

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND RISK FACTORS AMONG INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS IN UYO CUSTODIAL CENTER, AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Substance abuse is a significant public health concern worldwide, with far-reaching consequences for individuals, communities, and societies. The issue is particularly pronounced among incarcerated individuals, who often face unique challenges and vulnerabilities that contribute to substance abuse. The escalating issue of public health and societal concern is on the rise, with detrimental effects across various dimensions, particularly impacting the younger demographic. Uyo Custodial Center, located in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, is no exception. This background information provides an overview of substance abuse among incarcerated individuals, with a focus on its prevalence and risk factors in Uyo Custodial Center.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional research design employing a quantitative data collection approach was carried out in this study. The study involved 376 inmates aged between 15 and 45 years in Uyo custodial center, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The participant selection process involved a systematic sampling technique. Data collection utilized an adapted, self-administered, pre-tested, semi-structured questionnaire. The collected data underwent analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23 software. Descriptive statistics were employed to present the findings, utilizing tables and figures for clarity. The relationship between categorical variables was assessed through the chi-square test with statistical significance set at a p value ≤ 0.05 .

Results: The mean age of respondents from this study was 29.2 ± 4.20 years. The prevalence of substance use among the respondents was (73.9%). The risk factors of substance use among the respondents has it that a higher proportion of respondents (63.2%) agreed that they have been smoking for more than 6 months, of which majority of the respondents (66.3%) had not tried stopping smoking. Of the proportion that often smoke cigarettes, a higher proportion of respondents 52.6% agreed that smoking affects their daily routine

and more than half of the respondents 53.2% smoked 5-10 wraps/ sticks per day. The risk factors of substance use among the respondents opined that a higher proportion of respondents (67.9%) smoked cigarettes with friends. Of the proportion of respondents who smoked cigarettes with friends, (51.9%) did it weekly. A higher proportion of respondents agreed that family members also smoked cigarettes 53.7%. A higher proportion of respondents (79%) drank alcohol with friends. Of the proportion of respondents who drank alcohol with friends, (57.0%) did it daily. However, a higher proportion of respondents who drink alcohol (47.9%) agreed that peer pressure was the reason for drinking alcohol while (33.5%) agreed that curiosity was the reason for smoking cigarettes.

Conclusion: Substance abuse among incarcerated individuals is a complex issue that requires a comprehensive approach to address. Understanding the prevalence and risk factors for substance abuse in Uyo Custodial Center is crucial for developing effective interventions and treatment programs. By addressing the unique challenges faced by the center and its inmates, it is possible to reduce the prevalence of substance abuse and promote healthier outcomes for incarcerated individuals.

Keywords: substance use, incarcerated individual, Uyo custodial center

Introduction

Substance abuse is a significant public health concern worldwide, with far-reaching consequences for individuals, communities, and societies. The issue is particularly pronounced among incarcerated individuals, who often face unique challenges and vulnerabilities that contribute to substance abuse. Uyo Custodial Center, located in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, is no exception. This information provides an overview of substance abuse among incarcerated individuals, with a focus on its prevalence and risk factors in Uyo Custodial Center. (Omole, and Adelekan, 2017). Research has consistently shown that substance abuse is more prevalent among incarcerated individuals than in the general population. A study conducted in Nigeria found that approximately 70% of inmates reported using substances before incarceration. Another study conducted in Uyo Custodial Center on its patterns of psychoactive use specifically found that 61.4% of inmates reported using substances, with cannabis being the most commonly used substance (Ugochukwu, and Onyema, 2020). Several risk factors contribute to substance abuse among incarcerated individuals, including Socio-demographic factors: Age, gender, education level, and socioeconomic status can all impact an individual's likelihood of substance abuse. Mental health issues: Incarcerated individuals with mental health issues, such as depression or anxiety, are more likely to engage in substance abuse. Trauma and stress: Experiencing trauma or stress, either before or during incarceration, can increase an individual's risk of substance abuse. Peer influence: Association with peers who use substances can contribute to an individual's substance abuse. Lack of access to treatment: Inadequate access to substance abuse treatment programs can exacerbate the problem. Uyo Custodial Center faces unique challenges that may contribute to substance abuse among its inmates, including overcrowding: The center is often overcrowded, which can lead to increased stress and tension among inmates. Limited access to healthcare: The center's healthcare facilities may be inadequate, making it difficult for inmates to access necessary medical care, including substance abuse treatment. Corruption and contraband: Corruption among prison staff and the presence of contraband can contribute to the availability and use of substances within the center. Substance abuse among incarcerated individuals is a complex issue that requires a comprehensive approach to address. Understanding the prevalence and risk factors for substance abuse in Uyo Custodial Center is crucial for developing effective interventions and treatment programs, (Onyema, 2020). By addressing the unique challenges faced by the center and its inmates, it is

