

Causes and Implications of Codeine Cough Syrup Addiction among Adolescents in Kano State Nigeria

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Abstract

There has been a steady rise in the incidences of drug addiction throughout the world. This study examined the causes and implications of codeine cough syrup addiction among adolescents in Kano State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to find out the prevalent causes and implications of codeine cough syrup addiction among adolescents in Kano State, Nigeria. A cross sectional survey was adopted for the study. A sample of one hundred (100) respondents who were adolescents and were willing to be part of the study were purposively selected for the study. A researcher developed and validated questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using a split half method. The correlation coefficient was .87r. Data were analysed using Mean and Standard Deviation. Findings revealed that there is a significant difference in the causes of codeine cough syrup addiction among male and female adolescents in kano State ($Pvalue=0.001<0.05$). Some of the causes were peer pressure, failure in school, permissive parents, curiosity, boredom, willingness to try new things and willingness to rebel against parents are the causes of codeine cough syrup addiction among adolescents in the study area. Findings also revealed that, codeine cough syrup abuse has led to blurred vision, constipation, dizziness, drowsiness, tiredness, weakness, vomiting and nausea, difficulty in breathing, among others.

Keywords: Codeine, Addiction, Implications, Cough Syrup, Adolescents

Word Count: 221

Introduction

Civilisation as important as it is, always comes with its prone and cones. One of it is the exposure of people, especially youths to negative social habits through social media and other means, which portrays these habits as been related to success. Substance abuse is one of such habits. The Treatment Centre (2018) asserted that, codeine cough syrup came into spotlight in 2013 when rapper Lil Wayne was reported to have overdosed on the medication. Even though opioid addiction has been in existence for ages, the rapper brought the dangers of codeine cough syrup addiction to global spotlight. The newest and surprising trend in codeine cough syrup addiction is its increasing abuse among secondary school students and adolescents. Codeine syrup is a prescription medicine which suppresses cough and relieve pains. Even though there are several drugs that contain codeine, the most frequently abused one is the one that contains promethazine. Although, both codeine and promethazine are prescription drugs and are classified as central nervous system depressants, they are meant to be the last resort for painful cough as they create a kind of euphoria in several users (Addiction Centre, 2020).

Many users underestimate the dangers of these drugs because they come in liquid form and are usually prescribed by a doctor. However, taking them in large doses could be deadly. The common misconception about this drug is that they are safer than other other types of drugs due to the fact that they are legal. Such sense of safety, can however be fatal. For instance, high doses of codeine can cause liver damage (Natasha, 2018). This is because, it suppresses breathing systems so as to control coughs which can eventually lead to death. One notable method of abusing codeine is to use it to make *purple drank, also known as sip-sip, koko* (in Nigeria), *lean* and *sizzurp*. Purple drank is a cocktail that contains promethazine and codeine cough syrup, soda, hard candy and alcohol.

Amosun, Ige & Ajala, (2010) expressed that, the biggest long term danger of codeine consumption is that people develop tolerance for it. People who abuse this substance regularly will continuously demand higher and higher doses in order to achieve

the similar effect (opioids overdose). Sadly, when too much promethazine and codeine are ingested it can result in an overdose, which could lead to respiratory depression, heart attack or untimely death. Natasha (2018) described opioids addiction as a compulsive and repeated use of increasing amount of opioids substances with surfacing of withdrawal symptoms at any attempt to stop using the substance. Although, the specific causes of opioids addiction are not known, genetic, environmental and psychological factors seem to play a very significant role. It is much likely to have multiple factors leading to drug addiction rather than a single one for a given drug addict. Several people identify drug use and ignorance as causes of drug addiction. For instance, a person dealing with pain management issues may be placed on highly addictive drugs, being ignorant of the potential danger of addiction, coupled with physical pain experienced, the person may become addicted to the drugs. Gulchrist, Schinke and Nurius (2010) also noted that psychological factors are believed to be important causes of drug addiction. Often times, these causes stem from trauma, especially among adolescents. Domestic physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and chaos may result in self medication among adolescents with the aim of reducing pains, this may eventually lead to addiction. Other important psychological causes of drug addiction may include; mental illnesses(depression), bad peers, poor academic performance, poor stress coping skills. According to Gilligan, Ward & Taylor (2008). A person's environment could be an important cause of drug addiction. For example, if a person lives in an environment where drug abuse is rampant or permissible, such person may eventually engage in it.

