound independence, peer pressure, and academic stress. However, there are limited studies on the prevalence and psychosocial effects of substance abuse among university students. Hence, this study which assessed the prevalence and psychosocial effects of substance abuse among undergraduates in a tertiary institution in South-west Nigeria. A descriptive cross sectional study design was used. A multistage sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 410 undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan. A Core Alcohol and Drug Survey questionnaire was adapted for data collection on types, prevalence and perceived psychosocial effects of substance abuse. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequencies, percentages, mean and inferential statistics of chi-square at 0.05 level of significance. The mean age of the participants is 21.8 ± 0.882 , majority were female 260(63.4%). Findings show there is a high prevalence 125(30.5%) of substance use, with alcohol (46.6%) and marijuana (18%) being the most abused substance among the students in the last one year. However, Marijuana (46.8%) was the type of substance abused mostly. Many (68%) reported negative perceived psychosocial effects of substance abuse. The most common effects are hangover (29.3%), abdominal pain (21.7%), lack of classroom concentration (16.3%), absenteeism (14.1%), and enhanced social activity (16.1%). The perceived benefits are being happy (27.1%), feeling of motivation (27.6%) peer connections (11.7%). There was a significant relationship between the academic performance of students and the prevalence of substance abuse ($p=0.000$). Findings showed a significant prevalence of substance abuse and a negative psychosocial impact on the students. Therefore, it is imperative that the university provide resources for substance abuse prevention, awareness and support in order to curb the rising prevalence of substance abuse and maintain positive psychosocial health.

Keywords: Substance abuse, prevalence, perceived, psychosocial effects, undergraduate students

Introduction

Substance abuse remains a global public health concern, with profound consequences for individuals, families, and communities (Lo *et al.*, 2020; Oluwasola *et al.*, 2021). The World Health Organization (2022), defines substance abuse as the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, like alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, cocaine, opioids and amphetamines leading to dependence, morbidity, and significant social or occupational impairment. This definition underscores not only the clinical dimensions of substance use but also its broader psychosocial and developmental implications (Oluwasola *et al.*,

2021). Among young adults, particularly university students, substance abuse presents a unique concern because this developmental stage is marked by identity formation, increased autonomy, and heightened exposure to peer influence (Bulfone *et al.*, 2025).

Globally, substance use among young adults has reached alarming levels. At different time points, there have been diverse reports of prevalence of substance abuse globally. For instance, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2021) reported that approximately 275 million (60%) people worldwide reported drug use in the previous year,

with a significant proportion being young people. Also, UNODC reported that in 2022, the number of people using illicit drugs increased to 292 million which is a 20% increase over the past 10 years. It further noted that substances abused mostly are cannabis (228 million people), Opioids (60 million people), Amphetamines (30 million, people), Cocaine (23 million people) and Ecstasy (20 million people) (United Nations, 2024). Furthermore, in 2024, UNODC, annual World Drug report warns that there are nearly 300 million users of drugs globally (United Nations, 2024).

In Africa, substance abuse among undergraduates is also a rampant public health issue. Several studies have shown there are high rates of alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, prescription drug and inhalants use among undergraduate cohorts across African countries (Abayomi *et al.*, 2022). A study done in Northwest Ethiopia reported above 50% of university students involved in substance abuse and alcohol drinking and nonmedical prescription stimulant use for perceived academic improvement was also noted across African campuses (Melkam *et al.*, 2023). In Nigeria, around 19% of the general population of 213 million engages in drug abuse, concentrated among youth ages; 15-35 years old with alcohol, cannabis, cocaine, codeine, tramadol and benzodiazepines being abused the most (Aguocha, *et al.*, 2021; National Drug Law Enforcement Agency Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2019). A scoping review by Jatau *et al.* (2021) revealed a prevalence of drug abuse to be as high as 20-40% among Nigerian youths and 20.9% were seen among students. Furthermore, a study done in Owerri, Imo state reported that the lifetime rate of psychoactive substance use among undergraduates was 84.5%, with alcohol (82.5%) having the highest rate of life time and in a year (61.1%) use (Aguocha *et al.*, 2021). Another similar study conducted in Osun state Nigeria, showed that 12.3% of undergraduates had engaged in substance abuse and 29.8% used alcoholic beverages (Idowu *et al.*, 2023). These statistics paint a disturbing picture of substance abuse penetration into Nigeria's youth population, including those in tertiary institutions who should ideally be focused on academic excellence and personal development.

