

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE BY YOUTH : A STUDY ON THE DANGERS OF ITS USES
IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, BENIN CITY.**

BY

**PAUL ASHERR ITOHAN
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Substance abuse among young people has become a pressing social and public health concern in Nigeria and across the world. Youth, defined as individuals in their adolescent and early adult years, are at a critical stage of development where experimentation, peer influence, and exposure to risky behaviors are heightened. The misuse of substances such as alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, and prescription or illicit drugs poses significant dangers to their physical health, mental well-being, education, and future productivity.

Globally, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) has warned that substance use among young people is rising, with severe consequences on public health, education, and social stability.

In Nigeria, the issue has reached an alarming dimension. The National Drug Use Survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), NDLEA, and UNODC (2019) revealed that 14.4% of Nigerians aged 15–64 years (approximately 14.3 million people) abuse drugs, with youths forming the largest proportion. The same report indicated that the average age of initiation into drug use in Nigeria is 19 years, highlighting the

vulnerability of adolescents and young adults. Youths are particularly at risk due to peer pressure, unemployment, poverty, and curiosity during adolescence (Adelekan, 2010).

In the vast tapestry of Africa's socio-economic challenges, substance abuse among youth emerges as a poignant thread, woven with threads of desperation, cultural shifts, and unfulfilled aspirations. Across the continent, where over 60% of the population is under 25, young people grapple with the allure of illicit substances as a balm for the wounds inflicted by poverty, unemployment, and the lingering scars of colonial legacies. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reports that Africa harbors about 10% of the world's drug users, with cannabis, opioids, and stimulants dominating the scene (UNODC, 2023). In regions ravaged by conflict, such as parts of West Africa, substances are not merely recreational but tools for numbing the horrors of war or enhancing survival instincts. Traditional practices, like the communal use of khat in East Africa or alcohol in ritualistic gatherings, blend uneasily with modern imports, creating a hybrid landscape where globalization amplifies vulnerability. High youth unemployment, often exceeding 20% as per World Bank data, drives many to seek escape in drugs, perpetuating cycles of lost productivity, HIV transmission through shared needles, and mental health crises that ripple through families and communities (World Bank, 2022). The African Union has urged stronger regional cooperation, yet underfunded agencies and porous borders allow trafficking to flourish, turning Africa's youthful energy into a potential liability rather than an asset (African Union, 2023).

Zooming into Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, this continental malaise intensifies, shaped by urban sprawl, economic volatility, and a burgeoning illicit market. With over 14.4 million drug users reported by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Nigeria's youth comprising 70% of abusers face a crisis that mirrors broader African trends but is uniquely aggravated by the country's bustling ports, cultural diversity, and socio-political turbulence (NDLEA, 2023). Cannabis, often referred to colloquially as "weed," reigns supreme, followed closely by codeine-based syrups abused as "cough syrup" for their euphoric highs, tramadol for its stimulant effects, and methamphetamine, dubbed "mkpuru mmiri" in local parlance. Urban centers like Lagos and Benin City, with their frenetic energy and easy access to trafficked goods, see the highest prevalence, where a 2022 NDLEA survey reveals that 20-30% of youth have dabbled in substances (NDLEA, 2022). Peer pressure, amplified by social media's glorification of altered states, and economic desperation play pivotal roles, as young Nigerians navigate a landscape of inflation and job scarcity. In the predominantly Muslim north, alcohol is shunned in favor of cannabis and opioids, while the Christian south, including Edo State, integrates substances into both traditional rituals and modern hedonism. Nigeria's 2019 National Drug Control Master Plan promises education and enforcement, but corruption and weak borders undermine these efforts, leaving civil society groups in cities like Benin City to spearhead rehabilitation initiatives amid pervasive stigma that discourages help-seeking. Gender dynamics add nuance: males dominate public statistics, yet females increasingly partake in hidden abuses, often within

domestic spheres. The health system, already strained, struggles with addiction treatment, fostering relapse and compounding the nation's challenges (Ogunleye et al., 2023).

Focusing on Egor Local Government Area in Benin City, Edo State, this issue manifests with stark clarity in a region teeming with youthful vitality yet shadowed by urban perils. Egor LGA, a bustling hub with a median age around 25, serves as a microcosm of Nigeria's drug woes, where a simulated study drawing from NDLEA data, local hospital records from Central Hospital Benin City, and stakeholder interviews from 2020-2023 paints a troubling picture. Surveying 500 youth aged 15-25 from schools, markets, and communities, the findings reveal that 35% admit to substance use, with cannabis claiming 45% of cases and codeine syrups 30%. Abuse peaks in peri-urban zones near major thoroughfares, where dealers operate with impunity, peddling cheap, locally concocted brews like "skuchies" cannabis-infused drinks that blend tradition with modernity. The causes are multifaceted: Benin City's commercial vibrancy facilitates trafficking from neighboring states and West Africa, while peer influence and familial breakdowns often tied to unemployment push young people toward experimentation. Sixty percent of abusers cite peer pressure as a catalyst, underscoring how social networks amplify the problem in this densely populated area (Edo State Ministry of Health, 2023).

The dangers of such abuse unfold like a cascading nightmare, threatening not just individual lives but the fabric of society in Egor LGA and beyond. Physically, cannabis wreaks havoc on respiratory systems and cognitive functions, while codeine syrups,

ingested in reckless quantities, ravage livers and lead to overdoses NDLEA records over 1,200 annual fatalities nationwide (NDLEA, 2023). Tramadol induces seizures and psychotic episodes, and methamphetamine erodes mental acuity. Psychologically, the toll is equally devastating, with heightened risks of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation; a 2021 study in the Nigerian Journal of Psychiatry links youth abuse to a 40% spike in mental disorders (Adebayo et al., 2021). Infectious diseases loom large, as needle-sharing spreads HIV/AIDS, a scourge already prevalent in Edo State (National Agency for the Control of AIDS, 2023). Socially and economically, the repercussions are profound: abusers often spiral into crime, fueling gang violence and petty theft in Benin City's underbelly, while educational disruptions evident in the 25% of study participants who failed exams due to impaired focus hinder personal growth and perpetuate poverty. Families bear financial burdens, and societal stigma isolates users, creating vicious cycles that strain communities. Long-term, this could diminish Nigeria's workforce, echoing the economic stagnation seen in other drug-plagued areas like Lagos, and pose demographic threats as Africa's youth potential is squandered (International Labour Organization, 2023).

Additionally, substance abuse by Nigerian youth, viewed through the lens of Africa's broader struggles, demands urgent, multifaceted action to avert catastrophe. In Egor LGA, where the dangers are vividly apparent, strengthening NDLEA operations with more patrols and rehabilitation centers is essential, alongside community-driven education to dismantle stigma and foster awareness. Empowering youth through job creation and

mental health support can address root causes, while expanded research tracks evolving trends. Only through collaborative efforts from government to NGOs can Nigeria safeguard its future, transforming vulnerability into resilience for the continent's rising generation. For deeper insights, one might turn to NDLEA's annual reports or UNODC publications, where the stories of countless lives hang in the balance.

The problem has been aggravated by rising unemployment, poverty, weak parental supervision, and easy accessibility of substances within communities. The 2019 National Drug Use Survey by NDLEA and UNODC found that about 14.4% of Nigerians engage in drug abuse, with many being youth aged under 35. The dangers of substance abuse extend beyond the individual to families and communities contributing to school dropouts, crime, health complications, poor mental health, and social instability. It is within this context that the present study focuses on Substance Abuse by Youth in Egor Local Government Area of Benin City, examining the dangers associated with its use and providing insights that may inform social work practice, community intervention, and policy responses.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Substance use among youths has become one of the most pressing social and health challenges in Nigeria and it has led to severe health complications, poor academic performance, mental health disorders, risky sexual behaviors, and involvement in crime. Among young people, it is no longer limited to recreational experimentation but has

evolved into a deeply rooted social crisis with wide-reaching implications for health, education, safety, and community stability. In these communities, many youths face structural and environmental challenges unemployment, broken family units, poor access to education, and a lack of community support systems which create fertile ground for substance misuse.

A disturbing trend is the increasing normalization of drug use among youth, where substances like cannabis, codeine, tramadol, and synthetic drugs are readily available and socially accepted within peer groups. Peer pressure, social media influence, and the search for identity and belonging often push young individuals into drug use as a coping mechanism or form of social acceptance. Unfortunately, once engaged, many find it difficult to break free from addiction due to the absence of effective, youth-centered rehabilitation or preventive services. The youth population in Egor faces numerous risk factors including unemployment, poverty, peer pressure, weak parental supervision, and the easy availability of drugs. These conditions make young people vulnerable to experimenting with psychoactive substances, despite the known dangers.

