

## **Drugs Abuse among Adolescent School Dropouts in Sokoto State, Nigeria: Exploring Adverse Effects on Academic Potential and Relations**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to assess the use of drugs among adolescents who have obtained only a primary school certificate in Sokoto and its consequent effect on academic potential and relations. The study was executed using a cross-sectional survey, and data were collected with a questionnaire from 300 respondents selected through a snowballing sampling technique. Eighty cohorts served as control for the study as well. The results show that respondents are Hausa/Fulani Muslims, 15-17 years old, single, have obtained a primary certificate, and are males (100%). They use cigarettes more than the cough syrup. Most of them were victims of drug abuse for a year and a minority for over two years. Most respondents spent 500 Naira on drugs, some spent 300 Naira, and others spent 200 Naira daily. The influences of the drug are: a majority face peer pressure and a minority are influenced by elder/brother. The effects felt on their body due to the drugs mainly were headache, sleep disorders, and tiredness. The others include mental illness, sickness, and loss/lack of morals. Ways to control drug abuse among adolescents are mostly employment and prevention of selling. There is a significant difference between the respondents' drug use and academic potential at  $p < 0.05$ . There is indeed a harmful use of cough syrup and cigarettes among adolescent dropouts in Sokoto, with many effects. Job creation and prevention of accessibility are needed.

**Keywords:** *Primary Education, School dropout, Academic Potential, Skoto*

### **1. Introduction**

Education remains a key to development of any respect, be it economic, social, productive, skilled, cultural, political, or any other form. It involves training a person to read, write, obtain a certificate, and modify himself to a better form in order to be successful and productive in life (Musa, 2018; Aliero,

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2020). Education remains a key that is always there to open a better life, successful life, and development. It is a significant right a country or state shall give its citizens, especially adolescents who are potential youths who would be catalysts with better capacity to take the country forward in any progressive population (Abubakar et al., 2022). However, the main issue challenging education the world over is the issue of school dropout. Likewise, an issue of significant importance in developing nations that have been militating education and spurring many unsavory consequences is the rising population of people dropping out of schools for various reasons (Dagneu, 2017; Ngamaba, 2021). If the number of school dropouts continue to rise, no meaningful benefits and development will be obtained from education (Dagneu, 2017). School dropout has been a known phenomenon affecting Nigeria's education, Sokoto state included (Christian, 2015).

School dropout is defined in various forms; one form of school dropout is dubbed as abandoning education without completing a minimum program of education that awards a certificate/ credential required to make a successful life or obtain a successful job; more often people who failed to obtain a secondary school certificate are regarded as school dropout (Fernandez-Suarez et al., 2016; Yildiz & Eldeleklioglu, 2018). There are causes or associated factors that lead to school dropout and there are consequences of dropout. More significantly, youth (adolescents) are increasingly dropping out of school due to socioeconomic issues and in turn engaging in social problems such as drug abuse. Likewise, children with academic issues tend to drop out of schools and join deviant children into drugs or other vices. Therefore, a tight relationship exists between school dropout and drug abuse (Fernandez-Suarez et al., 2016; Abotsi et al., 2018).

Adolescents dropping out of school enter a problematic situation from many dimensions. For example, dropping out of school is a violation of social norms that a person/ child shall protect to follow the ideal education system to the highest point on the education ladder. A dropout child receives much condemnation from many angles of society, including his family (in turn eliciting him to engage in other acts like drug abuse). A dropout child has left a ladder that will catapult him to the top despite his weak or low facility status; a dropout is taking a risk of entering labor market without the prerequisite potential for meaningful and proper job acquisition; a school dropout is at the verge of unemployment and dependence welfare; a dropout has a risk of psychological stress burden (Gausel & Bourguignon, 2020; Gilani et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, it is very worrisome in Nigeria as the number of school dropout children is very large; instead of going to school, they wander the streets

in a languishing situation (Aliero, 2020). Unfortunately, the issue of school dropout has been a problem of education in Sokoto state and is associated in one way or another with drug abuse (Bello et al., 2017; Abubakar et al., 2021; Abubakar et al., 2022).

