EFFECT OF SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND ON DRUG ADDICTION AMONG PATIENTS IN KARU GENERAL HOSPITAL ABUJA

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ABSTRACT
The rate of drug addiction has been increasing overtime and it could be traced to some social and economic issues. There is not much study on these issues in relation to drug addiction thus this study was designed to examine the effect of socioeconomic background on drug addiction among patients in Karu general hospital, Abuja. Nigeria. This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey research design with a sample size of 82 patients. Data was analyzed using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation score method with result of the data at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between social background and drug addiction (r= 0.407, P< 0.05), there was also a significant relationship between economic background and drug addiction (r= 0.489, P< 0.05). The study concludes that social background and economic background has effect on drug addiction. Some of the recommendations werecommunity members should participate and get involve in identifying drug abusers and the sellers of such drugs and report to appropriate authority for prompt action; government should work out policies and modalities that will improve the overall economic status of Nigerians and lastly parents should work harder to provide the basic needs of their families.

Introduction

Drug addiction, medically known as substance use disorder, is a debilitating disease that impacts both an individual's brain function and their behavior. It results in the inability to regulate legal or illegal drug consumption for individuals affected by it, including substances such as marijuana, nicotine and alcohol too. A person with drug addiction continues using drugs despite experiencing adverse consequences from doing so. This ailment has become one of growing concern worldwide due to its impact on society at large; especially since it currently constitutes a threat through juvenile delinquency issues which have criminalized many young people (Ogunbiyi 2022). The problem of drug addiction arose partly because there are several motivating factors behind personal choice concerning illicit medicaments aside from social media influence- bad

parenting choices coupled with peer pressure often play roles alongside impoverishment & unemployment leading up-to increased rates among delicate populations susceptible towards these insidious addictions.

Consumers in Nigeria, and many other countries, are required to obtain prescriptions for opioid-based medications due to the significant risk of addiction. The misuse of codeine products can result in several severe health outcomes such as liver damage, respiratory depression, coma or even death (Adeyeye 2018). Locally manufactured codeine-containing items have been restricted to prescription-only medicines since 2012; however unregistered contraband products are smuggled into the country. The trend of abuse remained unaffected despite the reclassification as POM, in part due to non-compliance with prescription regulations (Adeyeye, 2018). Drug addiction poses a range of social issues such as heightened crime rates, neglecting children's wellbeing and safety concerns pertaining vehicular accidents among other fatalities. Moreover, negative interpersonal dynamics arise amidst people grappling with drug dependencies.

Statement of the problem

In the 21st century, a widespread misuse of substances like marijuana, tramadol, analgesics, cough syrup and cocaine has emerged as a major global public health concern (UNESCO, 2019). Shockingly enough it's estimated by The World Health Organization that one-third of people above the age of fifteen are drug addicts which makes up to around five point five million individuals worldwide(Garechaba et al. 2017).These addictions often involve dangerous drugs such as opiates or opioids; cannabis and amphetamines; prescription psychoactive medicines obtained through unauthorized channels without consulting any doctor posing immense danger for millions across nations including Nigeria where youngster's addiction is increasing rapidly(Oshodi et al., 2017). This trend continues in developing countries with severe deleterious consequences not only on an individual level but their families' wellbeing & communities at large also face its negative impacts per Gruber & Taylor researches regarding alcohol/drug-dependency (Gruber&Taylor ,2016) Poor outcomes stem from these dependencies include factors affecting schooling/job retention/health/social well-being (Emlenton et al.;2021).

Regrettably, an incorrect type of substance or a misguided dosage at an inopportune moment and dispensed improperly can not only hinder one's abilities but also result in significant harm (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2016). Findings indicate that limited research exists regarding the influence of social-economic status on drug dependency. It is this gap the study filled by examining the effect of socioeconomic background on drug addiction among patients in Karu General Hospital, Abuja.

The following hypotheses were used for the study.

i. There is no significant relationship between the social background and drug addiction among patients in Karu General Hospital, Abuja.

ii. There is no significant relationship between economic background and drug addiction among patients in Karu General Hospital, Abuja.

Related Concept

Status of socioeconomic standing

According to Yie-Chu et al. (2020), a person's drug use can be significantly impacted by their family's economic stability. This financial security is determined by the income bracket that an individual or household falls under, as discussed in Lasser (2023). Economic status refers to one's usual level of income and can be categorized into three levels present globally today: An individual or household's economic position is determined by their income level and the class they belong to. In 2012, approximately 122,459,000 families earned money with only 4.5% of them earning over $200,000 (Lasser, 2023). Economic status refers to an individual's financial situation which mainly relies on their regular income source.