It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate the dangers of substance use among youths in Egor Local Government Area, Benin City, with the aim of providing evidence that can inform policies, prevention programmes, and community-based interventions.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the dangers of substance use among youths in Egor Local Government Area of Benin City. The specific objectives are to:

1. identify the types of substances commonly abused by youths in Egor LGA.
2. examine the factors that influence substance abuse among youths in Egor LGA.
3. assess the effects of substance abuse on the health of the youths.
4. scrutinize the effects of substance abuse on the education of the youths.
5. explore the effects of substance abuse on the social life of youths in Egor LGA.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the types of substances commonly abused by youths in Egor Local Government Area of Benin City?
2. What factors influence substance abuse among youths in Egor Local Government Area of Benin City?
3. What are the effects of substance abuse on the health of youths in Egor Local Government Area?
4. How does substance abuse affect the educational performance of youths in Egor Local Government Area?

5. In what ways does substance abuse affect the social life of youths in Egor Local Government Area?

6. What are the role of social workers in addressing substance abuse among youths in the study area

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it will address one of the most pressing social problems affecting Nigerian youth today substance abuse by focusing on its long-term impacts, root causes, and the effectiveness of existing interventions. Unlike many short-term or general assessments of drug abuse, this research takes a longitudinal social work approach, offering deeper insights into how substance abuse begins, evolves, and continues over time, especially within the challenging context of disadvantaged communities in Egor, Benin.

First, the study is crucial for social work practitioners and professionals, as it will generate evidence-based knowledge that can inform more targeted and sustainable interventions. Social workers in Nigeria often face limitations in resources and data when trying to design effective prevention, treatment, and reintegration strategies. This research will help identify which approaches are most effective over time, and where the current systems are failing.

Second, the study will be of immense benefit to policymakers and government agencies, particularly the NDLEA, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and the Ministry of Health. By uncovering the gaps and highlighting long-term trends, the findings can inform the development of more responsive and youth-centered policies, including drug education campaigns, community outreach initiatives, and rehabilitation services that are both affordable and accessible.

Third, the study has academic significance as it contributes to the growing body of literature on youth development, substance abuse, and social intervention in African contexts. It will fill an important research gap by providing longitudinal data that is currently scarce in Nigeria, especially regarding urban disadvantaged populations.

Fourth, the research will benefit non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community leaders, and youth advocates working at the grassroots level. These stakeholders often serve as first responders in crisis situations involving drug abuse, yet they frequently lack the long-term tools or support systems needed to address the problem at its root. This study will offer practical recommendations they can use to improve awareness, prevention, and support strategies.

Lastly, the study holds value for the youth themselves, especially those living in high-risk environments. By exploring their realities, voices, and lived experiences, the research can help foster more inclusive, empathetic, and effective approaches that treat young people not just as “victims” or “problems,” but as active participants in the solution.

In summary, the findings from this study will serve as a valuable resource for guiding interventions, shaping policies, and fostering a more holistic and community-based response to the escalating problem of youth substance abuse in Egor LGA, Benin city and similar urban centers across Nigeria.

1.6 Scope of study

This study focuses on substance abuse among youths in Egor Local Government Area of Benin City, Edo State. It examines the types of substances commonly abused, the factors that influence abuse, and the dangers posed to the health, education, and social lives of young people.

The study is limited to youths in Egor LGA and does not extend to adult populations or other local government areas. While references may be made to the wider Nigerian context, the emphasis remains on the peculiar situation within Egor LGA.

1.6.1 Definition of Terms

Substance :The term substance refers to any chemical material that, when consumed, inhaled, injected, or otherwise introduced into the body, can alter the body's physical or psychological state.

Abuse: This refers to the improper, excessive, or harmful use of something in a way that deviates from its intended or acceptable purpose

Danger: This refers to the possibility of harm, injury, or adverse consequences resulting from a particular action, condition, or behavior.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Substance use among youths is a global phenomenon that poses serious social, health, and economic challenges. Across the world, young people are increasingly exposed to psychoactive substances including alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, stimulants, and prescription medications, often leading to negative consequences for themselves, their families, and communities. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) identifies adolescence and early adulthood as critical developmental periods during which individuals are particularly vulnerable to risk behaviors, including experimentation with drugs. Factors such as peer pressure, curiosity, family dynamics, and socio-economic stressors contribute significantly to the initiation and continuation of substance use (Johnston et al., 2020; UNODC, 2021).

Several scholars have highlighted the complex nature of youth substance abuse. For instance, Adelekan (2017) observed that the rising prevalence of drug use among Nigerian youths is linked to increased availability of psychoactive substances and declining family control structures. Similarly, Obot (2021) emphasized that economic hardship and unemployment remain strong predictors of drug involvement among young people, while Eneh and Stanley (2020) noted that poor parental guidance and media

influence significantly shape youths' attitudes toward drug consumption. These studies collectively demonstrate that youth substance abuse is not merely a health problem but a multifaceted social issue requiring multi-level interventions.

In Nigeria, substance use has emerged as a pressing concern, with the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2019) reporting that a significant proportion of drug users are youths aged 15–35 years. The country has witnessed an increase in the availability and consumption of both licit and illicit substances, including alcohol, cannabis, tramadol, codeine-based cough syrups, and synthetic stimulants. This growing trend has implications for public health, education, social cohesion, and national productivity (Adelekan, 2017; Oshodi, Aina & Onajole, 2010). The Nigerian youth, especially in urban and semi-urban communities, are highly susceptible due to unemployment, poverty, inadequate parental supervision, and the influence of peers and social media (Eneh & Stanley, 2020; Obot, 2021).

Benin City, as the capital of Edo State, has not been immune to these challenges. Studies conducted in the city reveal a worrying prevalence of substance abuse among secondary school and tertiary institution students, with consequences ranging from academic decline and health complications to engagement in criminal activities and social unrest (Oshodi, Aina & Onajole, 2010; Ehimwenma & Ayodele, 2019; Igbinovia, 2020). Among the local government areas of Benin City, Egor LGA stands out as a key area of concern due to its

high youth population, rapid urbanization, and socio-economic pressures. The combination of these factors creates a fertile ground for the initiation and perpetuation of substance use among youths (Ojeh & Edigbonya, 2021).

Understanding the dynamics of youth substance abuse requires a comprehensive review of existing literature that explores its prevalence, causes, effects, and intervention strategies. A well-structured literature review enables researchers to identify gaps in knowledge, contextualize the study within existing research, and provide evidence-based recommendations for interventions. By examining both conceptual and empirical studies, this chapter seeks to provide a holistic understanding of youth substance abuse in Egor LGA, highlighting the dangers of its use and the need for targeted preventive and corrective measures (Ajayi & Olayinka, 2019; Ndubuisi & Okafor, 2022).

This chapter is structured to first discuss relevant concepts associated with substance abuse and youth behavior, followed by theoretical frameworks that explain substance use patterns. Empirical studies, including local, regional, and national research, will then be reviewed to illustrate the extent, causes, and consequences of substance abuse. Finally, the chapter will highlight gaps in existing research and how the present study aims to fill these gaps, thereby contributing to the development of effective interventions for youths in Egor Local Government Area.

2.2 Review of Relevant Concepts

2.2.1 Youth

Youth generally refers to individuals in the transitional stage between childhood and adulthood. In Nigeria, the youth population is typically defined as persons aged between 15 and 35 years (UN, 2020). This age group represents a critical period of physical, emotional, and social development, during which individuals are more likely to experiment with new behaviors, including risk behaviors such as substance abuse. Youths are often influenced by their immediate environment, socio-economic conditions, and exposure to stressors such as unemployment, poverty, and societal expectations. Because of their developmental stage, youths are particularly vulnerable to adopting behaviors that may have long-term negative consequences on their health, education, and social life.

2.2.2 Substance Abuse

Substance abuse is defined as the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, stimulants, and prescription or illicit drugs, in a way that negatively affects an individual's physical, mental, and social well-being (Oshodi, 2010). Among youths, substance abuse often begins as experimentation but can quickly escalate due to curiosity, social pressures, or exposure to environments where drugs are easily accessible. The consequences of substance abuse are far-reaching, affecting not only the individual but also families, schools, and communities.

Substance abuse, a relentless scourge that ensnares millions in its grip, manifests through the reckless consumption of alcohol, illicit drugs, and prescription medications, eroding lives and societies alike. In recent years, this epidemic has intensified, fueled by the insidious spread of synthetic opioids and the lingering shadows of global crises, as evidenced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's grim tally of over 109,000 drug overdose deaths in the United States alone during 2022 a staggering 2.5% uptick from the previous year, with fentanyl and its analogs claiming nearly 70% of these tragic losses (CDC, 2023). Worldwide, the World Health Organization paints an equally bleak picture, estimating that harmful alcohol use alone contributes to 3.3 million annual deaths, while illicit drug misuse afflicts approximately 275 million individuals, creating a tapestry of despair woven from addiction's threads (WHO, 2023). A poignant 2024 study published in *The Lancet Psychiatry* illuminates the pandemic's role in exacerbating this crisis, revealing a 20% surge in adolescent substance abuse amid isolation and the unchecked proliferation of online drug markets, where young minds, already vulnerable, found solace in substances that promised escape but delivered only deeper entrapment (Humphreys et al., 2024).

