



**THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY FACTORS
ON DRUG ABUSE AMONGST PUBLIC PRIMARY PUPILS
IN NYAMIRA COUNTY, KENYA**

R. O. Gisemba¹,

A. Sindabi²,

Obonyo D.³ⁱ

¹Egerton University,

Kenya

²Dr., Egerton University,

Kenya

³Dr., Mount Kenya University,

Kenya

Abstract:

Drug abuse amongst youth and especially those schooling has become a major social problem not only in Kenya, but globally. Drug abuse amongst schooling youth has led to decline in their performance, increased drop out, increased cases of indiscipline and even death. Many studies have offered mixed or inconclusive findings on the causes of drug abuse amongst schooling youth especially those at primary level. The purpose of this was to the influence of family factors on drug abuse amongst public primary pupils in Nyamira County, Kenya. The research was guided by the following objectives: to establish the influence of nature of structure of families on drug abuse, to determine the influence of nature of parenting on the drug abuse to evaluate the influence of family value and culture on the drug abuse among public primary school pupils in Nyamira County. The study employed descriptive research survey. A sample of 220 pupils was selected from a population of 12045 pupils through proportionate stratified sampling together with 20 teachers from the guidance and counseling department who were purposively sampled. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from the pupils, while an interview schedule was used to collect qualitative data from the guidance and counseling teachers. For purposes of validity and reliability of the instruments, the questionnaire was piloted in five schools in Borabu Sub-County and their reliability was ascertained using Cronbach's alpha. The reliability of the questionnaire item was well above 0.75. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively and inferentially using a Chi-square in SPSS V.23) and the stated hypothesis was rejected at 5% significance level. Qualitative data was transcribed and analyzed thematically. The study established that decline in family nature and structure, coupled

¹ Correspondence: email richardorina75@yahoo.com

with failure by the community to have a united approach in drug abuse has negatively influenced the surge in drug and substance abuse amongst pupils in schools. The study recommends active parental involvement in the schooling and upbringing of their children.

Keywords: drug abuse, family factors, pupils, public primary school

1. Introduction

There is a worldwide upsurge of drug and substance abuse among different cohorts in society. The term drug abuse has been defined in many ways by different scholars and medical practitioners. Leonardi-Bee, Jere, and Britton (2011), defines drug abuse as the use of a drug with such frequency that it causes physical or mental harm to the user or impairs social functioning. Although the term seems to imply that it's the drug which abuses the user, it is the user who abuses the drug. The World Health Organization, WHO (2006) also defined drug abuse as a state of periodic or chronic intoxication, detrimental to the individual and to the society, produced by the repeated consumption of a drug (natural or synthetic). Chebukaka (2014), observed that most of the drugs that are abused were first used for medicinal and recreational purposes. There is evidence that intentionally fermented alcohol existed from as early as 10,000BC when it was used in religion and worship, for recreation, medicinal use and quenching thirst by long distance travellers (Hanson, 1995). Marijuana was used as medicine from 2,737 BC in China then later in the 19th century, active substances used in production of drugs like cocaine and morphine were extracted and freely prescribed by physicians for various ailments and even sold over the counter until problems of addiction gradually started being recognized (Kremer & Levy, 2008). Goldberg (2013), asserts that the earliest record of prohibition of excessive use of alcohol was in 2000BC in Egypt, but it was not until 1956 that legal measures against Drug Abuse were first established in USA. By 1950, many Asian countries placed high priority on Drug Control policies and the death penalty was prescribed for trafficking or possession of opium and its derivatives like heroin. Despite this, opium and its derivatives are still widely used in Asia.

According to the World Drug Report (UNDCP, 2012), 1.3 billion people or 30% of the world population use tobacco and 230 million people, an equivalent of 5% of the world population, aged between 15 and 16 years use illegal drugs. Another report by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), estimates that 22 million people in Europe use marijuana (EMCDDA, 2012). Currently Africa and Asia account for 70% of global population using opium and its derivatives (UNDCP, 2012). During the pre-colonial days, drug use was accepted in many African countries, but they were regulated among the adults since it was a privilege of the elders, more often than not the male ones. Further, drugs were used for religious purposes to invoke trance, to aid mediation or for ritualistic reasons as well as pain relief or curing diseases, (National Agency for the Campaign against Drug Abuse, 2006). However, taboos, traditional values and family patterns which had for long given the society coherence,

sense of belonging and identity have been disregarded and in some cases discarded altogether in our shrinking “global village”, resulting in drug abuse, even by children (Ondieki & Mokuia, 2012). There are many factors that influence drug abuse among the youth. This can be categorized into nature of structure of families, nature of parenting and family culture and values. According to Ndugwa *et al.*, (2011), learners in both primary and secondary schools start smoking at a very young age, way before they are 18 years of age, some being as young as 10 years. Ndugwa *et al.*, (2011), further states that, over 400000 primary school children in Kenya are smoking tobacco, where 160000 of this figure are girls. This therefore justifies this study, in that drug abuse is a reality among the young children in primary Schools.