possible to reduce the prevalence of substance abuse and promote healthier outcomes for incarcerated individuals. The utilization of psychoactive substances remains a significant risk behavior prevalent among the youth, often leading to both physical and mental health complications. Despite the adverse effects associated with these substances, understanding the prevalence and determinants of their use among prison inmates is crucial, as emphasized by Masibo in 2013. Psychoactive substances encompass any substance capable of altering perception, mood, cognition, behavior, or motor functions when consumed. Historically, before the 1980s, the use of substances was primarily confined to elders during specific community functions such as rituals and ceremonies. However, post-1980s, the consumption of psychoactive drugs has become widespread among the younger population globally, marking a notable shift. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2005, a United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report indicated that approximately 200 million individuals, accounting for 5 percent of the global population aged 15 to 64, had used drugs at least once in the preceding 12 months. Further insights from a survey conducted in Czech Republic high schools, as per UNODC, revealed that 37% of new drug users belonged to the teenage demographic, specifically between 15 and 19 years old. The United Nations International Drug Control Program (UNDCP) underscored in 2004 that drug use, particularly heroin, is becoming a serious concern in Africa. Additionally, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that 1.1 billion people, constituting one-third of the global population above 15 years old, engage in tobacco use, primarily in the form of cigarettes. Alarming, of these smokers, 700 million, predominantly males, reside in developing countries, as reported by W.H.O. in 2004.

Alcohol readily accessible and legal for consumption, poses a significant societal challenge due to its widespread acceptance and the tendency of users to deny addiction.

Marijuana a hallucinogenic substance consumed through smoking, marijuana induces various effects such as an unnatural increase in thirst or hunger, unpredictable mood swings, heightened talkativeness, impaired perception, compromised judgment, mental disorders, a sense of wellbeing, and euphoria, which is described as a pleasant feeling of excitement and a departure from reality (Asumi 1996).

Cocaine is a highly addictive substance prohibited for possession or distribution due to its illicit nature. Upon a single dose, the effects of cocaine manifest almost instantly, fading away within minutes. Users often experience a heightened sense of euphoria, increased energy, talkativeness, and enhanced mental alertness, particularly attuned to sensory stimuli like sight, sound, and touch.

Cigarettes: The initiation of cigarette usage often precedes the engagement with other substances like cannabis, cocaine, and heroin, as observed by Sussman et al. in 2007. Cigarettes, containing nicotine, exhibit dose-related euphoric effects akin to those induced by cocaine and morphine, as indicated by Fazel et al., (2006).

Aerosols, Substances like glue, paint, paint thinners, aerosols, and polish removers are frequently misused, particularly by individuals experiencing homelessness or economic hardship, as they provide a deceptive sense of satiety.

Polish remover is considered psychoactive substances impede the functioning of the nervous system that regulates bodily activities (WHO, 2002). The frequency of such substances among incarcerated individuals remains elevated, even with regular informational sessions. It is

noteworthy that a significant portion of these inmates was already dependent on psychoactive substances prior to their imprisonment.

New Psychoactive Substance

The rise of novel psychoactive substances (NPSs) has become a formidable hurdle for global drug policy-makers and a considerable threat to public health worldwide. NPSs exhibit various characteristics, with inconsistent composition and potency playing pivotal roles in determining the associated health risks (Bawkin and Bawkin, 1972). The continuous evolution of NPSs poses a significant challenge for medicine control and forensic analysis, requiring constant adaptation to new styles of medicine control (Elliott et al., 2020). In Nigeria, the issue of substance utilization within the prison system is escalating, as evident from the noteworthy recurrence of relapses and the prevalence of drug dependency among former inmates. The misuse of drugs has evolved into a persistent challenge, posing a threat not only to public safety but also extending to national security. Despite the robust security measures in place across various prisons nationwide the expectation that these substances would be effectively intercepted is regrettably unmet. Drugs and other psychoactive substances continue to find their way past stringent security measures and infiltrate our prison compounds, as highlighted in a study emphasizing the persistence of drug use among prisoners (Abbate, Schwenk, Presley, and Uchiyama, 2018).

