

THE IMPLICATIONS OF KUSH DRUG ON THE LIVES OF YOUTHS: WESTERN AREA URBAN OF SIERRA LEONE

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ABSTRACT

The primary focus of this study was to examine the effects of Kush drug use on young people living in Freetown, a western urban center of Sierra Leone. Given the influence that Kush consumption has on the lives of young people in society, there is growing concern about drug usage and its impacts on adolescents and the issues they confront. People are far more accepting of the concerns that young people in this nation and throughout the world are bringing to light about drug usage than they were a few years ago.

The prevalence of Kush drug use on young people's academic performance, the main reasons why Kush drug use affects health-related issues in the study area, the impact of Kush drug use in the study area, and an assessment of the efforts made by stakeholders to address youth Kush drug use are among the specific objectives the researcher has in order to achieve the study's overall goal. A purposive random sampling strategy was used to examine a sample of ninety respondents. Primary and secondary sources provided the study's data. The majority of the data analysis was done in tabular form using frequency counts; however various figure forms like bars and charts were also used. The survey finds that among other substances, Kush, tramadol, marijuana, and double punch were frequently taken by young people.

According to the report, Kush consumption is brought on by peer pressure, the need to seem more mature and intelligent, stress management techniques used by parents and instructors, and peer pressure itself. Furthermore, the study found that consuming Kush has an effect on young people's lives. The respondents acknowledged that some of the negative effects of Kush consumption on young people's lives include swollen legs, mental disorders, an increase in crime, sudden death, and a decline in academic performance.

According to the respondents, there exist organizations or institutions in the Freetown Western area that are tackling the issues of Kush intake and youth lives. These include police officers, parents, physicians, clinicians, substance abuse officers, and ministry of education staff members. The government should prioritize enforcing the Drug Abuse Act laws and their complete implementation in order to lessen the country's high Kush intake, not only in the Western region of Freetown but also nationwide.

Key Words: Kush, Implication, Youths, Drug

INTRODUCTION

Any chemical substance that, when consumed, alters an organism's physiology or psychology is considered a drug; drug abuse is defined here as the use, trafficking, and consumption of unlawful products. Numerous facets of a person's physical and mental health can be impacted by drug usage. While some medicines produce insomnia, paranoia, or hallucinations, others might make you drowsy and cause your breathing to slow down. Chronic drug usage is linked to disorders of the liver, kidneys, and heart. (Maraire, T., & Chethiyar, S. D. 2020).

Drug misuse has a long history, just like the human race. Drug usage is not always bad; in fact, certain medications have even proved beneficial to medicine. Herbs, roots, and bark leaves have been used to treat pain and manage illnesses from the beginning of recorded history. Before the eighteenth century, history tells us, the Chinese utilized opium to treat diarrhea. According to the United Nations, European nations like Britain and Holland were known to trade tea and silk for opium grown in their colonies with China (Muoti, S.K 2014). Regretfully, several substances that first provide users a sense of power, peace, euphoria, and well-being have instead become addictive and problematic.

According to the most current British Crime Survey, 50% of adolescents between the ages of 16 and 24 report having taken illicit drugs at least once in their lifetime (lifetime prevalence). Cannabis is the most common drug among 16–19 and 20–24 year olds (used by 40% of 16–19 year olds and 47% of 20–24 year olds, respectively). Other drugs that are used often include amphetamine sulphate (18 and 24% of the two age groups, respectively), LSD (10 and 13%), and ecstasy (8 and 12%). Between the two age groups, the lifetime prevalence of using cocaine hydrochloride, or powder cocaine, is 3 and 9%, respectively. All things considered, these estimates are similar to those of the US and other European nations. According to the most current British Crime Survey, 5% of 16–29-year-olds (Ramsay and Partridge, 1999). Given that 16% of this age band reported drug use in the month prior to interview, this suggests that just under a third of these individuals had used more than one illicit substance during this time period. With alcohol included, the prevalence of poly-drug use is likely to be much higher. (Stellamaris Kanini Muoti 2014)

Substance and drug misuse is a concerning epidemic in Africa, where the incidence rates range from 5.2% to 13.5% of the population (WHO, 2018). In Africa, cannabis is the most often abused illicit substance, with amphetamine-type stimulants like "ecstasy" coming in second. Throughout the African continent, benzodiazepines including diazepam, chlorpromazine, and other inhalants are also abused, and 3.7% of people use injectable pharmaceuticals. The abuse of these illegal substances has a significant detrimental influence on the African continent, resulting in financial hardship for individuals, families, and society as a whole, as well as serious health effects on the abusers and their loved ones. (Maraire, T., & Chethiyar, S. D. 2020).