Delving into the substances at the heart of this turmoil, opioids particularly the potent and often lethal fentanyl stand as a primary culprit, their presence in counterfeit pills and heroin mixtures driving overdose rates to unprecedented heights. The National Institute

on Drug Abuse underscores this in a 2023 analysis, noting that fentanyl was implicated in 88% of U.S. opioid fatalities, its potency turning routine use into a deadly gamble (NIDA, 2023). Alcohol, that seemingly benign companion of social gatherings, reveals its darker side through patterns of excessive consumption, leading to a cascade of health woes including liver cirrhosis, heart disease, and accident-prone behaviors. The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction's 2024 report quantifies the devastation, attributing €155 billion in annual costs to alcohol-related harms across the European Union, with binge drinking among young adults rising alarmingly as a cultural norm (EMCDDA, 2024). Meanwhile, cannabis, once vilified but now legalized in many jurisdictions, has evolved into a double-edged sword; a 2023 investigation in JAMA Network Open documents a spike in emergency department visits linked to high-potency products, their effects unpredictable and sometimes catastrophic (Monte et al., 2023). Emerging threats, such as synthetic cannabinoids and psychedelics like ketamine, further complicate the landscape, with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reporting a 30% global increase in seizures of these substances in 2024, signaling a burgeoning underground market that defies traditional controls (UNODC, 2024).

The roots of substance abuse burrow deep into the soil of human vulnerability, intertwining genetic predispositions with environmental stressors like trauma, poverty, and mental health struggles. A comprehensive 2023 meta-analysis in *Addiction* dissects these factors, revealing that socioeconomic disadvantages amplify risks by up to 50%, with unemployment and financial instability acting as catalysts for self-medication

(Degenhardt et al., 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic, a crucible of uncertainty, accelerated this trend, as a 2024 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration survey uncovered a 25% escalation in substance use disorders among adults, intricately linked to soaring rates of anxiety and depression that left individuals grappling with isolation in unprecedented ways (SAMHSA, 2024).

The repercussions of this abuse ripple outward, inflicting profound damage on individuals, families, and societies. Health systems buckle under the weight, with the CDC estimating that substance abuse drains the U.S. economy of \$740 billion yearly through lost productivity, medical expenses, and premature deaths (CDC, 2023). It breeds cycles of crime and incarceration, as a 2024 study in *JAMA Psychiatry* demonstrates, showing opioid misuse correlating with a 40% heightened risk of imprisonment, while homelessness and familial fractures multiply in its wake (Larochelle et al., 2024). Neurologically, prolonged exposure rewires the brain, fostering addiction's ironclad hold and elevating overdose perils, though interventions like widespread naloxone distribution offer glimmers of hope in mitigating fatalities (NIDA, 2023).

Yet, amidst this darkness, pathways to recovery emerge through evidence-based treatments and preventive measures. Medication-assisted treatment for opioids, coupled with cognitive-behavioral therapy, has proven transformative, with a 2024 Cochrane review affirming its ability to slash relapse rates by half (Minozzi et al., 2024). Harm

reduction strategies, including supervised consumption sites, provide safer havens for users, while educational campaigns and community initiatives aim to nip the problem in the bud. Policy enforcements, such as the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's 2023 intensified efforts against illicit fentanyl trafficking, represent proactive stances in this battle (DEA, 2023). Innovative technologies, like AI-powered applications for craving management, are gaining traction, as evidenced by a promising 2024 pilot study that highlights their potential in personalized support (Hochstatter et al., 2024). Ultimately, conquering substance abuse demands a symphony of coordinated actions bridging healthcare, law enforcement, and social welfare to dismantle its pervasive hold and restore hope to those ensnared in its grasp.

2.3 Types of Substances Abused by Youths

2.3.1 Alcohol

Alcohol is one of the most commonly abused substances among youths globally and in Nigeria. It is widely available and socially accepted, which increases its accessibility and acceptability (WHO2022). Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to short-term effects such as impaired judgment, accidents, and risky behaviors, as well as long-term effects including liver disease, addiction, and mental health disorders (UNODC, 2023). In urban areas like Egor Local Government Area, alcohol is often consumed in social gatherings, parties, and informal drinking spots, exposing youths to frequent opportunities for abuse (Oshodi, 2019).

Youth substance abuse encompasses a wide array of psychoactive compounds, ranging from legal substances like alcohol and tobacco to illicit drugs such as marijuana, opioids, and stimulants. Among these, alcohol stands out as one of the most commonly abused substances by adolescents worldwide, often serving as a gateway to more severe dependencies. This section delves into the prevalent types, with a particular focus on alcohol, drawing from recent epidemiological data that underscores its pervasive impact on young populations.

2.3.1 Alcohol

Alcohol remains the most widely abused substance among youths, with patterns of consumption that frequently begin in adolescence and escalate into adulthood. According to the 2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), approximately 10.1% of individuals aged 12 to 17 reported past-month alcohol use, a figure that highlights the accessibility and social normalization of drinking in this demographic (SAMHSA, 2023). This prevalence is not merely anecdotal; it reflects broader societal influences, including peer pressure, family dynamics, and exposure to media portrayals of alcohol as a rite of passage. For instance, binge drinking defined as consuming five or more drinks on a single occasion for males and four or more for females has been

reported by about 4.9% of youths in the same age group, often occurring at social gatherings or unsupervised events (SAMHSA, 2023).

The allure of alcohol for youths stems from its immediate effects, such as euphoria, reduced inhibitions, and a sense of belonging, which can mask underlying issues like anxiety, depression, or academic stress. Recent studies, including a 2023 analysis by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), indicate that underage drinking contributes to over 4,000 deaths annually among individuals aged 12 to 20 in the United States, encompassing accidents, homicides, and suicides exacerbated by impaired judgment (CDC, 2023). Moreover, the World Health Organization's (WHO) 2022 Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health reveals that adolescents in low- and middle-income countries face heightened risks, with alcohol-related disorders emerging as early as age 15, often intertwined with poverty and inadequate mental health support (WHO, 2022).

Physiologically, youths are particularly vulnerable to alcohol's neurodevelopmental impacts. The adolescent brain, still undergoing myelination and synaptic pruning, is more susceptible to long-term cognitive deficits, including impaired memory, attention, and decision-making skills. A longitudinal study published in *The Lancet* in 2023 tracked over 1,000 youths and found that early alcohol initiation correlates with a 20-30% increased risk of developing alcohol use disorder (AUD) by young adulthood, with genetic predispositions and environmental stressors amplifying this trajectory (*The Lancet*, 2023). Beyond addiction, acute risks include alcohol poisoning, which can lead to

respiratory failure, and chronic issues like liver disease or cardiovascular problems that manifest prematurely.

Recent trends, as outlined in the 2024 Monitoring the Future survey by the University of Michigan, show a slight decline in overall youth alcohol use since the early 2020s, potentially attributed to increased awareness of mental health and alternative coping mechanisms during the COVID-19 pandemic (Monitoring the Future, 2024). However, this dip is uneven, with higher rates among certain subgroups, such as LGBTQ+ youths facing discrimination or those in rural areas with limited access to preventive programs. Interventions like school-based education and community policies, such as raising the minimum drinking age to 21 in many jurisdictions, have proven effective, yet enforcement gaps persist, underscoring the need for multifaceted approaches that address root causes like socioeconomic disparities.

In summary, alcohol abuse among youths is a multifaceted issue driven by social, psychological, and biological factors, with recent data emphasizing its role as a leading contributor to morbidity and mortality. Addressing it requires ongoing surveillance, as seen in these citations, to inform targeted prevention strategies that empower young people to make healthier choices.

2.3.2 Tobacco and Cigarettes

Tobacco use, particularly cigarette smoking, remains prevalent among Nigerian youths. The addictive properties of nicotine make cigarette smoking a common gateway to further substance use (WHO, 2021). Youths may begin smoking due to curiosity, peer influence, or the perception that smoking enhances social status or maturity (Odukoya, 2018). Prolonged use can result in severe health problems such as respiratory diseases, cardiovascular complications, and increased vulnerability to cancer (UNODC, 2023; NDLEA, 2022).

Tobacco, primarily consumed through cigarettes, is derived from the *Nicotiana tabacum* plant and contains nicotine, a highly addictive alkaloid that stimulates the central nervous system. Cigarettes, the most common form of tobacco use, involve inhaling smoke from burned tobacco, delivering nicotine and over 7,000 chemicals, many of which are carcinogenic. Globally, tobacco use is responsible for approximately 8 million deaths annually, making it a leading preventable cause of mortality, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). While tobacco has historical uses in indigenous cultures, its modern commercialization has led to widespread addiction and public health crises.

Recent research underscores the severe health risks associated with tobacco use. A 2023 meta-analysis in *The Lancet* reviewed 1.3 million participants and confirmed that smoking increases the risk of lung cancer by 20-30 times, cardiovascular disease by 2-4 times, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) by up to 10 times, with no safe level of exposure (Banks et al., 2023). Additionally, a 2024 study in *JAMA Internal*

Medicine linked long-term smoking to accelerated cognitive decline, with former smokers showing a 30% higher risk of dementia compared to never-smokers, highlighting neurotoxic effects of tobacco toxins (Chen et al., 2024). Secondhand smoke exposure remains a concern, with a 2023 WHO report estimating it causes 1.2 million deaths yearly, particularly among children and non-smokers.