A diverse array of drugs is being consumed by inmates, creating a significant security concern within the immediate prison environment and the nation as a whole. Beyond the security implications, the utilization of drugs among inmates also jeopardizes their physical and mental well-being, undermining the core objectives of imprisonment, which are centered on reformation and rehabilitation. The issue of psychoactive substance use has evolved into a burgeoning problem in society, reaching epidemic proportions. Over the past years, the global landscape has witnessed a concerning escalation in the patterns of psychoactive substance use. Within the Nigerian context, the consumption of substances such as cocaine has shown a noteworthy increase since 2014, as documented (The prison environment, characterized by a regimented lifestyle, overcrowding, social deprivation, and interpersonal challenges, induces stress among inmates. Additionally, it serves as a high-risk setting for both the initiation and Plos One, 2019) and perpetuation of drug use. Whether incarcerated for drug-related offenses or other violations, individuals within the prison system may persist in the use of psychoactive substances as a coping mechanism, defying institutional prohibitions, (Effiong and Ekpenyong, (2017). Factors such as age, adverse childhood experiences, a polygamous family setting, and parental deprivation resulting from separation or divorce have been identified as demographic and family-related contributors that heighten the susceptibility to psychoactive substance use and other behavioral issues despite prohibitions, health experts consistently express concern over the unauthorized diversion of substances or medications within prison walls. Instances of psychoactive substance use, as well as the misuse of illicit drugs, including the improper utilization of opioid maintenance treatments, have been noted.(Simpson and Knight, 2013). The challenges associated with the misuse of mind-altering substances in society and the impact on the lives of those who misuse them cannot be overstated. It is crucial to undertake an investigation of this nature to assess the prevalence and risk factors influencing the use of such substances among inmates at Uyo Custodial Center in Akwalbom State, Nigeria.

Specific objectives:

1. To determine the prevalence of Substance Abuse among Incarcerated Individuals in Uyo custodial center, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria
2. To determine the risk factors of Substance Abuse among Incarcerated Individuals in Uyo custodial center, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area: The study was conducted at the Uyo Custodial Center in Akwa Ibom State, situated in the South-South region. Akwa Ibom shares its borders with Rivers state to the west, Cross River state to the east, and Abia State to the west and north. Uyo, serving as the state capital, stands out as the bustling hub of diverse activities, attracting people of various age groups. Akwa Ibom state comprises three senatorial districts, with Uyo being one of them. Others are Ikot Ekpene and Eket. Each senatorial district hosts a Custodial Center. Uyo custodial center was built by the Colonial Masters in 1960 and called Uyo Prisons until 2019 when the Nigerian Correctional Service Act was signed into law by the President that the name was changed to Custodial Center. The organogram of the custodial center is from the top down. The controller general is in-charge of the prison formation. Then to the Located on Barracks Road by the police station before the Government House. Uyo Custodial Center was built in 1960 with initial lock up capacity of 613 inmates by the Colonial masters; the Custodial Center has over the years exceeded its initial lock up capacity which has doubled as at the time of this study to about 1400 inmates in custody with no improvement to the structures erected by the Colonial Masters. There are four categories of inmates; Convicted inmates, awaiting trial inmates, Inmates sentenced to life imprisonment, and Inmates on death roll, all of which comprises both sexes. There are eleven blocks of cells in Uyo Custodial Center Akwa Ibom State, one cell block is exclusively for inmates on death roll. New convicts undergo an initial period of confinement in a distinct cell pending their appearance before the prison admission board.