Multiple factors have been identified as contributors to substance abuse among university

students. Low self-esteem, peer pressure, the need for extra energy for daily activities, poor socioeconomic conditions at home, experimental curiosity, family upbringing, ceremonial exposure, insecurity, sex drive, feeling of ecstasy, confidence building, as a way to show toughness, to stay awake to read, and curiosity have been documented as reasons for initiation (Emakpor *et al.*, 2024; Oluwasola *et al.*, 2021; Adeoti, 2011). Also, students abuse drugs in order to react to failure with mark feeling of hurt and inferiority to low frustration tolerance and to ensure their ability to play expected gender roles (Odejide, 2021).

Students or young ones perceive substances to be beneficial to them, without realizing its detrimental health challenges (Oluwasola *et al.*, 2021). Research consistently demonstrates that substance abuse has significant physical and psychosocial consequences and UNODC reported in 2024 that 64 million people suffer from drug use disorders (United Nations, 2024). Physiologically, chronic alcohol and drug use may impair brain structure and cognitive functioning, cause liver cirrhosis, peptic ulcer, diarrhea, sleep disorders, renal failure, reduce memory, attention, and executive control (Oluwabusi & Olawale, 2020; Nwokorie, 2024; Osalusi *et al.*, 2022). Academically, substance use has been associated with poor learning, lower grades, increased absenteeism, and higher dropout rates (Arria *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, Nwokorie (2024) reported that substance abuse has a high impact on the reading culture, failure rate in examination, and level of concentration in school. Psychologically, prolonged substance abuse is linked to depression, anxiety disorders, behavioural disturbances, and increased risk of psychosis (Arria *et al.*, 2020). Socially, UNODC in 2024 reported that 7 million people had drug offences, 2.7 million people were prosecuted for drug offences and 1.6 million people were convicted all as a result of using or being in possession of drugs (United Nations, 2024). Other social challenges substance abuse correlates with are interpersonal violence, risky sexual behaviours, multiple sexual partnerships, and increased vulnerability to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections as well as political and economic well-being (Oluwasola *et al.*, 2021; Ssekamatte *et al.*, 2023; Arria *et al.*, 2020).

Despite this growing body of evidence on prevalence and psychosocial effects of substance abuse, significant gaps remain in the Nigerian literature on the prevalence of substance abuse at different time point within a year and perceived psychosocial effects of substance abuse. First, several studies focus on prevalence without revealing the prevalence of each substance at different time point, as well as integrating comprehensive psychosocial frameworks. For instance, a study by Oluseye *et al.* (2025) done in University of Ibadan focused on disruptive behaviours disorders without addressing comprehensively the perceived psychosocial effects of substance abuse on the students. Perception is critical because continued substance use is often sustained by perceived benefits such as enhanced confidence, stress relief, or improved academic stamina, despite documented harms (Oluwasola *et al.*, 2021). Secondly, there is limited region-specific evidence from South West Nigeria, particularly from established tertiary institutions such as the University of Ibadan, where academic competitiveness and institutional culture may influence both patterns of substance use and perceptions of its consequences (Olanrewaju *et al.*, 2022; Osalusi *et al.*, 2022). Given these gaps, a focused study examining both the prevalence at different periods within a year and perceived psychosocial effects of substance abuse among undergraduates in South-West Nigeria is timely and necessary. Such research contributes not only to region-specific epidemiological data but also to a deeper understanding of how students conceptualize the impact of substance use on their cognitive functioning, emotional wellbeing, academic performance, and social relationships. By integrating prevalence data with psychosocial perception, the study advances the literature beyond descriptive statistics and provides evidence relevant for targeted campus interventions, mental health programming, and policy development. Hence this study which aimed to assess the prevalence and perceived psychosocial effects of substance abuse among undergraduates in the University of Ibadan.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To determine the prevalence of substance abuse among undergraduates.
2. To determine the perceived psychosocial effects of substance abuse among undergraduates.
3. To assess the type of substance being abused by most undergraduates.