Similar to other African nations, drug usage is a concern in Zimbabwe. The drug addicts, their families, communities, and the country as a whole have all suffered from this issue. Youth in Zimbabwe (10–35 years old) account for 67.7% of the country's population and are the age group most impacted by drug misuse. The majority of people in Zimbabwe are young. (Maraire, T., & Chethiyar, S. D. 2020).

Youth drug usage in Nigeria has been a plague on the country's overall sustainable development. Substance abuse is a severe problem on a worldwide scale, especially in developing nations like Nigeria. Drug misuse is a significant issue for social, individual, and public health. It is also thought to exacerbate economic crises, which contributes to Nigeria's poverty. Substance misuse has a detrimental effect on undergraduate education in many universities throughout the world. Drug abusers' general health is severely impacted, and their drug-abusing behaviors put them at risk for criminality and infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS. (Ifeoma P. Okafor 2020)

Teenage substance misuse is thought to be a common problem in Monrovia, Liberia. In a pilot study that used a cross-sectional survey of 802 young Liberians, 51% of respondents said they had used alcohol, and 9% said they had used marijuana. This finding showed how common drug and alcohol use is among secondary school students in Monrovia, Liberia.

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The alarming surge of Kush abuse among youth in Sierra Leone in recent times is especially concerning. Kush is a synthetic drug that resembles cannabis and is sometimes combined with formalin, acetone, and human bones. It causes chronic hypnosis and mysterious skin lesions and is still causing havoc among young people in Sierra Leone. Disaggregated data on kush substance abuse are not available, but a 2024 report from Sierra Leone reveals that the country's mental health and rehabilitation facilities are three times full, and that the number of patients presenting with drug addiction at the nation's single psychiatric hospital has increased by nearly 4000% since 2020. In spite of this exponential increase in substance abuse cases, mental health services and public health involvement remain woefully inadequate. (Retrieved by 5pm www.thelancet.com Vol 404 July 20, 2024)

The initiative began last year in the Freetown neighborhood of Bombay, when a few individuals attempted to wean a colleague's younger sibling off of Kush. They kept him confined to his room for two months after attempts at persuasion and threats failed. It was successful. Some parents are worn out. Memunatu Kamara, 49, supports her family of six primarily through selling smoked fish in a Freetown market. Her spouse works as an imam. The oldest son has left school and taken the few possessions they had in order to purchase drugs. Sierra Leone is the most affected nation in the region, according to Prince Bull-Luseni, director of the West Africa Drug Policy Network, an organization that works to advance legislative changes. (Retrieved by 5:05pm <https://apnews.com/article/sierra-leone-drug-addiction>, August 21, 2024)

Therefore, comprehending the "Socio-economic Implications of Kush drug in the Lives of Youth in the Central Area of Western Urban Area, Sierra Leone" is the goal of this study.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Drug usage has a long history in Sierra Leone, where marijuana is one of the most often used substances. In 2018, the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) conducted a study which revealed that 22.1% of young people in Sierra Leone acknowledged smoking cannabis within the previous year. Young people have been using the strong strain of marijuana known as "Kush" more frequently in recent years. Because of the possible harm to their socioeconomic well-being, youth's usage of Kush and other cannabis strains has sparked worries. Numerous research studies have looked into the economic effects of drug abuse, particularly Kush, on young people's life. Kush drug use has been connected to a number of socioeconomic issues, such as unemployment, crime, and poverty. (Retrieved by 5pm www.thelancet.com Vol 404 July 20, 2024).