2. Research objectives

The research was guided by the following objectives:

1. To establish the influence of nature of structure of families on drug abuse among public primary school pupils in Nyamira County.
2. To determine the influence of nature of parenting n the drug abuse among public primary school pupils in Nyamira County.
3. To evaluate the influence of family value and culture on the drug abuse among public primary school pupils in Nyamira County.

3. Literature Review

Families influence their children in taking alcohol if they form a tendency of drinking in the presence of their children (Leonardi-Bee *et al.*, 2011). Children who come from homes where parents take alcohol tend to imitate the behaviour of their parents by engaging in taking alcohol. The culture of parents going to entertainment joints and pubs with their children affects their behaviour. The children will engage in alcohol drinking early or later in life. The attitude of parents towards alcohol, tobacco and other drugs play a major role in children’s behavior (Ondieki & Mokuia, 2012). Young people learn from what they see by imitating what their parent and other significant people in the community do (Chebukaka, 2014). A survey report released by the National Agency for Campaign against Drug Abuse (NACADA, 2012), shows that young people, aged between 10 and 24 years whose parents use or sell alcohol and other drugs are likely to abuse these substances themselves. At times, the youth, including students, who sell such substances on behalf of their parents, are themselves exposed to substance abuse in due course (Sacerdote, 2011).

According to the 2014 WHO report on alcohol consumption and health, a family history of alcohol use disorders is considered a major vulnerability factor for both genetic and environmental reasons. Parental alcohol use disorders have been found to negatively affect the family situation during childhood. Parents with alcohol use disorders display particular patterns of alcohol consumption and thereby increase the likelihood that their children will develop drinking patterns associated with high risk of

alcohol use disorders when they are introduced to alcohol. Heavy drinking by parents affects family functioning, the parent–child relationship and parenting practices, which in turn affects child development adversely (Kothari, 2004; Kremer & Levy, 2008). The mistreatment of children, including sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect, may also lead to childhood psychopathology and later to problem drinking (Di Chiara, 2000). Nightlife environment is a great opportunity for the youth to engage in alcohol consumption and often predisposes them to risky sexual practices as alcohol is known to promote sexual encounters (Sacerdote, 2011). There is a belief among the youth that alcohol consumption can improve sexual performance and increase sexual pleasure (Oteyo & Kariuki, 2009). A study has shown that English young adults who drank and used illegal drugs had more sexual partners and had engaged in more episodes of unsafe sex compared to non-users (Kremer & Levy, 2008). Binge drinking episodes were causally associated with unsafe sex and sexual violence among adults in Africa (Di Chiara, 2000).

A study carried out by (Kabiru & Orpinas, 2009), in Central Division of Machakos District in 2009 that targeted public secondary schools found out that there is a significant relationship between drug abuse and use of drugs by other family member. This researcher also came up with a variety of factors that contribute to drug abuse such as curiosity, acceptance by peers and ignorance as to the dangers of drugs (Kabiru & Orpinas, 2009). This study, like other studies, considered secondary school students who are already in their teenage. This therefore makes it important to investigate how the situation is in Primary Schools of which this study targets. A survey report released by NACADA in 2004 says that, young people between 10 and 24 years, whose parents use or sell alcohol and other drugs, are likely to abuse the substances. At times youth, including students who sell on behalf of parents, are themselves exposed to substance abuse in due course (Chebukaka, 2014; Kabiru & Orpinas, 2009).

A study of drug abuse in public secondary schools in Kenya by Chebukaka (2014) revealed that living with a male relative such as a father or a step-father increased the tendency of lifetime drug use, and so did living with brothers and sisters. Smoking and alcohol consumption were also associated with living with brothers and sisters who smoke and drink. Mother’s education was significantly associated with use and non-use of alcohol, with the percentage of students who used alcohol increasing with higher levels of mother’s education. Interestingly, a study of peer group influence, alcohol consumption and secondary school students’ attitudes towards school in Uganda revealed that there was no significant relationship between peer group influence and alcohol consumption (Sacerdote, 2011). Emotional, social and physical transformations that can expose young people to emotional and health vulnerabilities are the main features of adolescence period. In this stage of development, young people begin to engage in risky behaviors, such as alcohol/drug use and unsafe sex (Oteyo & Kariuki, 2009).

