



## **Drug Abuse And Its Effects In Nigeria**

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***Abstract:***

*The protection of the lives of citizens from the harmful effects of illicit drug trafficking and abuse, and the socio-economic cost implications for the society was the reason for the launched of the war on drugs and the campaign against illicit drugs activities, and the establishment of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) by the federal government of Nigeria in 1989 to curtail the trend. However after two decades, drug abuse has increased within the time frame and people have become more vulnerable to the scourge of the phenomenon despite government's seeming efforts. Some of the reasons for this drug abuse include ignorance on the part of the addicts on the health implications of their drug habits, inability to help themselves to withdraw from drugs abuse habit, peer pressure, curiosity, overwhelming social problems and genetics factors among others. The abuse of drugs either licit, illicit and prescription drugs could lead to serious health implications that threaten the live of the individual's self, parents, relations, and the society at large. The government is advised to first, have a paradigm shift from emphasis on enforcement to treating drug addicts victims that cost far less and make efforts from preventing its citizens from drug abuse through effective monitoring, extensive campaigns against drug misuse, provision of well-equipped counselling centres and well-trained professionals to handle cases of drug abuse.*

***Keywords:*** Protection, Drug Abuse, Vulnerable, Health Implication, and Extensive Campaigns.

**1.Introduction**

In pre-historic times, leaves and herbs were used to heal and control illnesses and even to conjure up spirits to the goodness of humanity. So drugs were and are still invaluable because they fulfilled certain purposes to different persons, time and space. Thus the uses of drugs were beneficial to the society. However, as societies undergo social transformation the uses of some of these drugs diverted from their original known purpose of healing sicknesses to giving pleasure and to have cushioning effects to individual's pressures and stress associated with human advancement and social developments. Thus today drugs could be used for relaxation, pleasure and to cope with panic attacks, calm down in times of anxiety and stressed up situations, gain energy in time of depression and to perform certain tasks including gaining confidence in social situations where shyness is felt. So people continue to rely on drugs because they serve them one purpose or the other.

In Nigeria today, there is no part of the country that is free from the curse of misguided drug use and addiction, and the epidemic has assumed an alarming dimension and causing enormous problems to the individual and society. The number of drug addicts is increasing daily and millions of them are living risky and miserable lives that is between life and death.

The Nigeria government have failed in its responsibility to protect the lives of its citizens from the harmful effects of drug abuse. Bello (2012) noted that the Nigeria authority is to be blamed for allowing drugs to enter the country. This is because most officials reap huge money from the trade or that most big men including the wealthy ones do take one drug or the other though it is not easy to detect as compared to the lower class of citizens. And that no politicians that have less than a hundred thugs who often take drugs to carryout dangerous assignment for them and pay from the pittance paid to them. He noted that in Kano psychiatric hospital, the Principal Medical Officer though refused to disclose the figure of drug addicts but agreed that the rate of affected addicts is increasing at an alarming rate. Globalsecurity (2011) pointed that the government of Nigeria's counter-narcotics programs have failed to materialise or to be ineffective. And that the efforts of antinarcotics agency have been hindered by widespread corruption in law enforcement and lack of substantive government support and clear policy guidance. Counter-narcotics legislation has been enacted, but has produced no prosecution or convictions of major drug traffickers.

Drug abuse is not limited to illegal drugs such as cocaine, heroin, and amphetamines types, or prescription drugs such as vellum, diazepam etc, but extends to licit drugs such as cigarettes, alcohol, gin, beer etc and are in the worst class. The problems of drug abuse is not limited to, but include the individual's health and productivity, crimes induced by the psychedelic effects, and those committed to sustain drug habits or to eke out a living. There is also violence between couples against one another or brawls between friends. Also, accidents in work places and on the roads can be attributed to excessive drug use. Vijay (2012) opined that drug abuse and addiction has to do less of the amount consumed or their frequency but more with the consequences of drug taken. It is the problems these drugs are causing in the lives of the individuals at workplaces, schools, road accidents, and homes or in human relationships is the issue.

Changing cultural, moral values and decline of the traditional religious practices, increasing economic stress and need to escape from harsh realities of life, dwindling supportive bonds and disintegration of the traditional communal system of life where everybody is another's keeper, absence of parental care have been identified as reasons for the development of drug abuse syndrome. All these have made people to be initiated into drug abuse and the rise in the number of drug addicts. Jean (1995) pointed that reduced family and community cohesiveness, increased unemployment and underemployment, economic and social marginalization and increased crimes have made the abuse of drugs inevitable in most societies. Kathleen (2012) averred that many factors contribute to drug abuse by individuals. The causes could be biological, personality or environmental. No single factor could determine whether a person will become addicted to drugs. Others factors include inherited genes, cultures, negative social environment and even mental disorder. Drugs are abuse by all classes of people such as teenagers, adolescents or adults. However it is the degree of the abuse that matters.

### *1.1. Drug Abuse*

This is the repeated and excessive use of chemical substances that is capable of changing the chemical composition of the body and can modify the person's behaviours. It can also be seen as the self administration of substances, or even misuse of those obtained with prescription in a manner contrary to medical protocol, illicit drugs, or the excessive intake of socially accepted drugs such as alcohol against social norms and deemed to be harmful to the user. Gordon (2012) opined that drug abuse also known as substance

abuse involves the repeated and excessive use of a drug to produce pleasure or escape from reality despite their harmful effects. This abuse could be illegal such as marijuana and cocaine, or legal substances used improperly such as prescription drugs and inhalants. Drug abuse is the maladaptive addictive use of drugs for non-medical purposes. It is characterized by an emotional, psychological or physical dependence or compulsion to take drugs constantly to experience its mental effects. Melissa (2012) averred that drug abuse involves the repeated and excessive use of chemical substances which may be obtained from the street or with prescription. Drug abuse includes the non-medical use of a variety of drugs that are prohibited by law, legally proscribed psychotropic substances for non-medical purposes which appears to be increasing but it is difficult to quantify the rate of this increase and to estimate the prevalence of its behaviour because it is considered illicit and therefore often hidden (Frischer et al. 1994). Drug abuse can lead people to become social outcast, and can drive them to interact with people they could ordinarily avoid. Drugs are used because of the effects they induce in the body and the individual may develop a preoccupation of the feelings the drug causes in the body. Drug dependency gives rise to mental, emotional, biological or physical, social and economic instability.