Most young people take drugs because they think it's part of their diet. Drug addiction is very unusual among them because there are many secret locations that they know of that sell drugs for reasonable prices. Since most drugs aren't purchased with a prescription, people can easily buy tranquilizers, sedatives, and pain relievers at any pharmacist or drug store to satiate their cravings, even though these establishments are overseen by a board of pharmacists. Because of their drug addiction, most of these young people are found on the streets, insane, frustrated, thieves, prostitutes, .(Sylvia Kercher Bangura 2022)

People who use the substance become sick, hopeless, and lethargic. Ansu Konneh, the director of mental health at the Ministry of Social Welfare, stated that there has been a noticeable increase in the number of Kush addicts showing up at Sierra Leone's only psychiatric hospital since 2022, despite the fact that the government does not release official statistics on Kush-related deaths or hospital admissions. Young people are dropping out of college as a result of it, and their physical health is suffering. He stated, "You can see they're involved in crimes, they have multiple organ failures, and their feet are swollen." It's a dire circumstance. Families are breaking up,

communities are having issues, and people are dying every day as a result. (Retrieved by 5:05pm <https://apnews.com/article/sierra-leone-drug-addiction>, August 21, 2024)

This depressing Kush reality in Sierra Leone emphasizes the urgent need for targeted support and funding via a community-based strategy to address the rapidly growing issue of drug abuse among the country's youth. Too much attention is being paid to this alienated minority by political tokenism and competing objectives. Important tactics include the urgent need for more funding for harm reduction, prevention, and treatment initiatives. These initiatives should include increasing access to evidence-based interventions like mental health support, counseling, and rehabilitation as well as tightening laws governing the sale and distribution of Kush. Active community involvement and a multi-sectoral strategy should be used to implement these ideas. If swift action is not taken, the nation faces the possibility of an additional exponential increase in cases, which might result in a regional epidemic. (Retrieved by 5pm www.thelancet.com Vol 404 July 20, 2024).

Further research is necessary to fully understand the socioeconomic effects of Kush drugs on young people's lives. These gaps point out areas where the available research is either lacking or ambiguous, requiring additional thorough and rigorous investigation. Therefore, by examining the socioeconomic implications of Kush drug use in the lives of young people in Freetown, Sierra Leone, this study seeks to close these gaps.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Becker & Lemert (2000), the sociological theories of drug abuse provide an explanation for the concepts of drug abuse. Deviance, including drug and alcohol abuse, can be best understood as a kind of "career," or a collection of identities, roles, and behaviors that make up a lifestyle that is both consistent and counter to conventional society in certain aspects. In summary, it was best to view deviation, like drug use, as a dynamic phenomenon with a beginning or entry point and frequently a desistance or end point.

The Anomie theory

For the past few centuries, the term "anomie" has been commonly used to characterize socioeconomic situations. It has to do with how quickly society is changing and how culture and social structure interact. The classic writings of Robert Merton and Emile Durkheim from 1997 helped popularize the idea of anomie. Additionally, it played a key role in the writings of Richard Rosenfield and Steven Messner, who provided modern reasons for the notable differences in major crime rates between countries. According to Durkheim, transgressions and criminality ought to be faced with consequences and punishment. Durkheim contends that as humans are products of their social environments, crimes against society are inevitable. As such, laws and penalties for aberrant behavior should be taken into. This leads to the conclusion that society as a whole, its values, and its diverse beliefs including the idea of collective conscience are the sources of law. This theory's significance for the study is to highlight how crucial the criminal justice system and law enforcement are to the management of the drug

supply, drug trafficking, illicit manufacture, and drug cultivation, all of which help to lessen the harmful effects of drug and substance misuse among young people in communities. (SOKOTO, Mohammed Malami, 2021)

THE MAJOR CAUSES OF KUSH DRUG INTAKE

It was found that, as reported by 24% of young people, getting high or feeling joyful is the main reason why they consume drugs. Young people's curiosity and peer pressure, which are represented by 18% and 16%, respectively, also play a major role. This is consistent with Oketch's (2008) observation that adolescence is marked by a number of issues that young people assume their peers understand. A widely accessible, adult idealized, socially acceptable, and mood-altering drug appears amid all of this chaos. Accordingly, many teenagers experiment with cannabis, alcohol, and cigarettes. This was corroborated by NACADA (2006), which found that peer pressure influences consumption of all drugs and substances by 21–42%.