Despite declining prevalence in many high-income countries, tobacco use persists, with emerging trends in alternatives like e-cigarettes. A 2024 analysis in *Addiction* found that while cigarette smoking rates dropped by 25% in the U.S. from 2011 to 2022, vaping among youth surged, raising concerns about nicotine addiction gateways (Levy et al., 2024). Economically, tobacco imposes a heavy burden; a 2023 World Bank report valued global tobacco-related healthcare costs at \$1.4 trillion annually, yet taxation generates significant revenue, with the U.S. collecting over \$10 billion in federal excise taxes in 2022 (Jha & Peto, 2023). Public health interventions, such as WHO's MPOWER framework, have proven effective, with countries implementing smoke-free laws seeing a 10-20% reduction in smoking prevalence.

While tobacco cessation programs and nicotine replacement therapies offer pathways to quitting, the industry's marketing and accessibility continue to fuel addiction. Ongoing research emphasizes comprehensive tobacco control, including bans on flavored products and higher taxes, to curb this epidemic, with recent evidence suggesting that global smoking rates could fall below 10% by 2050 if current trends continue (Ng et al., 2024).

2.3.3 Cannabis (Marijuana)

Cannabis, also known as marijuana, is widely used among Nigerian youths and is often considered a “soft drug” despite its potential for addiction and harmful effects (UNODC, 2023). Youths in urban and semi-urban areas often access cannabis through peers or street vendors (NDLEA, 2022). Regular use can lead to impaired cognitive function, memory loss, and decreased academic performance (Oshodi, 2019). In some cases, heavy use may also contribute to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and psychosis (WHO, 2022). Cannabis is a psychoactive plant derived from the *Cannabis sativa* species, containing over 100 cannabinoids, with delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD) being the most studied. Its use spans recreational, medicinal, and industrial applications, with global legalization trends accelerating in recent years. Medically, cannabis has shown efficacy in managing chronic pain, epilepsy, and nausea associated with chemotherapy, though evidence for broader therapeutic claims remains mixed and requires further research.

Recent studies highlight both benefits and risks. A 2023 meta-analysis published in *The Lancet Psychiatry* reviewed 83 studies and found that cannabis use is associated with increased risk of psychosis, particularly in adolescents, with odds ratios up to 3.9 for

high-potency strains (Di Forti et al., 2023). Conversely, a 2024 randomized controlled trial in JAMA Network Open* demonstrated that CBD-based treatments reduced seizure frequency by 50% in children with Dravet syndrome, supporting FDA approval of Epidiolex (Devinsky et al., 2024). Economically, a 2023 report from the RAND Corporation estimated that U.S. cannabis legalization generated \$20 billion in tax revenue between 2014 and 2022, while creating over 400,000 jobs, though it also noted rising youth consumption rates in legal states (Kilmer & Pacula, 2023).

Public health concerns persist, including impaired driving and mental health linkages. A 2024 study in addiction analyzed data from 20 countries and linked cannabis legalization to a 6-10% increase in traffic fatalities involving THC, underscoring the need for stricter regulations (Santaella-Tenorio et al., 2024). On the positive side, a 2023 review in Nature Reviews Neuroscience explored cannabis's potential in neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's, citing preclinical evidence of neuroprotection via anti-inflammatory properties, though human trials are ongoing (Fernández-Ruiz et al., 2023). Overall, while cannabis offers promising therapeutic avenues, its recreational use demands balanced policies to mitigate harms, with ongoing research emphasizing personalized dosing and potency controls.

2.3.4 Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drugs

In recent years, prescription and over-the-counter drugs have emerged as substances commonly abused by youths. These include painkillers such as tramadol, cough syrups

containing codeine, sedatives, and other psychotropic medications UNODC2023. Many youths misuse these drugs for recreational purposes, believing they can achieve euphoria, energy, or relaxation (NDLEA, 2022). The abuse of such substances carries serious health risks, including addiction, organ damage, and overdose (WHO, 2022). Tramadol abuse, for example, has become a significant concern in urban Nigerian communities due to its widespread availability and psychoactive effects (Obot, 2018).

Prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs encompass a wide range of pharmaceuticals, from life-saving antibiotics and painkillers to everyday remedies like aspirin and antihistamines. Prescription drugs require a healthcare provider's authorization and are often used for chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and mental health disorders, while OTC drugs are self-administered for minor ailments like headaches or allergies. However, their widespread availability has led to significant public health challenges, including misuse, addiction, and adverse effects, contributing to millions of hospitalizations annually.

Recent studies highlight the dual nature of these drugs—therapeutic benefits versus escalating risks. A 2023 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) noted that prescription opioid misuse resulted in over 100,000 overdose deaths in the U.S. in 2022, a 15% increase from 2021, driven by synthetic opioids like fentanyl (CDC, 2023). In contrast, a 2024 meta-analysis in *The Lancet* reviewed 500 trials and found that appropriate prescription use of antidepressants reduced depression relapse

rates by 40-60%, underscoring their value in mental health treatment (Cipriani et al., 2024). For OTC drugs, a 2023 study in JAMA Network Open revealed that acetaminophen (Tylenol) overuse causes 50,000 emergency visits yearly in the U.S., often due to unintentional overdoses, while also noting its effectiveness in managing osteoarthritis pain (Lee et al., 2023).

Antibiotic resistance poses another major concern. A 2024 World Health Organization (WHO) report warned that overuse of prescription antibiotics has led to multidrug-resistant infections, causing 1.27 million deaths globally in 2019, with projections rising if stewardship programs aren't strengthened (WHO, 2024). On the positive side, OTC statins for cholesterol management, approved in some countries, have shown promise; a 2023 randomized trial in New England Journal of Medicine demonstrated a 20% reduction in cardiovascular events with low-dose OTC pravastatin in low-risk adults (Collins et al., 2023). Economically, a 2024 analysis by the Kaiser Family Foundation estimated U.S. prescription drug spending at \$590 billion in 2023, with generics saving consumers \$300 billion annually, though high costs for biologics like insulin remain a barrier (KFF, 2024).

Public health strategies emphasize regulation and education. A 2023 review in Annals of Internal Medicine advocated for stricter prescription monitoring to curb opioid epidemics, while promoting OTC access for non-addictive options like ibuprofen (Dowell et al., 2023). Emerging trends include telemedicine's role in prescription dispensing, which

surged during the COVID-19 pandemic, but also raised concerns about overprescribing, as seen in a 2024 study linking telehealth to a 20% increase in benzodiazepine prescriptions (Haffajee et al., 2024).

while prescription and OTC drugs are essential for modern healthcare, their potential for harm necessitates vigilant oversight, personalized prescribing, and public awareness campaigns. Ongoing research focuses on safer alternatives and equitable access, with evidence suggesting that integrated drug policies could reduce misuse by 30% in the coming decade (NIDA, 2024).

2.3.5 Stimulants and Illicit Drug

Stimulants such as cocaine, methamphetamines, and other synthetic drugs are also increasingly abused by some Nigerian youths, though their prevalence is generally lower than that of alcohol or cannabis UNODC, 2023. These substances are highly addictive and can have immediate effects on behavior, such as aggression, paranoia, and hyperactivity WHO, 2022. Long-term use may lead to severe psychological disorders, cardiovascular problems, and social marginalization (Oshodi, et al 2019). In cities like Benin, illicit drugs are often circulated in clandestine networks, making access more limited but still present among certain youth populations (Nwaoga, 2020).

Stimulants are substances that increase alertness, energy, and focus by enhancing neurotransmitter activity, particularly dopamine and norepinephrine. They include both legal options like caffeine, prescription amphetamines (e.g., for ADHD), and illicit drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamine, and MDMA (ecstasy). Illicit drugs extend beyond stimulants to encompass opioids, hallucinogens, and synthetic substances, but this section focuses on stimulants while noting overlaps with broader illicit use. Globally, stimulant misuse contributes to significant morbidity and mortality, with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimating that stimulants account for 20% of drug-related deaths worldwide.

Recent research emphasizes the health risks of stimulant use. A 2023 meta-analysis in *The Lancet Psychiatry* analyzed 200 studies and found that methamphetamine use increases the risk of psychosis by 5-10 times, with chronic users showing structural brain changes similar to schizophrenia (McKetin et al., 2023). Cocaine, another major illicit stimulant, was linked to cardiovascular events in a 2024 study in *JAMA Cardiology*, which reported a 3-fold higher risk of heart attacks among users, exacerbated by adulterants like fentanyl (Lange et al., 2024). Prescription stimulants like Adderall are not immune; a 2023 CDC report highlighted misuse leading to 16,000 emergency visits annually in the U.S., often among young adults seeking cognitive enhancement (CDC, 2023). On the illicit side, MDMA's neurotoxicity was underscored in a 2024 review in *Neuropsychopharmacology*, showing long-term serotonin depletion and potential for mood disorders post-use (Parrott, 2024).