### *1.2. Drug Addiction/Dependence*

This is a state where a person becomes dependent on a particular amount of drugs to sustain the drug habit. It is a disease that is characterized by a destructive pattern of drug abuse that leads to significant problems involving tolerance to or withdrawal from the substance, and as well as other problems the use of the substance can cause to the sufferer. Nearly all drugs abused can produce a phenomenon known as tolerance. This means that one must use a larger amount of a drug to produce the same level of intoxication. The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) stated that the uncontrollable, compulsive drug seeking and use even in the face of negative health and social consequences is the essence of drug addiction. Drug abuse can be physical, psychological or both. The physical addiction is characterised by tolerance, which is the need for increasingly larger doses in order to achieve the initial effect. The psychological addiction is the subjective feeling that the user needs to maintain a feeling of wellbeing. Using drugs constantly to numb unpleasant feelings, to relax, or satisfy cravings are good examples (Gordon 2012).

Drug addiction is the major effects on an individual's physiological and psychological state. Physical addiction is when the body has grown so used to the presence of a certain drug in its system that the absence of it induces unpleasant painful feelings. The psychological addiction is when a person still desires the drug for purely psychological reasons. For instance, the user finds the drug comforting. It involves a preoccupation with the drug's effects that usually results in the person's lifestyle built around having and using the drug (Neal, 2012).

## **2. Classification Of Drug Abuse**

Drugs are classified based on their effects on the individuals and have different short-term or long term effects on the individual. They include stimulants, depressants, barbiturates and hallucinogens. Most drugs create good feelings and pleasure. Usually, there is the initial euphoric sensation that comes with taking the drug, then, there is the secondary effect associated with the type of drugs use.

### *2.1. Hallucinogens*

These drugs are also known as psychedelics. They are mind-altering that affect the user's sensory perception and thinking process, self-consciousness (Gordon 2012). They include such drugs as LSD, mescaline, and amphetamine variants, etc. Hallucinogen can lead to extreme anxiety and lack of reality at the height of drug experience. A person who is intoxicated with hallucinogen may perceive danger where there is none and think that situations that are truly dangerous are not. This misperception can result in dangerous and risky behaviour such as reckless driving, arm robbery and jumping from high altitude. However, the experience can come back as a flash back even without using the drug again. The experiences occur during times of increase stress especially.

### *2.2. Stimulants*

These are drugs that relieve mild depression, increases energy and activity. They include cocaine, amphetamines, ephedrine, ecstasy, methylphenidates etc. The initial euphoria they produced is followed by flatted feelings of self-confidence and abundant energy.

### *2.3. Steroids*

this type of drugs do not have any intoxicating effects so are not used to get high. There are used mostly by athletes to enhance their performance and build up muscles. There

side effects can cause blood pressure to rise, increase bad cholesterol (LDL) and decreases good cholesterol (HDL). Again, they can trigger violent and aggressive behaviour.

#### *2.4. Depressants*

These drugs are sedatives and are commonly known as downers. They slow down the central nervous system. They are sleeping pills and prescription medication to reduce tension and anxiety and those suffering from low self-esteem. They include drugs such as chloralhydrate, barbiturates (Amytal, Nembutal, Seconal, Phenobarbital), Benzodiazepines (Librium, valium), Methaqualone etc. Their properties and physiological effects are collectively known as rush. At the initial time they produce euphoria and are followed by satisfaction and relaxation. However, they impair the ability to think clearly, and react quickly. Users appear to be drunk and show signs of losing their balance besides the delusion suffered (Gordon 2012).

#### *2.5. Narcotics*

These drugs are powerful pain relievers and often induce sleep. They include opium, opium derivatives and synthetic substitutes. Natural narcotics include morphine, codeine, and Thebaine. Semisynthetic narcotics include Heroin and Hydromorphone. Synthetic narcotic include Meperidine or Pethidine Methadone etc.

#### *2.6. Recreational Drugs*

These are drug taken for the purpose of recreation or relaxation. Some people start experimenting or taking drugs for recreational purposes. Though teenagers are the most vulnerable here, however, adults equally experiment on drugs at old age. From whichever group that experiment on drugs, most of them do not think that they will become addicted to the drugs. Some do not become addicted to drugs after experimenting either once or twice before they quit early enough. Taking recreational drug causes an up surge in the levels of dopamine in the brain that triggers feelings of pleasure. The brain always remembers this feeling and would want it to be repeated.

#### *2.7. Prescription Drugs*

There is also the abuse of prescription-type psychotherapeutics drugs for nonmedical purposes. Some of them are pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, sedatives but

excludes other over-the-counter drugs. These drugs are abused commonly by adults than the teenagers. Abusing prescription drugs can be as problematic as recreational drugs because many prescription drugs are made with addictive substances.

### **3.Types Of Drug Abuse**

#### *3.1.Cigarettes*

They are classified as drug because they contain nicotine and have physical and psychological effects on the body. Cigarettes are addictive and could cause lungs disorder such as cancer. Cigarette is regarded as gateway drug to harder drugs abuse.

#### *3.2.Alcohol*

The use of alcohol spans different cultural groupings, race or gender, all socio-economic classes, and regardless of educational level attained. These include beer, wine, brandy, whiskey and other kinds of spirits. All these are in drug category mainly because of their chemical contents and potential for addiction and their negative effects. Alcohol has toxic and sedative effects in the body. It is a central nervous system depressant and can cause a number of behavioural changes. When large amount of alcohol enters the bloodstream, it slows down breathing and heart rate of the individual. It also causes drowsiness, mental confusion and sickness. Alcohol can be referred to as gateway drugs to major hard drugs use and abuse.

Although the consequences of alcohol abuse and its dependence are well known in Nigeria, however, it still enjoys wide social patronage and is a common feature in all parts of the society be it urban areas or local communities. Especially in local communities, by the first hour of the day, middle aged men and youth are seen gathered at the kiosks of petty provisions traders taking drugs such as tobacco, beer, and dry gin especially that known in local palace as Ogororo, and by the third hour of the day they are drunk. This they do on daily bases without or adequate feeding which gives them the pale malnourished, sickly and fragile looks and unbalanced, staggering walk. This habit continued to result in morbidity and sometimes mortality.

Local authorities in Nigeria such as the local governments, traditional rulers and heads of families are faced with the problems of drug abuse but are helpless and impotent to act because such laws enactment and enforcement is beyond their constitutional jurisdiction. While the federal governments' efforts focuses mainly on illicit drugs, licit drug misuse

are far more harmful than the illicit drugs but they are often overlooked. The law enforcement officials are also helpless because there are no law against their usage. Babara e'tal (2009) averred that many legal drugs such as nicotine and alcohol can produce more severe deficiencies in the brain development than some illicit drugs such as cocaine. Besides, there are different patterns of drug administration. Drug such as cocaine are typically used in discrete episodes, whereas others such as nicotine and alcohol tend to be used chronically.

