IMPACT OF COVID-19 LOCKDOWN ON ADOLESCENTS SUBSTANCE ABUSE: IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Azorondu Abigail
Student Development, Babcock University, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Abstract
This study was conducted to determine how COVID-19 lockdown measures influence adolescents substance abuse, as well as social work measures to addressing the problem. The population of this study consists of all adolescents as well as social workers in Babcock University in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State. A sample of 250 adolescents and social workers was selected for this study using a simple random sampling technique. The questionnaire as the instrument adopted for this study, was content and face validated. The Cronbach alpha formula was utilized to ascertain the internal consistency reliability; the coefficient of 0.77 was obtained. The data collected were analyzed using the descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The findings showed that adolescents used substances due to personal factors, boredom experienced, constant frustrations and naggings from the parents and lack of freedom caused by lockdown measures. The findings also showed that adolescents, who used substances, experience difficulty in coping with schooling, encounter health and attitudinal problems and usually avoided interventions. Based on the findings, recommendations were made that adequate support and considerations are expected from social workers as well as other professionals to advance the well-being of adolescents involved in substance abuse.

Key Words: Abuse; Adolescents; Drugs; Lockdown; Social Work Practice

INTRODUCTION
Adolescents well-being is very crucial and has gathered the attention of researchers, parents and helping professionals especially in cases of substance abuse (Omorogiuwa & Ukponahiusi, 2017; Omorogiuwa, 2018; Stratton, 2020). According to United Nations Youth Envoy (2015), substance abuse is the frequent or uncontrolled use of drugs, which is seen by the society as harmful to both the individual’s health and the general environment. Substance abuse connotes persistent use of drugs that are detrimental to health such as Indian hemp, liquor and other illicit substances that may have adverse impact on the individual (Omorogiuwa, 2018; Stratton, 2020). Previous studies, Omorogiwa and Ukponahiusi (2017), Omorogiwa (2018) and Volkow (2020) have shown that substances often abused by adolescents are marijuana, prescription drugs, cocaine, Indian hemp and several forms of alcohol to such an extent that negative impacts are felt on their emotional, physical and social well-being. Consequently, substance abuse results in a situation of psychological issues, whereby constant use makes the person addicted and the urge for such drugs become uncontrollable (World Health Organization, 2017).
A study in the US reports that over 79% of adolescents have taken substances that are addictive such as marijuana, cocaine, alcohol and tobacco and not less than 35% of them have indicated medical symptoms of addiction (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). Researches in the UK affirm that adolescents between 14-17 years have used at least cannabis 52%, others between 18-25 years have taken regular alcohol and tobacco 45% in their lives (Alcohol Concern, 2019; Stephens & Mitchell, 2019). In similar vein, studies in Nigeria have indicated that more than 81% of the adolescents have been involved with cigarette smoking and over 72% of alcohol use, while the use of coffee, energy drinks and kolanut have 69% (Adekeye, Adenusi, Chenube, Ahmadu & Sholarin, 2015; Omorogiwa & Ukponahiusi, 2017, Omorogiwa, 2018).

Adolescents are comprised of young people within the age of 14-25 years and majority of the youths that use substances in Nigeria are usually within this age bracket (Oliha, 2014; Omorogiwa & Ukponahiusi, 2017). Adekeye et al. (2015) assert that adolescents use substances for reasons like personal, family, school and community contexts. This implies that substance use among the adolescents in Nigeria is triggered by too many factors ranging from the individual induced to the societal influence. It has been found that oftentimes adolescents who use substances experiment results in taking risks as part of development and all these stem from the growing increase in substances used during parties such as marijuana, prescription drugs and alcohol (Omorogiwa & Ukponahiusi, 2017). Unfortunately, several risks undertaken by adolescents under the influence of substances have damning consequences on their health and safety (Oliha, 2014). Whilst a good population of young people in Nigeria rely on varied forms of drugs even without knowing the full implication on their social, educational, political and moral lifestyles, such as cocaine, heroin, alcohol, tobacco, Indian hemp etc (Ekpenyong, 2012; Ekpegnyong & Aakpege, 2014; Oliha, 2014; Omorogiwa & Ukponahiusi, 2017; Omorogiwa, 2018).

Moreover, the studies of Omorogiwa and Ukponahiusi (2017), American Psychiatric Association (2013) have indicated that implications of substance abuse on adolescents consists of physical and mental health problems, reduced performances in academics, criminal and attitudinal problems and sometimes, death. Oshikoya and Alli (2006) noted that one of the significant implications of drug use is total dependence and addiction, which are associated with compulsion and persistent negative impacts on the youths. The implications of persistent use of drugs by the adolescents include health care challenges, burdens on criminal justice as well as education and social services, which pose challenges to their future (APA, 2013). A number of adolescents in Nigeria indulge in drugs given their lack of awareness on how to use it and the impacts of wrong use and currently, perilous use of alcohol in adolescents have increased overtime and posed a danger to the health and well-being of the society (Adekeye, 2012; Ekpegnyong & Aakpege, 2014).

There is serious need to bring about support programmes to assist adolescents in a society, with substance abuse issues, because as it stands, there is an increasing health, academic and behavioral problems among adolescents (Kumpfer & Hansen, 2014; Omorogiwa & Ukponahiusi, 2017). Social work practice has been recognized as a distinctive profession, which could persuade the process of extending services that
control the sensitive and persistent needs of adolescents engaged in use of drugs (National Association of Social Workers, 2013). This means that professionals in the field of social work are expected to have sufficient understanding and ability to assist adolescents in order to carry out adequate plans for caring with the use of resources available, which includes practice from encounters.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Substance Abuse and Adolescents during COVID-19 Lockdown
The challenges brought about by COVID-19 pandemic to the services of health care and global public health policy is enormous, especially the method of treatment required to sustain the wave of the pandemic (Stratton, 2020; Omorogiuwa, 2020). The effects of substance abuse by the adolescents include a high risk exposure to the pandemic which is easily contracted when the body cells are weak (Lagisetty, 2017; Peacock, 2018). Moreso, the challenges of economic breakdown and social changes that came as a result of the pandemic has reduced the level of access to treatments and health care opportunities and as a result, the conditions are increased (Bojdani, 2020). Consequently, weighing up measures to adopt for effective containment of adolescents with substance abuse problem could require careful efforts that consider the several stages of their different cases. These efforts include assessing the addiction stage of the individual before considering the treatment measure adequate enough for the problem, checking for psychiatric history and report of the individuals to ascertain the stage of their mental effects before treatments and effective examination to determine the exact causes of substance use by the individual (Cascella, 2020; Omorogiuwa, 2020).

Furthermore, the effects of substance abuse makes it easier for COVID-19 to penetrate the system and cause further harm and as a result makes the addicts more prone to the implications of drug abuse. Research on the problems associated with the respiratory system points that substances in form of hard drugs cause the breakdown of the system and increase the risk of breathing problems (Stratton, 2020). In Nigeria however, the Federal Ministry of Health (2014) made efforts to tackle the issue of lack of awareness about health services among Nigerian adolescents substance abusers. The strategies are informed by the WHO standards, and also seek to influence adolescents help seeking behaviour positively (Agwogie, 2016), which include peer education, school based information and communication, mass media based sensitization, to cite but a few, FMH (2014) reports that efforts are also geared towards providing such adolescents friendly health services at the primary health care level in order to reach a number of them in rural and remote areas in Nigeria. Thus, the lockdown measures put in place due to COVID-19 seemed to increase the population of adolescents engaged in substance abuse.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
The study was guided by the following research questions:
1. Do personal factors influence substance use among adolescents?
2. Does boredom and idleness factor influence substance use among adolescents?
3. Does family or parents contribute to substance use among adolescents?
4. What are the influences of substance use on adolescents?
5. How does social work practice address substance use among adolescents?

METHODOLOGY
This study employed the descriptive survey method of research. The population of this study consists of all adolescents and social workers in Babcock University, Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State. A sample of two hundred and fifty (250) adolescents and social workers in Babcock University, Ikenne LGA were randomly selected for this study. 200 questionnaires were administered to the adolescents, while 50 questionnaires were administered to the social workers at the Babcock University Teaching Hospital. The four point Likert scale was adopted for this study. The instrument was face and content validated by experts involved with substances abuse issues in the field of social work. The Cronbach alpha formula was used to determine the internal consistency reliability; the reliability coefficient of 0.77 was obtained. The data collected were analyzed using the appropriate descriptive statistics measures; mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research Question One: Do personal factors influence substance use among adolescents?

Table 1: Mean responses of respondents on the influence of personal factor on the substance use among adolescents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Statement</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents oftentimes take substances out of ignorance</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents see substances as normal lifestyle since others too are doing it</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents take substances with intention of self-medication at moments of identity crisis</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents take substances out of curiosity and anxiousness to see the outcome</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Mean</strong></td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td><strong>Agreed</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Work 2020

Mean Score: 2.50

Table 1 indicates that participants on the influence of personal factor on the use of substances among adolescents has a grand mean of 2.78 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, implying that participants agreed that personal factor has influence on the use of substances among adolescents. It was further found in this study that personal factor is a major reason adolescents indulge in substance abuse. This study correlates with the work of Oshodi, Aina and Onajole (2010) who buttressed that when individuals are exposed to substances with the intention of having a positive impact,
they are more liable to get involved with it. Adolescents who have just started entering adulthood are usually too concerned about themselves, with feelings of self-dependence in decision-making without need of any sort of permission or consent from any other person. As a result, the combination of self-reliance and self-focus without control which best describes the age often lead to substance use.