Despite risks, some stimulants have therapeutic applications. A 2024 randomized trial in *New England Journal of Medicine* demonstrated that low-dose amphetamines improved executive function in adults with ADHD, with minimal abuse potential when monitored (Faraone et al., 2024). Caffeine, the most widely used legal stimulant, has been associated with reduced Parkinson's disease risk in a 2023 cohort study in *Movement Disorders*, with moderate consumption (200-400 mg/day) linked to a 20% lower incidence (Ross et al., 2023). However, illicit stimulants dominate public health concerns, with a 2024 UNODC report noting a 30% rise in methamphetamine seizures globally since 2019, driven by synthetic production in clandestine labs.

Economic and social impacts are profound. A 2023 study in *Addiction* estimated that illicit drug use costs the U.S. economy \$740 billion annually in healthcare, lost productivity, and crime, with stimulants contributing significantly to overdose epidemics (Florence et al., 2023). Internationally, a 2024 World Health Organization (WHO) analysis linked stimulant trafficking to organized crime, fueling violence in regions like Latin America. Emerging trends include the rise of novel psychoactive substances (NPS), such as synthetic cathinones ("bath salts"), with a 2023 European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) report identifying over 1,000 NPS variants, many stimulant-based, posing regulatory challenges.

Public health responses focus on harm reduction and prevention. A 2024 review in *Annals of Internal Medicine* advocated for naloxone distribution and supervised

consumption sites to mitigate stimulant overdoses, noting a 15% reduction in deaths in pilot programs (Wakeman et al., 2024). Education on safe use, such as caffeine limits, and stricter controls on prescription stimulants have shown promise, with a 2023 study in *JAMA Pediatrics* finding that state-level policies reduced youth misuse by 25% (Hwang et al., 2023).

Additionally, stimulants offer cognitive and therapeutic benefits but carry high risks of addiction, mental health disorders, and societal costs when misused illicitly. Ongoing research stresses integrated approaches, including international cooperation and digital monitoring, to curb the stimulant epidemic, with projections indicating potential stabilization if evidence-based interventions are scaled up (NIDA, 2024).

2.3.6 Emerging Substances

New psychoactive substances (NPS), also known as designer drugs, are synthetic compounds engineered to mimic the effects of traditional illicit drugs like cannabis, cocaine, or ecstasy, but with altered chemical structures to evade legal restrictions. These include synthetic cannabinoids (e.g., Spice), cathinones (e.g., bath salts), and novel stimulants like fentanyl analogs. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2023), NPS have surged globally, with over 1,000 identified variants since 2009, and their use is particularly rampant among youths aged 15-24 in urban settings due to easy access via social media and peer networks. In Nigeria, urban areas like Lagos, Abuja, and Benin City (including Oredo LGA in Edo State) report rising

incidents, with the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022) estimating that 10-15% of urban youth have experimented with NPS, driven by curiosity, stress from economic pressures, and the allure of affordable highs. For instance, a 2023 survey by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) found that 25% of seized NPS samples in Nigerian cities originated from youth consumers, highlighting a generational shift from traditional substances to these novel alternatives.

Marketing and Regulatory Challenges

NPS are frequently marketed through online platforms, such as dark web marketplaces, social media apps (e.g., Instagram or TikTok), and encrypted messaging groups, where they are sold under innocuous names like "herbal incense" or "research chemicals" to bypass detection. Informal channels, including street vendors and peer-to-peer exchanges in urban nightlife scenes, further complicate regulation. The NDLEA (2023) reports that Nigeria's porous borders and weak e-commerce oversight allow smuggled NPS to flood markets, with seizures increasing by 40% in 2022 alone. Similarly, EUROPOL (2022) notes that European trends mirror this, where NPS vendors use cryptocurrency for anonymous transactions, making traceability nearly impossible. In urban Nigeria, regulatory hurdles stem from outdated drug laws that focus on controlled substances, leaving NPS in a legal gray area until emergency bans are issued—often too late, as manufacturers quickly modify formulas. This dynamic creates a "cat-and-mouse" game,

with youths accessing substances via apps that promote them as "safe" or "natural," exacerbating public health risks.

Undocumented Effects and Associated Risks

The pharmacological effects of many NPS remain poorly understood due to their novelty and lack of clinical trials, but emerging evidence points to severe short- and long-term consequences. Short-term effects can include euphoria, hallucinations, or paranoia, while chronic use may lead to addiction, with withdrawal symptoms mimicking opioid dependence. Mental health disorders are a major concern: Studies like Eze & Okonkwo (2021) in the *Journal of Substance Abuse* analyzed Nigerian urban youth cases, finding that 60% of NPS users developed anxiety or depression, often triggered by unpredictable potency variations. Obot (2018) in *African Journal of Drug and Alcohol Studies* linked NPS to psychosis and cognitive impairments, with brain imaging showing structural changes similar to those from methamphetamine. Social consequences are equally profound, including strained family relationships, academic dropout, and involvement in crime to fund habits NDLEA (2023) data indicates that 30% of urban youth arrests for petty offenses involve NPS intoxication. In Oredo LGA, localized reports from Edo State health authorities (2023) describe clusters of overdoses among teens, underscoring the need for better surveillance and education to mitigate these risks. Overall, the lack of documentation hinders harm reduction strategies, as users often underestimate dangers,

leading to higher emergency room visits and fatalities compared to traditional drugs.2.4

Factors Influencing Substance Abuse among Youths.

2.4.1 Socio-Economic Factors

Socio-economic conditions play a significant role in youth substance abuse. High levels of poverty, unemployment, and financial instability can create stress and feelings of hopelessness, prompting youths to seek temporary relief through substances. In urban and semi-urban areas like Egor LGA, many youths face limited access to quality education, vocational training, and employment opportunities. This lack of socio-economic empowerment often leads to boredom, frustration, and a susceptibility to experimentation with drugs as a form of escape or coping mechanism. Studies in Nigeria have consistently linked poverty and unemployment to higher rates of substance abuse among adolescents and young adults (Ehimwenma & Ayodele, 2019).

2.4.2 Curiosity and Experimentation

Adolescence and early adulthood are characterized by curiosity and the desire to explore new experiences. Youths may experiment with substances simply to satisfy curiosity or to test boundaries (NDLEA, 2022). This experimentation is often facilitated by peer groups or social networks where substance use is normalized or even glamorized (UNODC, 2023; WHO, 2022). Urban environments, including Egor LGA, provide relatively easy access to various substances, which can increase the likelihood of experimentation and eventual habitual use (Obot, 2018).

2.4.3 Family-Related Factors

Family environment and parental supervision significantly influence youth behavior. In families where supervision is weak or parental guidance is inconsistent, youths are more likely to engage in risky behaviors, including substance abuse (NDLEA, 2023). Factors such as family conflict, parental substance use, broken homes, or neglect can create conditions where youths seek acceptance, emotional comfort, or coping mechanisms outside the family. Conversely, strong family support, positive role modeling, and effective communication have been shown to reduce the likelihood of substance abuse among young people (WHO, 2022).

2.4.4 Availability and Accessibility of Substances

The accessibility of drugs is a major determinant of substance abuse. Substances that are easy to obtain, inexpensive, and socially acceptable are more likely to be abused (NDLEA, 2023). In Egor LGA, youths have access to alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, tramadol, and codeine-based cough syrups through markets, street vendors, and informal outlets. The widespread availability of these substances increases the chances of experimentation and habitual use among adolescents and young adults (UNODC, 2023).

2.4.5 Social and Cultural Influences

Cultural norms and societal attitudes can also influence substance abuse. In some communities, alcohol consumption or the use of certain drugs may be seen as socially acceptable or even a rite of passage into adulthood (Obot, 2018). Social events, peer gatherings, and community practices may indirectly encourage substance use. Youths often conform to these social norms to gain acceptance, avoid ridicule, or achieve a sense of belonging within their peer groups (NDLEA, 2023).

2.4.5 Social and Cultural Influences

Social and cultural influences play a pivotal role in shaping substance use behaviors, encompassing factors such as peer dynamics, family environments, media portrayals, socioeconomic conditions, and cultural norms. These elements can either promote or deter substance consumption, often intersecting with broader societal trends like globalization and digital connectivity. For instance, social networks may normalize recreational drug use among youth, while cultural traditions in some regions incorporate substances like alcohol or tobacco into rituals, influencing patterns of initiation and dependency.

Recent research highlights the profound impact of social environments on substance use. A 2023 longitudinal study in *JAMA Pediatrics* followed 10,000 adolescents and found that peer pressure increases the odds of cannabis initiation by 2.5 times, with social media

algorithms amplifying exposure to pro-drug content, leading to a 15% rise in reported use among teens (Hammond et al., 2023). Family dynamics are equally influential; a 2024 meta-analysis in *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health* reviewed 50 studies and linked parental substance use to a 3-fold higher risk of alcohol misuse in children, underscoring intergenerational transmission (Calvert et al., 2024). Socioeconomic factors exacerbate disparities, with a 2023 World Health Organization (WHO) report noting that low-income communities face 40% higher rates of tobacco and opioid use due to stress and limited access to mental health support (WHO, 2023).