Literature available indicates that authoritative parenting is associated with lower rates of substance abuse than autocratic, permissive or uninvolved parenting (Sanders, 2000). Authoritative parenting is a constellation of parenting characteristics

that include warmth and responsiveness as well as moderate to high levels of control; control is defined as firm and consistently enforced rules and standards for the child's behaviour. Youngsters who undergo family transitions often experience temporary psychological difficulties which may be associated with increased substance use (Ndugwa *et al.*, 2011; Otieno & Ofulla, 2009). One aspect of parenting that appears particularly important to substance abuse is negative communication patterns between parents and their adolescents (Sandelowski, 2000). Poor parental monitoring is a powerful predictor of substance abuse. Knowing where teens are, what they are doing and who they are with may be especially important in the after-school hours; one study linked unsupervised after-school time to substance use and abuse (Hanson, 1995; Kwon, Lee, & Shin, 2014).

According to (Kwamanga *et al.*, 2003), children from homes where parents take drugs tend to imitate the behaviour of their parents by taking illegal drugs. When parents or siblings are heavy users of alcohol or recreationally use illegal drugs, youth are more apt to use substances as well (Korir & Kipkemboi, 2014; Ngesu *et al.*, 2008). For example, a household which includes one cigarette smoker doubles the likelihood that a teen will smoke or expect to smoke (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992). Modelling of drug use by siblings appears to be a better predictor of a younger brother's use than parental use (Sanders, 2000). But parents who involve their children in drug use (i.e. asking their child to get them a beer or to light a cigarette) increase the likelihood that teens will use or abuse drugs. Youth are more apt to get involved in alcohol use when parents are tolerant of children's use (Greenberg *et al.*, 2003), and when there are few or inconsistent rewards for non- use (Ondieki & Mokuia, 2012).

3.1 Research Design

This study used the descriptive research design. This design was the most appropriate in this study because the variables cannot be manipulated since their manifestations have already occurred (Kothari, 2004).

3.2 Research Instruments

Data was collected by use of a questionnaire and interview schedule. The questionnaire consisted of a list of items relating to the objectives of the study. The questionnaires were administered directly to the respondents and collected the same day. The interview instrument was employed to gather data from the teachers in-charge of guidance and counseling due to its uniformity and it allowed the researcher to clarify ambiguous questions, thus improving accuracy of both questions and responses. It also provided higher quality information that was free from bias than any other instrument and it allowed greater interviewer-interviewee interaction.

3.3 Data Analysis Procedure

The data collected was organized and coded. Data was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data was analyzed by frequencies, percentages, and chi-square (Kathuri & Pals 1993:117). Qualitative data was transcribed and analyzed

thematically. The analysis of the structured items was done using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS).

4. Results and Discussions

This purpose of the study was to find out the influence of family factors in drug abuse in the study area. In this study, family factors were categorized into three indicators that gave the study objectives: nature and structure of families, parenting style, and family culture and values.

4.1 Nature and Structure of Families

This item sought to find out the nature and structure of families. This included parental marital status, and the head of the household. The findings are as shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Pupil’s Parents’ Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	152	77.2
Single	22	11.2
Widowed	13	6.6
Separated	10	5.1
Total	197	100
Household Head	Frequency	Percent
Both Parents	128	65
One Parent	39	19.8
One of my siblings	10	5.1
Relative	20	10.2
Total	197	100

The result in Table 13, indicate that majority of the pupils (65%) were living with both parents with a small portion (19.8%) living with one parent. However, fewer cases of pupils living with older siblings were noted. Further, a great percentage (77.2) came from families where both parents were married with only a small percentage of 5.1% and 6.6% who were separated and widowed respectively. This implies that the responsibility of child upbringing and parental guidance is a preserve of the biological parents. Given that household heads are both parents, then it implies that cases of juvenile delinquency cannot be attributed to the absence of one or both parents.

4.2 Nature of Parenting

This item sought to find out the nature and quality of parenting offered to the children. The items were constructed on a five point Likert scale of: 1=strongly disagree, and 5=strongly disagree.

Table 14: Nature of Parenting

Statement	Percentage of the responses				
	SDA	DA	N	A	SA
1 My parents are not concerned about my welfare in school and at home	5	10	8	35	42
2 I don't have a very cordial relationship with my parents	5	12	7	28	48
3 My parent is not loving and understanding	10	10	14	28	38
4 My parent is not human and fair in administering punishment to us	7	10	11	32	40
5 My parents does not strives to provide for our needs	10	12	13	30	35

On the item that sought to find out whether parents were concerned with their children's' welfare, majority of the pupils strongly agreed (42%) while only a small percentage of (5%) strongly disagreed. This implied that most parents were not concerned with the welfare of their children.