**Research Question Two:** Does boredom and idleness factor influence substance use among adolescents?

**Table 2: Mean responses of respondents of boredom and idleness factor influence on substance use among adolescents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Statement</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents revert to substances when they feel bored and idle</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents take substances when their friends and peers advise them it helps out of loneliness</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents take substances because they are not interested in school and other important things</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents take substances to prove they can hang out with certain companies</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Mean</strong></td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field Work, 2020  Mean Score: 2.50*

Table 2 reveals that participants on the influence of boredom and idleness factor on the use of substance among adolescents has a grand mean of 3.01 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, implying that participants agreed that boredom and idleness factor has influence on the substance use among adolescents. From the analysis of this study, it was found that boredom and idleness play an important role in influencing adolescents to substance use. The study agrees with Stratton (2020) that periods of excess leisure and sometimes idleness without control and containment could be an experimental period for adolescents who usually seek every opportunity to try out new things. As such, substance use is tried and tested in such moments of leisure and boredom expecting good outcomes which unfortunately are not the case. In addition, Peacock (2018) also confirmed that too much time for personal privacy and idle moments are the reasons for many adolescents who are chained in the shackles of substances and drug use.

**Research Question Three:** Does family or parents contribute to substance use among adolescents?
Table 3: Mean responses of respondents on contribution of family and parents to substance use among adolescents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Statement</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extreme and harsh methods of parenting often lead adolescents to substance use</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence is a cause of substance use</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate parental supervision and control often lead adolescents to substance use</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic state of parents often lead adolescents to substance use</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Mean</strong></td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td><strong>0.95</strong></td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Work, 2020

Mean Score: 2.50

Table 3 reveals that participants on the contribution of family and parents as factor on the use of substance among adolescents has a grand mean of 3.01 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, implying that participants agreed that family and parents factor has influence on the substance use among adolescents. It was found from this study that family background contributes to substance use among adolescents. This study agrees with Kumpfer and Hanson (2014) who found out that Siblings often impact the adolescents almost in the same way as their parents depending on their level of closeness. It recognizes the roles played by the relationship and communion existing between the members of family and the adolescents as well as the roles it plays in their lives. It is very interesting to remark that impacts of family bond cannot be overemphasized since adolescents who usually live apart from their parents have greater risk of substance abuse compared to those who lived together with their parents.

Research Question four: What are the influences of substance use on adolescents?

Table 4: Mean responses of respondents on the influences of substance on adolescents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Statement</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular use of substances can lead adolescents to addiction</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents who take substances usually have poor academic performance</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substances use lead to bad behavior and attitude issues among adolescents</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is negative impact on physical and mental health of adolescents who take substances</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Mean</strong></td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td><strong>0.80</strong></td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Work, 2020

Mean Score: 2.50
Table 4 reveals that participants on the influence of substance among adolescents has a grand mean of 3.20 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, implying that participants agreed that the influences of substance use among adolescents are addiction or reliance on the drugs; relying on drugs can cause negative effects that are harmful to the individuals physical and mental health; young people who take drugs believe that it provides pleasure through the inner peace and satisfaction; use of drugs lead to deterioration or weakening; disability or an inefficiency or distress. It was further found from this study that the influence of substance use on adolescents is due to experiments out of curiosity, peer pressure and family influences, lack of parental monitoring and personal challenges. This study has similar undertone with Oliha (2014) which noted that using substances like drugs are usually predominant in adolescents who has low self-control, adolescents who lived in unruly neighborhoods and schools, adolescents who live in families with history of disruption and poor bonding or lack of parental supervision. On the same note, Adekeye et al. (2015) found that substance use is harmful leading to decrease academic performance, increased risk of physical health issues and psychiatric disorders.