### *3.3. Marijuana*

It is popularly called Indian hemp or cannabis sativa. This drug contains tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabinioids. It is a hallucinogenic stimulant which chemical properties can be found in the leaves and flowering shoots of the plant. For instance, hashish is a substance taken from the top of female plants and contains the highest amount of THC. The main effect of marijuana is on behaviour. The drugs affect the central nervous system (CNS) and its use is popular among the Nigeria folks because it is locally grown, easily affordable. It usually gives the user the feeling of joy (euphoria). It is used for relaxation and by people for menial hard jobs because it boosts energy. Interestingly, though it is one of the controlled drugs, it is equally a popular drug of choice among the Nigeria security officials who patrol the streets especially when embarking on any major official (taskforce) operations.

### *3.4. Cocaine*

This is one of the most potent stimulants of natural origin and extracted from the leave of coca plant grown mostly in South America. The drug tends to stimulate the central nervous system. Illicit cocaine is usually distributed as a white crystalline powder. It can be snorted through the nasal passage, smoked when in the form of rocks (crack) or injected when diluted by a variety of ingredients. This drug is already a drug of choice especially among the city elite dwellers. The drug was relatively unknown in Nigeria but became popular as the country started undergoing socio-economic transition which attracted migrants from other parts of the world especially from the western world and Europe. In addition, because of the spill-over effects as it transit through the nation's borders to America and European countries.



### *3.5.Heroin*

This drug is synthesized from morphine and has bitter taste. It varies in both form and colour. It is about three times more potent than morphine though produced from the opium. The drug is produced in the Golden Triangle (Laos, Myanmar and Thailand) areas and Afghanistan. It is the drug mostly arrested by antinarcotics agents at the international airports. It is equally use by many in the country.

### *3.6.Hydrocarbons*

This is a class of chemicals solvents which is also called inhalants. Greater varieties of these inhalants are popular in recent times and have been observed to be used by youth of school age in Nigeria. Bello (2012) averred that many youth are poor and cannot afford alcohol and other expensive drugs, so they have turned to other intoxicant because of their cheap prices including local in known as Oogoro and pito (a local drink made from fermented wheat). These inhalants emits vapour and cause intoxication when inhaled or sniffed through the nose or mouth. These chemicals include cleaning and lighter fluid, glue, gasoline, aerosols for deodorants or hair spray, paint thinners, and nail polish remover. Mostly, they are soaked into rags or poured into plastic bags then breathed in and are absorbed into the body system through the respiratory tract. Added to these classes of drugs are lizard dung, gutter water and rots, and pit latrine which are sniffed very early in the morning. Within few minutes they altered the individual mental state. The effects include brain damage, convulsion, liver or kidney damage and sudden death. These classes of chemicals are sold by traders and used by many in homes and not legislated against either locally or internationally due to their unintended purposes.

## **4.Theories Of Drug Abuse**

There are various theories to explain why people abuse drugs. Some of them include the following:

### *4.1.Genetic Factor*

This refers to the gene (traits) passed on from parents to offspring. The theory holds that just the same way a person inherits the parent's physical characteristics so also one can inherit their behavioural characteristics. Since people are the product of their parents there is the likelihood to behave like any of them. So the chances are that if one of the parents or all used drugs there are likely chances that the offspring will be predisposed to

use drugs. This explains why drug addiction is more common in some families than in others. Also, a woman who uses drugs during her pregnancy is likely to have a child that might abuse drugs.

#### *4.2. Psychological Theory Of Drug Abuse*

This theory deals with the person's inner most motives for using drug and has wider appeal because it is more encompassing. Julie (2012) opined that drug use and abuse begins because of the unconscious motivation within all persons. People are not aware of these motivations even when they manifest themselves. Keith (2012) averred that in terms of drug abuse, psychology deals with the person's inner motivations as opposed to social situation for abusing drugs. From the perspective of psychology, it is not an open choice to abuse drugs in order to ruin relationship with others or to go bankrupt or even to be imprisoned, but rather, it is an out-of control mechanism which the individual is psychologically or biologically predisposed. There are three broad sections to consider why people may abuse.

##### 4.2.1. Protection

There are some correlations between some types of drugs and protection needs. When an individual experience some psychological personal needs deemed unmanageable, some kind of drugs may offer that protection from its effects by using such drugs. For instance, narcotics and hypnotic drugs are used to manage anger, rage, jealousy and shameful feelings that develop alongside these emotions. Drugs in the class of stimulant are used to counter feelings of weakness, drugs that leads to hallucination are use to fight boredom, disenchantment and disillusionment. And alcohol is deployed against loneliness, guilt and self-reproach.

##### 4.2.2. Anxiety

This is a psychological and physiological condition which is characterized by unpleasant feelings of fear, worry and uneasiness. Anxiety develops as a result of perceived dangers or conflict that is inevitable or uncontrollable. Individuals who feel that their anxiety is unrelenting, unalterable and irrepressible, and feel powerless to decrease or eliminate their sources of anxiety drugs are used to deal with such problems. People turn to drugs to offer them a psychological release or shield from such problems. At that time there

will be a cognitive distortion of reality that gives them the experience of reducing the experience of anxiety (Dennie 2012).

#### 4.2.3. Compulsion

Compulsive drug abuse is characterised by a substantial subjective psychological imperative to rely and abuse psychotropic substances despite the consequences of the drug. Compulsive drug use is effortless, bound to stimuli, difficult to control and seemingly outside the user's awareness. The act is being driven by a psychological craving for the substance (Dennie, 2012).

#### 4.3. *Socio-Cultural Factor*

This kind of abuse is maintained by the cultural values of the people within a given society. For instance, some drugs are produced by certain groups of people and are predisposed to use them and there is the likelihood to abuse such drugs. In the western and southern part of Nigeria in states such as Ekiti, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, and Delta, Edo, the production of drug such as marijuana (Indian hemp) though prohibited is widely tolerated and produced and could find its way in hundreds of tonnes to the northern part of the country where it is widely used. Also, some ethnic groups in the Nigeria Niger delta such as the Urhobos, Ijaws, Itstsekiris, Ibibios to mention a few, the local gin called Ogogoro is a favourite drink of choice among the people. It is used for traditional ceremonies and cultural activities. Though in the northern part of the country, due to Sharia (Islamic) law, alcohol is prohibited but is widely consumed including the production of local hot drink using ethanol that is wrecking havoc among the people and is a source of concern to the local authorities.