The period of adolescence in the life course is a time that is characterized by active endocrine system development that can spur children to be embroiled in some behaviours like drug abuse that can have detrimental effects on the users (Kwari et al., 2020). In the best interest of drug policies worldwide, a drug is any substance or chemical that can alter the biological systems' behaviour, functions (such as cognitive and motor), perception, and the like, irrespective of whether it is regarded as illicit or licit one (Baconi et al., 2015). Drug abuse results in distress, impairment of functions of the body, and failure at school or, home, or the workplace. It is a pattern of using drugs that is harmful whether the drug is legal or illegal and its motive is to alter the user's mind and spur problems like poor performances at work, school, or home breakage. Drug abuse can often lead to a soared relationship with friends, family, parents, and other members of society (Nasiru, 2019).

Many revelations from studies and theories believe that adolescents take drugs for the sake of many reasons such as stress, prolonged reading, tiredness, curiosity, academic, mental/ psychological factors, examination tension, broken home, low economic status, to feel high, socialization, family background, and peer pressure among others (Nasiru et al., 2019; Murtala et al., 2020; Sokoto, 2021). A significant reason that influences adolescents to drug abuse is the issue of the family background of the children, such as when the family is broken, and when the family is unable to take the wards to schools. Other frustrations emanating from the family influence adolescents to take drugs to get temporary succor from their embroiled situation. In another streak, many adolescents indulge in drug abuse due to the influence of peer pressure due to consistent reports from studies worldwide (Hussain et al., 2021; Jatau et al., 2021).

Indeed, the abuse of drugs among adolescents is a thing of concern to all. However, the issue has not been explored empirically in most cases, especially in Sokoto. In this streak, a diverse array of drugs/ substances have been related to Sokoto; in addition to that, cigarettes and cough syrup are among the most harmful drugs utilized by youths (including adolescents). Cigarette smoking has several effects on the user and passive smokers; in addition, more than 25 diseases (such as many cancers) are due to Cigarettes. Other effects associated with a cigarette are diabetes, stomach ulcers, reduced fertility, asthma, osteoporosis, early menopause, loss of teeth, cataracts, reduced sperm count, impotence, atherosclerosis, blindness, etc. (John et al., 2019). Indeed, smoking is

injurious to health, but many youngsters take it for granted. One of its effects is that smoking elicits damage to cells and consequently alters the essential functions of the cells. Several carcinogenic substances are disgorged by a cigarette that binds to DNA for cancer elicitation. For example, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and heavy metals cause dangerous effects on the body (Adak, 2014).

Additionally, abuse of cough syrup drugs is now a prominent public health threat in many states of the Federation, including Sokoto. As confirmed by studies, it has devastating health consequences, especially its ability to cause liver toxicity (a pivotal enzyme in the body) among users with ease. Nevertheless, many of our youths are into the behaviour. In addition, in Kano alone, about 3 million bottles of the drugs are consumed daily (Mustapha et al., 2019; Sokoto, 2021). However, there is little survey on adolescent drug abuse of cough syrup and cigarettes; therefore, there is a need for studies that inform policymakers and interventions, as well as the public to take the proper measures (Nasiru et al., 2019; Costantine-Simms et al., 2020).

Academic potential is from the two words, viz, academic and potential. Academics explains things related to work carried out at school, college, university etc., involving teaching and learning. The potential is having the needed ability or quality to be practical or successful in the future. Academic potential is an aspect that shows how successful a person/ student could be in future academic endeavors such as schooling, working, and educational attainment (obtaining a given certificate). Academic potential is tested periodically in learning and teaching because it depicts the nature of the success of past or present programs passed by the person involved and how the future program would be successful for the prosperousness of education, learning and development of the personal life of individual and progress of a country (Septianingsih & Jerusalem, 2021).