**Research Question five:** How does social work practice address substance use among adolescents?

**Table 5: Mean responses of respondents on the social work practice in addressing substance use among adolescents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Statement</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adequate information about resisting peer pressure will prevent substance abuse</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching parents the best way to help their children avoid drugs in an effective practice of social worker</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposing adolescents to their parents during substance use counseling will help keep them away from using drugs</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggesting methods to parents on how best to reach out to their children will help reduce substance abuse</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Mean</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td><strong>3.55</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.32</strong></td>
<td><strong>Agreed</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field Work, 2020  Mean Score: 2.50*

Table 5 reveals that participants on efforts of social workers in the reduction of substance use among adolescents has a grand mean of 3.55 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, implying that participants agreed that social workers efforts reduce the use of substance among adolescents. It was found from this study that efforts of social workers reduce the use of substances among adolescents. This study correlates with Omorogiwa and Ukponahiusi (2017) that efforts of social workers are designed to minimize the risk factors for early substance use at the individual level, school, family, and community. This is also supported by National Association of Social Workers, NASW (2016) that social workers intervention carry out important tasks by supporting parents, adolescents, family, school, workplace and community to
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handle the cases of addictions. This finding is further confirmed by Omorogiuwa (2020) who buttressed that conducive environments and compassionate professionals (social workers) contribute heavily to the psychological assistance offered to the adolescents.

CONCLUSION
A number of studies had been carried out on adolescents’ substance use with few others considering the implications for social work practice. This study tried to provide a synergy between adolescents’ substance use and how social work practice could help with interventions that addresses the challenges posed by the use of such substances. Based on the findings of the study, it is confirmed that substance abuse among adolescents is not influenced by any particular factor; to a certain extent it is prevalent in every group, persons, family and other factors as well as the implications however, with a varied difference. Consequently, it is concluded that adolescents substance abuse is influenced by personal factors, boredom and idleness factors, family background and parental factors. Also, it is concluded that substance use by adolescents have implications on their physical health, mental health issues, behavior and attitude problems as well as affected concentration even in schools which derailed their general contributions to the society at large. Therefore, it shows that use of substance oftentimes affect other issues. On the other hand, it was confirmed that social work efforts usually help to provide valid way out in cases of substance use among adolescents.

SUBSTANCE USE AND IMPLICATION FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE
Generally, social work professionals pay attention to assisting clients to handle their fears, manage their anger problems, get relieved from depression, get hope, and receive support from several emotional problems through counseling (Omorogiuwa, 2020; Amadasun & Omorogiuwa, 2020). Social workers also assist to initiate advocacy for legislation, policies and procedures to make sure that the needs of adolescents with substance abuse problems are achieved (Omorogiuwa & Ukponahusi, 2017). It has been observed that social work professionals have increasingly been involved in carrying out Evidence Based Programmes (EBP) that help individuals with several psychological disorders such as depression in the, which has further showed their ability to deliver programmes based on evidence (Geron & Keefe, 2006). Therefore, social workers are expected to “be at the vanguard of promoting policy change in the context of the challenges faced (Omorogiuwa, 2020, p. 647) by adolescents who have substance abuse problems, even during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The uniqueness and centrality of social work practice in attending to adolescents with drug abuse problem cannot be overemphasized. Hence, one of the weaknesses of EBPs that has been identified by social workers is their applicability for diverse populations (Rubin & Parrish, 2007; Gorin, Gehlert & Washington, 2010). On the same note, social work professionals often carry out important measures to assist people with the problems of abuse and even during the COVID-19. The effects of COVID-19 lockdown measures on the adolescents have been immense on the short term with further consequences expected on the long-term unless adequate interventions are directed to control the young people who abuse substances
Omorogiuwa, 2020). Thus, the primary objective of this study therefore is to ascertain the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on adolescents using substances and the efforts of the social work professionals in addressing the situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Social workers should organize and carry out seminars and sensitization in secondary schools detailing the risk factors of substance abuse on adolescents and their development and contributions to the society.

2. Social workers should involve parents of adolescents who encounter challenges in their academic performance social life adjustments as a result of substance abuse when planning the intervention programmes that befits the child assistance.

3. The government, policy makers, helping professionals (social workers, teachers, guidance counselors, child protection networks, family welfare agencies) and the public are to collaborate and promote social functioning of adolescents who have been saved from substance use.

4. Teachers and parents who have suspected any issues of substance use by the adolescents should notify the social workers and other helping professionals for timely intervention and assistance for the protection of the adolescent.

5. There is need for government and private school owners to employ at least two social workers as part of the non-academic or academic staff in the schools for adequate mentoring of the adolescents and attentive care-giving in the schools.

6. The government should create an academic curriculum that includes social work education as part of the subjects undertaken in secondary schools to help students understand the activities and importance of social workers. This will help change the perception of adolescents who may view social workers as part of only disciplinary measures adopted in schools.

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**Contact:**

Azorondu Abigail, Student Development, Babcock University, Ogun State, Nigeria. azorondua@gmail.com