There are three different levels of economic statuses worldwide: The lower class represents poverty-stricken people who experience homelessness and unemployment issues while struggling for medical care services, education assistance, food security, clothing, safety, vocational training etc., despite low educational qualifications in most cases marginalized as "the underclass" by media that falsely portrays poor individuals as lazy welfare abusers having

numerous children, exploiting government support instead of working hard like others making them seem more destitute drug-addicted criminals than citizens worth valuing . The middle class is the economic status between lower and higher positions on the income pyramid. These white-collar employees earn more than those in lower positions but less than those at the top. The middle class can be divided into two groups based on their income, education, and social standing. Members of the lower-middle-class include managers, small business owners, teachers, and secretaries who have relatively low incomes compared to highly educated professionals like doctors or CEOs that make up most of the upper-middle-class (Elwell, 2014).

Only a small percentage (1-3%) belongs to high-income earners called "the upper class (Kenton, 2021). There are further divisions within this group: one belonging to individuals with new wealth from savings accounts or investments known as Lower-upper Class; while the aristocrats assert financial position earning much through inherited fortunes belongs to Upper-upper Class having significant power over Lowers due partly because they've had it for so long. Individuals classified as Middle-Class according to 2012 data were making somewhere around $40000-$100000 dollars yearly. Awards presented by various organizations exist recognizing specific spending habits indicative thereof socioeconomic expenditure ranges levels i.e the Luxury Consumers attainable level depends significantly upon annual earnings (Elwell, 2014).

Addiction to Drugs

Substance use disorder, commonly referred to as drug addiction, is a neurological and behavioral ailment that impedes the regulation of legal or illicit drugs or medicine intake. Drugs such as alcohol, nicotine and marijuana are also classified under this condition. Despite its harmful effects on an individual's physical health and wellbeing, those who struggle with addiction often find it difficult to abstain from using these substance(s). According to Akinloye and Akinwusi (2014), the significance of drug abuse and addiction is not primarily determined by the quantity or frequency of substance intake, but rather through its adverse effects. Similarly, Eze and Kasali (2021) concurred that addiction can be complicated due to repetitive compulsive drug usage with unique physical impacts for each specific chemical. Additionally, they noted how all substances subject to misuse encounter modifications in brain activity from repeated consumption. Dependency on drugs, especially illegal ones, is what characterizes drug addiction. This condition constitutes a disease that affects brain function and behavior to such an extent that one loses the ability to control their use of these substances (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2020).

According to Wikipedia's definition, addiction refers to a disorder within the brain characterized by compulsive engagement in rewarding stimuli despite negative outcomes. Studies suggest this abnormal indulgence can be attributed largely as a coping mechanism amidst life's harsh realities for those suffering from it. Scientific reports list Heroin, cocaine, nicotine barbiturates, and alcohol among some of the most addictive substances globally (Hudson, 2023). The affordability has been identified as leading Nigerian youths into abusing prescription drugs including tramadol, codeine, antibiotics cough syrups, and laxatives amongst others.

The Ethical and Social Implications of Drug Abuse and Addiction

Heilig et al. (2016) suggest that addiction treatment has not experienced substantial developments, and attribute this to a disconnection between the neuroscience of addiction and its social context. They identified two prevalent characteristics of human addiction: progressive social exclusion and marginalization, which they defined as follows:

Social exclusion that is gradually increasing over time.

Experiencing restrictions to essential resources and privileges that are available to the majority of the population is known as societal marginalization. Substance abuse can lead to limited employment prospects and social isolation, which contribute to further substance use - whether self-inflicted or imposed by external factors- making it a significant factor in perpetuating addiction.

The process of being pushed to the margins

When a certain group of people are treated as inferior or unimportant, it leads to marginalization. Individuals who suffer from

substance abuse may face judgment due to the misunderstanding that addiction is an illness. This social issue could be one of the factors deterring individuals from seeking treatment (Heilig et al., 2016).

Theoretical Framework

Several methods have been utilized to understand why individuals develop drug dependency, and one among them is the sociocultural approach. Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky introduced this concept in the 1930s that primarily emphasizes on cultural and environmental influences contributing towards drug dependence.

The sociocultural perspective on substance abuse:

According to the sociocultural theory, drug abuse is influenced by the values and norms of a society. For instance, some cultures permit alcohol and marijuana use while others prohibit it. In Nigeria's Edo, Ijaw, Igbo, Ibibio, Urhobo, Itesekiri, and Yoruba tribes specifically; cultural activities involve alcohol consumption but in Northern Nigeria no drugs are allowed (Oluremi 2012). Substance use is thought to be linked with acculturation - how much someone identifies themselves with their native culture (William et al., 2019). Culture dictates what foods or drinks people find acceptable within different societies: using any particular substance can either be accepted or rejected depending on that region's socio-cultural standards surrounding such things (Nwagu et al., 2017). Moreover,to have an understanding about potential consequences associatedto excessive usageby taking substances(Including addiction)impartially depend upon individual expectations for behavior coached essentially during socialization periodwithina uniqueculture.Groups who possess little knowledge regarding addictive behaviors tend toward adopting ill-advised habits when exposed extensively(thus made vulnerable)for whichcultures may develop protective mechanisms (William et.al., 2019).In essence,this study builds aroundsociocultural theory based on our beliefthat individuals learn fromtheir environmentand broaderculturalfactors.Accordingly,theirownhab its & characteristics change according to their interactionswith those factors.