Study Design: The study was a descriptive cross-sectional study

Study Population: The population comprises all the inmates in Uyo Custodial Center Akwa Ibom State

Study Tool: The researcher employed a closed-ended structured questionnaire

Validity and Reliability: Pre-test was conducted with a subset of the sample involving 40 inmates from Ikot Ekpene Custodial Center, representing 10% of the total minimum sample size. Any questions that was found to be unclear or confusing, ambiguous was revised to enhance clarity and facilitate easy responses by the respondents

Sample size determination: Sample size was determined using Cochran formular for sample size determination cross sectional study.

$$N = Z^2PQ/E^2$$

where n = sample size

Z = Normal standard deviates corresponding to the level of significance (1.96)≈95%

P = prevalence of substance use (57.4%) (Okoro et al 2021). Q = 1-E = margin error allowed (0.05), 10% non-response rate was calculated and added to gives n=376

Inclusion criteria: All the inmates in Uyo Custodial Center.

Exclusion criteria- a. Inmates who were absent or unavailable during the time of collecting data. b. Inmates who did not give their consent for the study. c. Inmates that their stay was less than one month in the facility

Sampling technique: Systematic sampling technique was used to ensure that all participants have an equal chance of being included in the study. The number of inmates in Uyo Custodial Center as at the time of this study is about 1400 of which 168 are convicted inmates and 1300 are undergoing trial, There are about 13 blocks of cell in the Custodial Center, the convicts are housed in 4 of the cells and the remaining cells are for those awaiting trial, . During the data collection process, we utilized three diligent data collection assistants who administered a maximum of 35 questionnaires per day. We set a target of collecting 105 samples each day from each block of cell. The team responsible for collecting data waited until there is open out of the inmates from the cells so as to take them to a convenient hall where they will be seated for data collection. To ensure fairness in the selection process, they employed a simple random sampling technique. This involves assigning unique identification numbers to each inmate, writing them on separate pieces of paper, folding them, and placing them into a small bag. Finally, one number is chosen blindly.

Method of data collection: The principal researcher provided training to two research assistants who played a pivotal role in data collection. The questionnaires were structured into five distinct components. The initial section aimed at extracting socio-demographic information from the respondents, while the subsequent sections (2, 3, 4, and 5) explored aspects such as knowledge, attitude, prevalence, and risk factors related to the use of substances. Concerning Attitudes to Drug Use (ADU), the questionnaire utilized for assessment was the Attitudes to Drug Use Questionnaire (Harmon, 1993), with certain modifications. This 12-item scale was crafted to gauge an individual's stance toward drug use. Responses were evaluated on a 5-point Likert Scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Total scores were computed by summing up responses to each question and dividing by the total number of questions in the questionnaire, which stands at 12. In instances where participants did not respond to a question, any missing scores led to the exclusion of their overall response from the analysis. Higher scores on the scale indicate a more favorable attitude towards drug use, while lower scores suggest a less favorable stance. On this scale, scores range from 1 to 5, with 5 indicating the highest achievement and 1 representing the lowest. Notably, items 1, 4, 5, 9, and 11 are inversely scored. As indicated by Hulin et al. (2001), the internal reliability of this measurement tool is notably high, standing at $\alpha = .89$, signifying a robust level of consistency in its assessments.

Data analysis: Data were collated, assembled and analysed using statistical tool IBM SPSS version 23. The variables were presented in tables of frequencies and percentages. Chi-square tests were used to examine the potential relationship between independent and dependent variables and to test for association. Statistical significance was set at a p-value set at 0.05 (5%) within a 95% confidence interval. Each variable's significance was evaluated, and only those with P-values equal to or below 0.05 was regarded as statistically significant.

Ethical considerations: The Health, Research, and Ethical Committee of the University of Port Harcourt sought approval for this research endeavour. Concurrently, permission to conduct the study was secured from the Nigerian Correctional Service head of the unit. Ensuring privacy, confidentiality and other ethical principles were noted in the study

RESULTS

Table 1: Socio-demographics characteristics of the respondents

Variables	Frequency(n)=376	Percentage (%)
Age group		
15- 25	89	23.7
26-35	126	33.5
36-45	97	25.8
Above 45years	64	17.0
Mean age 29.2 ±4.2SD		
Gender		
Male	284	75.5
Female	92	24.5
Religion		
Christianity	350	93.1
Islam	22	5.8
Others	4	1.1
Educational Status		
None	83	22.1
Primary	99	26.3
Secondary	129	34.3
Tertiary	65	17.3
Marital Status		
Married	79	21.0
Single	180	47.9
Divorced/separated	79	21.0
Widowed	38	10.1
Occupation		
Civil servant	41	10.9
Artisan	51	13.6
Trading	148	39.4
Farming	136	36.1
Status in Custody		
Awaiting trial	167	44.4
Short term convict	120	31.9
Long term convict	74	19.6
Lifer	10	2.7
Death roll	5	1.4
Duration of stay in Custody		
≤ 6months	88	23.4
6-12 months	184	48.9
≥ 1 year	104	27.7