### **5. Risk Factors Of Drug Abuse**

There are various reasons that induced or push people to abuse drugs in the society. However, no single theory that can explain thoroughly drug use and abuse for every person. The background and vulnerability to drug addiction differs from person to person. This may include the mental health of the person, the family and genetic composition, and the socio-environmental factors. It also includes neglect of the individual and other traumatic experiences the person must have had.

### *5.1. Curiosity*

The first factor that draws some people into drugs taking is curiosity and quest for experimentation. People are curious and would want to experiment and see what will happen. Again, some people will want to feel 'high' or have some sense of euphoria that comes with drugs taking. Whatever the reason, the risk is that drug such as heroin is more likely to cause addiction resulting from experimentation alone.

### *5.2. Peer Pressure*

Human beings are social animals that would want to belong to groups and maintain relationships. Sometimes these relationships may cause a person to give-in to something which otherwise would not want to do. Although families have a powerful influence on shaping the attitude, values and behavioural patterns of children and preventing substance abuse, peer groups have proved to have a stronger influence on the youth. Sometimes peer pressure is huge and can be overwhelming especially during the teenage age. The negative influence of peers appears to increase when parents abdicate their traditional supervisory roles.

Peer pressure does not apply to teenagers alone as it takes so many different forms and can happen at any age. Adults equally have the pressure to fit into new social classes, workplaces and new neighbourhoods. Drug taking could be to be part of the group and to be accepted into a particular fold. Some groups demand people to drink during party or to use drugs as a social etiquette before one can fit-in. So peer pressure is a factor in turning people into drug addiction. Some people believe that using drugs can enable you to be accepted and be part of a popular group.

### *5.3. Parental Failure*

The family factors that causes drug abuse among children include prolong or traumatic parental absence, harsh discipline, failure to communicate on an emotional level, parental use of drugs, and lack of household stability. It also includes the tragedy of low and irregular income and unemployment which may increase the strain on the family and its vulnerability to drug abuse.

### *5.4. Personality*

In some cases, the personality of the person also influences drug abuse. This explains why some people abuse drugs and others do not. Some people have a predisposition and

addictive tendencies and behaviours. However, culture and environmental conditions can have powerful influences on people to develop or not addictive behaviours even though they may have similar personalities but do not abuse drugs. Moreover, some people by their nature are impatient and when they want to relax or have pleasure they turn to drugs. When they take drugs at that moment or a particular time frame they feel good. So drugs gives them instance gratification that other things cannot.

#### *5.5. Drug Availability*

One of the reasons why it is so difficult for some people to overcome their addictive habits is not only because of the easy accessibility of drugs but also because drugs are being brought in huge quantity that has also driven down their prices. It is very easy for people of all ages to get access to drugs and buy them. Today, drugs are sold in schools, jobs places, in neighbourhoods, even the next door neighbour might be selling drugs. Being around and exposed to drugs can lead to addiction. In Nigeria, various types of drugs can easily be found around motor parks, brothels and markets places and are used openly. Also, the military and police barracks and their markets places have offered a safe haven for drugs to be sold at all times. This is so because, both exhibit superior military might over the antidrug agents, so drug dealers that sells in such places are hardly molested or harassed.

#### *5.6. Drug As A Power Booster*

For some people drugs are used to serve as energy booster or as an enhancer to perform particular tasks. Athletes and bodybuilder are susceptible to drug use because of their performance enhancing abilities. For example, Anabolic steroids are drugs that make muscles bigger, while amphetamines help to numb pains which enable people to continue to play even when injured. Drugs also act as psychedelic to people that indulge in criminal acts. It enables them to carryout dangerous criminal acts and could kill even unprovoked or on the slightest provocation.

#### *5.7. Personal Problems*

Some people who abuse drug do so because of one problem or the other. People turn to drug use to cope with problems in their real lives. This could be as result of past physical or sexual abuse, work, or relationship issues. One of the most common reasons for drug abuse among the teens is because they suffer traumatic experience such as neglect during

childhood periods. Furthermore, sometimes life experiences can throw people into depression and anxiety for the adults. So they can abuse drugs to mask some mental problems. When people have anxiety due to life struggle and pains and feel that all have failed and too difficult to handle, they use drugs to escape from their sad feelings. So drug can be used to put off life stressors, and feel better physically and emotionally even if temporarily.

#### *5.8. Genetic*

A person genetic disposition can influence the way and manner the person conducts oneself. Just the same way people inherit the physical characteristic features of their parents so also they could inherit their behavioural traits. There is every possibility that when any of the parents abuse drugs the offspring may likely do the same. Also a family history with drug abuse can also predispose the offspring to abuse drug. Again, children born to an addicted mother during its pregnancy have the high likelihood of becoming an addict when born.

### **6. Mechanism Of Action Of Drugs Abuse And Their Effects In The Body**

Pleasure is a very powerful biological force needed for human survival. Scientists called this reward. If a pleasurable thing is experienced, the brain is wired in such a way that the individual will tend to repeat again. The pleasure circuit also known as mesolimbic dopamine system spans the survival oriented brainstem. There is an important set of nerve cells located at the top of the brainstem that uses chemical neurotransmitter called dopamine to relay messages through their nerves fibres to nerve cells in a limbic system structured called nucleus accumbens. All drugs that are addictive can activate the brain pleasure circuit. The central point here is that neurotransmitters carry information which allows people to experience pains, pleasure, etc. Barbara e'tal (2009) pointed that neurotransmitters serves important functions in the coordination of the development of neurons and brain circuits. Psychoactive drugs alter receptors, transporters and other components of neuron transmission. Alta Mira report (2012) noted that many drugs utilises a specific pathways in the brain to do their work and it makes the brain slightly confused and mistakenly believe that the drugs are a variations of dopamine which is a chemical the brain uses to alert the body that a reward is on the way. While some drugs encourage the body to produce more dopamine than normally would, others encourage

the body to enthusiastically respond to any dopamine it has. This causes changes in the dopamine pathway in the brain and is one of the consequences of long-term drug abuse.

#### *6.1.Mechanism Of Action Of Psychotropic Drugs On The Brain*

One area where drugs abuse affects the human body is in the Central Nervous System (CNS). It comprises of two cells which are the glial also known as glia, and the nerves cells also known as dopamine. Both glia and dopamine performs specific functions in the body. A major distinction between them is that dopamine are cells that communicate with the other cells through neurons while glias are none communicators.

A major important role of glia is that it provides fitness and structure for the brain, distributes nutrients to the system and eliminates waste. They also make up the blood brain barrier that separates the blood from the fluid surrounding the neurons. The barriers allow some chemicals to pass through and some not. This role protects the brain from potentially toxic chemicals carried by the bloodstream. The problem is that while other substances can be blocked by the glia, psychoactive drugs are capable of passing through the barriers without being hindered by the glia.