In addition, the peer subculture encourages the activity by supplying the drugs, a suitable social environment, and guidelines. Youths have recognized additional characteristics that should not be taken for granted, such as their greater financial status and the effect of their drug-using parents. Teachers claim that peer pressure—which accounts for 40% of drug addiction—is the main cause of drug abuse. Curiosity, drug availability, and students' perceptions that drugs are the secret to passing tests were among the other variables (20%). These results suggest that curiosity and peer pressure play a significant role in teenage drug misuse. In this instance, young people are lured and exposed to narcotics through their as a result, individuals develop a strong desire to taste these chemicals. This is the last step before they start using drugs. (Kiambi Muriithi Joel, 2018) In Goderich, a young man identifying himself as Ahmed told AYV that he abuses drugs like Tramadol and Dragon and that he can't spend a day without them, especially when having sex with a woman. Ahmed admitted, his face painted with timid smiles, "I used Tramadol, dragon, and sometimes Jah-scotch to make me go hyped and boost my sexual sensation whenever I'm having sex with a woman and when playing football." (Sylvia Kercher Bangura 2022)

Not only is Sierra Leone a transshipment zone, but adolescents there also experiment with drugs or continue to take them for a variety of reasons, such as: Students use drugs "because others are doing it" or because they believe others are doing it in order to fit in. They do this out of fear of being rejected from their peer group who also use drugs. To feel good: Substance abuse affects how the brain's neurochemistry functions to create pleasurable experiences. Depending on the drug kind and method of usage, this euphoria might vary in intensity. To feel better: A number of teenagers experience physical discomfort, social anxiety, depression, and disorders linked to stress. One may try to reduce these distressing feelings by using substances. Stress in particular is a major factor in both initiating and maintaining drug usage.

To perform better: There might be a lot of pressure to achieve well in both academics and athletics in our highly competitive world. Because they believe such substances will boost or improve their performance, some teenagers may turn to illicit or prescription stimulants. To try new things: teenagers are frequently driven to look

for novel experiences, especially ones they find exciting or risky (NIDA 2014). The following are the reasons we use drugs: Since they are taken by others, In order to unwind socially and feel good, To engage in antisocial behavior, such as hitting your partner, To gain our political goals (such as using drugs to incite rebels for war), To eliminate dissatisfaction and depression, To activate the muscles and nerves for effective athletic performance, To escape the painful truths of life, and it is normal for youngsters to try taking chances, seek out new challenges, and establish their independence as they get older. A risk that draws a lot of maturing teenagers and adolescents is underage drinking. Although many are eager to try alcohol, they frequently are unaware of how it may affect their behavior and overall health. Peer pressure, growing independence or a desire for it, and stress are some other factors contributing to underage alcohol consumption. Furthermore, a lot of young people can have easy access to alcohol. 95.1 percent of 17 to 25-year-olds who reported drinking alcohol in the previous month in 2015 stated that they received it free of charge on their most recent occasion. Adolescents frequently find alcohol at home or get access to it through family members. (Available at <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov> Accessed June 5th, 2024 at 10:00pm)

Numerous works of literature exist regarding the origins, types, and extent of drug misuse that result in criminal behavior or drug-related offenses in young people, with consequent social, political, economic, and cultural ramifications for the communities in the states of Kano and Soot. According to Faroe (2012), imitations, low self-esteem, peer pressure, ignorance of the impacts of illicit drugs on the user, their family, and their immediate community are some of the causes of drug misuse among young people. However, Roche (2009) noted that drug experimenting results in regular drug usage, which then causes addiction and dependency.

In light of this, Haladu 1998, Garba 2003, and Bullock 1999 added other variables to the list of important reasons of drug usage and, by extension, criminal behavior, including the availability of drugs, the effect of the environment, and social standing. Adeyeye (2018) discovered additional societal elements, such as the deterioration of the family value system, parents not carrying out their responsibilities, inadequate parental guidance, social media impact, and advertisements, that contribute to drug misuse. Corruption, the diversion of prescription medications, and a lack of oversight in the pharmaceutical drug distribution chain are a few more causes. In support of the claim, Lawal (2012) listed additional factors that students and young people typically use drugs for, such as exam success, curiosity, audacity, partying with friends, intellectual pursuits, depression, restless sleep, and athletic performance. Martins (2012) noted

The researcher claims these expose teenagers to medication trials and curiosity. He goes on to say that abusing alcohol and other socially acceptable drugs, like cigarettes, encourages the use of more harmful narcotics. The claim that smoking cigarettes increases the likelihood of misusing other illegal drugs was bolstered by Hamisu (2014). Given that many cigarette smokers never used other illegal drugs in the future, this argument seems

overly dramatic and applies only in rare circumstances. Additional factors included in Inuwa (2012) and Zwall (2014) include self-medication, low self-esteem, and the deterioration of social values. While acknowledging that teenage imitation is a significant contributing factor to drug consumption, Josephine (2014) concurred with the argument. (SOKOTO, Mohammed Malami, 2021).