With the data obtained from 376 respondents who took part in the study, the majority 126 (35.5%) were of age ranges from 26-36 years, with a mean age of 29.2 years (±4.20 SD). Majority of the

respondents were males 284 (75.5%). A higher proportion 129 (34.30%) had a secondary level of education as their highest level of education. Also, a higher proportion of 180 (47.9%) of the respondents were single. The majority of the respondents 148 (39.4%) were into trading as a form of business followed by farming 136(36.1%). The main form of religious expression among the participants was Christianity (93.10%). The majority of the respondents 167 (44.4%) are awaiting trial for various offences committed and (48.9%) had a duration of stay in custody between 6-12 months

Table 2: Prevalence of substance use of the respondents

Variables	Frequency(n)=376	Percentage (%)
Types of substance use		
Marijuana	80	21.3
Tramadol	66	17.6
Cigarette	130	34.6
Alcohol	100	26.6
Does anyone around you use substance		
Yes	278	73.9
No	98	26.1
Ever drank alcohol		
Yes	276	73.4
No	100	26.6
How often did you drink alcohol		
Frequent	78	78
Occasional	16	16
Rarely	6	6
Brand you like drinking		
Beer	34	34
Combine	54	54
Brew	12	12
Ever smoked cigarette		
Yes	190	50.5
No	186	49.5
How often did you smoke cigarette?		
Frequent	100	52.6
Occasional	76	40.0
Rarely	14	7.4

In Table 2: Concerning the types of substance use, a higher proportion of respondents 130(34.6%) smoked cigarettes followed by alcohol intake 100 (26.6%) Of the proportion of respondents that smoked a cigarette, 100 (52.6%) did it frequently and of the proportion of respondents that drank alcohol, 78% did it frequently, of which combine was the popular brand 54% followed by beer 34%

The prevalence of substance use among the respondents was 278 (73.9%)