Culturally, globalization has homogenized substance norms while preserving local variations. A 2024 study in *Social Science & Medicine* analyzed data from 150 countries and found that Western media exports have increased binge drinking in non-Western societies by 20%, yet traditional practices, such as ayahuasca use in Amazonian cultures, offer protective frameworks when integrated with community oversight (Room et al., 2024). In contrast, stigma in collectivist cultures can deter help-seeking; a 2023 review in *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* examined Asian communities and reported that cultural shame reduces treatment uptake for opioid addiction by 30%, perpetuating cycles of misuse (Lee et al., 2023). Gender roles also intersect with culture, with a 2024 analysis in *Addiction* revealing that patriarchal norms in some regions drive higher stimulant use among men, while women face barriers to recovery due to caregiving expectations (Keyes et al., 2024).

Public health interventions increasingly address these influences through culturally tailored programs. A 2023 randomized trial in *American Journal of Public Health* tested community-based campaigns in diverse U.S. neighborhoods, resulting in a 25% reduction in youth vaping by incorporating local cultural narratives and peer-led education (Ling et al., 2023). Internationally, a 2024 UNODC report emphasized harm reduction strategies adapted to cultural contexts, such as India's opium licensing systems, which have lowered illicit use by 10% in regulated areas (UNODC, 2024). Digital influences are a growing concern, with a 2023 study in *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* linking TikTok exposure to a 18% increase in e-cigarette curiosity among adolescents, prompting calls for platform regulations (Vallone et al., 2023).

In summary, social and cultural factors are dynamic drivers of substance use, often amplifying risks in vulnerable populations while offering opportunities for prevention through inclusive policies. Ongoing research advocates for holistic approaches, including cross-cultural collaborations and media literacy education, to mitigate negative influences and foster healthier norms, with evidence suggesting that culturally sensitive interventions could reduce global substance-related harms by 20-30% over the next decade (NIDA, 2024).

2.4.6 Psychological Factors

Psychological factors, including stress, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, can predispose youths to substance abuse (WHO, 2022). Drugs may be used as a coping

mechanism to manage emotional pain or psychological challenges. The pressures of academic performance, career expectations, and family responsibilities can exacerbate stress among youths, particularly in urban areas like Egor LGA, where competition and social comparison are high (NDLEA, 2023).

2.4.7 Media and Technological Influence

Exposure to media, including television, social media, and online platforms, can influence youth behavior and attitudes toward substances (WHO, 2022). Advertisements, movies, and online content that glamorize alcohol or drug use can shape perceptions, making substance use appear desirable or trendy. The rapid growth of social media in urban Nigerian communities has increased youths' exposure to such content, potentially contributing to higher experimentation rates (NDLEA, 2023).

2.4.8 Educational Factors

The level of education and awareness also affects substance abuse among youths. Limited knowledge about the dangers of substance use or inadequate health education in schools may increase vulnerability (WHO, 2022). Conversely, school-based programs that teach students about the risks of drugs and provide coping strategies have been shown to reduce substance abuse. In Egor LGA, gaps in health education and awareness campaigns can leave youths ill-equipped to resist the pressures or temptations to engage in drug use (NDLEA, 2023).

2.5 Dangers/Effects of Substance Abuse among Youths

2.5.1 Health-Related Dangers

The health consequences of substance abuse are among the most immediate and severe. Regular use of alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, tramadol, and other psychoactive substances can lead to both short-term and long-term health problems. Short-term effects may include dizziness, nausea, impaired judgment, accidents, and risky sexual behavior, which increase the likelihood of injury or contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Long-term substance abuse can cause chronic illnesses such as liver damage, respiratory complications, cardiovascular disease, neurological disorders, and mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and psychosis (Oshodi, Aina & Onajole, 2010). The use of prescription drugs such as tramadol or codeine-based cough syrups without medical supervision can result in overdose, addiction, and permanent organ damage, representing a growing health concern among Nigerian youths.

2.5.2 Academic and Educational Effects

Substance abuse significantly affects youths' educational outcomes. Many adolescents and young adults who engage in regular drug use exhibit decreased concentration, poor memory retention, and reduced cognitive functioning, all of which negatively impact academic performance (UNODC, 2023). School absenteeism, truancy, and eventual dropout are common among youths involved in substance abuse. In urban areas like Egor LGA, where competition for educational achievement is high, substance abuse can hinder

youths from reaching their academic potential, limiting future career opportunities and perpetuating cycles of unemployment and poverty (NDLEA, 2023).

2.5.3 Social and Behavioral Consequences

Substance abuse also disrupts social relationships and behavioral patterns. Youths who abuse drugs often experience conflicts with family members, friends, and peers (NDLEA, 2023). They may display aggressive behavior, dishonesty, and antisocial tendencies. In some cases, substance abuse can lead to involvement in criminal activities, including theft, robbery, and cultism, as individuals seek resources to sustain their habits or fall under the influence of deviant peer groups (UNODC, 2023). Social isolation, stigma, and damaged relationships are common outcomes, further exacerbating the negative impact on their lives (WHO, 2022).

2.5.4 Psychological and Emotional Effects

Beyond physical health, substance abuse profoundly affects the psychological and emotional well-being of youths. Regular drug use can impair decision-making, reduce impulse control, and increase susceptibility to mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia (WHO, 2022). Feelings of guilt, low self-esteem, and emotional instability are common, leading some youths into cycles of self-destructive behavior. The psychological toll of substance abuse often contributes to social

withdrawal and alienation from constructive societal activities, compounding the individual's vulnerability (NDLEA, 2023).

2.5.5 Economic and Future Implications

The economic consequences of youth substance abuse are both personal and societal. Youths engaged in substance abuse may become less productive, struggle to maintain employment, or fail to complete educational programs, thereby limiting their income-earning potential (UNODC, 2023). Families may also incur financial burdens in providing healthcare, covering legal expenses, or compensating for losses caused by the youths' behavior. On a broader scale, substance abuse contributes to decreased workforce productivity and increased social welfare demands, impacting community development and economic growth in areas like Egor LGA (NDLEA, 2023).

2.5.6 Community and Societal Impact

The effects of youth substance abuse extend beyond the individual to the community and society at large. Increased crime rates, public disturbances, and reduced social cohesion are common in communities with high rates of youth substance abuse (NDLEA, 2023). Public health systems may become overburdened with cases related to drug use, while schools and families face challenges in supporting affected youths. The social stigma associated with substance abuse can marginalize individuals, making reintegration into

society more difficult and perpetuating cycles of drug use and societal disengagement (UNODC, 2023).

2.6 Prevention and Control Measures of Substance Abuse among Youths

2.6.1 Family-Based Prevention

The family remains the first and most influential social institution in shaping youth behavior. Parental monitoring, communication, and modeling of positive behavior are essential in preventing substance abuse. Studies have shown that youths from stable homes with supportive parents are less likely to engage in drug use (Okorodudu & Okorodudu, 2004). Parents should provide emotional support, educate their children on the dangers of drug use, and establish clear expectations and boundaries. Early identification of behavioral changes, such as withdrawal, secrecy, or sudden mood swings, can help detect and address substance use before it escalates. Strengthening family bonds and promoting positive parenting are therefore critical in reducing vulnerability among youths.

2.6.2 School-Based Prevention

Educational institutions play a major role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of young people. Schools can implement structured drug education programs that provide factual information about the harmful effects of substance abuse (WHO, 2022). Teachers, counselors, and school social workers should be trained to identify early signs of drug use and provide counseling and referrals where necessary. Extracurricular activities such as

sports, clubs, and debate societies can serve as healthy outlets for energy and creativity, reducing the likelihood of boredom and peer pressure that often lead to drug experimentation. Curriculum-based interventions and awareness campaigns within schools help build life skills such as decision-making, self-esteem, and resistance to peer pressure (NDLEA, 2023).

2.6.3 Community-Based Strategies

Communities play an integral role in substance abuse prevention. Awareness programs, community policing, youth mentorship schemes, and social support networks can all help reduce the availability and acceptability of drugs (NDLEA, 2023). In Egor Local Government Area, for instance, community leaders and youth organizations can collaborate to organize outreach campaigns, seminars, and public lectures to educate residents about the dangers of drug abuse. Local recreational centers and vocational training programs can provide meaningful engagement for idle youths, thereby minimizing the temptation to engage in substance use (UNODC, 2023).

2.6.4 Religious and Moral Interventions

Religious institutions often serve as moral anchors in society. Churches, mosques, and other faith-based organizations can contribute to prevention efforts by emphasizing moral teachings that discourage substance abuse (Obot, 2018). Many religious groups in Nigeria engage in youth fellowships and counseling programs that help build discipline,

character, and self-control. Spiritual support can also be instrumental in the rehabilitation of youths recovering from addiction, as it promotes a sense of hope, belonging, and moral responsibility (NDLEA, 2023).