The second item attempted to establish whether or not the children had cordial with their parents. The response was that the majority (48%) reported to have strongly agreed and only 5% strongly disagreed. This implied that even if the parents had information about drugs, they may have lacked the forum through which they would enlighten their children since their relationship was not cordial.

The third item aimed to find whether parents were loving and understanding to their children. 38% of the pupils are reported to have strongly agreed and 28% to have agreed. This implied that the children never felt that they are loved. This may have compelled them to look for love outside the family circles and even be recruited into drug abuse. On the item of fairness in administration of punishment, 40% strongly agreed that their parents were not fair and only 7% strongly disagreed. This implied that the children viewed their parents as being unfair.

Lastly, the final item sought to find out whether or not parents provided for their needs, again 35% strongly agreed and 30% agreed, leaving only a small percentage that disagreed. This implied that most of the children were not supported by their parents.

4.3 Family Culture and Values

This was the last indicator of family factors. Much emphasis was paid to those factors within the family that may be precursors to the initiation into drug abuse or inhibitors to the genesis of drug abuse amongst pupils. The items were constructed on a five point item Likert scale of 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree.

Table 15: Family Culture and Values

Statement	Percentage of the responses				
	SDA	DA	N	A	SA
1 Sometimes a family member sends me to buy him/her or prepare alcohol/cigarettes.	7	10	10	35	38
2 Sometimes when there is a function at home alcohol is freely served	5	12	7	30	48
3 At times one or both of my parents take beer/ smokes in my presence	7	8	10	28	47
4 My parent(s) is not concerned about my movement and where about whenever I am out of home.	7	10	11	30	42
5 Our parents do not restrict me from attending cultural parties and burial bonfires	10	12	13	33	32

On the item that sought to find out whether a family member exposes the pupils to drug abuse or not, majority (38%) of the respondents strongly agreed and nearly the same percentage (35%) agreed that sometimes a family member send the pupil to buy or prepare alcohol/cigarette, hence, exposing them to cognizance of such drugs. This implies that a family as an institution meant to protect the pupil from exposure to drugs, does instead expose them to the existence of drugs.

The second item aimed at finding out whether alcohol is liberally served in the homes of these pupils during cultural events. Majority (48%) strongly agreed and only a small percentage (5%) strongly disagreed. The implication is ironical since a family as an institution where norms and values are learnt, turns out to be an epitome of propagation of cultures of drug and substance abuse. The third item attempted to find out the parent's part in role modeling. At family level majority of the pupils (47%) strongly agreed while a small percentage (7%) strongly disagreed. This implied that majority of the pupils may be influenced by their significant others in this case the parents into abusing drugs.

The second last item aimed to find out if parents were concerned about the movements or whereabouts of their children especially when away from home. Majority (42%) strongly agreed and a big percentage (30%) agreed to that. This implied that many children would go out doing their missions without their parents knowing their whereabouts. Without the monitoring of the parents, the children might be influenced into experimenting on drugs. The last item attempted to investigate whether or not the parents controlled their children from attending night cultural parties or not. Majority (32%) strongly agreed and about (33%) agreed. This implied that most children would attend night parties where they may end up experimenting with drugs at the cover of darkness.

5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The study established that, majority of the pupils (65%) were living with both parents with a small portion (19.8%) living with one parent. Further, a great percentage (77.2) came from families where both parents were married with only a small percentage of 5.1% and 6.6% who were separated and widowed respectively. In terms of nature of parenting, the study found out that 77% of the parents were not concerned about their welfare, 76% did not have cordial relationship with their children, 66% perceived their parents as not loving and caring. As regards to family culture, the study found out that a family member would send a child to buy or be asked to prepare a drug for him/her. This therefore would expose the child to drug use or abuse. The study established that beer was liberally served during cultural parties and that parents would abuse drugs in the presence of their children hence role modelling them into abusing drugs. The chi-square that was run showed that there was a significant relationship between the composite variable "average family factors" and their propensity of use or abuse of drugs: $\chi^2(1)$, The study concluded that family factors like poor parenting, bad family

cultures and values, and dysfunctional family influences the propensity of use or abuse of drugs by children Nyamira County.

The study concluded that family factors like poor parenting for instance not having a cordial relationship with one's children, bad family cultures and values such as abusing drugs in the presence of children or sending them and or asking them to engage in drug related business, and dysfunctional families influence the pupils to use or abuse drugs in public primary schools in Nyamira County.

Arising from this study, the research makes the following recommendations.

1. The National government through its agents like NACADA should enlighten parents not to stock drugs such as alcohol at home.
2. Parents who send their children to buy drugs for them, for instance cigarettes should be discouraged.
3. Lastly family members who abuse drugs before minors should not do so as this may encourage them to drug abuse.

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