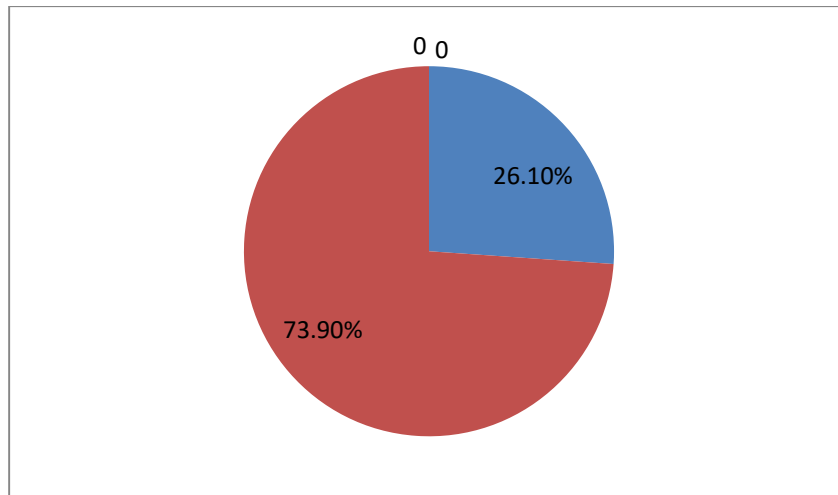


Fig 1: overall prevalence of psychoactive substance use

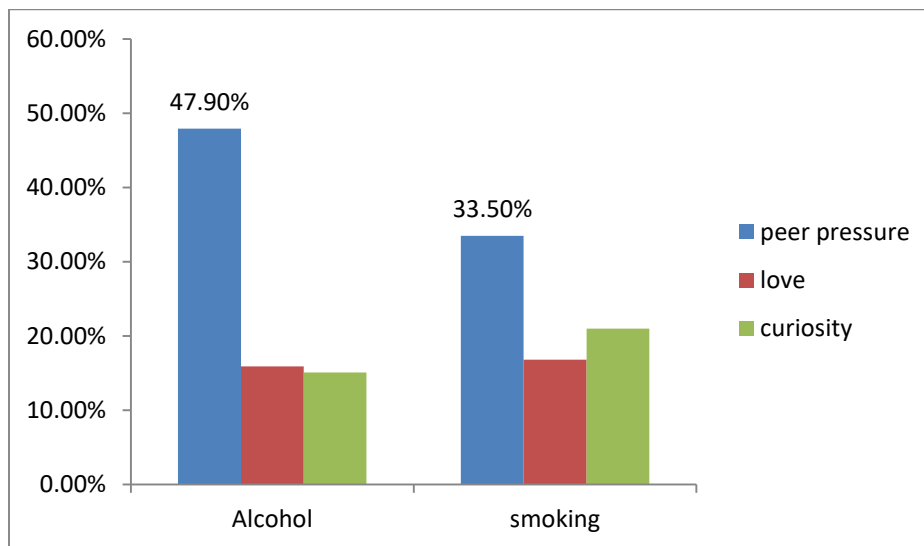


Figure 2 shows the reasons for alcohol intake and smoking of cigarettes among the respondents A higher proportion of respondents who drink alcohol 180(47.9%) agreed that peer pressure was the reason for drinking alcohol while 126 (33.5%) agreed that curiosity was the reason for smoking cigarette. Also, there was the same proportion of respondents 79(21.0%) who curiosity and

pleasure were a reason for drinking alcohol while 97(25.8%) and 89(23.7%) agreed that peer pressure and pleasure were the reasons for smoking cigarettes.

Table 3: Risk factors of substance use among the respondents

Variables	Frequency(n)=190	Percentage (%)
Do you smoke with friends		
Yes	129	67.9
No	61	32.81
How often do you smoke with friends		
Daily	45	34.9
Weekly	67	51.9
Monthly	17	13.2
Does your parents/ family member smoke		
Yes	88	46.3
No	102	53.7
N=100		
Do your friend drink alcohol		
Yes	79	79
No	21	21
How often do you drink with friends		
Daily	45	57.0
Weekly	28	35.4
Monthly	6	7.6
Does your parents/ family member drink alcohol		
Yes	71	71
No	29	29
Have you been punished for using psychoactive substance		
Yes	276	73.4
No	100	37.6
Does use of psychoactive substance affect your daily life		
Yes	250	66.5
No	126	33.5

A higher proportion of respondents 129 (67.9%) smoked cigarette with friends. Of the proportion of respondents that smoked cigarette with friends, (51.9%) did it weekly. A higher proportion of respondents agreed that family members do also smoked cigarette 53.7%. A higher proportion of

respondents (79%) drank alcohol with friends. Of the proportion of respondents that drank alcohol with friends, (57.0%) did it daily.

DISCUSSION

The average age of the participants was 29.20 ± 4.20 years, spanning from 15 to 45 years. This contrasts with the age distribution observed in a study conducted in Romania, where the mean age was 21.09 ± 1.48 years, and the age range was 18-25 years.

The predominant religious affiliation among the respondents is Christianity. Most religious doctrines strongly discourage the consumption of substances. Inmates actively participating in religious activities demonstrate a decreased likelihood of engaging in drug experimentation. Furthermore, their involvement in religious pursuits increases the probability of spending time with like-minded peers who are less inclined towards drug use (Arenas, D.J., Beltran, S., Zhou, S. 2020). Religion could play a crucial role in anti-drug initiatives for inmates if concerted efforts are made to engage religious organizations in identifying and counselling individuals using psychoactive substances. Self-reported academic struggles, as evident in the educational levels achieved by participants, displayed a notable correlation with substance use. In this present investigation, individuals lacking formal education indicated a higher prevalence of engaging in psychoactive substance use, coupled with subpar academic performance.