Ajala (2010) asserted that, adolescents who grew up in homes full of drug addicts often become addicts themselves. Poor parenting could also contribute to drug addiction among adolescents. For example, adolescents who have inattentive, abusive or neglectful parents are more at risk for codeine syrup addiction. Lack of attention and oversight from parents could also be a contributory factor to codeine addiction among adolescents. Furthermore, sports engagement could also contribute to addiction. United Nations (2014) opined that participation in

sports where performance enhancing drugs are encouraged could be a key factor in drug abuse. Moving with peers that abuse drugs, low socio-economic status, gender and ethnicity also play important roles in drug addiction. Other reasons include; adolescents' curiosity, desire to rebel against parents and the desire to fit in a drug abusing peer group. Other reasons include low self-esteem, boredom, permissive parents, parents with history or problems of drug abuse, ease of access and to get attention.

However, codeine syrup addiction could have detrimental effects on addicts. A report from Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (2018) revealed that, thousands of Nigerian youths are now involved in the act of abusing the cough syrup and it has become a street drug. Unfortunately, codeine cough syrup abuse has several health implications which include; blurred vision, constipation, dizziness, drowsiness, tiredness, weakness, vomiting and nausea, difficulty in breathing, blue lips or skin, severe sleepiness, chest pain, loss of consciousness and sudden death. Codeine cough syrup addiction among adolescents have become epidemic in recent times, especially in Nigeria. According to Otunba, (2016), over 40% of Nigerian youths are into drug abuse and the consequences of uncontrolled use of alcohol and drug abuse have placed a significant burden on Nigeria's healthcare sector.

There are several other reports and documentaries from social media reporting the high rate of drug abuse among adolescents in Nigeria. Tam and Foo (2018) found in a study on drug addiction that, peer influence and curiosity were the top two significant factors contributing to drug abuse among adolescents. Lack of parental guidance and low self esteem was also reported among the respondents. The researcher observed that, youths in the study area do not only abuse prescription drugs, they also abuse super glue, ten days urine, soak away pits, drainages, tramadol, methylated spirits and lots of other dangerous substances. Apparently, this might be a contributory factor to the increasing social and psychological problems among Nigerian adolescents which include mental illnesses, depression, dropping

out of school, respiratory health challenges, premature death, suicide among others. If this problem is not given prompt and due attention, there will continue to be increased loss of lives, higher prevalence of mental illnesses, reduced manpower with a serious implication on sustainable development. Against this backdrop, the researchers investigated the causes and implications of codeine cough syrup abuse among adolescents in Kano State, Nigeria.

Study Objectives

The objectives of the study were to; I) Find out the causes of codeine cough syrup addiction among adolescents in Kano State, Nigeria. II) Assess the implications of codeine cough syrup addiction among adolescents in Kano State, Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis

I. There is no significant difference in the causes of codeine cough syrup addiction among male and female adolescents in Kano State, Nigeria.