A number of socioeconomic and environmental reasons, including the emergence of synthetic cannabinoids like "kush" among young people, are contributing to the problem of drug usage in Sierra Leone. Young people are especially vulnerable to drug use because of post-conflict trauma, widespread unemployment, and a lack of alternative recreational and educational possibilities. The widespread use of Kush is made worse by the fact that it is more readily available and less expensive than other drugs.

Its extensive usage is also fueled by the illusion of escape it provides in an environment of endemic poverty and restricted opportunities. The lack of strong policies and rehabilitation programs, along with insufficient resources, have hindered the government's response, making Kush usage a serious public health issue. A multifaceted strategy is needed to address this problem, with a focus on education, economic empowerment, and comprehensive public health initiatives catered to the needs of Sierra Leone's youth. (Koroma, A. B. 2023).

THE SOCIO CULTURAL IMPACT OF KUSH DRUG

It is believed that slum regions in cities and towns contribute to the younger generation of drug abusers. This is quoted in Kenyan towns and cities, especially Nairobi where a huge number of alcoholics and drug addicts are known to reside in slums like Majengo, Mathare, Kibera, and Mukuru. Drug misuse, however, is not limited to young people from specific socioeconomic backgrounds or places of residence. It has an impact on both urban and rural areas of the country. The issue transcends all disciplinary boundaries. People are impoverished and miserable not just in slums and low-income neighborhoods, but also in households with better living circumstances and better-behaved kids.

Some young people from wealthy homes, who have everything materially, do drugs just for fun and for pleasure. This is in line with Njagi's (2013) argument in Drug Abuse Rehabilitation and Treatment Care, Nairobi, that addiction develops when drugs are used for extended periods of time for enjoyment and amusement. (Muoti, Stellamaris Kanini) It is not easy, but it is feasible, to identify the young drug abuser. Early action and therapy may be the outcome of early recognition. Additionally, treatment is crucial since children who use drugs heavily and frequently do so as a coping technique for personal issues that must be addressed in order for normal development to take place.

Drug use as a coping mechanism or to mask emotions prevents young people from developing socially and psychologically normally. The following are some specific behaviors and traits to look out for in order to assess whether substance addiction is taking place: frequent absences, a drop in academic performance, confrontations

with authority figures, issues with peers, the forming of new peer relationships, self-destructive behavior evidence, avoidance and distancing, depression, low energy, impetuous behavior, disregard for one's own personal hygiene and well-being, overt signs of intoxication, and indications of a troubled home life [www.counseling.orgSubstanceAbuse Adolescent Drug use](http://www.counseling.orgSubstanceAbuseAdolescentDruguse) Accessed June 3th 2024 at 9:45pm)

The following issues are highlighted while examining the impact of substance misuse and youths welfare: consequences for academic achievement, consequences for health, Impacts on the brain and behavior.

EFFECTS KUSH DRUG ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Up until the age of 25, research indicates that brain development continues throughout adulthood. The use of drugs or alcohol may alter how your brain organizes and stores information, which may impact your ability to concentrate, think clearly, and recall things. Addicting youths are more likely to drop out of school, have lower marks, and skip more classes than not. Overall, substance addiction has different effects on how the brain functions. As an illustration: Drinking too much alcohol might impair one's ability to focus, use particular talents, remember things, and use executive function. Marijuana use can have an impact on memory, learning, and focus. Even after you stop taking the medication; these effects may last for a few days or weeks. Nearly one-third of kids who left school

For many students, finishing high school is a significant accomplishment, but substance abuse can have an impact on a teen's chances of graduating and vice versa. According to a study conducted on teenagers between the ages of 16 and 18, children who dropped out of school before graduating were more likely than their peers to have used alcohol, marijuana, cigarettes, and illegal drugs. Alcohol binge drinking was more common among dropouts (31.8 vs. 22.1%) than among students. In addition to being more likely to use prescription medicines for non-medical purposes (9.5% vs.4.6%), teenage dropouts were also more likely to consume marijuana (15.6 vs. 9.5%). (Sylvia Kercher Bangura 2022)

Adolescents who use drugs or alcohol regularly sometimes face a variety of issues, such as trouble in school, health issues, and strained relationships with peers, and participation with the juvenile criminal system. There are also repercussions for the community, the family, and the entire society, such as drug trafficking, gang activity, violence, disintegration of the family, and friend conflicts. Adolescent substance misuse is linked to declining grades, absence from school and extracurricular activities, and a higher risk of dropping out of school. Research by Hawkins, Calatano, and Miler revealed a possible link between teenage substance use and truancy rates and poor levels of commitment to school. Once more, abusing drugs has an impact on the brain, which leads to a significant reduction in the functions that the brain does.