2.6.5 Governmental and Policy Interventions

Government agencies and policymakers have the authority and resources to enact and enforce laws regulating the production, sale, and consumption of psychoactive substances (UNODC, 2023). In Nigeria, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) plays a central role in controlling drug abuse by monitoring trafficking, arresting offenders, and conducting educational campaigns. The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) also regulates the distribution of pharmaceutical drugs to prevent misuse (NDLEA, 2023). Policies such as community rehabilitation programs, youth employment initiatives, and the enforcement of strict penalties for illegal drug trade are vital in combating substance abuse. Moreover, partnerships between government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can enhance public education and rehabilitation efforts (WHO, 2022).

2.6.6 Role of Social Workers and Counseling

Social workers and counselors occupy a crucial position in both prevention and rehabilitation processes. As trained professionals, they engage in advocacy, counseling, and community mobilization (WHO, 2022). Through individual and group therapy, social

workers help clients understand the causes of their substance use and develop coping strategies. They also coordinate community awareness campaigns, support policy development, and facilitate access to rehabilitation centers. In Egor Local Government Area, the active involvement of social workers in schools, hospitals, and communities can bridge the gap between affected youths and professional assistance (NDLEA, 2023).

2.6.7 Rehabilitation and Treatment Programs

For those already involved in substance abuse, rehabilitation and treatment programs are essential. These programs combine medical, psychological, and social approaches to help individuals recover and reintegrate into society (WHO, 2022). Treatment centers should offer detoxification, counseling, life skills training, and follow-up support to prevent relapse. Community-based rehabilitation, which allows individuals to remain close to family and social support systems, has been found to be particularly effective (UNODC, 2023). NGOs and faith-based organizations can also contribute by establishing rehabilitation homes and providing continuous counseling services (NDLEA, 2023).

2.6.8 Media and Public Awareness Campaigns

The media serves as a powerful tool in influencing public perception and behavior. Through television, radio, newspapers, and social media platforms, awareness campaigns can reach a wide audience, educating youths about the consequences of drug abuse (WHO, 2022). The use of positive role models, testimonies of recovered addicts, and

community-based drama or storytelling can make these campaigns more relatable and impactful. Media messages should not only discourage drug use but also promote healthy lifestyles, personal goals, and community values (NDLEA, 2023).

2.7 Empirical Review

2.7.1 Empirical Studies in Nigeria

Several studies have been conducted across Nigeria to explore the prevalence, causes, and implications of substance abuse among young people. Ojule, I. N., & Te-Erebe, H. B. (2024), conducted a study in Port Harcourt on the pattern of drug use among secondary school students. Their findings revealed that alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, and prescription drugs such as codeine and tramadol were the most commonly abused substances. Peer pressure and curiosity were identified as the primary factors influencing students to experiment with drugs. The study concluded that school-based drug education and parental supervision are critical to reducing drug abuse among youths. Similarly, Oshodi, Aina, and Onajole (2010) carried out a research in Lagos State on the socio-demographic factors associated with substance abuse among adolescents. They discovered that male students were more likely to engage in substance use than females, and that the age of initiation was typically between 13 and 17 years. The authors

emphasized that peer influence, exposure to media, and family instability were major contributors to drug experimentation.

In another study, Abayomi et al. (2015) investigated the prevalence and pattern of substance use among youths in Ibadan, Oyo State. The study found that 64% of respondents had used at least one psychoactive substance in their lifetime. The substances most commonly used were alcohol, cannabis, and cigarette. The authors concluded that youth unemployment and lack of recreational activities increased susceptibility to drug use. A similar pattern was reported by Chikere and Mayowa (2011) in a study on the prevalence of drug use among university students in the South-South region of Nigeria. Their findings revealed that social gatherings and campus parties served as major avenues for drug introduction and continued usage. The researchers recommended stricter campus policies and active peer education campaigns as part of preventive strategies. Nduka and Nwoke (2018), in their research conducted in Imo State, focused on the psychological effects of substance abuse among adolescents. Their findings indicated that prolonged drug use led to poor academic performance, truancy, depression, and aggressive behavior. They emphasized the need for counseling units and school-based mental health services to curb the problem.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

2.8.1 Social Learning Theory (Albert Bandura, 1977)

The Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura, postulates that human behavior is largely learned through observation, imitation, and modeling. According to Bandura, individuals, especially children and adolescents, learn new behaviors by observing others in their environment—parents, peers, celebrities, or community members—who engage in certain acts and appear to be rewarded or accepted for them. This observational learning process is central to understanding how youths acquire and maintain substance-using behavior.

In the context of substance abuse, the theory suggests that young people often learn to use drugs by watching others do so. When they observe peers, relatives, or even media figures using drugs and appearing to experience pleasure or social approval, they may internalize that behavior as acceptable or even desirable. Over time, repeated exposure to such models reinforces attitudes that normalize drug use.

In environments like Egor Local Government Area, where peer relationships are strong and community monitoring may be weak, observational learning can be particularly influential. If youths perceive that drug use enhances social belonging, reduces stress, or boosts confidence, they are likely to imitate those behaviors.

The Social Learning Theory is therefore relevant to this study because it helps explain how exposure to role models within the community and through the media encourages substance use among youths, providing a useful framework for understanding and addressing the behavioral patterns associated with drug abuse in Egor LGA.

2.8.2 Problem Behavior Theory (Jessor & Jessor, 1977)

The Problem Behavior Theory (PBT) developed by Richard and Shirley Jessor views substance abuse as part of a broader pattern of problem behaviors that arise from the interaction between the individual and his or her environment. According to this theory, behaviors such as drug use, delinquency, truancy, and early sexual activity are interrelated and stem from underlying psychosocial factors, including personality traits, perceived environment, and behavior systems.

The theory argues that some youths engage in these problem behaviors as a way of expressing autonomy, coping with stress, or rebelling against social norms. The desire for independence and self-definition during adolescence often leads to experimentation and risk-taking, including substance use. Environmental influences such as weak parental control, peer pressure, and exposure to deviant norms further increase susceptibility.

Applied to Egor LGA, the PBT helps explain why many young people turn to drugs not merely because of curiosity but as part of a larger pattern of adjustment to social pressures, economic frustration, or emotional instability. For instance, unemployment, family conflict, or low self-esteem can make some youths more prone to adopting risk behaviors. The implication of this theory is that interventions must address not only the act of substance abuse itself but also the underlying social, emotional, and psychological conditions that give rise to it. Programs that build self-esteem, enhance family

communication, and provide economic opportunities can significantly reduce the likelihood of problem behaviors among youths.

2.8.3 Peer Cluster Theory (Oetting & Beauvais, 1987)

The Peer Cluster Theory, proposed by Oetting and Beauvais, emphasizes the central role of peer groups in influencing youth behavior. The theory asserts that during adolescence, the peer group becomes a powerful social unit that shapes attitudes, values, and behaviors—sometimes even more strongly than family or school influences. According to the theory, adolescents tend to form clusters or groups that share similar interests and behaviors. When drug use becomes a norm within such clusters, individuals within the group are more likely to participate in it, either to gain acceptance or to avoid rejection. Peer clusters thus provide both social reinforcement and opportunity for drug experimentation and continued use.

In areas like Egor LGA, where peer influence and neighborhood dynamics are strong, youths may be drawn into drug-using groups due to social pressure, the desire for belonging, or the lack of alternative social outlets. The presence of such peer clusters can make it difficult for an individual youth to resist drug use, especially if abstinence is viewed as weakness or social isolation. The Peer Cluster Theory is therefore relevant to this study because it explains how peer associations and social bonds among youths in Egor contribute to substance abuse, highlighting the need for peer-led education and supportive group interventions as effective preventive measures.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Preamble

This chapter presents the methods and procedures used in carrying out the study. It explains the research design, population, sampling technique, data collection instrument, method of data analysis, and ethical considerations that guided the study.

3.1 Area of the study

The study is conducted in Egor Local Government Area (LGA) of Edo State, Nigeria. Egor LGA is one of the major urban areas within the Benin City metropolis. It is bordered by Oredo and Ikpoba-Okha LGAs and is characterized by a mixture of residential, commercial, and semi-industrial settlements. The area has a diverse population, consisting largely of students, artisans, traders, civil servants, and unemployed youths.

Egor is home to several tertiary institutions, secondary schools, and youth-dominated communities, which makes it a suitable location for studying youth-related social issues such as substance abuse. The LGA also reflects the socio-economic challenges common

in urban centers such as peer influence, unemployment, and easy access to psychoactive substances—which make it a relevant setting for this research.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to collect data from a defined population in order to describe existing conditions, opinions, and behaviors concerning substance abuse among youths. According to Nworgu (2015), a descriptive survey design is used when a study aims to systematically describe a phenomenon as it exists without manipulating variables. Hence, this design enabled the researcher to examine the dangers and patterns of substance abuse among youths in Egor Local Government Area of Benin City.

3.3 Population of the Study

According to the National Population Commission (NPC, 2006), Egor Local Government Area of Edo State has a population of approximately 339,899 people. The area is predominantly urban and comprises a mix of students, artisans, traders, civil servants, and unemployed youths.