Methodology

The research utilized a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to test the hypotheses. The study group consisted of 82 patients from Karu general hospital in Abuja, and selection was done through purposive sampling techniques. Data collection involved using self-structured questionnaires that focused on specific variables related to the objectives and hypotheses of the study. Each section of the questionnaire evaluated the variables. The sample size for the study was the total number of all the patients at the general hospital as at the time of this study. The total number was 82 patients.

Procedure

The researchers sought permission from the appropriate authorities to assess patients at Karu General Hospital in Abuja. They administered a prepared instrument to each participant and informed them that participation was voluntary, obtaining written consent beforehand. Participants' confidentiality was upheld as no personal identifying information was gathered through the questionnaire. The validity of the instrument's sections were ensured by verifying that items measured accordingly, while internal consistency reliability testing resulted in a combined score of 0.940 - indicating strong overall reliability.

Data Analysis

The information gathered from the questionnaires that were filled out was compiled and assessed utilizing version 21.0 of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Each variable received a particular score based on its rating scale, following which it underwent computation. To test our hypotheses, we relied on Pearson Product Moment Correlation method.

Results

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the social background and drug addiction among patients.

Table 1: Relationship between the social background and drug addiction among patients

		Social background	Drug addiction
social background	Pearson Correlation	1	.407**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Drug addiction	Pearson Correlation	.407**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	82	82

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Hypothesis one was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between the social background and drug addiction among patients (r= 0.407, P< 0.05) as the level of significant is less than 0.05 (5%). This implies that the social background is a determinant to the drug abuse. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Two

Ho: There is no significant relationship between economic background and drug addiction among patients.

Table 2: Relationship between the social background and drug addiction among patients

		Drug addiction	Economic background
Drug addiction	Pearson Correlation (r)	1	.489**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Economic background	Pearson Correlation (r)	.489**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	82	82

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Hypothesis two was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between the economic background and drug addiction among patients (r= 0.489, P< 0.05) as the level of significant is less than 0.05 (5%). This implies that the economic background is a determinant to the drug abuse. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The impact of socioeconomic background on drug addiction among patients at Karu General Hospital in Abuja was investigated by the study. Results revealed that there is a correlation between one's social status and their susceptibility to drug addiction. Hypothesis one also found a significant relationship between social background and drug dependence amongst hospital patients, affirming findings similar to those made by Pettersen et al. (2019) about this issue. Similarly, Daley (2013) discovered substance use disorders have negative impacts ranging from medical issues, psychological problems down to legal difficulties which affect not only individuals but their families as well as society overall.The research outcome aligns with Whitesell's (2013)findings that suggest multiple factors

including peers selection, family engagement,and environmental forces predict adolescent substance abuse; hence forming an intricate network of risk indicators for such behaviors. Additionally, cultural values within societies can influence acceptance or rejection perceptions towards particular substances. Nwagu et al. (2071), citing sociocultural theory notes how different cultures shape attitudes toward substance usage-impacting approaches, and dealing specifically around it.

The study's hypothesis two revealed a noteworthy correlation between patients' economic background and drug addiction at Karu general hospital, endorsing the 2013 International Narcotics Control Board findings. The results also align with Patrick et al.'s (2012) exploration that indicated individuals from lower childhood family socioeconomic status were inclined towards smoking during young adulthood while those belonging to higher backgrounds had greater tendencies for alcohol and marijuana consumption.

Conclusion

The correlation between drug addiction and one's socioeconomic background was established by the study. An individual's society and culture can either put them at risk for, or protect them from falling into substance abuse patterns- a conclusion previously drawn by other scholars as well (as indicated in this paper's discussion section). Furthermore, it became apparent that economic status - positively or negatively - contributes to possible occurrence of narcotic dependency. Drug addiction is an issue of great concern worldwide; hence both individuals and governments are tackling its prevalence. It has become more pronounced among young people who often lack knowledge regarding relevant risks associated with such behaviors. Given current statistics—showing Nigeria having highest concentration rate—and considering it exhibiting poorest population figure across all nations globally – intervention seems absolutely necessary.

Recommendations

Considering the fact that socio-economic background has a significant impact on drug addiction among patients in Karu General Hospital, Abuja, and by extension, Nigeria as a whole, the following are recommended, based on the outcome of this research, as the way forward to curb the menace:

i. Government should work out policies and modalities that will improve the overall economic status of Nigerians.

ii. Parents should work harder to provide the basic needs of their families.

iii. More efforts should be directed towards the creation of awareness on the causes, threat and identification of drug abusers in the community through public health education.

iv. Schools should do more to enlighten their students on the dangers of drug abuse and addiction.

v. Community members should participate and get involve in identifying drug abusers and the sellers of such drugs and report to appropriate authority for prompt action.

vi. Counselling services should be made available to people who are addicted to drugs,

vii. Drug addicts should not be discriminated upon as they are still members of the society.

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