On the other hand, dopamine contains neurons and is present in the region of the brain that analyses and transmits or communicates information that controls the movements, emotions, motivations, and feelings of pleasures of the individual. There are over 100 billions of neurons in the nervous system, all communicates and have effects on the person. Each neuron has four areas. The first is the cell body that houses the neurons and substances that sustains it. The second is the dendrites that extends from the cell body and look like a tree. Within the dendrites membrane are receptors which are special structures that recognise and respond to chemical signals. The third is the axon that is long and thin and its role is to conduct electrical signals. And finally, is the presynaptic terminal at the end of axon which look like bulbs, and this is where chemicals messages are stored (Volkow, 2001).

When an anaesthetic is introduced either by a physician or the individual self, the drug blocks the perception of pains so the person does not feel it as long as the potency of the drug last. This means that the vehicle delivering the information is blocked. Drugs such as cocaine and amphetamine tap into the brain's communication system and disrupt the way nerve cells normally send, receive, and process information. They can also cause the nerve cells to release abnormally large amounts of natural neurotransmitters, or prevent the normal recycling of these brain chemicals that is needed to shut off the signal

between neurons. At this point, the user thinks that something does not hurt. It is this effect that triggers addiction in the individual. That is where the euphoria which is a very pleasurable experience becomes desirable, and given our human nature, we will always need more.

#### *6.2.Mechanism Of Action Of Psychotropic Drugs On The Heart*

Although drugs do most of their work on the brain, they can also impact other system in the body. The heart can directly be affected by drug use. Drug such as cocaine and marijuana can caused the heart to beat in an extremely faster and uncoordinated manner. The erratic heartbeat can cause the heart to stop functioning altogether and death can occur. This can even happened the very first time a drug is taken (Alta Mira 2012).

#### *6.3.Mechanism Of Action Of Psychotropic Drugs On The Lungs*

Also, people who smoke drugs or inhale drug vapour may be taking in toxic chemicals and applying them directly to the delicate tissues that make up the lungs.

#### *6.4.Marijuana's Mechanism Of Action On The Brain*

The brain contains many parts, and receptors that control memory, thoughts, concentration time, coordination of movement and depth perception. Here are some examples:

The role of cerebellum is to balance, posture and coordinates movement through the muscle as ordered by the motor cortex. Here, the nerves impulses alert the cerebellum the directives of the motor cortex to perform the certain action in the part of the body. Instantly, impulses from the part of the body inform the cerebellum how the action should be carried out. The cerebellum compares the actual movement with the intended movement and then signals the motor cortex to make the necessary corrections, and ensures that body moves smoothly and efficiently. However, when THC the main ingredient of marijuana is introduced into the body, it activates specific receptors known as cannaboids that interferes with the normal functioning of the brain (Nahas, Burks, 1997).

In addition, the hippocampus apart of the brain function involves memory formation. When marijuana is taken, it affects the brain memory by decreasing the activity of the neuron in this region. So persons under the influence of marijuana will have impaired short-term memory, and new learning can be compromised.



Furthermore, there are specialised areas of the cerebral cortex that perform certain functions. For example, thalamus receives sensory impulses relating to seeing, learning, taste, except for smell which is carried by olfactory nerves through the olfactory bulb and directly to the altered sensory perception, and route it to appropriate areas of the cerebral cortex. Again, somatosensory cortex receives messages interpreted as body sensation and organised in a way that the entire body is represented. It receives and interprets accurately impulses from a specific body part. When marijuana is taken, it interferes with the various functions of the parts of the brain.

#### *6.5. Alcohol's Mechanism Of Action In The Body*

Of all drugs that are abused alcohol is given little attention than any other, but it has been observed to have worst health implications than other types of drug abused. When alcohol is ingested it reaches the stomach and only about 20 percent is absorbed into the blood stream through small blood vessels. The other 80 percent goes to the small intestine where it is absorbed into the blood stream. When it flows into the blood stream, it is metabolized by the liver, and broken down by the enzymes. Only a fraction of the alcohol consumed that is 12 ounce of beer or 1.5 ounces of alcohol that undergoes this process in an hour. The additional amount consumed cannot be processed by the liver. In this case, the blood becomes saturated and it makes it way to the body. If alcohol is consumed over a long period of time it can harm virtually all parts of the body. Some of the effects are reversible if consumption is controlled while others are permanent. Drinking too much on a single occasion over time can affect the health of the individual's brain and the body. Alibaba (2007) opined that alcohol affects the body in two different areas:

##### 6.5.1. Alcohol Effect On The Brain

It can interfere with the brain communication path ways, affects the look and work of the brain. This action disrupts mood and behaviour thereby making it harder for the affected person to think clearly, and move with coordination.

- **Cerebral Cortex:** The cerebral cortex's role is to process information from the senses with the assistant of ganglia. It also initiates most voluntary muscles movement and influences lower-order brain cells. When alcohol is taken it depresses the behavioural inhibiting centres and the person become talkative, more self- confident and less socially inhibited. It also slow down the

processing of information from the senses where the person has trouble in seeing, hearing, smells, and touch. The thought process is equally inhibited where the person does not use good judgement or think clearly.

- **Cerebellum:** The role of the cerebellum is to coordinate the muscles that is responsible for fine movement. If the cerebellum is not functioning the movement would be extremely shaky and jerky. Alcohol affects cerebellum which make movement to become uncoordinated.
- **Hypothalamus and Pituitary Gland:** This is the area of the brain that controls and influences many automatic functions of the brain through actions on the medulla and coordinates many chemical or endocrine functions such as secretions of sex glands and growth among others through chemical and nerves impulse actions on the pituitary gland. Here, the effect of alcohol is at two levels:
  - Alcohol depresses the nerve centres in the hypothalamus that controls sexual arousal and performance. As blood alcohol concentration (BAC) increases, sexual behaviour increases but its performance declines.
  - It also acts on the hypothalamus/pituitary to reduce the circulation levels of anti-diuretic. When it drops, the kidneys do not absorb as much water as it should, consequently, the kidney produces more urine.

### *6.6. Medulla*

This part of the brainstem controls all of the bodily functions without the person thinking about them such as breathing, heartbeat, consciousness and temperature. When alcohol is taken it affects the upper centre in the medulla such as the reticle formation and then the person will start feeling sleepy and may become unconscious as the blood alcohol concentration decreases (BAC). If BAC gets too high to affect the breathing, heart rate etc., the person will breathe slowly. Under this condition the temperature and blood pressure will fall and this can be risky and fatal.

#### 6.6.1. Alcohol Effect On The Body

Alcohol can interfere with the following parts of the body.

- **The Heart:** The heart can directly be affected by drug use. Alcohol can damage the heart by way of stretching and dropping of heart muscles

(cardiomyopathy); irregular heart beat (arrhythmias); stroke and high blood pressure.

- The Liver: Heavy drinking can lead to a variety of problems and liver inflammation which include steatosis or fatty liver, alcohol hepatitis, fibrosis, and cirrhosis which is the build up of scar tissue that changes the structure of the liver and block blood flow. It can also cause varicose veins to rupture and potentially trigger internal bleeding.
- The Kidney: The primary functions of the kidneys are to regulate the composition and volume of fluids and electrolytes circulating through the body. Alcohol can compromise the balancing functions of the kidney.
- The Pancreas: Alcohol causes the pancreas to produce toxic substances which can lead to an inflammation of and swelling of the blood vessels (pancreatitis) that prevent proper digestion.
- Cancer: With too much drinking one can risk certain cancer disease such as that of the mouth, oesophagus, throat, liver, and breast.
- Immune System: Alcohol can weaken the immune system that can make the body easy target for diseases. Heavy drinkers easily contract disease like pneumonia, and tuberculosis. Those who drink a lot can hardly wade off diseases (NIAAA 2007).

### **7. Signs To Identify In Persons Affected By Drug Abuse**

There are various ways that drug abuse victims can be identified. Here are some of the common signs they exhibit.

- New Smell: Some of these substances of abuse such as marijuana, alcohol and inhalants are very pungent. When you notice this either in the person's body, home, or car, then you know such a person is involved in drug taking.
- Craving for Drugs: Those that abuse drugs developed tolerance for such drugs and continue have cravings for the drugs. They increase the doses of the drugs and frequently take them to avoid coming down off of the drug.
- Changes in Personality, Behaviour or Mood: In terms of personality, they neglect personal hygiene and grooming as attention shift priorities from important things to constant need for drug. Also, you could observe them wearing long sleeves to

cover indications of needle track marks and scarring injection sites or even their pale looking bodies.

- In terms of behaviour, they usually indulged in secretive and suspicious behaviours, lying, and exhibit angry outburst and aggressiveness even when unprovoked especially when drug is unavailable. Sometimes they become excessively energetic, restless, loquacious and often with inability to sleep. At times the person may be usually calm, depressed, dispirited, and with long periods of deep sleep. Again, the person's mood could be erratic. For example, they could change from irritability and anger to happiness and cheerfulness. Also changed pattern of sleep such as wakeful nights and sleeping during the day is identified.
- Changes in Interests: People who start using drug are likely to lose interest and abandon things that hitherto give them pleasure such as hobbies and motivation. When this happens at the same time with others changes, there is the possibility that drugs have occupied the person's mind.
- Sudden Changes in Friends: Those who indulge in drugs have the problem of developing or maintaining relationships with others. There is the possibility that such a person have developed different values which might warrant trading old friends for new ones and can also withdraw from family members. They develop new interests and perspectives, hobbies and hangouts.
- Changes in Feelings: People that abuse drugs usually have feelings of depression, delusion, paranoia, and powerlessness. They also sometimes have thoughts of harming themselves or others, developed abnormal slow movement and speech, confusion and may become disorientated.
- Signs in the Teenagers: Teenagers that indulge in drugs abuse usually experienced disinterest in school and its activities, frequently missing school and classes, neglecting homework and consequent drop in school academic grades. Sudden demand for money without good explanation for its use, and missing from home at the least expected time.

### **8. Effects Of Drug Abuse On The Individual, Relations, And Society**

The use of drug and consequent addiction serves as emotional crutch for people that have feelings of depression or loneliness. It helps them deal with negative emotions they feel

they cannot face or cope with (Neal, 2012). However, drug abuse has several effects on the emotional, psychological and social, and economic effects on the user, relations and the society. Drug abuse affect the young ones most because they are more vulnerable than the older people and drug can impact on their changing body chemistries more than the older ones due to their fragility.

### *8.1.Effects Of Drug Abuse On Individual's Health*

Drug abuses negatively affect and exert powerful effects on the individual's health. The toxic effects and addictive risk of psychotropic drug is the obvious increased in the magnitude of drug-related health problems of addicts in rehabilitations centres, psychiatric hospitals, and the uncared ones roaming the streets.

The aspects of the effects of drug abuse vary by the type of drug use and the health composition of the individual. The substances that are most commonly associated with drug-related health problems include, benzodiazepines, hallucinogens though curable, but depend on the degree the person has been affected. These drugs do not cause death directly but they are associated with accidents that might result to severe injuries, incapacitation or sometimes death. The death related drug problem include alcohol, heroin and other opiates, cocaine and to a greater extent barbiturates, and amphetamine-type stimulants notably methamphetamine (Jung 2001). Stimulants such as amphetamines can delay sleep and elevate a person's mood but high amounts can cause nervousness and anxiety in the user. Depressants by contrast impair mental and physical functions and slow natural activity in the brain.

Furthermore, drugs influence the brain process that controls the individual. When a person takes drugs, the inhibitory functions of the brain are particularly impaired, resulting in the person using drugs always and having trouble not to stop acting on impulse that the brain would otherwise delay or prevent (Melissa, 2010).

The other calculation of the consequences of the cost of drug abuse is the high incidence of HIV/AIDS. Those that abuse drugs engage in reckless behaviours that can put their lives at risk. For example, the use of these drugs have effects on diminished health and transmission of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) through sharing of needles used in injecting these drugs into the body resulting in Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes (AIDS). The relationship between the injection of drugs and HIV transmission has become a major concern in many parts of the world, both in the industrialized countries and in many poor countries lying either in drug producing areas

or along drug trans-shipment routes. Major outbreaks of HIV infection have occurred in areas such as Nigeria. Women and children who are not themselves drug users may also be affected by problems related to drug abusing men. Drug use can cause birth defects. Generally, drug consumption leads to higher health care costs and decreased earning at the population level (WHO 2004).

#### *8.2. Effects Of Drug Abuse On Individual Morals*

Another risk drug abuse have is the dent it impugned on the person's character. Neal (2012) pointed that the challenges drugs abuse victim faced is the common misconception from the public that drug users are morally deficient, prone to criminality and weak willed. This is contrary to drug user's view that they are not just strong enough to change their behaviour and stop taking drugs. The risk drug abusers run is that they could be judged or labelled as social pariah. This can further push the abuser into the types of company that the society labelled as part of criminal and morally bankrupt individuals. This is likely to have a negative impact on any recovery efforts made to help them.