Drug abuse affects learning, academic potential, and academic performance through various effects. Drug numbs or alters the minds of the person to be only or mostly pre-empted with the zeal to get the drug and when the drug is taken, the consumer become intoxicated. Thus, learning and capability are deteriorated. Likewise, the drug physically affects the biological system by causing morbidities that elicit hospitalization, absenteeism from classes/ schools, economic hardship etc. (Iqura, 2017; Bensaïd et al., 2021; Pepple & Diri, 2021). Thus, drug abuse has continuously become a concern to the learning, and the progress of societies around the globe because it impedes the merits of learning, teaching, and the overall goals of education (Pepple & Diri, 2021). This study aimed to assess the use of drugs among adolescents who have obtained only a

primary school certificate in Sokoto and its consequent effect on academic potential.

### **1.1 Objectives of the Study**

Objectives of the study included to:

1. determine the effect of the type of drugs on the academic potential of adolescent dropouts in Sokoto state
2. determine the use of drugs among adolescent dropouts in Sokoto state, Nigeria
3. determine the influences on the use of drugs by adolescent dropouts in Sokoto state, Nigeria
4. determine the measures to prevent the use of drugs among adolescents in the state.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. What is the effect of the type of drugs on the academic potential of adolescent dropouts in Sokoto state?
2. How is the use of drugs among adolescent dropouts in Sokoto state, Nigeria?
3. What are the influences on the use of drugs by adolescent dropouts in Sokoto state, Nigeria?
4. What are the measures to prevent the use of drugs among adolescents in the state?

### **1.3 Resaerch Hypothesis**

H<sub>A</sub>: There is a significant difference between the academic potential of adolescent school dropouts who abuse drugs (cigarette and cough syrup) and non-users in Sokoto state, Nigeria.

## **2. Literature Review**

Drug abuse is dubbed by WHO as the harmful or dangerous use of psychoactive substance or substances including illicit drugs and alcohol. Drug abuse can also be described as the act of maladaptive drug use that in turn instigate clinical problems (Sarkingobir, 2023). Drugs of abuse are mostly the ones available in the environment at cheaper price. Parable, alcohol, cannabis, cigarette, are common drugs being abused by many including the adolescents and youths in Nigeria (Dankani, 2012; Kwari et al., 2020; Constantine-Simms et al., 2020). However, causes or factors instigating drugs abuse include the following enumerated items:

Peer pressure- During the period of youthful days youngsters are on many occasions allowed to leave the family demarcations and get involved into the various interactions with society macrospace and at this time the tendency of the young to associate with peers is more pronounced. Therefore, an association

with drug abusing peers easily influence many younger ones to delve into drug abuse (Sokoto, 2021).

**Family characteristics-** Many factors within the family easily help in determining the chances of instigating many young ones to drugs. For example, young ones on many occasions inherit the drug abuse associated behaviors from parents or family members (behaviors such as weakness in dealing with stress can be inherited); likewise, when parents are taking drugs children can socially learn that absurd behaviors. Availability of drugs in the family settlements encourages drug abuse among younger ones (Sarkingobir, 2023).

**Social problems-** Social problems on many occasions elicit people to take drugs to solve issues or behave arrogantly in dealing with others or relieve social pains. **Environmental determinants-** Availability of drugs in the environment, weak laws to subjugate drug abuse or supply encourage drug abuse behaviors in youngsters. **Strenuous labour-** Many youngsters are out there engaging in works that require energy boosting and in turn have to take drugs in order to satisfy their work demands (Kwari et al., 2020; Constantine-Simms et al., 2020).

**Curiosity or experimentation-** Youngsters are born with the behaviors of scientists, that is the behaviors of " I want to experiment, I want to see what will happen". Thus, many younger ones take drugs in order to satisfy their zeal of seeing what are the feelings/ euphoric outcomes from the drugs. **Political activities-** The political polity in our societies are disturbing. On many occasions, politicians buy and distribute drugs to youngsters so that they can be manipulated for election rigging and political violence. Politicians are mostly above drugs laws, shield drug sellers, and shield drug abusers from the law (Sokoto, 2021).

**Cognitive enhancement-** Some young ones take drugs to boost their academic capabilities or relations (Sokoto, 2021). **Stress-** Due to lack of experience or proper emotional intelligence many younger ones take drugs to reduce stress etc (Sokoto, 2021). Drugs substances that when taken by the body are treated as xenobiotics and in a bid to get rid of them the body transform them to other intermediates that are harmful. The transformation could lead to physical internal or external injuries and in turn causing hospitalizations, school absenteeism and other detrimental situations that affect academics. Moreover, the drugs alter minds and in turn the body physiology or morphology changes or the mind (brain and related organs responsible for knowledge) are altered. Consequently, the academic capacity of the drug abusers is affected negatively (Dankani, 2012; Kwari et al., 2020; Constantine-Simms et al., 2020).

Many drugs contain antinutrients that act to impair nutritional statuses of youngsters, and in turn people that are poorly fed are poorly intelligent, poorly

growing, and poorly developing. Likewise, many drugs contain chemicals such as heavy metals that affect the body and affect central nervous system and inturns knowledge centers or ability to attend and concentrate at learning events (Sokoto, 2021).

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

In the conduct of this study, a cross-sectional survey design was used because the approach is a social move to address a social population; therefore, the study investigates some cross-section participants from the population of the community to generate qualitative data (Sokoto, 2021).

#### **3.2 Population of the study**

The study involved a population of children/ adolescents who have left education at the primary school level and are into using drugs, specifically cough syrup and cigarettes, in Sokoto state, Nigeria; and the control cohorts. Sokoto state is situated in the rear end of the North Western part of Sokoto near the Niger Republic, around the Sokoto and Rima Rivers. In the Eastern part, the state is surrounded by Zamfara state. In the Southern part, there is Kebbi state, and in the Western region, Benin Republic covers Sokoto state. It is a state with Hausa, and Fulani, tribes as the primary occupants, and they practice Islam as the religion of the area (Sokoto, 2021; Dikko et al., 2022; Sarkingobir et al., 2023).

#### **3.3 Sample & Sampling Technique**

The sample recruited in this study was very delicate and difficult to handle; therefore, a snowballing sampling approach was utilized to access participants. Snowballing is a common sampling method used in many studies in social sciences, medical sciences, and geography (Kirchherr & Charles, 2018). It was defined by many; one definition refer to snowballing as a sampling method in which an interviewee anoints at least one or more potential participants in the study. Therefore, the sample increases similar to a rolling ball due to encountering one or more referrals (Kirchherr & Charles, 2018). Notably, in this study, the first line of sample participants was enrolled with the aid of an insider (a person familiar with the activities of drug users). Then, every person interviewed was asked to nominate/ bring another potential participant for the study until saturation was attained. The sample size was calculated using the Raosoft calculator at a 5% margin of error, 95% confidence limit, and 40 percent response distribution, and assumed a 1600 population size. Therefore, for this study, the size was 300 respondents drawn from either cough syrup or cigarette drug users. Additionally, 80 non-drug control cohorts were involved.

### 3.4 Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument utilized in collecting data in this study was a structured questionnaire; in addition to that, the first section involved questions regarding the demographic characteristics of respondents, the second section asked about the use of drugs among the respondents, the third section talked about the influence on use drugs, and the last part asked about measures to prevent the use of drugs among adolescents in the state. A checklist was also used to assess the academic potential of the respondents; the test of the academic potential of the respondents was ensured through procedures and methods adapted from a report of Umar et al. (2018) and Sokoto (2021).

### 3.6 Ethical Considerations

The authors ensured that no ethical norm was violated in the conduct of this work. The data that was collected (that is, the interview performed with the drug users) through a method that reserved the identities of the respondents, and likewise, some of the data that were collected through the use of assistants ensured that the identities and rights of the participants were preserved. Every participant was never maltreated, humiliated, or victimized and quit at any time. All rights of the participants were maintained, and, in the end, the study would help the participants by calling the attention of society and stakeholders to help ameliorate the situation.

## 4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequencies and percentages were computed, and the data were presented using a frequency distribution table. A t-test in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 tested a hypothesis. The results of this study were shown in the form of frequency distribution Tables, 1-5.

### Research Question 1

What is the effect of the type of drug on the academic potential of adolescent dropouts in Sokoto state?

Table 1a

*Summary of Result of Chi-square Test between Cigarette Drug Users and cohorts Academic Potential*

	Variables	N	Mean	SD	Chi-square	Remark
Academic potential	Users of Cigarette Cohorts	200	24.63	3.40	3395.067	Accepted
		40	42.61	1.218	3.13	



Table 1b

*Summary of Result of Chi-square Test between Cough Syrup Drug Users and cohorts Academic Potential*

	Variables	N	Mean	SD	Chi-square	Remark
Academic potential	Users of Cough Syrup Cohorts	100	28.22	4.19	7.145	Accepted
		40	42.61	1.12	11.25	

In Table 1a and 1b, a hypothesis that says: "There is a significant difference between the academic potential of adolescents' school dropouts who abuse drugs (cigarette and cough syrup) and non-users in Sokoto state, Nigeria"; was tested, and it was been found that the result is significant at  $p < 0.05$ . Therefore, the consumption of drugs can affect the academic potential of the respondents, which has agreed with the findings of Ibrahim et al. (2021). An effect that happens through causing sickness or disorders that cause hospitalization and, in turn, school absenteeism that affects academics. Alternatively, the toxic contents of the drugs (such as heavy metals) cause an effect on the brain and other parts of the nervous system that affect learning and different cognitive outcomes. Academic potential depicts the past and present successes recorded by the educational course passed upon a person the other hand, it depicts a person's future ability. An altered brain or mind could not function critically or propel the cognitive or behavioural outcomes of academic/ education. Moreover, drugs act to change the physiology or anatomy of the body of drug abusers and, in turn, cause morbidities that affect academic attendance, academic attainment, academic achievement and the relevant elements of education (Mustapha et al., 2019). Adverse effects on academic potential found by this work were related to several studies (Dankani, 2012; Kwari et al., 2020; Constantine-Simms et al., 2020).

Table 2

*Distribution of Study Populations Demographics*

S/N	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	300	100.0
Female	0	0.0
Age		
13-14 years	0	0.0
15	46	15.3
16 years	80	26.7
17 years	174	58.0

Marital status		
Single	300	100.0
Married	0	0.0
Religion		
Islam	300	100.0
Educational status		
Primary	300	100.0
Secondary	0	0.0
Tertiary	0	0.0

Source: Authors Fieldwork, 2022

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by demographic characteristics. They are Muslims, males, 15-17 years old, single, and have obtained a primary certificate (100% each).

### **Research Question 2**

How is the use of drugs among adolescent dropouts in Sokoto state, Nigeria?

Table 3

*Use of Cough Syrup and Cigarette Drugs Abuse Among Adolescents in Sokoto State, Nigeria*

S/N	Frequency	Percentage
Types of drugs being used		
Cigarette	200	66.7
Cough syrup	100	33.3
Age of starting drugs		
13 years	100	33.3
14 years	200	66.7
The time you spent being on the drug use		
1 year	200	66.7
2 years	100	33.3
How much do you spend every day on the drug?		
500 Naira		
300 Naira	150	50.0
200 Naira	50	16.7
	100	33.3

Table 3 shows the types of drugs the dropout adolescents use in Sokoto, Nigeria. The majority of them (66.7%) submitted cigarettes as the drug they take, and the minority (33.3%) of them used cough syrup. The majority (66.7%) of the respondents have been into a drug for only one year, and a minority (33.3%) have taken it for over two years. On the number of drugs, they used daily or the money they spend on them, most of them (50.0%) spend 500 Naira on the drug, 16.7%

spend 300 Naira on it, and 33.7% spend 200 Naira on the drug. As indicated in Table 3, adolescents in the state use cigarettes and cough syrup. The most dominantly used drugs by adolescents are the ones that are available and cheap in the environment they live as reported by many studies across the world; more significantly, a Sokoto study among youths has revealed that (Nasiru et al., 2015). Therein, cough syrup and tobacco are among the drugs frequently utilized by respondent youths in the state (Nasiru et al., 2015). Another study among undergraduate youth from Kano showed drinking and smoking among the respondents' methods of taking drugs. The methods indicated that cough syrup and cigarettes might be among the drugs taken by the subjects of the study (Jubairi et al., 2016; Murtala et al., 2020). Another concern is; that the use of cigarettes has been reported as a factor that induces the use of other drugs. Hence, there is a potential that users of cigarettes in this study may also transgress to other more harmful drugs.

Moreover, young ones have more tendency to addiction after underlying drug consumption. Therefore, adolescent drug use is a concern (Sokoto, 2021). The two drugs, cigarette and cough syrup, are used due to their availability, accessibility, and low price. Every person (big or small, hidden or plain) can buy them in shops at a very low price, and there are no laws in the country or state that prohibit them or agencies working strongly to impede their uptake (Sokoto, 2021). Likewise, many religious clerics in the state have not characterized these drugs as unlawful; they never take them as alcohol (as in Islam, alcohol is overtly prohibited). The price of drugs (in this study as shown in Table 3) is low, similar to what was related by another Sokoto study that fees range from 50-200 Naira (Nasiru, 2015). When drug prices are low, users tend to have more opportunities to use them (Sokoto, 2021). In Table 3, the time spent on the drug was stated by the adolescents. It has shown that the subjects have not spent many years on the act.

**Research Question 3**

What are the influences on the use of drugs by the adolescents dropouts in Sokoto state, Nigeria?

Table 4

*Influence of Use of Cough Syrup and Cigarette Drugs Abuse Among Adolescents in Sokoto State, Nigeria*

	Frequency	Percentage
What influences you to use drugs?		
Friends/peer pressure	200	66.7
Elder/ brother	100	33.3
What are the effects you felt on your body due to drugs?		
Headache		

Sleeping	110	36.7
Tiredness	100	33.3
	90	30.0
What do you think are other effects of drug abuse?		
Mental illness		
Sickness	150	50.0
Loss/ lack of moral	75	25.0
	75	25.0

Source: Authors Fieldwork, 2022

Table 4 shows what influences adolescents to drugs; a majority (66.7%) are attracted to drugs due to friends/ peer pressure, and elders/brothers influenced minority (33.3%). On the question "What is the effect you felt are on your body due to drugs?" the most submitted response (36.7%) was headache, then sleeping (33.3%), and lastly, tiredness (30.0%). On the question "What do you think are other effects of drug abuse?" the most submitted response was mental illness (50.0%), then sickness (25.0%), and loss/ lack of morals (25.0%). In Table 4, the influences on the study subject to drugs are friends/ peer pressure and elder/ brother. It is similar to the findings of Nasiru (2015), and Jatau et al. (2021), who reported family background as a factor that influences youth to drug abuse, and peer pressure was reported by several studies contained from a scoping review result (Jatau et al., 2021). A Sokoto study among youth by Bawa et al. (2019) indicated that most of the youth are into drugs due to peer pressure influence. A subject of research in Sokoto believed that his friends use substances, and he never sit with non-drug bausers. One respondent echoed that he takes it with friends at school. Friends/ peer pressure influences drug use among youngsters at school, at home, or anywhere (Bawa et al., 2019). Peer pressure induces an individual to incline to behaviours of people of his age, social class, group, place, school, or any other factor that joins humans in a typical social bond (Attahiru et al., 2021). The two identified factors, viz, elder/ brother and peer pressure, are potent agents in society that dictate how a person can be in the community. Immediately after leaving the family/ brotherhood ties, are the peers that can help make or mar a person, especially the adolescents, a period when the subject needs more supervision and care and the individual is trying to be independent. At this time of adolescence, the family and peers exert much power in tilting the direction of life, and experience adapted at that time is very adamant to changes; likewise, the body is characterized by fast physical growth, changes in physique, and maturing of secondary sexual traits (Nasiru et al. 2015). Indeed, the adolescence stage is known for its turbulent, venturesome, mysterious, unpredictable, and boisterous nature (Attahiru et al., 2021). The respondents of this study (as shown in Table 4) submitted the effects of drugs on

them as headache, sleeping, and tiredness. A similar study among youth in Sokoto has showed that substance abuse causes effects on the users, such as sedation, mood change, and mental illness. One of the participants mentioned that drugs cause drowsiness, as in Table 4. One respondent said he felt sick (Nasiru et al., 2019). All these effects showed in Table 4 are not part of the signs of addiction; therefore, there is an opportunity to guide the respondents to avoid the act. Likewise, their opportunity to use the effects mentioned to encourage the respondents to prevent drugs using health education methods (Jatau et al., 2021). In the same streak, the general effects (mental illness, sickness, loss/ lack of morale) of drugs mentioned in Table 4, are in tandem with many studies' findings (Bawa et al., 2019; Jatau et al., 2021).

**Research Question 4**

What are the measures to prevent the use of drugs among adolescents in the state?

Table 5

*Measures of Preventing Cough Syrup and Cigarette Drugs Abuse Among Adolescents in Sokoto State, Nigeria*

	Frequency	Percentage
What do you think of measures to prevent drug abuse?		
Employment creation	200	66.7
Prevention of selling	100	33.3
Total	300	100.0

Source: Authors Fieldwork, 2022

Regarding ways to control drug abuse among adolescents, the respondents' highest response was employment (66.7%) and prevention of selling (33.3%). This study identified employment creation and ways to stop drug selling as the best way to prevent adolescent drug use, as depicted in Table 5. Other findings have supported the conclusions (Bawa et al., 2019; Nasiru et al., 2019; Kwari et al., 2020; Jatau et al., 2021).

**5. Discussion and Conclusion**

Education is a tool for growth and development at the individual, community, and societal levels; however, one of the forefront issues that affect education in Nigeria and Sokoto state is the rising number of school dropouts among adolescents, which in turn leads to many inconveniences including engaging in drug abuse to ease their conditions but ended up indulging in more devastating situations that affect them and the society at large (Waheed, 2016; Sarkingobir et al., 2022ab; Sarkingobir et al., 2023). This study showed that primary school dropout adolescents engage in drug abuse, particularly by taking

cough syrup and cigarettes. This pattern was mostly due to peer pressure and family (elder/ brotherhood), as reported in other studies (Gana et al., 2018; John et al., 2019).

Parable, cigarette smoking is a public health menace among adolescents' school dropouts that causes about 25 diseases in human beings, such as chronic bronchitis, loss of teeth, cataracts, early menopause, reduced fertility, etc. There are many risks due to cigarette smoking, such as diabetes, reduced lung function, asthma, stomach ulcers, etc (Gana et al., 2018). Although there are visible effects of cigarette smoking and various campaign strategies, people are hesitant to quit the practice; therefore, it is pertinent to look for further solutions to the problem (Gana et al., 2018). All pivotal parts of the body are affected by the Cigarette. Administration of cigarettes acts on the brain by causing relaxation and feeling better in neutralizing stress for a moment. However, continuous or routine smoking causes a change in brain chemistry, such as a decrease in dopamine receptors and an intense desire for addiction. Regular smoking elicits asthma through bronchospasm, leading to wheezing. It reduces mucus production in the lungs, thereby reducing the clearing function of the mucus. Also, smoking causes an accumulation of cough that cannot be cleared, leading to breathing problems. High tobacco intake causes high blood pressure that can spur organ damage (such as in blood vessels). Nicotine in tobacco causes much accumulation of low-density lipoprotein and decreases the accumulation of high-density lipoprotein (Gana et al., 2018).

Smoking affects the small intestine, large intestine, and other parts of the gastrointestinal tract by decreasing the effectiveness of secretions leading to irritation of the oesophagus/ stomach. Indeed, any distortion of metabolic activities is significant in the body. Cigarette interferes with the absorption of micronutrients such as vitamin E, C, folic acid, and vitamin A. Therein, effects such as weakness, depression, poor wound healing, inflamed gums, poor blood clotting, diarrhoea, and swelling might occur (Adak, 2014). Renal diseases are skyrocketing in smokers, and many types of cancers are seen in smokers (Adak, 2014). Likewise, abuse of cough syrup like codeine-containing substances is a significant health challenge facing this country, especially among youths who take the drug in silence because of its availability (Mustapha et al., 2019). A study of cough syrup administration in rats has shown that it is a liver-affecting drug by causing hepatotoxicity (Ayuba et al., 2021). It leads to elevation levels of aspartate aminotransferase, total protein, bilirubin, and alkaline phosphatase. Therefore, it can lead to hepatotoxicity effects in humans (Bello et al., 2021). In another report, the users of cough syrup appear with anxiety, depression, emotional numbness, stealing, legal issues, poor performance at school, social

isolation, dizziness, seizures, low blood pressure, hallucinations, and others (Mustapha et al., 2019). From the biochemical sense, excessive use of codeine with other drugs can spur gastric ulcers, iatrogenic effects, gastrointestinal bleeding, nausea, slow blood pressure, urination issues, etc. (Mustapha et al., 2019; Bello et al., 2021).

Drug abuse affects the body of adolescents by numbing the brain and causing morbidities, affecting the victims' academic potential. Low academic potential is a threat to education and, likewise, to the development and growth of individual citizens and the country at a whole. Therefore, (as suggested by the respondents), the government and all stakeholders should provide the right jobs that do not tamper with the dignity of adolescent dropouts to prevent involvement in drug abuse. Likewise, there is a need to truthfully implement measures that will prevent the selling or availability of drugs to adolescents and other drug users because many school dropouts engage in drugs to solve their preexisting problems and end up with further issues; therefore many drug users find their drugs very quickly, a trend that is essential in facilitating drug abuse (Mustapha et al., 2019).

Indeed, drug abuse is a dominant phenomenon causing much damage to numerous adolescents, especially nowadays. Among the significant drugs been taken by youngsters are cough syrup and cigarettes, and in turn, they affect their health, affecting other individuals, groups, and society at large. Despite the vivid dangers of this practice and the nature of drug, laws in the country, adolescents still take syrup and cigarette at a very dangerous rate. Therefore, the following questions were raised: How is the use of drugs among adolescent dropouts in Sokoto state, Nigeria? What are the influences on the use by the adolescents' dropouts in Sokoto state, Nigeria? What are the measures to prevent the use of drugs among adolescents in the state? What is the effect of the type of drug on the academic potential of adolescent dropouts in Sokoto state?. This study has revealed that adolescents in Sokoto take syrup and cigarette drugs despite knowing and feeling inconveniences due to the drugs, primarily due to the availability of drugs, peer pressure, and family; may be in a view to relieving the situation they find themselves. They also advised that providing employment to adolescents and ensuring that drug laws are done and implemented to checkmate accessibility to drugs are ways to curb the spread of adolescent drug abuse in the state. Unfortunately, drug abuse affects the academic potential of adolescents in Sokoto, Nigeria.

## **6. Recommendations**

The followings are enumerated recommendations based on findings of this work:

1. There should be more awareness creation through the use of Health Belief Model and religion to incite young ones shun drugs and withstand peer influence to drugs.
2. There should be implementation of proper drug laws in the study area in order to reduce drug abuse prevalence
3. Family should work hard to ensure that drug abuse determinants are not available in their spaces and help their wards with emotional learning and religious injunctions that ban drug abuse.

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