Hypothesis

There is no relationship between academic performance and prevalence of substance abuse among undergraduates.

Materials and Method

A descriptive cross-sectional study was employed in this study. The study was conducted in University of Ibadan from March to April, 2024. A multistage sampling technique was used for the study as follows; a simple random sampling techniques was used at stage one to select eight (8) faculties and at stage two to select a sample size of 410 undergraduates from different levels based on Taro Yamane formula ($n = N/(1+N(e)^2)$). Participants who met the inclusion Criteria of being 1) regular full-time undergraduates, 2) willing to participate in the study were included while those who met the exclusion criteria of being 1) part time or distance learning undergraduates in the University were excluded from the study. A validated questionnaire named 'Core Alcohol and Drug Survey questionnaire' with internal reliability score of Cronbach's $\alpha=0.80$ (Ayala *et al.*, 2017) was used to obtain data on the prevalence of substance abuse, perceived psychosocial effects, types of substance abuse. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics of percentage, frequency, and mean and inferential statistics of Chi-Square at 5% level of significance and presented using tables. For prevalence of substance abuse, the options were scored as this; "never - 1", "Once - 2", "3-6 times - 3", "8 -12 times - 4", and ">12 times - 5". A mean prevalence score ≥ 41.13 shows high level of prevalence and vice versa. For perception of effect of substance abuse, the options were scored as this; 'Yes' - 2; 'No' - 1, a mean perception score ≥ 63.4 shows positive perception and vice versa. Ethical approval was obtained from University of Ibadan/University College Hospital Ethical Review Committee with approval number, UI/EC/24/0183. Ethical principles of research were maintained.

Results

Table 1: Socio-demographic information of study participants (n=410)

Variables	Responses	Frequency	Percent	S.D ± MEAN
Age	16-18	44	10.7	21.8 ± 0.882
	19-21	135	32.9	
	22-24	175	42.7	
	25-27	51	12.4	
	27-29	5	1.2	
Gender	Male	150	36.6	
	Female	260	63.4	
Faculty	Pharmacy	35	8.5	
	Arts	100	24.4	
	Sciences	65	15.9	
	Veterinary medicine	27	6.6	
	Social sciences	42	10.2	
	Education	54	13.2	
	Law	47	11.5	
	Agriculture	40	9.8	
Level of Study	100L	14	3.4	
	200L	70	17.1	
	300L	123	30.0	
	400L	171	41.7	
	500L	32	7.8	
CGPA	1.0-1.99	8	2.0	
	2.0-2.99	123	30.0	
	3.0-3.49	204	49.8	
	3.5-4.0	75	18.3	

Table 1 reveals that majority of the respondents (42.7%) are within the age range of 22-24. 63.4% of the respondents are female. Majority of the respondents (24.4%) are from the Faculty of Arts. A good number of the respondents (41.7%) were in 400L. 49.8% of the students are within the CGPA range of 3.0-3.49.

