

Exploring The Implications Of Substance Use On Students' Sexual Relationships In Public Secondary Schools In Laikipia County, Kenya

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Abstract

This research paper investigates the implications of substance use on the sexual relationships of students in public secondary schools within Laikipia County, Kenya. The study involved 285 students, 28 guidance and counseling teachers, and 28 deputy principals as respondents. Through a mixed-method approach incorporating surveys, the study explores the prevalence of substance use among students, its correlation with sexual behavior and roles of guidance and counseling teachers and deputy principals in addressing these issues. Findings suggest a significant association between substance use and risky sexual behavior, highlighting the need for targeted interventions within school settings. The findings offer practical recommendations for policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders to develop targeted interventions that address substance use and promote healthy sexual relationships among adolescents in school settings.

Keywords: *Substance use, Sexual relationship, Student, Secondary schools, Kenya, Adolescents, Intervention*

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I. Background Of The Study

Substance use among adolescents, particularly in the context of secondary school settings, is a global public health concern with multifaceted implications, including its impact on sexual behavior (Ngesu, et.al. 2008). Laikipia County in Kenya grapples with various challenges related to adolescent health, including substance abuse and risky sexual behavior. Understanding the interplay between substance use and sexual relationships among students in public secondary schools within this county is crucial for devising effective interventions and promoting positive outcomes for adolescents.

In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the link between substance use and risky sexual behavior among adolescents worldwide (Lamba et.al.2009). Substance use, encompassing the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs that can impair judgment, lower inhibitions, and increase engagement in risky sexual practices such as unprotected intercourse, multiple sexual partners, and transactional sex (Maithya, 2009; Miyakado, 2013). These behaviors not only pose immediate health risks, including unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), but also have long-term consequences on educational attainment, mental health, and overall well-being.

Laikipia County faces unique challenges in addressing substance use and its implications for adolescent sexual health. Factors such as poverty, limited access to quality education and healthcare, cultural norms, and peer influences contribute to the vulnerability of adolescents to substance abuse and risky sexual behavior (Kingori,2013). Additionally, gaps in school-based interventions and support systems further exacerbate the problem, highlighting the need for comprehensive strategies that involve collaboration among stakeholders, including schools, parents, healthcare providers, and community organizations. Against this backdrop a research focusing on the implications of substance use on students' sexual relationships in public secondary schools in Laikipia County was imperative. By examining the consequences of substance use on sexuality among students, as well as the perspectives and roles of school staff in addressing these issues, such research endeavors could inform targeted interventions tailored to the local context. Moreover, understanding the challenges and opportunities within school environments was essential for fostering a supportive and conducive atmosphere that promotes healthy decision-making and positive youth development (Eneh & Stanley,2004).

According to the world drug report (2005), the use of illicit drugs has increased throughout the world in recent years. The report further states that a major world trend is the increasing availability of many kinds of drugs to an ever- widening social economic spectrum of consumers. Drugs abused range from the socially accepted like alcohol, tobacco, miraa and caffeine to the outlawed ones such as heroin, cocaine, and cannabis sativa (bhang). Students obtain drugs from friends and relatives who come to school during parents' day and

opening day (Kingori, 2018). They also get drugs from teachers who are addicted. Some teachers send students to buy illegal drugs from the nearest shops and by so doing the students get a share without the teacher knowing (Maithya, 2009).

According to the United States Department of health and human services, in USA half of all teens and 60 percent of high school teens report that drugs are used, kept or sold at their school. Students at these schools are three times more likely to smoke, drink, or use illicit drugs than students whose schools are drug free. Those students who tried cigarettes in school at some time, 86 percent of them are still smoking as seniors. Those who have tried marijuana even once, 76 percent are still using it in the twelfth grade, by completion of high school, 70 percent have smoked cigarettes, 81 percent have drunk alcohol, 47 percent have used marijuana, and 24 percent have tried another illegal drug (Wamuyu, 2010).

Nightlife environment is a great opportunity for the youth to engage in alcohol consumption and often exposes them to risky sexual practices as alcohol is known to promote sexual encounters (Lamba et.al, 2009). There is a belief among the youth that alcohol consumption can improve sexual performance and increase sexual pleasure (Stoner et. al, 2007). A study has shown that British young adults who drunk and abused illegal drugs had more sexual partners and had engaged in more episodes of unsafe sex compared with the non-users (Bellis et al, 2008). Binge drinking episodes were casually associated with unsafe sex and sexual violence among young adults in Africa (Chersich et al, 2007).

Studies reveal that, there is a relationship between student's sexual relationship and drug abuse (Sabia & Rees, 2009). It was found that high school students who were dating exhibited consistently abuse of drugs and alcohol (Quatman et al, 2001). Another study on teenage sexual abstinence and academic achievement revealed that teens who abstained from sex during high school years were substantially less likely to be expelled from high school by 60 percent, 50 percent less likely to drop out of high school and almost twice as likely to graduate from college (Rector & Johnson,2005).

In light of the foregoing, this study aimed at filling the existing gaps in knowledge by investigating the intricate relationship between substance use and students' sexual relationships in public secondary schools in Laikipia County, Kenya. Through a comprehensive examination of the issue, the study sought to contribute to the evidence base for effective interventions that promote adolescent health and well-being in the region.

Statement of the Problem

Substance use amongst the youth in Kenya has become a serious problem affecting a good number of students. This is viewed by education stakeholders as contemporary problem that has turned into a crisis. The ministry of education in Kenya has introduced various measures such as counselling and mentorship with the aim of providing life skills education to enable the schools to control the menace. Despite the many programs and activities aimed at reducing substance use there are negative consequences related to drug abuse and sexuality among students in Laikipia county. Information available still shows that there is an increase in substance use and sexuality related issues among students in day public secondary schools. The question that arises is whether substance use has any significant implication on students' sexual relationship in Laikipia county. It's on this basis that the research paper is written.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to examine the implications of substance use on students' sexual relationships in public secondary schools in Laikipia County, Kenya.

Research Question

What are the implications of substance use on students' sexual relationships in public secondary schools in Laikipia County, Kenya.?

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by social cognitive theory by Albert Bandura (1986). The theory states that the behaviour is determined by the persons thought processes, the environment and behaviour itself, meaning that individuals determine their own behaviour while being influenced by the environmental factors and their own behaviour. It describes about the process of imitation and modelling in significant learning. The potential drug abuser imitates those peers who abuses drugs. Those peers who abuses drugs in this context are known as models. The models are friends, neighbours, parents and television stars. Through observation people learn good and bad behaviours.

When one observes others taking drugs, one may be motivated to imitate the behaviour. If the behaviour is punished, it is not imitated and therefore it is avoided. Most of the learning occur through direct experience and can also be acquired through observation of other behaviour. A teacher counsellor in school set up should be a good role model. Albert Bandura (1986) believes that behaviour is largely regulated by cognitive factors such as

perception of an issue and the pattern within the environment. To apply this knowledge in the current study, the social cognitive theory indicates that behaviour that students have acquired over time as they interact with their teachers, non-teaching staff, parents and secondary school environment determine their drug and substance abuse trend which also impact on their sexual behaviour.

II. Research Methodology

The study used a mixed-method research design to determine the substance use implications on students' sexual relationships in public Secondary Schools in Laikipia County, Kenya. This design allowed for the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, providing a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics involved in substance use and its implications on students' sexual relationships (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). By employing a mixed-method research design, researcher was able to triangulate findings from both quantitative and qualitative data sources, enhancing the validity and reliability of the study results.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

In determining the sample size of students in this study Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample size was used. As indicated on the Morgan table with an ideal population (N) of 1075, a sample size of 285 cases were selected. To select the 285 students' respondent in the 28 schools for inclusion in the study simple random sampling was utilized. Twenty-eight (28) head of Guidance and counselling departments and 28 deputy principals were purposively sampled from each school.

Instrumentation

Data was collected using self-administered questionnaires and interview schedule. According to Frankel and Wallen (2002) questionnaires was an ideal for the study since it was easy to collect data from a large number of respondents and the items were uniform to all the respondents. Three sets of questionnaires (questionnaire for students, Guidance and counselling teachers and also deputy principal) were used as a tool for data collection.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative data analyzes methods. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages with the help of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 26. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically. Analyzed data was presented in form of charts, percentages and graphs.

III. Results And Discussion

Majority of students' respondents were aged between 15 and 20 years with 81.40 percent (232), less than 15 years 9.49 percent (27), and 21-30 years 9.12 percent (26). Padilla (2012) maintains that indiscipline cases emanate from age between 15 and 20 years since this is adolescent stage which is a time of significant biological changes along with social transition characterized by daring behaviours and these study respondents were of this age group.

This study gathered data on gender of teacher counsellors and deputy principals which is indicates that there were more male teacher counsellors with 57.14 percent (16) than females with a percentage of 42.86 %. This shows that there are more male counsellors than female counsellors in the area of study. The study also found that there were more male deputy principals with 53.57 percent (15) than females who were 46.43%.

The students' respondents were requested to indicate their status of the substance use and the results are shown in figure 1.

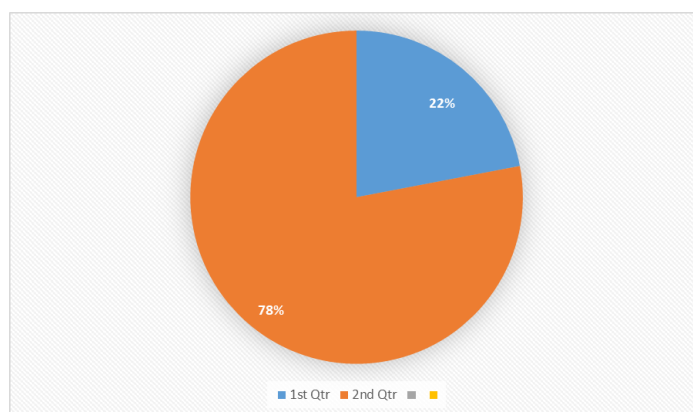


Figure 1. Status of Students Substance Use

About 62 (22%) students indicated that they had taken drugs while 222(78%) indicated that they had never taken drugs. This implies that quite a number of students had never taken drugs. These findings support those of NACADA, (2012) while carrying out a survey on effects of drug abuse in secondary schools which established that fifty percent (50%) of students had ever taken drugs a higher than this finding which adversely affected their academic performance In this study the effect was examined on Substance use to their sexual relationship.

The study also found out that alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug were among the prevalent substance use among students in public secondary schools in Laikipia County. Specific patterns of substance use, such as frequency, quantity, and preferred substances, varied among students, highlighting the need for tailored interventions to address these diverse needs.

Implications of Substance Use on Students' Sexual Relationships

An examination of the data that sought information on the implications of substance use on students' sexual relationships is summarized on Table 1.

Table 1. Implications associated with Substance Use and Students' Sexual Relationship.

1Strongly Agree, 2 Agree, 3 Not Sure,4 Disagree,5 Strongly Disagree,Total. Mean							
Infection of HIV/AIDS.	86(25.2%)	94(27.6%)	80(23.5%)	50(14.7%)	31(9.1%)	341	2.55
Unprotected Sex.	97(28.4%)	121(35.5%)	52(15.2%)	42(12.3%)	29(8.5%)	341	2.37
Sharing injection needles.	93(27.3%)	87(25.5%)	77(22.6%)	40(11.7%)	44(12.9%)	341	2.57
Unplanned Pregnancy.	89(26.1%)	126(37.0%)	59(17.3%)	39(11.4%)	28(8.2%)	341	2.39
Sexually transmitted diseases.	106(31.2%)	72(21.1%)	79(23.2%)	45(13.2%)	39(11.4%)	341	2.53
Rape.	114(33.4%)	98(28.8%)	56(16.4%)	35(10.3%)	36(10.6%)	341	2.34
Don't use Condoms.	74(21.7%)	102(29.9%)	89(26.1%)	45(13.2%)	38(11.1%)	341	2.68
Leads to sexual Violence.	90(26.4%)	109(32%)	73(21.4%)	36(10.6%)	28(8.2%)	341	2.38
Leads to multiple sex partners.	85(24.9%)	107(31.4%)	72(21.1%)	33(9.7%)	41(12.2%)	341	2.50

Table 1 indicates that most respondent acknowledged that substance use leads to sexuality. For instance, sexual issues of infection of HIV/AIDS had a weighted mean of 2.55, followed by students that don't use condoms with a weighted mean of 2.68, sharing of injection needles 2.57, leads to sexually transmitted diseases with 2.53, having multiple sex partners 2.50, sexual violence due to drug use 2.38, unplanned pregnancy associated to drug use with a weighted mean of 2.39, unprotected sex sharing with 2.37 and rape 2.34. These findings are in agreement with those of Lamba et.al. (2009) who found out that nightlife environment is a great opportunity for the youth to engage in alcohol consumption and often exposes them to risky sexual practices as alcohol and substance use is known to promote sexual encounters. There is a belief among the youth that alcohol consumption can improve sexual performance and increase sexual pleasure (Stoner, 2007). This is further supported by study done by Goodman, (2009) who did study on social work with drugs and substance use and found out that implications of substance use among the learners includes juvenile delinquency, immorality and HIV infection.

About 89 (26.1%) and 126 (37.0%) students strongly agreed and agreed respectively that substance use leads to unplanned pregnancy. These study finding is supported by Odgers and Moffit, (2008) who noted that substance use among adolescents leads to early and unplanned pregnancy. The study findings thus found that substance use implied high multiple sex partners, more sexual Violence, an almost no use of Condoms, rape, sexually transmitted diseases, Unprotected Sex, and unplanned sex. There was thus a clear association between substance use and risky sexual behavior among students. Those who reported engaging in substance use were more likely to engage in unprotected intercourse, having multiple sexual partners, and engaging in other risky sexual practices.

Guidance and counseling teachers and deputy principals expressed concerns about the prevalence of substance use among students and its implications on their sexual relationships and overall well-being. They

highlighted the importance of proactive prevention efforts, early identification of at-risk students, and the provision of support services to address substance abuse and related issues. On issues of availability of resources to handle issues of substance use many identified limited resources for implementing comprehensive prevention programs and stigma associated with substance use, and gaps in coordination among stakeholders as a factor leading to more abuse. They highlighted opportunities for intervention to included guidance and counselling, use of support structures within schools, engaging parents and communities, and strengthening collaboration among stakeholders to address substance use effectively.

IV. Conclusion

Firstly, the study found that there was a prevalence of substance use among students in public secondary schools in Laikipia County where alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug were reported as used.

Secondly, there was a clear association between substance use and risky sexual behavior among students. Most reported that those engaging in substance use were more likely to engage in unprotected intercourse, have multiple sexual partners, rape and engage in other risky sexual practices.

Furthermore, the perspectives and roles of guidance and counseling teachers, as well as deputy principals, emerged as crucial factors in addressing substance use and promoting healthy sexual relationships among students.

V. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study on Substance use implications on students' sexual relationships in public secondary schools in Laikipia County, Kenya, several recommendations are proposed to address the identified issues and promote the well-being of students:

There is need to implement comprehensive substance use prevention programs that will provide students with accurate information about the risks associated with substance use, build refusal skills, and promote positive peer norms.

There is a need to strengthen school-based counseling services by enhancing the capacity of guidance and counseling teachers to provide support and intervention services to students struggling with substance abuse and related issues and Provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities to equip guidance and counseling teachers with the necessary skills and resources to address substance use and its implications on students' sexual relationships.

There is need to facilitate collaboration among schools, parents, healthcare providers, community organizations, and relevant government agencies to develop coordinated efforts in addressing substance use among students. This coordinated effort can go a long way to curbing substance abuse which help escalate sexuality.

Finally, there is need to advocate for the development and implementation of policies at the county and national levels that prioritize adolescent health and well-being, including comprehensive sexuality education and access to youth-friendly health services.

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