Methodology

A descriptive research design of survey type was used for the study. The target population comprised all adolescents (13-21 years) who were admitted in three local drug rehabilitation centres in Kano State, Nigeria. Out of a total of one hundred and sixteen (116), one hundred (100) respondents who were willing to participate in the study were purposively selected for the study. A researcher structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was tagged "Questionnaire on Causes and Implications of codeine cough syrup addiction. Data was collected with the help of two instructed research assistants who were also indigens of Kano State and were fluent in Hausa Language. Permission was granted by the operators of the centres and consent of the respondents was sort before participating in the study. All the respondents who consented and were within the age range of 13-21 years were used for the study. The instrument was interviewer administered and its contents were explained to the respondents either in English or Hausa languages, as the case may

be. Data for the study was analysed using frequency counts, mean and standard deviation and independent sample t-test was used to test the hypothesis for the study. The responses were compared to a fixed mean of 2.5 on a 4point Likert Scale and the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results:

Table 1: Mean scores on causes of codeine cough syrup addiction among adolescents in Kano State, Nigeria

S/N	Items		
		Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Peer pressure	2.91	0.675
2	Ignorance	2.38	0.848
3	Lack of parental guidance	2.23	1.057
4	Failure in school	2.67	0.895
5	Permissive parents	2.89	0.783
6	Curiosity	2.67	0.931
7	Low self esteem	2.86	0.622
8	Boredom	2.95	1.023
9	Willingness to try new things	2.83	.991
10.	Willingness to rebel against parent	2.65	.542
11	Drug Use	2.57	.831
	Aggregate Mean Score	29.61	

Average mean Score = 2.69, fixed mean = 2.5

Table 1 shows the level of knowledge of causes of codeine cough syrup addiction among adolescents in Kano State, Nigeria. The mean score on peer pressure was 2.91. On ignorance, the mean score was 2.38, while that of lack of parental guidance was 2.23. On failure in school, the mean score was 2.67 while the mean score on permissive parents was 2.89. On Curiosity, the mean score was 2.67 while the mean score on low self esteem was 2.89. On boredom, the mean score was 2.95 while on willingness to try new things and willingness to rebel against parents, the mean scores were 2.83 and 2.65 respectively. Comparing to a fixed mean of 2.5 in 4 point Likert scale, peer

pressure, failure in school, permissive parents, curiosity, boredom, willingness to try new things and willingness to rebel against parents are the causes of codeine cough syrup addiction. However, ignorance and lack of parental guidance are not seen as the causes of codeine cough syrup addiction among adolescents in Kano State, Nigeria. This shows that, the youths in Kano State need more enlightenment on the importance of parental guidance and education as causes of drug addiction.

Table 2: Mean scores on implications of codeine cough syrup addiction among adolescents in Kano State, Nigeria

S/ N	Items		
		Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Constipation	2.17	0.775
2	Blue lips	2.86	0.848
3	Chest pain	2.23	0.016
4	Depression	2.85	0.895
5	Excessive sleep	2.71	0.923
6	Loss of consciousness	2.30	0.841
7	Nausea	2.51	0.922
8	Vomiting	2.45	0.666
9	Tiredness	2.75	0.234
10	Dizziness	2.63	0.542
11.	Difficulty in breathing	2.40	0.453
12.	Mental disorder	2.52	0.889
13	Dropping out of school	2.67	0.576
14.	Sudden death	2.71	0.212
	Total	33.36	

Average mean=2.55, fixed mean =2.5

Table 2 shows the perception of adolescents on the impacts of codeine cough syrup addiction on the health of adolescents in Kano State, Nigeria. The mean score on constipation was 2.85. On blue lips, the mean score was 2.86, while that of lack of chest pain was 2.23. On depression, the mean score was 2.17 while the

mean score on excessive sleep was 2.71. On curiosity, the mean score was 2.67 while the mean score on low self esteem was 2.89. On loss of consciousness, the mean score was 2.30 while on nausea and vomiting, the mean scores were 2.51 and 2.45 respectively. On tiredness, the mean score was 2.63, while that of dizziness and difficulty in breathing are 2.63 and 2.40 respectively. The mean score on mental disorder was 2.52, while that of drooping out of school and sudden death are 2.67 and 2.71 respectively. Comparing to a fixed mean of 2.5 in 4 point Likert scale, constipation, blue lips, excessive sleep, tiredness, dizziness, mental disorder, dropping out of school and sudden death are the implications of codeine drug addiction on the health of adolescents in Kano State, Nigeria. However, chest pain, depression, loss of consciousness, vomiting and difficulty in breathing are not seen as the implications of codeine cough syrup addiction among adolescents in Kano State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Independent Sample t-test on difference in causes of codeine cough syrup addiction among adolescent in Kano State, Nigeria.