Table 2a: Prevalence of Substance Abuse among Undergraduates within the last Two Weeks

Variables	Never f(%)	Once f(%)	3-6 times f(%)	8-12 times f(%)	> 12 times f(%)
Tobacco (smoke, chew, snuff)	377(92)	10(2.4)	23(5.6)	-	-
Alcohol (beer, wine, liquor)	288(70.2)	44(10.7)	71(17.3)	7(1.7)	-
Marijuana (pot, hash, hash oil)	355(86.6)	20(4.9)	35(8.5)	-	-
Cocaine (crack, rock, freebase)	405(98.8)	2(0.5)	3(0.7)	-	-
Amphetamines (diet pills, speed)	401(97.8)	6(1.5)	3(0.7)	-	-
Sedatives (downers, ludes)	399(97.3)	5(1.2)	6(1.5)	-	-
Hallucinogens (LSD, PCP)	407(99.3)	-	3(0.7)	-	-
Opiates (heroin, smack, horse)	407(99.3)	-	3(0.7)	-	-
Inhalants (glue, solvents, gas)	405(98.8)	1(0.2)	4(1.0)	-	-
Designer drugs (ecstasy, MDMA)	406(99)	1(0.2)	3(0.7)	-	-
Steroids	400(97.6)	6(1.5)	3(0.7)	1(0.2)	-
Other drugs	369(90)	23(5.6)	18(4.4)	-	-

*f = frequency

Table 2 shows the prevalence of substance abuse among students within the last two weeks. It was revealed that majority have never had tobacco

(92%), alcohol (70.2%), Marijuana (86.6%). Majority, did not take sedatives (97.3%), hallucinogens (99.3%) in the last two weeks.

Table 2b: Prevalence of Substance Abuse among Undergraduates within the last Month

Variables	Never f(%)	Once f(%)	3-6 times f(%)	8-12 times f(%)	> 12 times f(%)
Tobacco (smoke, chew, snuff)	373(91)	12(2.9)	11(2.7)	14(3.4)	-
Alcohol (beer, wine, liquor)	265(64.6)	31(7.6)	70(17.1)	37(9.0)	7(1.7)
Marijuana (pot, hash, hash oil)	350(85.4)	6(1.5)	35(8.5)	19(4.6)	-
Cocaine (crack, rock, freebase)	403(98.3)	6(1.5)	1(0.2)	-	-
Amphetamines (diet pills, speed)	406(99)	-	4(1)	-	-
Sedatives (downers, ludes)	404(98.5)	-	6(1.5)	-	-
Hallucinogens (LSD, PCP)	410(100)	-	-	-	-
Opiates (heroin, smack, horse)	410(100)	-	-	-	-
Inhalants (glue, solvents, gas)	408(99)	3(0.7)	1(0.2)	-	-
Designer drugs (ecstasy, MDMA)	402(98)	8(2)	-	-	-
Steroids	404(98.5)	5(1.2)	-	1(0.2)	-
Other drugs	384(93.7)	12(2.9)	9(2.2)	5(1.2)	-

It can be inferred from table 2b that majority of the respondents (91%) had never taken tobacco within the last month. Some of the respondents (64.6%) did not take alcohol, 85(4%) of the respondents did not take Marijuana. Likewise, 98.3% of the respondents did not take cocaine. A significant proportion of the respondents (99%) never had

amphetamines. Most of the respondents never used sedatives, which accounts for 98.5% of the respondents. All of the respondents did not take hallucinogens and opiates within the last month. Moreover, 99%, 98%, 98.5% and 93.7% of the respondents never used inhalants, designer drugs, steroids and other drugs respectively.