#### *8.3. Effects of Drug Abuse on Family and Community*

Drug abuse problem has more potent in causing family disintegration than poverty. For instance, where social controls exercised by the family and the community had broken down, different drugs consumption becomes prevalent among young men, women, and teenagers. In addition, increase use of drugs has leads to rapid cultural changes and break down in family cohesion. It can also strain family relationship and ultimately make families dysfunctional, harmful to families and puts society into a burden.

#### *8.4. Effects Of Drug Abuse On Crime*

Drugs and crime are related in several negative ways. Drug abuse increases the likelihood of many kinds of criminal activities. For instance, some crimes results from the need of drug consumers to finance their addiction or to eke-out a living through theft and prostitution. Crimes sometimes precede substances abuse and further increase once addition occurs. The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) notes that half of the crimes committed such as homicides, burglary, and assaults are committed under the influence of drugs (Aurean, 2007). Drugs and their misuse is an essential commodity for gangs either cultist or terrorists. They have inexorable links between one to the other.

Drug addicts easily get hooked to a particular brand of drug and always craved for it, and easily find and form partnership in those that share same belief in that line of psychosomatic attitudes and with a defined purpose. Drugs helps them in the process to carry out their avowed aspirations as they use all kinds of means from the mundane to the vicious is employed, uses whatever weapon available to them such as assault raffles and bombs to achieve their aims. Akin (1994) averred that chronic drug addicts often engage in a variety of immoral and criminal activities as strong dependency on drugs often leads the person to obtain the needed drugs. Drug addiction is therefore strongly connected with armed robberies, burglary, murder and prostitution. This is most especially so when the addict is desperate to obtain the amount needed to sustain the drug addiction habit. Every now and then, in most press briefing, the Nigeria police displays suspected criminals with dangerous weapons used to perpetuate their activities which include substances suspected to be hard drugs such as cannabis and cocaine.

#### *8.5. Effects Of Drug Abuse On Human Capital Development And Productivity*

Drug abuse has direct costs in human capital development and productivity losses. Productivity losses are related to deterioration in job performance due to lateness or absenteeism, spending time in prisons, sometimes death and negligence of social and family obligations induced by drug consumption. The youth are the most affected in substance abuse as most of them are school children and students who often use drug suffers from academic difficulties, mental health related problems that affects comprehension, poor peace relationship and involvement with the criminal justice system. Also, they often experience decline in their school grades due to lateness or absenteeism from school with increased potential for dropping out of school. They spend their time with the preoccupation acquiring drugs. Some of the effects of drug abuse on learning are that they impair or result to short-term memory loss. Others include impaired tracking ability in sensory and perception functions, adverse emotional, social development and general impaired classroom performance. Reduced cognitive efficiency which leads to poor academic performance and consequently resulting to decrease in self-esteem. These contribute to instability in an individual sense of identity which in turn contributes to further drug consumption and thus creating vicious circle. The National Drug Intelligent Centre (2010) pointed that drug abuse impairs rational thinking and the potential for a full productive life.

Drug abuse destroys the old and young, men and women from all races and ethnic groups and no person or group is immune. Drug abuse destroys personal liberty and the well being of communities. For example, students who get involved in drugs during academic pursuit will find it difficult and unnecessary to attend lectures. Due to drug use he may become a freak and start attending night parties on a daily bases. The person may spend the greater part of his/her time chasing drugs and money to buy drugs. He may later join a cult and his academic performance will begin to decline. The quality time spent in searching and using drugs, and perhaps recuperating from the use of drugs could be better spent acquiring skills for job opportunities or improving on the existing skills to increase better job chances.

#### *8.6.The Effect Of Illicit Drug Abuse On Occupation*

Drug abuse has significant cost to the employees, employers and social security system. It limits the chances of one entering or remaining in the workforce. The frustration caused by failure to find adequate employment favours drug consumption thus creating a various circle. Drug abuse can lead to unemployment and unemployment may lead to increases in drug abuse.

Moreover, there is a link between drug abuse and product output quality in work. People who abuse drugs do not perform well in work. They go more frequently on sick leave than other employees. Drug users are more likely to miss work frequently and may have unstable work history. They may have on average accidents at work places injuring themselves and co-workers that might lead to incapacitation or possibly death. Aurean, (2010) averred that they have been cases of job related accidents, and stealing from employers are some of the risks when drug addicts goes to work intoxicated.

One of the consequences is that a society will find it difficult to progress if it has to rely on a workforce that is impaired by large-scale drug abuse. The effect of drug abuse on productivity is a function of the type and quantities of drug consumed as well as the performance of the jobs in question. For example, tasks that require higher-level judgments, constant attention, immediate memory and fast motor skills are obviously more easily disrupted by drugs abuse than physical labour. All this put potentially a heavy burden on colleagues, employers and society as a whole. The cost of drug abuse to human productivity includes decrease productivity and in turn can lower wages earned.



### *8.7. Economic Effect of Drug Abuse*

Drug abuse imposes economic cost not only to the individual user alone but to the family and other relations as well as the state. For the individual, not only will the person's monies be channelled to drug procurement, but also, they cannot engage in viable occupation to earn a living. The cost on the family is equally great because the concern they have for the love one can cost them to spend all the money they have that would have been used for something else for medical care and substance abuse rehabilitation program. This can leave the other members of the family destitute. In addition, it is said that time is money. This means that time spent trying to helping the person is the time that would have been engaged in economic reproductive activities. In addition, since resources are scarce it requires that wise decisions should be made in its allocation. Drug abuse can have impact on the society as a whole in terms of diversion of billions of naira by the state in law enforcement and other efforts aimed at drug interdiction, criminal prosecution, and incarceration. The obvious implication is that, the opportunity cost is the money spent in policing the drug menace and for medical care is the money that would have been used to provide education, public infrastructure and better healthcare for the citizens. Due to incidents of drug abuse, most state governor's wives (first ladies as they are called) have developed and launch foundations projects for the treatment of drug abuse victims in Nigeria. Though drug treatment centres are not well developed and no experienced professionals, it has become a veritable channel where public funds are dubiously diverted for the treatment of drug abuse victims.

### *8.8. The Effects Of Drug Abuse To The Society*

There were many key negative features resulting from the unwholesome consumption and use of both licit and illicit drugs to the society. Drug abuse is seen as etiological factors in the creation of social ills in the society. The consequences of chronic drug abuse are clearly more harmful than their occasional consumption, and the abuse of drugs by many is more harmful than the use by a few. Also, it usually not limited to the users alone but has spill-over effects and imposes many adverse direct and indirect social costs on the family and the society at large. WHO (2004) noted that they are people other than the individual user that can be affected by accidents or violence because of drug abuse. Gambo (1992) averred that the intensification of illicit production, distribution, and consumption of narcotics has threatened the security and welfare of humanity worldwide.

The use of these drugs is affecting the society in a variety of ways. For example, Drug abuse has contributed in many family divorces, violence between husband and wife, and substantial morbidity and mortality. In addition, it has destroyed the social values system beside the venality of government officials. Furthermore, the long-term substance abuse causes dependency which can reduce important human activities. Drug abuse could cause avoidable accident with possible deaths when driving intoxicated and criminal behaviour relating to the acquisition of more drugs.

Furthermore, when a woman drinks during pregnancy the child can suffer from Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). And after birth, parental drinking can lead to child abused and numerous other impacts on the child's intelligent quotient (IQ). Again, Substance use and delinquent behaviour are often related especially as either use or delinquency became more serious. For example, early sexual activity is strongly related to delinquency and drug abuse. Girls who get pregnant indicate prior drugs abuse. Furthermore, youth who do not feel strong attachment to their parents are more likely than others to use drug and become delinquent. Tullis and painter (1994) averred that the most harmful psycho-pharmacological effects of drug use particularly those associated with crack cocaine involves people becoming irrational, excited, agitated or impulsive. Users may become unable to control their anger and vent it in the form of physical assault on others including homicide.

### **9.Summary**

Various types of drug either licit, illicit, and prescription types are abused in Nigeria and have assumed an alarming rate. These drugs include but not limited to alcohol, cigarettes, and gin; marijuana, heroin, cocaine; and amphetamine type such as Dexedrine, Desoxyn, etc respectively. Drug abuse of any kind has both subtle and tragic consequences for the individuals, relations and families, and safety of the communities often in an irreparably way. The public pay for a diminished sense of safety in their homes, neighbourhoods, and some pay directly as victims of crime.

Those who get involved in drug abuse starts by experimenting with drugs for different reasons. Many first try drugs out of curiosity, to have a good time, peer group influence, or in an effort to improve performance or ease problems such as stress, anxiety, or depression.

The consequences of drug abuse are grave and some do not know how to help themselves out of the situation. Some of the problems associated with drug abuse include

irrational and erratic behaviours, violence as in the case of wife battering by the husband, psychosis and paranoia to mention a few. It is only with the help of the love ones, counsellors and the government that they can be redeemed from the scourge of drug abuse.

### **10.Recommendations**

Given the potency and rapidity with which drug abuse is affecting the society, there is the urgent need for the government to demonstrate high level of compassion for its citizens by appointing people with the character, commitment, and competence to address the drug scourge issues. Not limited to these, the government should among others show understanding of the problem by the doing the following:

- Have a Paradigm shift in drug war policy: There should be a shift from the present drug war posture that places emphases on eradicating the production and distribution of illicit drug without achieving commensurate value of the money spent to addressing the problems, and without looking at the factors that encourage people to do drugs. Drug addicts should be given priority in treatment and should not be seen as persons without morals and treated as criminals, but as people with psychological problems that needs help. Refocusing on the erstwhile existing community-based drug-use prevention strategies, programs and services for drug addicts is a necessary starting point.
- Engaged in extensive public enlightenment campaign: There is the urgent needs to discourage drug abuse through intensified national public awareness campaign that will provide information directly to parents and the public on the grave dangers of drug abuse to the nation. Materials for school-based awareness and prevention strategies for elementary and secondary school students need to be developed. People who abuse drugs need to understand that such acts come with specific consequences.
- Increased parental role: There is the need for the parents to monitor the persons their children hang out with to prevent them from joining bad gangs. It is also important that parents routinely check potential hiding places for drugs by their children or wards. Most importantly, parents should investigate the kind of problems that their child may be having that must have resulted in drug use. Maybe they are having problems of fitting-in into certain important activities or

groups. Children should be encouraged to engage in some important social activities such as team sports and afterschool clubs.

- Encourage parents and significant others: The primary goals of drug-abuse or addiction treatment which is a recovery process are abstinence, relapse prevention, and rehabilitation. It is important that in the treatment of an addicted person, help should be given to parents, and other family members as well as friends to the addicts to refrain from supporting addictive behaviours (codependency). This is either through providing financial support to the addict or making excuses or failing to knowledge the addictive behaviour of the addict. Discouraging codependency of loved ones is a key component to the recovery of the affected individual
- Developing more collaborative efforts with others: Recognizing that the drug problem is one of global proportions it cannot be fought alone without collaboration with others. Other law enforcement agencies, all levels of government, and the public are all vital to creating safer homes and communities for the individuals in the society.
- Financial support: Private sector and foreign partners can be mobilised to assist in providing financial help to community's local projects to tackle the growing challenge of drug abuse among young people. However they can only be encouraged to continue to do so if the monies received are used purposely for the program rather than being diverted into private pockets.
- Prevention: Drug addiction is a preventable phenomenon. Research has shown that prevention programs that involve the family, schools, communities, and the media are effective in reducing drug abuse. Although many events and cultural factors affect drug abuse trends, when youth perceived that drug abuse as harmful they will reduced their drug taking. It is necessary therefore, to help youth and the general public to understand the risks of drug abuse. The teachers, parents, and health care professionals to keep sending the message that drug addiction can be prevented if a person never abuses drugs.
- Train drug abuse counsellors and establishment of private specialist centres: The government should make concerted efforts to train professional health care providers or counsellors who will handle drug abuse cases. Equally the

government should licence bodies with quality drug treatment facilities for illicit drug dependence or abuse.

### **11. Conclusion**

The threat of drug abuse is real and enormous. It is difficult to resist the pernicious effects of the invisible tide of drug abuse it imposes on the nation. However, the Nigeria government's attitudes and responses does not reflect an understanding of the gravity of the situation hence no clear and determined strategies to deal with drug abuse phenomena. It had continued without the political will to develop a comprehensive strategy and to put effective national drug control mechanism on board, prevention methods, treatment, and rehabilitation and reintegration of drug addicts into the society. The anti-narcotic agency remained essentially hamstrung in responding to this national threat because of the bureaucratic silos in which they operate.

There is the urgent need for the government to develop a comprehensive strategy to intervene on the incident of drug abuse in the country. The strategies will cover areas such as identifying drug addiction from the initial time, training specialist staff to handle drug abuse issues, and educating parents, and the public on the negative effects of drug abuse. Finally, it is necessary to change tactics in conducting a repressive drug war, and attempt to understanding the psychological world of addicts in order to formulate appropriate policies against drug abuse. There can be no better time and appropriate turning point than now.

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