	Areas	N	Mean	SD	Df	t- valu	Sig(p)
Codeine Cough Syrup Addiction	male	85	29.61	0.571	752	.021	0.01
	female	15	4.44	0.426			

(t -critical = 1.972, P value > 0.05)

Results of the independent t-test in Table 3 shows that there is a significant difference between boys and girls in the causes of codeine cough syrup addiction. This was because the calculated p-value of 0.01 is higher than the 0.05 alpha level of significance, while the calculated t value of .021 is lower than the 1.972 t critical at df 98. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the

causes of codeine cough syrup addiction between male and female adolescents was rejected. This implies that the reasons why male adolescents get addicted to codeine cough syrup addiction is not similar to that of the female adolescents.

Discussion of Findings

Findings revealed that there is significant difference in the causes of codeine cough syrup addiction among male and female adolescents in Kano State, Nigeria. This finding is line with Tam and Foo (2018) who found in a study on drug addiction that peer influence and curiosity were the top two significant factors contributing to drugabuse. However, lack of parental guidance and low self esteem were reported among female respondents. This finding is further supported by, United Nations (2014) who opined that moving with peers that abuse drugs, low socio-economic status, gender and ethnicity also play important roles in drug addiction. Other reasons include; adolescents' curiosity, desire to rebel against parents and the desire to fit in a drug abusing peer group. Other reasons include low self-esteem, boredom, permissive parents, parents with history or problems of drug abuse, ease of access and to get attention. The researcher is of the opinion that the gender difference in the causes of codeine cough syrup addiction in the study area might be because, in the study area, girls are given better care than the boys. Mainly, boys are found on the streets as beggars (Almajiris) while most girls are always kept indoor conservatively and married off early.

Findings also revealed that constipation, blue lips, excessive sleep, tiredness, dizziness, depression among others were the implications of codeine cough syrup addiction on the health of adolescents in Kano State, Nigeria. However, chest pain, loss of consciousness, vomiting and difficulty in breathing were not among the implications of codeine cough syrup addiction among adolescents in the study area. This finding agrees with Otunba, (2016), that, over 40% of Nigerian youths are into drug abuse and the consequences of uncontrolled use of alcohol and drug abuse have placed a significant burden on Nigeria's health care sector. It is also in line with the report from NDLEA (2018) that, codeine

cough syrup abuse has several health implications which include; blurred vision, constipation, dizziness, drowsiness, tiredness, weakness, nausea, and sudden death. This finding is not surprising because, many of these implications are noticeable among drug addicts in the study area. For instance, mental health issues are uprising among the youths in the study area.

Conclusions

Based on the findings from the study, it was concluded that the causes of codeine cough syrup addiction among male and female adolescents in Kano State are different. Though, some of the revealed causes of addiction are peer pressure, failure in school, permissive parents, curiosity, boredom, willingness to try new things and willingness to rebel against parents .

It was also concluded that, adolescents in Kano state experience constipation, blue lips, excessive sleep, tiredness, dizziness, mental disorder, dropping out of school and sudden deaths as the implications of codeine drug addiction.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the conclusions drawn from the study; more sensitization should be given to adolescents in the study area by health workers and counsellors on the impacts of lack of parental guidance and education on addiction. This will go a long way in reducing the challenges of drug addiction among adolescents. Adolescents in the study area should also try as much as possible to seek help from professionals such as psychologists and health educators in order to prevent themselves from the health implications of drug abuse.

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