Table 2c: Prevalence of Substance Abuse among Undergraduates within last Year

Variables	Never f(%)	Once f(%)	3-6 times f(%)	8-12 times f(%)	> 12 times f(%)
Tobacco (smoke, chew, snuff)	363(88.5)	14(3.4)	8(2)	8(2)	17(4.1)
Alcohol (beer, wine, liquor)	219(53.4)	52(12.7)	48(11.7)	55(13.4)	36(8.8)
Marijuana (pot, hash, hash oil)	336(82)	3(0.7)	33(8)	17(4.1)	21(5.1)
Cocaine (crack, rock, freebase)	395(96.3)	8(2)	7(1.7)	-	-
Amphetamines (diet pills, speed)	386(94.1)	9(2.2)	15(3.7)	-	-
Sedatives (downers, ludes)	405(98.8)	1(0.2)	1(0.2)	3(0.7)	-
Hallucinogens (LSD, PCP)	410(100)	-	-	-	-
Opiates (heroin, smack, horse)	410(100)	-	-	-	-
Inhalants (glue, solvents, gas)	404(98.5)	2(0.5)	4(1.0)	-	-
Designer drugs (ecstasy, MDMA)	392(95.6)	7(1.7)	9(2.2)	2(0.5)	-
Steroids	402(98)	7(1.7)	-	-	1(0.2)
Other drugs	364(88.8)	21(5.1)	15(3.7)	7(1.7)	3(0.7)

Table 2c reveals that most of the respondents never took tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, sedatives, hallucinogens, opiates, inhalants, designer drugs, steroids, other drugs

within last year which accounts for 88.5%, 53.4%, 82%, 96.3%, 94.1%, 98.8%, 100%, 100%, 98.5%, 95.6%, 98% and 88.8% of the respondents respectively.

Table 2d: Categorical Table for Level of Prevalence of Substance Abuse among Undergraduate Students

Level of prevalence	Mean prevalence	Frequency	Percent (%)
Low level of prevalence	Frequency below or equals to 41.13	285	69.5
High level of prevalence	Frequency above 41.13	125	30.5
Total		410	100

Prevalence score= 41.13, n=410

Table 2d above revealed that majority of the respondents had low level (69.5%) of prevalence of substance abuse among the distribution of students according to the frequency of use of substances.

Table 3: Perceived Psychosocial effects of Substance Abuse among Participants

Table 3a: Perceived Physical effects of Substance Abuse

Variables	Yes f(%)	No f(%)
Had a hangover	120(29.3)	290(70.7)
Got nauseated or vomited	79(19.3)	331(80.7)
Had a memory loss	54(13.2)	356(86.8)
Been hurt or injured	45(11)	365(89)
Got admitted	18(4.4)	392(95.6)
Got energized	103(25.1)	307(74.9)
Felt stronger	101(24.6)	309(75.4)
Abdominal Pain	89(21.7)	321(78.3)
The loss of motor coordination	52(12.7)	358(87.3)
Interferes in other ways	45(11)	365(89)

Table 3 shows that significant proportion of the respondents disagreed that they had no hangover (70.7%), got nauseated (80.7%), had memory loss (86.8%).

Table 3b: Perceived Psychological Effects of Substance Abuse

Variables	Yes F(%)	No F(%)
Thought I might have a drinking or other drug problem	29(7.1)	381(92.9)
Had a memory loss	45(11)	365(89)
Done something I later regretted	57(13.9)	353(86.1)
Tried unsuccessfully to stop using	22(5.4)	388(94.6)
Seriously thought about suicide	33(8)	377(92)
Seriously tried to commit suicide	21(5.1)	389(94.9)
Felt motivated	113(27.6)	297(72.4)
Been happy	111(27.1)	299(72.9)
Others	55(13.4)	355(86.6)

Table 3b reveals the perceived psychological effects of substance abuse on the respondents. It was revealed that few of the participants did something they later regretted (13.9%), felt motivated (27.6%), or been happy (27.1%). However, majority of the respondents did not experience memory loss (89%) nor felt like committing suicide (92%).

Table 3c: Perceived Academic effects of Substance Abuse

Variables	Yes f(%)	No f(%)
Missed a class	58(14.1)	352(85.9)
Had difficulty in concentrating class	67(16.3)	343(83.7)
Performed poorly on a test/exam or important project	34(8.3)	376(91.7)
Felt motivated	71(17.3)	339(82.7)
Studied better	60(14.6)	350(85.4)
Had better academic performance	23(5.6)	387(94.4)
Others	34(8.3)	376(91.7)

*f = frequency

Table 3c shows that majority didn't study better (85.4%), didn't feel motivated (82.7%).