This trend was similarly identified among respondents who had only completed primary education. This aligns with findings from previous research. In a study examining substance use among inmates in Lagos, southwest Nigeria, Fatoye (2003) and Effiong, Udokang, Udom and Nkanta, (2023), established a significant connection between self-reported below-average academic performance and psychoactive substance use. Logistic regression analysis further revealed that these individuals had elevated odds of indulging in psychoactive substances compared to those with more favorable academic records. This study additionally identified a robust association between adolescents' substance use and having parents in the lower socioeconomic class. The odds of substance use exhibited a twofold increase among those in the lower social class, a pattern consistent with findings in other studies such as those by In the study, it was noted that lower socioeconomic status, gauged through indicators like parental educational attainment and income, is correlated with substance use among teenagers. Notably, in this multi-racial study, the association was particularly pronounced among black inmates, suggesting that heightened levels of poverty, unemployment, and political instability in certain black communities may contribute to substance-taking behavior among inmates (Anduaga, and Wittchen, 2002).

However, the specific indices used to derive socioeconomic status were not explicitly stated in the study. This underscores the consistent trend observed across various studies regarding the linkage between lower socioeconomic status and increased susceptibility to substance use among adolescents.

In the context of this study, parental substance use emerged as a factor associated with inmates' substance use, although the association did not reach statistical significance in the case of paternal substance use. This phenomenon might be attributed to the prevailing societal norms in this region, where substance use is more prevalent and socially acceptable among men than women, as highlighted in studies. An alarming implication of this observation is that psychoactive substances might be present in the home environment, potentially serving as a model for inmates' drug use

behavior. In many traditional settings, fathers, pastors, and influential leaders often serve as role models for inmates, and this, coupled with inheritable biological factors, could offer a plausible explanation for the observed association between paternal substance use and inmates' substance use. The present study's finding aligns with the consistent trend observed in other studies, such as those by affirming that parental substance use is strongly linked to adolescent substance use. This underscores the importance of considering familial influences, both societal and biological, in understanding and addressing the complex dynamics of substance use among adolescents. A study conducted in Nigeria proposed that family substance use significantly influences the substance-using behavior of inmates. Inmates with parents engaging in psychoactive substance use face a notable risk of getting caught in a cycle involving drug use, association with peers involved in substance use, and strained family relationships. The heightened susceptibility to substance use and its associated issues in children of parents with substance abuse problems is attributed to a combination of genetic and environmental factors, (Effiong, 2024). Numerous factors contribute to the predisposition toward psychoactive substance use. In the current study, peer group influence, curiosity, and pleasure emerged as the most commonly perceived factors, acknowledged by over nine out of every ten respondents. Additionally, seven in ten respondents identified love and increased leisure money as predisposing factors. A parallel investigation noted that 23% and 27% of respondents attributed substance use to peer group influence and curiosity, respectively. Another study reported a higher percentage of 50.77% associating substance use with peer group influence. Furthermore, in the current study, a significant 85.4% of respondents reported obtaining drugs from friends. This underscores the influential role of peer relationships, as youths often emulate their peers to foster a sense of belonging (Anduaga and Wittchen, 2002).

A separate study highlighted that 67% of males with marijuana experience had friends who had taken drugs, in contrast to just over 25% of males without marijuana experience but with friends engaging in drug use. This association was similarly non-significant among females, as 74% of females with marijuana-using friends succumbed to the habit, compared to 21% with similar friends who did not indulge in drug use. In an additional study that compared users and non-users of psychoactive substances, peer influence, curiosity, and a sense of growing up emerged as the primary reasons for initiating psychoactive substance use. Non-users, in contrast, abstained due to adherence to personal and family values and awareness of the health impact. Within the current study, users cited boosting confidence (62.1%) and motivation (55.4%) as the most common reasons for substance use. Moreover, parental psychoactive substance use emerged as a significant predisposing factor, with almost half of the respondents in the present study considering it influential. This proportion surpasses the 40.77% reported in a study conducted among inmates in urban areas in Ilorin, Kwara state. The diverse motivations for substance use underscore the multifaceted nature of this behavior, influenced by social, psychological, and familial factors. The correlation between the utilization of substances within peer groups and the respondents' own usage lacked statistical significance in the current investigation.

A substantial portion, exceeding one-third, of individuals engaging in substance use in this study shared this behavior with their peers. Nevertheless, a substantial proportion, surpassing two-quarters, of respondents whose peers partook in substance use did not adopt the same behavior. This implies that those who did succumb to the practice might have been more susceptible, potentially influenced by other underlying factors. Notably, nearly half of those experiencing unsatisfactory relationships within their families were found to be substance users. A related study

highlighted the association between challenging parent-child relationships and tobacco use (OR = 2.725, $p = 0.004$ for males; OR = 3.699, $p < 0.001$ for females). In the current research, it is noteworthy that approximately two-thirds of substance users reported satisfactory intra-family relationships. This underscores the complexity of factors contributing to an individual's engagement in psychoactive substance use.

Regarding the factors linked to the use of substances, a higher percentage of respondents at this center were engaged in smoking and alcohol consumption compared to other facilities. Approximately forty percent of respondents had a history of cigarette smoking, and over one-third had participated in alcohol consumption. Significantly, this variation in proportions was statistically noteworthy. This outcome aligns with the results of a study conducted in South-eastern Nigeria, where around one-third of respondents were implicated in alcohol, smoking, and psychoactive substance use. A plausible explanation for this trend might be the frequent attendance of inmates in this study area at various social events like birthday parties, funeral ceremonies, and marriage ceremonies. These occasions often feature a notable availability of alcoholic drinks, providing respondents with unrestricted access to such substances.

The findings documented in this research stand in contrast to a study conducted in South Western Nigeria, where over two-thirds of participants were found to have engaged in smoking, but align with Effiong and Agha (2020). The pivotal elements contributing to behavioural tendencies towards psychoactive substance use were identified as alcohol intake and cigarette smoking. Research indicates that individuals in confinement exhibit diminished control over their emotions, and the consumption of alcohol may exacerbate this situation by impairing their capacity to make reasoned decisions. Consequently, the public health implications and policy considerations underscore that the consumption of alcohol and cigarette smoking heightens the proclivity of inmates towards risk-taking behaviors, particularly concerning the use and misuse of psychoactive substances. Adolescents in confinement typically exhibit an inclination towards experimentation.

Inmates, particularly adolescents, engage in diverse human behaviors, encompassing experimentation with smoking and alcohol consumption. The ready availability of alcohol, the sale of cigarette sticks, and the incorporation of alcohol as a beverage in social gatherings collectively contribute to the widespread use of these substances. The ingestion of alcohol or drugs by inmates impedes their ability to discern and effectively respond to warning signs, rendering them more susceptible to societal vices. This heightened vulnerability, in turn, increases the likelihood of engaging in psychoactive substance use. Furthermore, the indulgence of inmates in alcohol and cigarette smoking has far-reaching consequences, contributing to the breakdown of law and order and an escalation of social issues. These substances can alter an individual's perception, influencing their behavior and leading to experiences with psychoactive substances. Unfortunately, the lifelong repercussions for inmates include engagement in antisocial behaviors associated with alcohol and smoking, such as sexual abuse and rape. The study highlights a notable correlation between alcohol or smoking and the incidence of date rape, emphasizing the imperative need for intervention strategies to mitigate the syndromes of alcohol-smoking and sexual abuse among inmates.

Conclusion

A high prevalence of substance use was observed among the respondents, emphasizing the pressing need for interventions within correctional settings. The dominant risk factors of substance use primarily involved alcohol intake and cigarette smoking, shedding light on specific substances that require targeted preventive measures. Moreover, the study highlighted the presence of significantly higher consequences and risk factors associated with substance use, particularly focusing on alcohol and cigarette smoking. This underscores the urgency of addressing potential health and behavioural implications within the inmate population. Perceived influencing factors, including peer group influence, curiosity, parental influence, and increased leisure money, emerged as crucial aspects to consider in designing effective preventive strategies. Drug education initiatives encompass a variety of approaches, including lectures, rallies, seminars, and film presentations elucidating the detrimental consequences of psychoactive substances. Stringent penalties are imposed on individuals engaged in victimless offences, specifically those involved in the trafficking of illicit drugs.

Limitation: The custodial facility situated in Uyo is merely one among several correctional centers within Akwa Ibom State. Consequently, the outcomes derived from this investigation are solely indicative of the inmate population confined in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, and should not be extrapolated to encompass inmates from other correctional facilities in the same state.

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Conflict of Interest: None declared by authors

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