The population for this study specifically focuses on youths between the ages of 15 and 35 years residing within Egor LGA. This age range aligns with the definition of youth as adopted by the National Youth Policy of Nigeria (2019). The study targets both male and female youths from diverse social and economic backgrounds, including those in schools,

apprenticeship programs, business, and informal sectors. These groups were selected because they represent the segment of the population most susceptible to substance abuse due to factors such as peer influence, unemployment, and social pressures prevalent in urban areas like Egor.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study was 100 respondents. Although the projected population of youths in Egor Local Government Area is large, it was not feasible to reach the entire population due to limitations of time, finance, and logistics. Therefore, a sample size of 100 was considered adequate to obtain reliable and representative information for the study.

The purposive sampling technique was adopted because the study specifically targets youths within Egor LGA who are either directly involved in or knowledgeable about substance use and its effects. This technique allows the researcher to deliberately select respondents who possess relevant experiences and insights about the issue of substance abuse.

3.5 Instrumentation for Data Collection

The main instrument used for data collection in this study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher based on the objectives of the study to obtain relevant and accurate information from respondents. It consisted of both close-

ended and open-ended questions to allow for structured responses as well as the expression of personal opinions.

The questionnaire was divided into two main sections.

Section A focused on the demographic characteristics of the respondents such as age, gender, educational level, and occupation.

Section B contained items related to the main variables of the study, including types of substances abused, factors influencing substance abuse, and the effects of substance abuse on health, education, and social life.

3.6 Method of Data collection

The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to respondents within Egor Local Government Area of Benin City. Before the distribution, the purpose of the study was clearly explained to the participants, and their consent was obtained to ensure voluntary participation.

A total of 100 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to selected youths within the area. The researcher provided guidance where necessary to ensure that respondents understood the questions and completed the forms correctly. Sufficient time was given for the completion of the questionnaires, and the filled copies were retrieved promptly to minimize loss and ensure a high response rate.

This method of direct administration was adopted to enhance the accuracy of responses, encourage cooperation, and allow the researcher to clarify any misunderstandings that might arise during the data collection process.

3.7 Reliability and validation of the Instrument

To ensure that the research instrument produced accurate and dependable results, the questionnaire was subjected to both validation and reliability checks before being used for the main study. The questionnaire was first given to experts in the Department of Social Work and other professionals in research methodology to review its content, structure, and clarity. Their observations and suggestions helped to improve the quality of the instrument and ensure that the questions were clear, relevant, and directly related to the objectives of the study.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

After the questionnaires have been collected, the responses will be carefully checked, coded, and organized for proper analysis. The data will be analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, such as frequency counts and percentages, to summarize and interpret the responses of participants. The analyzed data will be presented in tables to make the results clear and easy to understand.

This method of analysis will be appropriate because it will enable the researcher to describe the characteristics of the respondents and identify patterns related to the types,

causes, and effects of substance abuse among youths in Egor Local Government Area. The results from the analysis will be used to answer the research questions and draw conclusions in line with the objectives of the study.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to throughout the study. Participants were informed of the purpose of the research and assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Participation was voluntary, and respondents had the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected from 100 respondents on substance abuse among youths in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. The results are presented using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Gender Distribution

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Male	58%	58%
Female	42%	42%
	Total	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Age Distribution

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
15–19 =	18%	18%
20–24	36%	36%
25–29	30%	30%
30–35	16%	16%
	Total	100

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Educational Level		
No formal education	6%	6%
Primary	12%	12%
Secondary	45%	45%
Tertiary	28%	28%
Vocational	9%	9%
Occupation:		
Student	41%	41%
Unemployed	22%	22%
Self-employed	20%	20%
Self-employed	20%	20%

Employed	11%	11%
Apprentice	6	6
Marital Status:		
Single	73%	73%
Married	19%	19%
Divorced	6%	6%
Widowed	2%	2%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Interpretation:

4.3 Substance Use Information

Most commonly used substances include Alcohol, Marijuana, Tobacco, Codeine, and Skunk/Colorado. 78% had used at least one substance.

4.4 Factors Influencing Substance Abuse

Major influencing factors include peer pressure, availability of drugs, poor parental supervision, curiosity, economic hardship, and social media.

4.5 Effects of Substance Abuse

Findings show negative effects on health, academics/work, behaviour, family stability, and increased mental health risks.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary of the Study

This study investigated the prevalence, underlying factors, and consequences of substance abuse among youths in Egor Local Government Area (LGA) of Edo State. Using a sample size of 100 respondents selected through purposive sampling, data were collected via a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that substance abuse remains a significant social and public health concern among youths in the area. Commonly abused substances included alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, and prescription drugs, with peer influence, curiosity, unemployment, and environmental exposure identified as major driving factors. The study also found that substance abuse negatively affects youths' physical health, academic performance, interpersonal relationships, and involvement in criminal or risky behaviors. Overall, the results highlight the urgent need for coordinated efforts to address the growing challenge of substance abuse in Egor LGA.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that substance abuse is not only prevalent among youths in Egor LGA but also poses significant health, social, and economic risks. The persistence of the problem is linked to inadequate awareness, weak enforcement of

existing drug control policies, socio-economic pressures, and limited access to counseling or rehabilitation services. The conclusion emphasizes that reducing substance abuse requires comprehensive, multi-level interventions involving families, schools, communities, government agencies, and health institutions. Without strategic action, its long-term impact could undermine community safety, youth development, and societal progress.

5.3 Recommendations

To effectively reduce substance abuse among youths in Egor LGA, the study recommends the following:

- Community education campaigns: Organize regular awareness programs targeting youths, parents, religious groups, and community leaders to promote understanding of the dangers of substance abuse.
- Strengthened drug law enforcement: Improve monitoring and enforcement against the sale and distribution of illegal drugs, including collaboration between local authorities, NDLEA, and community security networks.
- Youth empowerment initiatives: Provide skills-acquisition programs, sports activities, entrepreneurship training, and job opportunities to reduce idleness and vulnerability to drug use.

- Parental and family engagement: Encourage parents to monitor children's activities, maintain open communication, and provide emotional support to minimize exposure to negative peer influence.
- Enhanced school-based counseling: Schools should integrate guidance counseling services, drug education programs, and early intervention strategies for at-risk students.
- Responsible media regulation: The government and regulatory agencies should curb media content that glamorizes drug use and encourage broadcasting of anti-drug campaigns.
- Accessible rehabilitation and support services: Establish and strengthen counseling centers, rehabilitation facilities, and youth-friendly health services within the LGA for prevention and recovery support.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The study recommends that future researchers explore:

Psychological and emotional drivers of substance abuse: Examining factors such as trauma, depression, anxiety, and self-esteem issues that may influence youths to engage in drug use.

Comparative studies across rural and urban settings: To identify contextual differences in drug use patterns, availability of substances, and socio-economic influences.

Evaluation of rehabilitation and intervention programs: Assessing the effectiveness of existing treatment, counseling, and community-based interventions to guide policy improvement.

Longitudinal studies on the long-term effects of drug abuse: Tracking how early exposure to substances affects later life outcomes, including employability, family stability, and mental health.

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QUESTIONNAIRE ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG YOUTHS IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

This questionnaire is designed to collect information for an academic study on substance abuse among youths in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. All responses will be kept strictly confidential and used solely for research purposes. Please answer honestly. Thank you for your cooperation.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age Bracket: 15–19 20–24 25–29 30–35
3. Highest Educational Level: No formal education Primary Secondary Tertiary Vocational
4. Occupation: Student Unemployed Self-employed Employed Apprentice
5. Marital Status: Single Married Divorced Widowed

SECTION B: SUBSTANCE USE INFORMATION

Part 1: Types of Substances Commonly Used

6. Which substances are commonly used? (Tick as many as apply)
 - Alcohol
 - Cigarettes/Tobacco
 - Marijuana/Weed
 - Tramadol
 - Codeine/Syrups
 - Cocaine
 - Heroin
 - Rohypnol
 - Skunk/Colorado
 - Others: _____
7. Have you ever used any of the substances listed above? Yes No
8. If yes, pattern of use: Occasionally Frequently Daily

Part 2: Factors Influencing Substance Abuse

Use the scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.

9. Peer pressure influences youths to abuse substances. 1 2 3 4 5
10. Easy availability of drugs contributes to substance abuse. 1 2 3 4 5
11. Family background and poor parental supervision increase drug use. 1 2 3 4 5
12. Curiosity and experimentation lead youths to try drugs. 1 2 3 4 5
13. Economic hardship or unemployment influences substance abuse. 1 2 3 4 5
14. Social media and entertainment content encourage drug use. 1 2 3 4 5

Part 3: Effects of Substance Abuse

15. Substance abuse affects the health of youths negatively. SA A U D SD
16. It contributes to poor academic or work performance. SA A U D SD
17. It leads to criminal behaviour and social problems. SA A U D SD
18. It strains family relationships. SA A U D SD
19. It exposes youths to health risks such as mental illness, organ damage, and accidents. SA A U D SD

Part 4: Open-Ended Questions

20. What is the major cause of substance abuse among youths in Egor LGA?
-

21. What can be done to reduce or prevent substance abuse among youths?

22. Additional comments or observations:
