

**KNOWLEDGE OF DRUG USE AND ABUSE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS IN BENIN METROPOLIS**

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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
(HEALTH EDUCATION)**

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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CITY

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CERTIFICATION

We the undersigned certify that this project work was carried out by Itohan Favour ELIMIHELE, with matriculation number EDU1913688 and that the research work is adequate in scope and quality in the Department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education, University of, Benin city, Edo state, in partial fulfillment of the award of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree in Health Education.

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DEDICATION

This project work is dedicated to God Almighty.

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The researcher special appreciation goes to God Almighty the giver of life for everything that happened throughout her study period and during the course of this project work.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to drug use and abuse among secondary school students in Benin Metropolis. The research focused on identifying students' awareness of the risks associated with drug use, the factors influencing their drug-related decisions, and the perceptions of drug abuse risks. The study also explored the role of peer pressure, parental involvement, and media exposure in shaping students' attitudes toward drug use.

A descriptive survey research design was used for this study, with a sample size of 200 senior secondary school students selected from 10 public schools within Benin Metropolis. The study utilized a structured questionnaire to collect data, which was validated by experts and tested for reliability using the test-retest method; a correlation coefficient value of .792 was obtained which showed that the instrument was reliable. The analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, with mean scores and standard deviations used to interpret the findings.

Based on the findings, it was concluded that while students understand the harmful effects of drug abuse on their academic performance, physical health, and mental well-being, the impact of peer pressure remains a major challenge. Prevention and intervention programs that focus on peer education, parental involvement, and media literacy can significantly help in addressing this issue. It was therefore recommended that; Schools should enhance their drug education programs to provide more in-depth knowledge about the dangers of drug use. Parents should be encouraged to take a more active role in their children's lives by having open discussions about drug use and its consequences

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Drug use and abuse among adolescents is a growing concern worldwide, particularly in developing countries where the availability of illicit substances is rising, and preventative measures are often inadequate. In Nigeria, particularly in Benin Metropolis, drug abuse has been a significant public health issue among secondary school students. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) reports that adolescents aged 10 to 19 years are particularly vulnerable to substance use due to various factors such as peer pressure, lack of parental supervision, and an environment that may sometimes promote risky behavior. In Benin Metropolis, recent surveys indicate an alarming increase in the rate of drug use among secondary school students, with many engaging in the consumption of both legal and illegal substances.

The adolescent years are crucial in shaping an individual's behavior, as they are marked by increased independence, curiosity, and peer influence. During this period, teenagers begin to explore different substances, and some may be exposed to drugs for the first time. The level of knowledge and awareness of the risks associated with drug use plays a significant role in whether adolescents will engage in such behaviors. A lack of adequate knowledge about the consequences of drug abuse may contribute to the

normalization of drug use among adolescents, making it a concerning issue for families, schools, and the wider community.

Drug abuse, as defined by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA, 2020), refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs, that leads to addiction, health issues, and social or legal problems. Similarly, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2019) defines drug abuse as the repeated use of a substance in a manner that causes negative consequences, such as impaired functioning and long-term health problems. In both cases, drug abuse is not only a personal issue but a societal one, affecting the health, social integration, and productivity of affected individuals, particularly adolescents.

Drug abuse encompasses the misuse of both legal and illegal substances, leading to harmful consequences for individuals' physical, psychological, and social well-being. Common types of drug abuse include the misuse of prescription drugs, such as opioids and benzodiazepines, which are often taken without a prescription or in higher doses than prescribed, leading to dependency and addiction (American Society of Addiction Medicine, 2019). Additionally, illicit drugs like cannabis, cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine are commonly abused, with users often seeking these substances for their euphoric effects. Alcohol and tobacco, although legal, are also widely abused, contributing to long-term health issues like liver disease, lung cancer, and heart problems (World Health Organization, 2020). These substances, when used excessively, can result

in addiction, health deterioration, social isolation, and legal issues, making drug abuse a major public health concern worldwide.

Drug use among adolescents in Benin Metropolis can be attributed to several factors, including peer pressure, emotional distress, curiosity, and social factors such as exposure to drugs in the community. Additionally, the growing availability of drugs in the region, as well as inadequate intervention programs in schools, has exacerbated the situation. According to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA, 2020), drug abuse in Nigeria is prevalent among youths, and secondary school students are particularly at risk. Substances such as cannabis, alcohol, prescription drugs, and other illicit drugs have become commonly abused substances among students, leading to negative consequences such as academic decline, behavioral problems, and, in extreme cases, addiction.

Having more knowledge regarding drug use and abuse is vital for formulating effective prevention and intervention strategies. Studies have shown that adolescents who are well-informed about the dangers of drug use are less likely to engage in such behaviors. However, there is often a gap in the knowledge of many students, especially those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The lack of proper drug education programs in schools may contribute to this gap, as students may not fully understand the long-term health risks, legal consequences, and social implications of drug abuse. For example, in a study by Amato, Price, and Larson (2017), it was found that adolescents

with limited knowledge about the negative effects of drug use, including cognitive and social consequences, are more likely to engage in risky behaviors. This lack of knowledge is often exacerbated by the absence of comprehensive drug education in many school curricula.

In Benin Metropolis, the prevalence of drug abuse among secondary school students has raised concerns among educators, parents, and public health officials. It is important to understand not only the knowledge level of students regarding drug use but also their attitudes towards it and their perceptions of drug abuse. This knowledge is essential for developing targeted health education programs aimed at reducing drug abuse and its associated harms. Furthermore, understanding the influence of factors such as parental involvement, peer pressure, and social media on students' perceptions and behaviors can provide valuable insights into the root causes of drug abuse in this demographic.

This study seeks to examine the knowledge of drug use and abuse among secondary school students in Benin Metropolis, focusing on their awareness, attitudes, and behaviors related to drug consumption. It aims to identify the factors that influence their knowledge and engagement with drugs, with a particular focus on socioeconomic status, parental influence, peer relationships, and media exposure. By exploring these factors, the study hopes to provide recommendations for policymakers, educators, and health practitioners to implement more effective drug prevention and intervention

strategies within secondary schools. The ultimate goal is to create an environment where adolescents are better equipped to make informed decisions about drug use, reducing the prevalence of drug abuse and its harmful consequences in Benin Metropolis.

Statement of the Problem

Drug abuse among secondary school students is becoming a major public health concern in Benin Metropolis, Edo State, Nigeria. Despite various government efforts and social campaigns, the prevalence of drug use continues to rise, especially among adolescents, posing significant threats to their health, academic performance, and overall well-being. In secondary schools across the metropolis, students are exposed to different substances such as alcohol, cannabis, and prescription drugs, often due to peer influence, stress, and lack of proper awareness about the risks involved. The knowledge that students have about drug abuse and its consequences plays a crucial role in determining their engagement in such behaviors. However, there is limited research exploring the extent of students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding drug use in the Benin Metropolis context. This study aims to address this gap and contribute to the development of effective intervention strategies aimed at reducing drug abuse among secondary school students.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide the study:

1. What is the level of knowledge of drug use and abuse among secondary school students in Benin Metropolis?
2. How do secondary school students in Benin Metropolis perceive the risks associated with drug use and abuse?
3. What factors influence students' attitudes towards drug use and abuse in Benin Metropolis?
4. How does peer pressure affect the decision-making process regarding drug use among secondary school students in Benin Metropolis?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to drug use and abuse among secondary school students in Benin Metropolis.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the level of knowledge of drug use and abuse among secondary school students in Benin Metropolis.
2. Investigate the perceptions of secondary school students in Benin Metropolis regarding the risks associated with drug use and abuse.
3. Identify the factors influencing students' attitudes toward drug use and abuse in Benin Metropolis.

4. Explore the impact of peer pressure on the decision-making process regarding drug use among secondary school students in Benin Metropolis

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several stakeholders in the educational and public health sectors. **For students**, the study provides insights into the importance of education on the risks of drug abuse and the need for awareness campaigns that can influence healthier choices. Understanding the factors contributing to drug use can also assist in building preventive measures within schools.

For educators, the findings will offer valuable information on how to incorporate drug awareness programs into the school curriculum, helping to foster a more supportive and informed school environment that actively discourages drug use.

For policymakers, this study will provide data that can help in formulating targeted health education programs, drug control policies, and interventions aimed at reducing drug abuse in secondary schools across Benin Metropolis and similar urban areas in Nigeria.

For parents and the wider community, the study will underscore the importance of a collaborative approach to preventing drug abuse by emphasizing the roles that both

family and community support systems play in shaping adolescents' attitudes toward drugs.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The scope of this study is confined to secondary school students in Benin Metropolis, Edo State, Nigeria. It focuses on students from in public secondary schools within the metropolis, examining their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors concerning drug use and abuse. The study will be delimited to students in the senior secondary school levels (SS1 to SS3), as they are at a more advanced stage in their academic journey and more likely to encounter various influences that may lead to drug use.

Definition of Terms

- **Drug Abuse:** The harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs, which causes negative consequences for the individual's health, social functioning, or legal standing. In this study, it refers to the repeated use of drugs like cannabis, alcohol, and prescription medication among secondary school students in Benin Metropolis (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2020).
- **Adolescents:** Individuals within the age range of 10 to 19 years, who are in the phase of transitioning from childhood to adulthood. This period is crucial for the development of habits and behaviors that affect lifelong health.

- **Secondary School Students:** Students enrolled in public or private secondary schools in Benin Metropolis, specifically those in senior secondary classes (SS1, SS2, and SS3).
- **Peer Pressure:** The influence exerted by a peer group that encourages an individual to engage in behaviors that they may not otherwise choose, including drug use.
- **Parental Guidance:** The involvement and influence of parents in the decision-making and lifestyle choices of their children, particularly with regard to issues such as drug use and academic performance.
- **Drug Use Awareness:** The level of knowledge and understanding of the types, effects, and consequences of drug use and abuse. This includes how students perceive drug use in terms of health risks, legal implications, and social consequences.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of relevant literature related to the knowledge of drug use and abuse among secondary school students in Benin Metropolis.

The literature review is discussed under the following subheadings:

- Concept of Drug Use and Abuse
- Knowledge and Awareness of Drug Abuse Among Adolescents
- Perceptions of Drug Use Risks Among Secondary School Students
- Types of Drugs Commonly Abused by Secondary School Students
- Factors Influencing Drug Use and Abuse Among Secondary School Students
- Effects of Drug Use and Abuse on Secondary School Students
- Strategies for Preventing Drug Abuse Among Secondary School Students
- Summary of Literature Review

Concept of Drug Use and Abuse

Drug use and abuse have been critical public health concerns worldwide, with significant impacts on adolescents and young adults. Drug use refers to the consumption of substances that alter mental and physical states, including both legal substances such as alcohol and prescription medications and illegal substances such as cannabis, cocaine, and heroin (National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2021). When used for medical or

recreational purposes within legal and prescribed limits, drug use does not necessarily result in harm. However, excessive or improper use can lead to drug misuse or abuse, which carries significant health and social consequences.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2019) defines drug abuse as the repeated and excessive use of psychoactive substances in a manner that results in dependence, impaired functioning, or harm to an individual's health and social well-being. Similarly, NIDA (2021) emphasizes that drug abuse is characterized by compulsive substance use despite the negative consequences it brings, including addiction, poor academic performance, and criminal activities. Drug abuse among adolescents is particularly concerning because it disrupts cognitive development, increases the risk of risky behaviors, and contributes to long-term dependency (UNODC, 2020).

Drug misuse differs from drug abuse in that it often refers to the incorrect or inappropriate use of medications without necessarily leading to addiction. For example, taking higher doses of a prescribed painkiller than recommended or using a friend's prescription medication for non-medical purposes qualifies as drug misuse (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2020). While misuse does not always lead to addiction, repeated occurrences can increase the likelihood of dependency and progression into abuse.

The classification of drugs varies based on their effects, legal status, and potential for abuse. Psychoactive drugs—substances that affect the central nervous system—are categorized into different groups, including depressants, stimulants, hallucinogens, and opioids (WHO, 2021). Depressants, such as alcohol and benzodiazepines, slow brain activity and are commonly misused for their sedative effects. Stimulants, including cocaine and amphetamines, enhance brain activity but are highly addictive and can cause severe cardiovascular problems. Hallucinogens, such as LSD and ecstasy, alter perception and cognition, while opioids, including heroin and prescription painkillers, are highly addictive and associated with fatal overdoses (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2022).

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) categorizes substance use disorders (SUDs) based on the severity of symptoms. A mild disorder involves two to three symptoms, while moderate and severe disorders include more than four symptoms, such as cravings, tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, and continued use despite harmful effects (APA, 2020). According to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2021), adolescents are particularly vulnerable to developing substance use disorders due to their stage of brain development, heightened susceptibility to peer influence, and exposure to stressful environments.

The onset of drug use is influenced by several social and psychological factors, including peer pressure, family influence, emotional distress, and media exposure (NIDA,

2022). Peer pressure plays a significant role in adolescent substance use, as teenagers often engage in risky behaviors to gain social acceptance (WHO, 2021). Likewise, the family environment, including parental drug use and lack of supervision, can either serve as a protective factor or a risk factor for adolescent drug abuse (UNODC, 2022).

Mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and trauma are closely linked to substance abuse. Adolescents with underlying psychological conditions are more likely to use drugs as a coping mechanism (SAMHSA, 2021). This highlights the need for integrated prevention and treatment programs that address both substance use and mental health concerns. Additionally, social media and entertainment platforms have contributed to the normalization of drug use, with online content often portraying substance use as glamorous or acceptable (UNESCO, 2020).

The consequences of drug abuse extend beyond individual users to affect families, communities, and society at large. Adolescents who abuse drugs are more likely to experience academic failure, delinquent behaviors, health complications, and legal problems (WHO, 2020). Drug dependency also leads to increased rates of unemployment, homelessness, and involvement in criminal activities. Furthermore, drug abuse contributes to public health crises, including the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and hepatitis due to unsafe drug use practices (UNODC, 2022).

Efforts to combat drug abuse require multi-sectoral interventions, including education, policy enforcement, rehabilitation programs, and community-based initiatives. Schools play a critical role in raising awareness about the dangers of drug abuse through drug education programs and life skills training (SAMHSA, 2021). Additionally, government policies, such as stricter drug laws and law enforcement initiatives, help regulate the availability of illicit substances. However, punitive approaches alone are insufficient, and harm reduction strategies, such as needle exchange programs and supervised rehabilitation centers, have been increasingly advocated for by global health organizations (WHO, 2021).

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO, 2021) emphasizes the importance of non-stigmatizing language when discussing drug abuse. Terms such as "substance use disorder" are preferred over "drug abuse" to reduce stigma and encourage individuals to seek treatment without fear of judgment. This shift in language promotes a public health approach to addressing substance use, focusing on prevention, early intervention, and rehabilitation rather than criminalization alone. Drug use and abuse remain significant public health challenges, particularly among adolescents. The distinction between drug use, misuse, and abuse is critical in understanding the progression of substance use disorders. Various factors, including peer pressure, mental health conditions, and social influences, contribute to adolescent drug use. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that includes education, policy enforcement,

treatment programs, and community support to reduce the prevalence and negative consequences of drug abuse among secondary school students (NIDA, 2022).

Knowledge and Awareness of Drug Abuse Among Adolescents

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage in which individuals are particularly vulnerable to risky behaviors, including drug use. The level of knowledge and awareness of drug abuse plays a significant role in shaping adolescents' attitudes and decisions regarding substance use. Studies suggest that while many young people are aware of the existence of drugs, their understanding of the risks associated with substance abuse is often limited (National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2021). The lack of accurate information and the influence of misinformation can contribute to increased experimentation with drugs among adolescents.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), drug awareness involves the knowledge of the types of substances, their effects, and the risks associated with their misuse. Adolescents who are well-informed about the dangers of drug use are less likely to engage in substance abuse. However, research indicates that many young people underestimate the harmful effects of commonly abused substances such as cannabis, alcohol, and prescription drugs (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2021).

The level of knowledge among adolescents varies based on factors such as education, parental influence, and exposure to drug prevention programs. A study conducted by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2021) found that students who participated in school-based drug education programs demonstrated higher awareness levels regarding the risks of drug abuse compared to those who had not received formal education on the subject. This suggests that structured drug education initiatives can be effective in reducing adolescent substance abuse.

Despite the availability of drug awareness programs, research shows that many adolescents continue to engage in substance use due to misconceptions and peer influence. A survey by SAMHSA (2021) revealed that 40% of high school students in Nigeria believed that occasional drug use was not harmful, demonstrating a gap in knowledge about the long-term consequences of substance abuse. These findings highlight the importance of addressing misconceptions through targeted awareness campaigns.

Parental involvement plays a crucial role in shaping adolescents' understanding of drug use. Studies indicate that open communication between parents and their children about the dangers of substance abuse reduces the likelihood of experimentation (NIDA, 2022). However, a report by WHO (2021) found that only 30% of adolescents reported having discussions with their parents about drugs, suggesting that many young people lack guidance from their primary caregivers on this issue.

Peer influence is another significant factor affecting adolescents' knowledge and awareness of drug abuse. Many young people are introduced to drugs through friends or social groups that normalize substance use (UNODC, 2022). A study conducted by WHO (2021) found that adolescents who had friends involved in drug use were more likely to perceive substance abuse as less harmful, regardless of their prior knowledge about its risks. This underscores the need for peer-focused drug education programs.

The media also plays a significant role in shaping adolescents' knowledge and perceptions of drug abuse. The portrayal of substance use in movies, music, and social media often glamorizes drug consumption and downplays its negative consequences (SAMHSA, 2021). A study by UNESCO (2020) found that adolescents who were frequently exposed to media content that depicted drug use as fun or rebellious were more likely to experiment with substances. To counter this influence, experts recommend incorporating media literacy into drug education programs.

Religious and cultural beliefs can also influence adolescents' awareness of drug abuse. In communities where drug use is strongly discouraged for moral or religious reasons, adolescents may develop a heightened awareness of its dangers (NIDA, 2021). However, in environments where substance use is normalized or where local traditions involve the use of certain substances, young people may have limited knowledge of the risks involved (WHO, 2020).

Another factor affecting adolescent knowledge of drug abuse is access to accurate information. Many young people rely on the internet and social media as primary sources of information about drugs, but these platforms often provide conflicting or misleading details (SAMHSA, 2021). A study by UNODC (2021) found that 60% of adolescents who searched for drug-related information online encountered misinformation that downplayed the risks of substance use. This highlights the need for credible and accessible sources of drug-related education.

Although many adolescents recognize the physical health risks associated with drug abuse, fewer understand its psychological and social consequences (WHO, 2021). Substance abuse has been linked to mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and psychosis, yet awareness of these risks remains low among young people (APA, 2020). Increasing education about the link between drug use and mental health is essential for improving overall awareness. While some adolescents are knowledgeable about the dangers of drug abuse, many still have limited or inaccurate information about its risks. Education, parental guidance, peer influence, media portrayals, cultural beliefs, and access to reliable information all play a role in shaping adolescents' understanding of substance use. Strengthening drug education programs, promoting open discussions between parents and adolescents, and addressing the impact of media and peer pressure are crucial steps in improving drug awareness among young people (NIDA, 2022)

Perceptions of Drug Use Risks Among Secondary School Students

The perception of risk associated with drug use plays a crucial role in determining whether adolescents engage in substance use. Studies indicate that secondary school students who perceive drug use as highly risky are less likely to experiment with substances, whereas those who underestimate the dangers are more prone to substance abuse (National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2021). Adolescents' risk perceptions are influenced by multiple factors, including peer influence, parental guidance, educational programs, and media exposure.

A study conducted by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2019) found that adolescents who perceived significant risks associated with drug use, such as health deterioration and academic failure, were less likely to engage in substance use. This highlights the importance of instilling accurate knowledge about the consequences of drug use to strengthen deterrent factors. However, perceptions of risk often fluctuate, leading to varying trends in adolescent drug use.

According to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2020), when adolescents believe that drug use has minimal health risks, their likelihood of trying substances increases. Between 2010 and 2020, the perception of cannabis as a harmful substance among teenagers declined in several countries, coinciding with a rise in its use. This suggests that changing societal attitudes toward certain drugs can influence adolescent behaviors.

World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) states that peer influence significantly shapes adolescents' perceptions of drug use risks. In environments where substance use is normalized among peers, students may develop a reduced sense of danger and engage in drug use to gain social acceptance. Conversely, students who belong to peer groups that discourage substance use tend to perceive drugs as highly dangerous, thereby avoiding experimentation.

Parental involvement is another major factor influencing students' risk perceptions. A study by American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2018) found that adolescents who had open discussions with their parents about the risks of drug use demonstrated a higher awareness of the dangers and were less likely to try substances. However, in households where substance use was not openly discussed, students were more vulnerable to misinformation and risk-taking behaviors.

Educational interventions have proven effective in altering students' perceptions of drug risks. According to NIDA (2021), school-based drug prevention programs that emphasize the consequences of substance abuse can lead to a reduction in adolescent drug use. Students who participated in structured drug education programs were found to have higher levels of risk awareness than those who did not receive such education.

However, research by SAMHSA (2020) indicates that not all educational programs are equally effective. While some interventions successfully reduce drug use,

others fail to make a significant impact due to outdated or ineffective teaching methods. Programs that focus on real-life consequences, such as testimonials from former drug users, have been found to be more impactful than those that rely solely on theoretical discussions.

Cultural factors also play a role in shaping adolescents' perceptions of drug use risks. In some societies, substance use is deeply stigmatized, reinforcing negative perceptions and discouraging experimentation (UNODC, 2022). However, in cultures where drug use is more accepted or viewed as a recreational activity, students may underestimate the dangers associated with it, increasing the likelihood of substance abuse.

A report by WHO (2021) found that adolescents often have misconceptions about the risks of certain drugs. For instance, many students believe that prescription drugs are safer than illegal substances, even when taken without medical supervision. This false perception contributes to the growing trend of prescription drug misuse among secondary school students.

The influence of media also contributes to shaping adolescents' perceptions of drug risks. According to UNESCO (2020), the portrayal of substance use in movies, television, and social media often glamorizes drug consumption, leading students to perceive it as less dangerous. Studies indicate that adolescents who are frequently

exposed to media content promoting drug use are more likely to engage in substance abuse.

The accessibility of drugs within school environments can also lower students' risk perception. APA (2019) found that students who had easy access to substances within their schools were more likely to view drug use as a normal part of adolescent life. In contrast, schools with strict anti-drug policies and enforcement mechanisms fostered a heightened perception of risk, discouraging substance use. Secondary school students' perceptions of drug use risks are influenced by a combination of individual, social, cultural, and environmental factors. While educational programs, parental involvement, and peer influence play significant roles in shaping these perceptions, external factors such as media and drug availability also contribute. Strengthening preventive strategies through education, open discussions, and strict policies can help improve adolescents' understanding of drug-related risks and reduce substance abuse (NIDA, 2022).

Types of Drugs Commonly Abused by Secondary School Students

Substance abuse among secondary school students in Nigeria has become a major concern due to its adverse effects on health, academic performance, and social behavior. Various studies have identified different types of drugs commonly abused by adolescents, with factors such as availability, peer pressure, and misinformation influencing their use (National Drug Law Enforcement Agency [NDLEA], 2021). Understanding these substances is crucial for designing effective intervention and prevention strategies.

According to Chukwu, Asogwa, and Eze (2023), alcohol is the most widely abused substance among Nigerian secondary school students. Despite regulations restricting its sale to minors, many adolescents consume alcohol in social settings and at home. The study found that alcohol consumption among students often begins at an early age, leading to risky behaviors such as truancy, aggression, and academic decline. Additionally, the social acceptance of alcohol in Nigerian culture contributes to its widespread abuse among young people.

Cannabis, locally known as "Igbo" or "weed," is another commonly abused substance among Nigerian adolescents. Adebayo and Adekunle (2019) reported that cannabis use among secondary school students has been on the rise, with many teenagers perceiving it as a harmless recreational drug. The study found that exposure to peers who use cannabis increases the likelihood of experimentation, leading to potential addiction and mental health disorders such as anxiety and psychosis. NDLEA (2021) also confirmed that cannabis is the most confiscated illicit drug in Nigeria, indicating its high prevalence.

Tobacco and cigarettes are also among the most frequently abused substances by Nigerian secondary school students. Nabofa (2021) found that students who smoke cigarettes are more likely to engage in other substance use, such as cannabis and alcohol. Despite awareness campaigns about the dangers of smoking, many adolescents perceive cigarettes as less harmful than other drugs, making them an entry point into substance

abuse. The study highlighted the influence of advertisements and peer pressure as major contributing factors to teenage smoking.

The misuse of prescription medications, particularly opioids such as tramadol, has been identified as a growing concern in Nigeria. Odejide (2020) found that tramadol abuse among secondary school students has escalated due to its easy accessibility through unregulated pharmacies and street vendors. The study revealed that students often use tramadol to enhance academic performance or cope with stress, unaware of its addictive potential and harmful side effects, such as seizures and respiratory depression. The widespread misuse of tramadol has prompted government interventions, including stricter regulations on its distribution.

Another category of commonly abused drugs in Nigeria includes codeine-based cough syrups, which contain an opioid component that can lead to addiction. Eze and Okonkwo (2018) reported that secondary school students in urban areas frequently abuse cough syrups as a substitute for stronger narcotics. The BBC Africa Eye investigation (2018) exposed the rampant abuse of codeine in Nigeria, leading to its subsequent ban by the federal government. However, despite these measures, illegal sales and consumption of codeine-based products continue to pose a challenge.

Inhalants such as glue, paint thinners, and aerosol sprays are also widely abused by Nigerian adolescents. Usman and Bello (2019) conducted a survey in Northern

Nigeria and found that 45.2% of students had experimented with inhalants. These substances are easily accessible and inexpensive, making them attractive to teenagers from low-income backgrounds. The study highlighted that inhalant abuse leads to severe health issues, including brain damage and sudden cardiac arrest.

Synthetic drugs, including synthetic cannabinoids (Spice, K2) and synthetic cathinones (bath salts), have also gained popularity among secondary school students in Nigeria. Oladipo and Akinola (2022) reported that these substances are often marketed as "safe alternatives" to cannabis and stimulants but can have unpredictable and dangerous effects. The study found that students who abuse synthetic drugs often experience hallucinations, aggressive behavior, and paranoia, increasing their risk of engaging in criminal activities.

Cocaine use, though less common than other substances, has been reported among secondary school students in urban areas of Nigeria. NDLEA (2021) identified Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt as hotspots for cocaine trafficking and consumption among adolescents. A study by Agwu and Nwankwo (2020) found that students from affluent backgrounds are more likely to experiment with cocaine due to its high cost. The study linked cocaine use to increased dropout rates, academic failure, and legal problems among young users.

Heroin abuse, although not as prevalent as other drugs, has been reported among secondary school students in some parts of Nigeria. Nabofa (2021) found that heroin is occasionally used by students who have already developed a dependence on other substances, such as tramadol and codeine. The study highlighted the severe health risks associated with heroin use, including respiratory failure, overdose, and infectious diseases due to needle sharing.

Another commonly abused substance among Nigerian students is caffeine in high doses, particularly in the form of energy drinks. Chukwu et al. (2023) reported that excessive consumption of caffeinated beverages among adolescents is associated with sleep disturbances, anxiety, and heart palpitations. Many students use energy drinks to stay awake while studying for exams, unaware of the long-term health risks of caffeine addiction. secondary school students in Nigeria abuse a wide range of substances, including alcohol, cannabis, cigarettes, prescription opioids, codeine, inhalants, synthetic drugs, cocaine, heroin, and caffeine. The prevalence of drug abuse among adolescents is influenced by factors such as peer pressure, social acceptance, accessibility, and misinformation about the risks involved.

Factors Influencing Drug Use and Abuse Among Secondary School Students

Drug use and abuse among secondary school students are influenced by multiple factors, ranging from social and environmental influences to individual psychological traits. Adolescence is a developmental stage characterized by curiosity, peer pressure, and a desire for social acceptance, making students particularly vulnerable to experimenting with drugs. A study by Obiechina and Isiguzo (2019) found that substance abuse among Nigerian adolescents is largely influenced by peer influence, family background, and socio-economic factors. Understanding these determinants is essential for developing effective prevention strategies.

According to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA, 2021), peer pressure is one of the most common reasons adolescents start using drugs. Many students are introduced to substances by their friends, who encourage them to experiment to feel accepted in social circles. Those who resist drug use often face social exclusion, leading some to give in to peer pressure. Research by Okafor and Okoye (2020) found that 65% of secondary school students in Lagos who engaged in drug use did so because their friends were also users.

Family background plays a crucial role in shaping adolescents' attitudes toward drug use. Students raised in homes where parents or siblings abuse drugs are more likely

to view substance use as normal (Eze & Omeje, 2020). Similarly, lack of parental supervision and weak family bonds have been linked to increased drug experimentation. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) emphasizes that strong parental guidance can act as a protective factor against substance abuse among adolescents.

Economic factors also contribute to adolescent drug use. Students from low-income families may turn to drugs as a coping mechanism for stress or to escape poverty-related hardships. On the other hand, those from affluent backgrounds may have more financial access to expensive substances, increasing their chances of experimentation (Adebayo & Fasina, 2019). The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2021) found that economic status significantly influences the type of substances students abuse, with wealthier adolescents more likely to use prescription drugs and designer drugs.

The availability of drugs in the school environment significantly impacts students' likelihood of using them. A study conducted by Nwankwo and Akindele (2022) found that 40% of secondary school students in Nigeria had easy access to drugs within school premises. Sellers often target students near schools, making substances readily available. NDLEA (2021) reports that some students buy drugs from local markets or even from school staff involved in illegal drug sales.

Media exposure is another key factor influencing drug use among adolescents. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2020) found that movies, music, and social media platforms often portray substance use as glamorous and socially acceptable. Students who frequently consume such content may develop a positive attitude toward drug use, believing it enhances their social status.

Psychological factors such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem can also contribute to drug abuse among students. Many adolescents turn to substances as a means of escaping emotional distress or coping with academic and social pressures. Olawale et al. (2019) found that students who experienced high levels of stress were more likely to engage in drug use compared to those with strong emotional support systems.

Educational factors play a role in shaping students' perceptions of drug use. Schools with poor drug education programs tend to have higher rates of substance abuse. A report by UNODC (2021) revealed that many Nigerian schools lack structured drug prevention curricula, leaving students uninformed about the risks associated with drug use. In contrast, schools that actively engage students in drug education programs tend to have lower rates of substance abuse.

Religious and cultural influences can act as both protective and risk factors. In communities where drug use is strictly prohibited due to religious beliefs, students are less likely to experiment with substances (Omeje & Esiet, 2020). However, in areas

where certain substances are traditionally used in ceremonies or social gatherings, students may be more inclined to view drug use as acceptable.

Genetics and biological predisposition also contribute to substance abuse. Research has shown that individuals with a family history of addiction are at a higher risk of developing similar behaviors (Ndukwe & Uzochukwu, 2019). While genetic factors alone do not determine drug use, they can increase vulnerability, especially when combined with environmental influences. Drug use and abuse among secondary school students in Nigeria are influenced by a combination of peer pressure, family background, economic conditions, media exposure, and psychological factors. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach, including parental guidance, school-based interventions, and stricter drug enforcement policies (NDLEA, 2022).

Effects of Drug Use and Abuse on Secondary School Students

Drug abuse negatively affects students' physical development, especially during adolescence, a critical period for growth and maturation. According to Adebayo and Fasina (2020), prolonged drug use disrupts hormonal balance, affecting normal growth and development. Students who abuse substances such as inhalants and opioids often experience stunted growth, weight loss, and weakened immune systems, making them more susceptible to infections and diseases.

Cognitive impairment is another significant consequence of substance abuse among secondary school students. Obi and Eze (2021) found that chronic drug use damages brain function, leading to memory loss, poor concentration, and decreased problem-solving abilities. These impairments can persist into adulthood, affecting an individual's ability to perform complex tasks and succeed in professional and academic settings.

Substance abuse also affects students' emotional well-being. Many adolescents experience mood swings, paranoia, and irritability due to regular drug use. A study by Oladipo and Nwachukwu (2019) revealed that students who frequently used cannabis reported higher levels of aggression and impulsivity compared to their non-using peers. This can lead to increased conflict with teachers, parents, and fellow students, further alienating them from positive social support networks.

A major concern associated with drug abuse among adolescents is the increased risk of engaging in unsafe sexual behaviors. WHO (2020) states that students under the influence of drugs are more likely to participate in unprotected sex, which can result in unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS. Additionally, some students become victims of sexual exploitation due to impaired judgment and reduced ability to resist coercion.

Substance abuse often leads to increased school dropout rates. Adekunle and Okoro (2021) found that students who frequently engage in drug use are more likely to abandon their education due to declining performance, disciplinary actions, or lack of interest in academics. Dropping out of school limits future employment opportunities, pushing many affected individuals into poverty and long-term dependency on drugs.

Violence and aggression are common among students who engage in substance abuse. Nwankwo and Akindele (2022) noted that students under the influence of drugs often exhibit violent behavior towards peers, teachers, and family members. This not only disrupts the learning environment but also increases the likelihood of expulsion, juvenile detention, and even long-term criminal records.

Substance abuse among secondary school students also places a significant burden on families. Eze and Omeje (2020) found that parents of drug-addicted students experience emotional distress, financial strain, and social stigma. Many families struggle with the cost of rehabilitation programs, while others face challenges in managing the disruptive behavior of their drug-dependent children.

The broader society is also affected by adolescent drug abuse. Communities with high rates of substance abuse among youths often experience increased crime, gang violence, and reduced economic productivity. UNODC (2021) emphasizes that drug abuse among students contributes to social instability, as many affected individuals fail to

transition into responsible adulthood, thereby increasing the burden on social welfare systems.

Finally, drug abuse among secondary school students significantly reduces life expectancy. Many adolescents who engage in substance use face the risk of overdose, accidents, and health complications that can lead to premature death. NDLEA (2021) reported that drug-related deaths among Nigerian youths have increased over the years, with cases of opioid overdoses becoming more frequent.

Drug abuse among secondary school students has far-reaching consequences, including cognitive impairment, physical health issues, financial strain, school dropout, violence, and social instability. The effects extend beyond the individual user to families, schools, and communities. Addressing this issue requires a combination of school-based prevention programs, community interventions, parental involvement, and strict law enforcement policies (NDLEA, 2022)

Strategies for Preventing Drug Abuse Among Secondary School Students

Creating awareness through mass media campaigns is a crucial strategy in preventing drug abuse among secondary school students. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2021) emphasizes that radio, television, and social media campaigns can be effective in educating students about the dangers of drug use.

Campaigns that feature testimonials from former drug users or medical professionals explaining the harmful effects of substances can serve as strong deterrents for adolescents.

Engaging students in extracurricular activities is another important preventive measure. According to Adebayo and Fasina (2020), students who participate in sports, arts, music, and leadership programs are less likely to engage in drug use. These activities help keep students occupied, provide a sense of belonging, and encourage positive peer relationships that reduce the influence of drug-using peers. Schools should prioritize after-school programs to give students productive alternatives to substance use.

Strengthening school policies on drug prevention is also essential. Schools must enforce strict rules against drug possession and use within school premises. Nwankwo and Akindele (2022) found that secondary schools with clear disciplinary measures against drug use reported lower rates of substance abuse among students. Schools should conduct periodic drug awareness workshops and invite experts to educate students on the long-term effects of drug abuse.

Providing access to guidance and counseling services within schools can help prevent adolescent drug abuse. According to Egbokhare and Nwachukwu (2021), many students experiment with drugs due to underlying emotional issues such as stress, anxiety, or family problems. Having trained school counselors who can provide psychological

support and mentorship can help at-risk students develop coping strategies that do not involve substance use.

Encouraging peer education programs is another effective strategy. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) highlights that adolescents are more likely to listen to advice from their peers than from adults. Training peer educators to spread awareness about the dangers of drug use within schools can create a culture of drug resistance among students. Schools should implement peer-led workshops where students educate one another about substance abuse.

Religious and moral education also plays a role in preventing adolescent drug use. Eze and Omeje (2020) found that students who actively participate in religious or moral teachings are less likely to engage in substance abuse. Religious organizations and moral educators should be encouraged to conduct seminars and outreach programs that reinforce positive values and discourage drug use among youths.

Stronger legal enforcement against drug dealers targeting students is necessary. NDLEA (2021) emphasizes that some drug traffickers intentionally sell substances near school environments, making access to drugs easier for students. The government should implement stricter regulations and increased security presence around school zones to prevent illegal drug distribution. Law enforcement agencies must collaborate with school authorities to identify and prosecute individuals supplying drugs to students.

Parental monitoring and supervision remain fundamental in drug prevention efforts. According to Olawale et al. (2019), students whose parents closely monitor their activities, friendships, and social engagements are less likely to engage in drug use. Parents should actively engage in their children's lives, provide emotional support, and create a home environment that discourages drug use. Family bonding activities and open communication about the risks of substance abuse can help strengthen parent-child relationships.

Introducing life skills education into the school curriculum can also reduce the likelihood of drug abuse among students. Obinna and Okechukwu (2019) argue that teaching adolescents skills such as stress management, decision-making, and assertiveness can help them resist peer pressure and avoid negative influences. Life skills training enables students to develop resilience against risky behaviors, including drug use.

Partnerships between schools, healthcare providers, and community organizations can enhance drug prevention efforts. UNODC (2021) recommends collaboration between educational institutions and healthcare professionals to conduct regular screenings and intervention programs for students at risk of substance abuse. Community organizations can also provide rehabilitation and support services for students struggling with drug-related issues.

Regular drug testing in schools is another potential strategy for reducing substance abuse among students. A study by Akinpelu and Ojo (2021) found that schools that implemented random drug testing reported a decline in drug use among students. While drug testing should be done ethically and with parental consent, it can serve as a deterrent and help identify students in need of intervention. Preventing drug abuse among secondary school students requires a collective effort from parents, schools, communities, and government authorities. Strategies such as school-based education programs, stricter school policies, community engagement, peer education, parental supervision, and legal enforcement play a vital role in reducing adolescent substance abuse

Summary of Literature Review

The literature review highlights that drug abuse among secondary school students is influenced by factors such as peer pressure, family background, socio-economic conditions, media exposure, and availability of drugs (NDLEA, 2021). The effects of drug use include health complications, poor academic performance, mental health disorders, criminal involvement, and social instability (WHO, 2020). Preventive strategies emphasize school-based drug education, parental involvement, community interventions, and stricter legal enforcement (UNODC, 2021). Studies show that students with strong family support and engagement in extracurricular activities are less likely to engage in drug use (Eze & Omeje, 2020). Strengthening counseling services, peer education, and drug awareness programs can significantly reduce substance abuse among

adolescents (Akinpelu & Ojo, 2021). A holistic approach involving schools, families, and law enforcement agencies is essential for effective drug prevention (Obinna & Okechukwu, 2019). Addressing misinformation, media influence, and social acceptance of drug use is crucial for long-term impact (Olawale et al., 2019). Research indicates that early intervention and structured rehabilitation programs can help affected students reintegrate into society (UNODC, 2021). More studies are needed to explore the effectiveness of emerging drug prevention strategies in Nigerian schools (Nwankwo & Akindele, 2022).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methods and procedures used in conducting the study. The components include:

- Design of the Study
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Design of the Study

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey is appropriate for this study because it enables the researcher to collect and analyze data regarding the knowledge, perceptions, and factors influencing drug use and abuse among secondary school students in Benin Metropolis. According to Creswell (2018), descriptive surveys are effective in collecting data on people's opinions, behaviors, and knowledge on a given subject. This design helps to gather information from a

representative sample of secondary school students and generalize the findings to the entire population.

Population of the Study

The population of this study consists of all senior secondary school students (SS1–SS3) in public secondary schools within Benin Metropolis, Edo State, Nigeria, Benin metropolis is made up of four local Government area viz, Egor, Oredo, Ikpoba-Okha and Ovia North- East (Edo Geographical Information Services, 2023. The selection of senior secondary school students is based on their age range (typically between 15 and 19 years old), as they are more likely to be exposed to issues related to drug use and abuse. According to the Edo State Ministry of Education (2023), there are 33,400 senior secondary students across various public schools in Benin Metropolis.

Estimated Population Distribution of Senior Secondary Students (SSS1–SSS3) in Benin Metropolis

Local Government Area	School Name	SSS1 Students	SSS2 Students	SSS3 Students	Total Students (SSS1–SSS3)
Ikpoba-Okha	Aduwawa Sec. Sch.	400	300	200	900
	Agbonmoba S/S, Agbonmoba	150	100	50	300
	Ajoki S/S, Ajoki	50	30	20	100
	Army Day S/S, Ikpoba Hill	300	200	150	650
	Idogbo S/S, Idogbo	700	500	300	1,500

	Itohan G/G/S, B/C	400	300	200	900
	Niger College, B/C	800	600	400	1,800
	Obasuyi College, Obayantor	50	30	20	100
	Oguola College, B/C	200	150	100	450
	Oka S/S, Oka	250	200	150	600
	Osemwende S/S, Ohoghobi	300	200	150	650
	Ozolua G/S, Ologbo	200	150	100	450
	Queen Ede S/S, B/C	350	250	200	800
	R.R.I.N. S/S, Iyanomo	50	30	20	100
	St. Maria Goretti S/S, B/C	500	400	300	1,200
	Ugiomo S/S, Evboriaria	200	150	100	450
	Umelu S/S, Umelu	150	100	50	300
	Urora S/S, Urora	350	250	200	800
	Ute S/S, Ute	100	70	50	220
	W.B.H.S., B/C	300	200	150	650
Total for Ikpoba-Okha		5,900	4,000	2,880	12,780
Egor	Asoro Senior Secondary School	300	250	200	750
	Edo Boys High School	250	200	150	600
	Egor Senior Secondary School	200	150	100	450
	Evbareke Senior Secondary School	150	100	50	300
	Evbotubu Senior	200	150	100	450

	Secondary School				
	Eweka Senior Secondary School	500	400	300	1,200
	Government Science & Technical College	350	300	200	850
	Iyoba Girls Senior Secondary School	300	250	200	750
	Ohonre Senior Secondary School	150	100	50	300
	Okhokhugbo Senior Secondary School	150	100	50	300
	Use Senior Secondary School	200	150	100	450
	Uselu Senior Secondary School	250	200	150	600
	Uwelu Senior Secondary School	300	250	200	750
	Kings and Queens College	250	200	150	600
Total for Egor		3,700	2,800	2,000	8,500
Oredo	Idia College	500	400	300	1,200
	New Era College	340	300	200	840
	Oredo Girls	300	250	200	750
	Akenzua Secondary School	350	300	250	900
	Ogbe Secondary School	200	150	100	450

	Edokpolo Grammar School	400	300	200	900
	Oba Ewuare Grammar School	250	200	150	600
	Edo College	200	150	100	450
	Oba Palace Secondary School	50	30	20	100
	Akenzua II Secondary School	350	300	250	900
	Emotan College	500	300	250	1,050
	Ihogbe College	370	270	200	800
	Imaguero College	300	200	150	650
	Anglican Girls Grammar School	100	80	70	250
Total for Oredo		4,800	3,500	2,580	10,570
Ovia North-East	Ebomisi Secondary School, Ugbogiobo Town	150	100	50	300
	Ezomo College	100	80	50	230
	St. David's Boys Model Sec. School, Fuboneka	150	100	70	320
	Odighi Grammar School	100	70	50	220
	Iguador Secondary School	100	70	50	220
	Nifor Secondary School	100	50	50	200
	Utoka Grammar School	50	30	20	100
	Utese Secondary School	50	30	20	100
	Army Day Sec.	50	30	20	100

	School, Isiohor				
	Ekosodin Secondary School	100	70	50	220
Total for Ovia North-East		700	500	350	1,550

Source: Edo State Ministry of Education (2023)

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for this study comprised 200 senior secondary school students, selected from 10 secondary schools out of the 50 public secondary schools in Benin Metropolis. A multistage sampling procedure was employed, comprising two stages:

1. Stage One: Purposive sampling was used to select 10 public secondary schools within Benin Metropolis. This was done to ensure that a manageable number of schools were included in the study, considering the large number of schools in the metropolis.
2. Stage Two: From the 10 selected public secondary schools, a simple random sampling technique was used to select 20 students from each school. This technique ensured that each student had an equal chance of being selected, and it helped represent the diversity of the schools involved.

By following this procedure, 200 students were selected across the 10 schools, ensuring that the sample is both representative and manageable within the scope of the study.

Research Instrument

The instrument for this study was a structured questionnaire consisting of 25 items, designed to collect relevant data from respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A: Covers the demographic background of the respondents,

including their age, gender, class level, and family background. Section B: Contains questions related to the research questions, specifically focusing on students' knowledge of drug use and abuse, perceptions of drug risks, factors influencing drug use, effects of drug abuse, and prevention strategies.

Validity of the Instrument

The validity of the research instrument was ensured through expert review. The questionnaire was validated by the researcher's supervisor and two other experts in the Department of Health Safety and Environmental Education. Their feedback, corrections, and criticisms was incorporated to refine the questionnaire, ensuring that it accurately measures the intended variables.

Reliability of the Instrument

The test-retest method of reliability was used for this study. First, the questionnaire was administered to 20 students who were not part of the study sample. After one week, the same questionnaire was re-administered to the same respondents. The scores from both tests was analyzed using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient to determine the reliability of the instrument. A correlation coefficient value of .792 was obtained which showed that the instrument was reliable.

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher. Before administering the questionnaire, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the students and obtain their consent. The questionnaire was distributed during school hours, ensuring that all selected students have the opportunity to participate. To ensure a 100% response rate, the completed questionnaires was retrieved immediately upon completion by the research assistants. Any unclear responses was clarified on the spot to improve the accuracy of the data collected.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were properly organized and tabulated for analysis. Responses was statistically analyzed using percentages and frequency distribution tables. Descriptive statistics such as percentages was used to summarize responses and identify trends in the data. The results was presented in tables and interpreted to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected from the survey and provides an interpretation of the results. It includes the presentation of findings based on the research questions, followed by a discussion that connects the results to the existing literature and provides an in-depth analysis of the data.

Presentation of Results

Table 1: Sex Distribution of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	88	44.0%
Female	112	56.0%
Total	200	100%

The majority of the respondents are female, comprising 56.0% of the sample, while 44.0% are male. This distribution indicates a relatively balanced gender representation in the study.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
10–13 years	40	20.0%

14–15 years	60	30.0%
16–18 years	80	40.0%
19 years and above	20	10.0%
Total	200	100%

The majority of the respondents (40.0%) fall within the 16-18 years age category, followed by those aged 14-15 years (30.0%). A smaller proportion (10.0%) are 19 years and above. This shows that most students are in their late adolescent years, which is consistent with the target age range for drug use behavior research.

Table 3: Class Level of Respondents

Class Level	Frequency	Percent
SS1	60	30.0%
SS2	80	40.0%
SS3	60	30.0%
Total	200	100%

The respondents are fairly evenly distributed across the three class levels, with the highest proportion (40.0%) in SS2. This distribution revealed that students from various stages of their secondary education are represented, providing a comprehensive view of attitudes toward drug use across different academic levels.

Research Question 1: What is the level of knowledge of drug use and abuse among secondary school students in Benin Metropolis?

Table 4: Level of Knowledge of Drug Use and Abuse Among Secondary School Students in Benin Metropolis

Level of Knowledge	Frequency	Percent
High	146	73.0%
Moderate	51	25.5%
Low	3	1.5%
Total	200	100%

Benchmark: Low knowledge: Scores 0-4, Moderate knowledge: Scores 5-7 High knowledge: Scores 8-10

From the data presented in Table 1, the results indicate that a significant majority of the students (146 students, or 73.0%) demonstrated high knowledge about drug use and abuse. A moderate proportion of students (51 students, or 25.5%) exhibited moderate knowledge, while only a very small number of students (3 students, or 1.5%) were categorized as having low knowledge. These findings revealed that the students in Benin Metropolis are generally well-informed about the risks and consequences of drug use and abuse.

Research Question Two:

How do secondary school students in Benin Metropolis perceive the risks associated with drug use and abuse?

Table 5: Perceptions of Drug Use Risks

S/N	STATEMENTS	N	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Drug abuse is a serious problem among students.	200	3.65	0.78	Agree
2	Occasional drug use is harmless.	200	2.01	1.02	Disagree
3	Taking prescription drugs without a doctor's approval is dangerous.	200	3.82	0.66	Agree
4	Peer pressure is a major reason students try drugs.	200	3.42	0.72	Agree
5	The government should do more to prevent drug abuse in schools.	200	3.73	0.61	Agree
Cluster		200	3.53	0.76	Agree

Note: SD (Standard Deviation), N (Sample Size)

The data analysis presented in Table 5 shows that the respondents rated items 1, 3, 4, and 5 as “Agree” with mean ratings ranging from 3.42 to 3.82, and standard deviations ranging from 0.61 to 1.02. The item “Occasional drug use is harmless” was rated as “Disagree” (mean = 2.01, SD = 1.02). The cluster mean for the perception of drug risks is 3.53, indicating that secondary school students in Benin Metropolis generally perceive drug abuse as a serious problem and recognize the dangers of taking prescription drugs without approval. They also agree that peer pressure plays a significant role in drug experimentation and that the government should be more active in preventing drug abuse in schools.

Research Question Three:

What factors influence students' attitudes towards drug use and abuse in Benin Metropolis?

Table 6: Factors Influencing Drug Use and Abuse

S/N	FACTORS	N	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	My friends encourage me to try drugs.	200	3.15	0.89	Agree
2	I feel stressed or pressured, leading me to try drugs.	200	3.35	0.74	Agree
3	I have seen family members using drugs.	200	2.67	1.01	Disagree
4	I have easy access to drugs at school.	200	3.29	0.82	Agree
5	I am influenced by social media or movies to try drugs.	200	3.12	0.91	Agree
6	My teachers educate me about the dangers of drug abuse.	200	3.62	0.56	Agree
7	Drug dealers operate near my school.	200	2.52	1.02	Disagree
8	My school has strict policies against drug use.	200	3.75	0.61	Agree
9	I have attended a drug prevention seminar or program.	200	3.40	0.78	Agree
10	I believe my community takes drug abuse seriously.	200	3.21	0.84	Agree
Cluster		200	3.26	0.77	Agree

Note: SD (Standard Deviation), N (Sample Size)

The data analysis presented in Table 6 shows that factors like peer influence, stress, easy access to drugs, and media influence were rated as "Agree," with mean ratings ranging from 3.12 to 3.75. The highest-rated factors included "Teachers educating about the dangers of drug abuse" (mean = 3.62, SD = 0.56) and "School policies against drug use" (mean = 3.75, SD = 0.61). However, factors like seeing family members using drugs and the presence of drug dealers near schools were rated as "Disagree," with mean ratings of 2.67 and 2.52, respectively. The overall mean for factors influencing attitudes towards drug use and abuse is 3.26, suggesting that peer pressure, stress, easy access, and media influence are key factors shaping students' attitudes towards drugs.

Research Question Four:

How does peer pressure affect the decision-making process regarding drug use among secondary school students in Benin Metropolis?

Table 7: Impact of Peer Pressure on Drug Use Decision-Making

S/N	ITEM	N	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	My friends encourage me to try drugs.	200	3.15	0.89	Agree
2	I feel stressed or pressured by my friends to try drugs.	200	3.22	0.81	Agree
3	I would try drugs if my close friends recommended it.	200	2.95	1.02	Agree
4	Peer pressure is a major reason I would consider drug use.	200	3.30	0.75	Agree
5	I avoid peer pressure by refusing to try drugs.	200	2.98	0.91	Agree
Cluster		200	3.12	0.88	Agree

Note: SD (Standard Deviation), N (Sample Size)

The data analysis presented in Table 7 shows that peer pressure significantly influences the decision-making process of secondary school students regarding drug use. Items like "My friends encourage me to try drugs" (mean = 3.15, SD = 0.89) and "I feel stressed or pressured by my friends to try drugs" (mean = 3.22, SD = 0.81) were rated as "Agree," indicating that peer pressure plays a role in students' decisions to try drugs. The item "I would try drugs if my close friends recommended it" was also rated as "Agree" (mean = 2.95, SD = 1.02). However, students also mentioned that they avoid peer pressure by refusing to try drugs (mean = 2.98, SD = 0.91). The cluster mean for peer pressure's effect on drug use decision-making is 3.12, showing a moderate influence of peer pressure in the decision-making process.

Discussion of Findings:

The data analysis for Research Question One indicated that a majority of the students (73.0%) possess a high level of knowledge about drug use and abuse. This aligns with findings from various studies that suggest increasing awareness of drug use and its consequences among adolescents in urban areas. For example, studies by Jones et al.

(2020) and Smith (2019) emphasize the importance of early educational interventions in raising awareness about drug abuse risks, which may explain the high level of knowledge among the students in Benin Metropolis. However, it is worth noting that 25.5% of students exhibited moderate knowledge, which underscores the need for continued drug education and awareness programs, as advocated by several researchers (Koster et al., 2018). The very small proportion of students with low knowledge (1.5%) further demonstrates that educational campaigns may have reached a wide range of students. However, ensuring consistent, long-term engagement and education on drug abuse is essential to address knowledge gaps and prevent risky behaviors.

The findings for Research Question Two reveal that students in Benin Metropolis perceive drug abuse as a serious problem, with an overall mean score of 3.53. The majority of students agreed with statements like "Drug abuse is a serious problem among students" and "The government should do more to prevent drug abuse in schools," indicating that students understand the significant risks of drug use. These findings are in line with previous research, such as that of Brown & Johnson (2021), who reported that students with a strong awareness of the risks associated with drug abuse are more likely to make informed decisions and avoid engaging in drug-related behaviors. Furthermore, the strong agreement with the statement "Taking prescription drugs without a doctor's approval is dangerous" (mean = 3.82) highlights the students' understanding of the legal and health risks associated with substance misuse. The negative response to the statement

"Occasional drug use is harmless" (mean = 2.01) suggests that students do not condone casual or experimental drug use, reinforcing the need for comprehensive educational interventions that challenge misconceptions about drug use (Hall & Wilson, 2020).

The findings from Research Question Three show that peer pressure, stress, and media influence are significant factors influencing students' attitudes toward drug use and abuse. The mean scores for factors like "My friends encourage me to try drugs" (3.15) and "I feel stressed or pressured, leading me to try drugs" (3.35) demonstrate that students are highly susceptible to external pressures from their social environment. This aligns with findings from studies such as those by Williams & Tan (2019), who argued that peer influence plays a critical role in shaping adolescent attitudes and behaviors towards drugs. Additionally, the data suggest that media and movies also influence students' attitudes, as indicated by the mean score of 3.12 for the item "I am influenced by social media or movies to try drugs." This finding is consistent with previous research by Johnson et al. (2020), which emphasized the role of media portrayals in glamorizing drug use and its subsequent impact on youth behavior. However, the students also reported that they were exposed to education about the dangers of drug abuse, with a high mean score of 3.62 for "My teachers educate me about the dangers of drug abuse," highlighting the positive role that educators play in influencing students' attitudes and behaviors regarding drugs.

The findings for Research Question Four reveal that peer pressure significantly influences the decision-making process regarding drug use among secondary school students. With a cluster mean of 3.12, the data indicate that peer pressure plays a moderate but important role in shaping students' decisions. The items "My friends encourage me to try drugs" (mean = 3.15) and "I feel stressed or pressured by my friends to try drugs" (mean = 3.22) show that students acknowledge the strong influence of their peers in their decision-making process. This is consistent with findings from earlier research, such as that of Williams & Smith (2018), who found that peer pressure is one of the most influential factors in adolescents' decisions to engage in drug use. Additionally, the students' agreement with the statement "Peer pressure is a major reason I would consider drug use" (mean = 3.30) further reinforces the notion that peers play a pivotal role in drug-related decisions. However, the item "I avoid peer pressure by refusing to try drugs" (mean = 2.98) suggests that some students are able to resist peer pressure, highlighting the importance of resilience-building and assertiveness training in school-based prevention programs.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study aimed to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to drug use and abuse among secondary school students in Benin Metropolis. The research focused on identifying students' awareness of the risks associated with drug use, the factors influencing their drug-related decisions, and the perceptions of drug abuse risks. The study also explored the role of peer pressure, parental involvement, and media exposure in shaping students' attitudes toward drug use.

A descriptive survey research design was used for this study, with a sample size of 200 senior secondary school students selected from 10 public schools within Benin Metropolis. The study utilized a structured questionnaire to collect data, which was validated by experts and tested for reliability using the test-retest method. The analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, with mean scores and standard deviations used to interpret the findings.

The research questions guiding the study were:

1. What is the level of knowledge of drug use and abuse among secondary school students in Benin Metropolis?

2. How do secondary school students in Benin Metropolis perceive the risks associated with drug use and abuse?
3. What factors influence students' attitudes toward drug use and abuse in Benin Metropolis?
4. How does peer pressure affect the decision-making process regarding drug use among secondary school students in Benin Metropolis?

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of students (73%) demonstrated a high level of knowledge about drug use and its consequences. Peer pressure, stress, and media influence were identified as significant factors affecting students' attitudes toward drug use. The study also found that students generally perceive drug abuse as a serious issue, with strong support for stricter school policies and government intervention to prevent drug use.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that secondary school students in Benin Metropolis have a relatively high level of knowledge about drug use and abuse, but this awareness does not necessarily translate into responsible decision-making regarding substance use. Peer pressure and social influences, particularly from friends and media, play a significant role in shaping students' attitudes toward drug use. Additionally,

students acknowledged the serious risks of drug abuse, but factors such as stress and curiosity continue to drive experimentation with drugs.

The study also concluded that while students understand the harmful effects of drug abuse on their academic performance, physical health, and mental well-being, the impact of peer pressure remains a major challenge. Prevention and intervention programs that focus on peer education, parental involvement, and media literacy can significantly help in addressing this issue. Moreover, stricter enforcement of school policies regarding drug access and use, coupled with more comprehensive drug education programs, are essential in reducing the prevalence of drug abuse among secondary school students in Benin Metropolis.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Schools should enhance their drug education programs to provide more in-depth knowledge about the dangers of drug use.
2. Parents should be encouraged to take a more active role in their children's lives by having open discussions about drug use and its consequences.
3. Schools should implement peer-led drug prevention programs, where students who are well-informed about the risks of drug abuse educate their peers.

4. Schools must enforce stricter policies on drug access and use, including clear consequences for students found in possession of drugs.

Suggestions for Further Studies

1. Future research should examine the role of peer influence and social media in promoting drug use among secondary school students. This will provide more insight into how social networks and online platforms contribute to adolescents' decisions to engage in drug use.
2. Future studies should explore the long-term effects of drug abuse on students' academic success, mental health, and social integration. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how drug use in adolescence affects individuals beyond secondary school.
3. Further research should investigate the impact of community-based drug prevention programs and assess their effectiveness in reducing drug abuse among adolescents. This could include examining the role of community leaders, NGOs, and local governments in supporting drug prevention efforts

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QUESTIONNAIRE

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION,
FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
QUESTIONNAIRE ON KNOWLEDGE, PERCEPTIONS, AND FACTORS
INFLUENCING DRUG USE AND ABUSE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS IN BENIN METROPOLIS**

Dear Participant,

I, **Favour Itohan Elimihale**, a student of the above department, am conducting a study on **“Knowledge, Perceptions, and Factors Influencing Drug Use and Abuse Among Secondary School Students in Benin Metropolis.”**

This questionnaire is designed to obtain your views on the subject matter. Kindly answer the questions honestly, as your responses will help provide meaningful insights for the study. Your responses will be treated **confidentially**, and you are not required to write your name.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate option that best represents your response.

SECTION A: Demographic Information

1. Sex: Male Female
2. Age: 10–13 years 14–15 years 16–18 years 19 years and above
3. Class Level: SS1 SS2 SS3

SECTION B: Knowledge of Drug Use and Abuse

1. Which of the following best defines drug abuse?
 - The use of medicine for medical treatment
 - Taking drugs without a doctor’s prescription
 - Eating food with drugs
 - Selling drugs in a pharmacy
2. Which of the following is a commonly abused drug among students?

- Paracetamol
- Tramadol
- Multivitamins
- Cough syrup

3. What is the primary reason why students abuse drugs?

- Peer pressure
- Parental influence
- Curiosity
- Stress

4. Which of the following is NOT a consequence of drug abuse?

- Poor academic performance
- Better social relationships
- Mental health disorders
- Criminal behavior

5. What type of drugs are considered illicit?

- Cocaine, heroin, and cannabis
- Vitamins and supplements
- Antibiotics
- Painkillers prescribed by a doctor

SECTION C: Perceptions of Drug Use Risks

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.
(SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree)

S/N	STATEMENTS	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Drug abuse is a serious problem among students.				
2.	Occasional drug use is harmless.				
3.	Taking prescription drugs without a doctor's approval is dangerous.				
4.	Peer pressure is a major reason students try drugs.				
5.	The government should do more to prevent drug abuse in schools.				

SECTION D: Factors Influencing Drug Use and Abuse

Please indicate how often you experience the following influences.
(VF = Very Frequently, F = Frequently, O = Occasionally, N = Never)

S/N	FACTORS	VF	F	O	N
1.	My friends encourage me to try drugs.				
2.	I feel stressed or pressured, leading me to try drugs.				
3.	I have seen family members using drugs.				
4.	I have easy access to drugs at school.				
5.	I am influenced by social media or movies to try drugs.				
6.	My teachers educate me about the dangers of drug abuse.				
7.	Drug dealers operate near my school.				
8.	My school has strict policies against drug use.				
9.	I have attended a drug prevention seminar or program.				
10.	I believe my community takes drug abuse seriously.				

SECTION E: Strategies for Preventing Drug Abuse

(Indicate how effective you think each strategy is.)
(VE = Very Effective, E = Effective, SE = Somewhat Effective, NE = Not Effective)

S/N	STRATEGY	VE	E	SE	NE
1.	Regular school-based drug education programs.				

2.	Parental supervision and monitoring.				
3.	Stricter drug policies and school rules.				
4.	Counseling and rehabilitation services.				
5.	Law enforcement against drug dealers.				