Table 3d: Perceived Social effects of Substance Abuse

Variables	Yes f(%)	No f(%)
Been in trouble with police, residence hall, or other college authorities	23(5.6)	387(94.4)
Damaged property	19(4.6)	391(95.4)
Got into an argument or fight	45(11)	365(89)
Been criticized by someone I know	48(11.7)	362(88.3)
Enhanced social activity	66(16.1)	344(83.9)
Facilitated connection with peers	48(11.7)	362(88.3)
Adversely affects your involvement in organized groups	26(6.3)	384(93.9)
Others	25(6.1)	385(93.9)

Table 3d shows that, majority of the respondents (83.9%) didn't have an enhanced social activity and connection with peers.

Table 3e: Categorical Table for Level of Perceived effects of Substance Abuse

Level of perception	Mean perception	Frequency	Percent (%)
Positive perception	Frequency below 63.4	132	32.2
Negative perception	Frequency higher than 63.4	278	67.8
Total		410	100

Mean Perception score= 63.4, n=410

Table 3e Overall, majority of the undergraduate students had a negative perception of the effects of substance abuse (68%).

Table 4: Types of Substance being abused

Variables	Yes f(%)	No f(%)
Tobacco (smoke, chew, snuff)	25(6.1)	385(93.9)
Alcohol (beer, wine, liquor)	71(17.3)	339(82.7)
Marijuana (pot, hash, hash oil)	192(46.8)	218(53.2)
Cocaine (crack, rock, freebase)	20(4.9)	390(95.1)
Amphetamines (diet pills, speed)	41(10)	369(90)
Sedatives (downers, ludes)	20(4.9)	390(95.1)
Hallucinogens (LSD, PCP)	11(2.7)	399(97.3)
Opiates (heroin, smack, horse)	11(2.7)	399(97.3)
Inhalants (glue, solvents, gas)	21(5.1)	389(94.9)
Designer drugs (ecstasy, MDMA)	33(8)	377(92)
Steroids	18(4.4)	392(95.6)
Others	36(8.8)	374(91.2)

Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents disagreed to abuse these substance, Tobacco (93.9%), Alcohol (82.7%), Marijuana (53.2%), Cocaine (95.1%), Amphetamines (80%), Sedatives

(95.1%), Hallucinogens (97.3%), Opiates (97.3%), Inhalants (94.9%), Designer drugs (92%), Steroids (95.6%), others (91.2%).

Table 5: Relationship between Academic Performance and Prevalence of Substance Abuse among Undergraduates

	Prevalence of substance abuse		Total	Chi-square Value	df	p-value
	Low level	High level				
Academic Performance CGPA						
1.0-1.99	8	0	8	19.085 ^a	3	0.000**
2.0-2.99	70	53	123			
3.0-3.49	145	59	204			
3.5-4.0	62	13	75			
Total	285	125	410			

** significant

Table 5, shows the relationship between academic performance and prevalence of substance abuse. There was a significant difference between academic performance and prevalence of substance abuse ($p=0.000$, $X^2= 9.085a$).

Discussion

The age distribution observed in the study aligns with typical undergraduate demographics and is consistent with previous research indicating that substance abuse is most prevalent among young adults in this age range. Studies have found that the overall past-year use of most psychoactive substances were more among people within the age brackets of 25 and 39 years (Oritsemuelebi *et al*, 2025). The study indicates that a significant portion of students are involved in substance abuse, with varying degrees of frequency over different time periods. Some of the substances abused are alcohol, marijuana and tobacco. The UNODC World Drug Report (2021), highlights high rates of alcohol and marijuana use among university students worldwide, similar to the patterns observed in this study. In the past year, alcohol and marijuana use continued to be prevalent. This finding is similar to a study done by Awosusi and Osisanya (2022) in Nigeria which indicated past-year alcohol use by 24.5% of undergraduates in universities across the country. Other substances showed intermittent use. These findings emphasise the need for targeted interventions addressing substance abuse on

university campuses. Prevention programmes, education on responsible substance use, and support services for students struggling with substance abuse will help in addressing issues surrounding substance abuse in university campuses across the country as stated in a study by Isola *et al*. (2025).

Furthermore, students reported experiencing various physical effects such as hangovers, nausea, memory loss, injuries, and abdominal pain. However, students reported experiencing hangovers, felt energized, and felt stronger after substance use. These positive reinforcement effects may explain why some students continue substance use despite awareness of potential harm. Psychologically, perceived psychological effects like potential substance use problems, regretful actions, and thoughts of suicide were reported. This is in line with a study done by Smith *et al*. (2022) where heavy alcohol consumption was linked to decrease cognitive function, memory impairment, and lower academic achievement. These findings underscore the serious mental health implications of substance abuse and align with research showing that the prevalence of psychosocial dysfunction is higher in adolescents abusing substance compared to controls. Furthermore, this study shows that students who abuse substance experience academic effects such as missing classes, difficulty in concentration, and poor performance on tests. Social effects experienced included arguments,

trouble with authorities, and strained relationships. Studies have revealed a similar effect as students experience social challenges like strained relationship, social isolation or decline in social engagement, involvement in risky behaviours, truancy, absenteeism, cultism, crimes, prostitutions, high-risk sexual behaviours, hostility, personality disorders, conflicts with peers, legal problems and financial strain (Melkam *et al.*, 2023; Emakpor *et al.*, 2024). Despite all these concerns a majority of the students still have a negative perception of psychosocial effects of substance abuse. It can be concluded that the negative perception of psychosocial impact of substance abuse on students' well-being, poor academic performance, and social interactions highlights the urgent need for comprehensive interventions addressing substance abuse prevention, education, and support services on university campuses to mitigate the negative consequences experienced by students as mentioned in a study by Hanafi (2025).

The findings regarding the types of substances being abused among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan indicates that alcohol, tobacco and marijuana are most commonly abused substance. This aligns with global trends aligns with previous studies where alcohol abuse remains a significant concern among university students (Han & Palamar, 2022).

Conclusion

Findings showed a significant prevalence of substance abuse and a negative psychosocial impact on the student's health as well as their academics. Hence it is imperative that healthcare workers in the University Health Services create awareness about substance abuse and its prevention, provide psychosocial or mental health screening and support to the students in order to curb the rising prevalence of substance abuse and maintain positive psychosocial health and quality education among the students.

Limitation of the Study

The generalizability of the result, social desirability due to social stigma, and study designs which is a cross-sectional research design due to its ability to collect data at one time point are limitations to this study.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, we therefore recommend for each sector based on the findings of substance abuse among undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan:

1. School Management is encouraged to implement comprehensive substance abuse prevention programmes tailored to different faculties and academic levels.
2. Increase awareness and education campaigns on substance use and its impact on academic performance and overall well-being of students.
3. Establish support services, such as counselling and rehabilitation programmes, for students struggling with substance abuse issues.
4. School Health Care System are encouraged to strengthen screening and early detection mechanisms for identifying students at risk of substance abuse, provide accessible and confidential counselling services for students dealing with substance abuse problems and offer educational workshops and seminars for students and staff on recognizing signs of substance abuse and interventions.
5. Health Educators are encouraged to develop and deliver targeted educational programmes on substance abuse prevention, responsible use, and risk reduction strategies, utilise evidence-based approaches and interactive methods to engage students in discussions about substance abuse and its consequences and foster peer education and support networks to promote positive behaviour change and encourage help-seeking behaviours.
6. Mass Media are encouraged to use mass media platforms to disseminate accurate information about substance abuse, its effects, and available resources for support, develop targeted campaigns targeting specific substances (e.g., alcohol, tobacco, marijuana) and their associated risks among students. Collaborate with student organisations, influencers, and community leaders to amplify messages and reach a wider audience.

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