Adolescents who use drugs have a significantly shorter attention span and become bored much more quickly than those who do not use drugs or abuse other substances. Students will become disinterested in their coursework and extracurricular activities. The majority of psychoactive drugs have an adverse effect on young people's ability to make decisions, inhibiting their ability to think creatively and acquire the essential social and life skills. They also obstruct people from realizing their own potential and interests, which have an impact on how their careers grow. Adolescents who use drugs may have behavioral and cognitive issues that affect their ability to study in school and cause challenges for their peers. The upkeep of a secure and orderly learning environment in schools is linked to the consumption of substances.

It results in classroom chaos and property damage to the school. The effects of substance misuse are extensive. For example, a 2012 poll by NACADA with a sample of 632 children revealed that 6% had ever had sex while under the influence of drugs (7.3% for boys and 4.4% for girls). It is estimated that the median age of sexual debut was eleven years old. According to an evaluation of the circumstances surrounding the first sex, 30% of people had sex against their choice. Additionally, almost 20% reported receiving inducements to engage in sexual activity, and an additional 8% said they had used drugs before to their first sex. Their early exposure to unlawful sex exposes kids to risks and has a detrimental effect on their self-esteem.

(Stellamaris Kanini Muoti July, 2014).

EFFECTS OF KUSH DRUG ON HEALTH

Substance addiction can have serious long-term consequences for the body and general health. Reversing them may be challenging or impossible. According to studies, drug usage can have an impact on the following bodily parts: elevated blood pressure, erratic cardiac rhythm, and stroke Liver inflammations, such as cirrhosis, fibrosis, and alcoholic hepatitis, renal disease, including both acute and chronic kidney failure, Pancreas: blood vessel enlargement and inflammation that impedes appropriate digestion, Immune system: increases vulnerability to illnesses like pneumonia and TB, Cancers of the breast, mouth, esophagus, throat, larynx, colon, and rectum have been linked to alcohol usage. Additionally, it can make stomach and pancreas cancer more likely. (www.gatewayfoundation.org)

Teenagers who drink alcohol may get into accidents and sustain injuries. About 188,000 people under the age of 21 attended an emergency room in 2011 alone due to accidents brought on by alcohol. (www.niaaa.nih.gov Accessed September June 5th, 2024 at 6:05pm)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As stated by Robson (2002), there are two sources of data that can be obtained: primary and secondary internal and external sources. To put it briefly, data sources are locations, either digital or physical, where data is kept in various storage formats such as data objects, tables, or other types of storage. Two sources of information can be used to collect data: internal and external ones (primary and secondary sources). Primary and secondary sources

of data were gathered for this study's purposes. A semi-structured questionnaire consisting of two hundred (200) open-ended and closed-ended questions was used to collect primary data from youths in the study community. In addition, several questions about the influence of Kush on the lives of youth in the study area relied on personal observation. The following unpublished and published sources provided secondary data for this study on the effects of solar grid electrification in rural areas: Unpublished journals, papers, dissertations, and these were obtained via the Google search engine. Organizations such as the Ministry of Education workers, parents, doctors, nurses, police officers, and substance abuse officers were proactive in that regard.

DATA ANALYSIS

Large-scale data collection, compilation, and processing were the main goals of data analysis. Essentially, straightforward and significant statistical analysis was used to examine the facts that were discovered in the field. Frequency and descriptive statistical analysis were used to examine the field data that was supplied.

FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

Table 1: Sex composition of the respondents

Sex	Absolute Frequency (AF)	Relative Frequency (RF = %)
Male	75	83.3
Female	15	16.7
Total	90	100

Source: field survey, 20224

As can be seen in Table 1 above, there were 16.7% female respondents and 83.3% male respondents. This suggests that more than 83.3% of the respondents who were interviewed were men, and fewer respondents who were questioned were women. Male respondents were recruited for the study in greater numbers since male youth abusers of Kush are more prevalent.

Table 2: Responses on why do youth's take Kush

Causes	AF	RF (%)
Peer influence	50	45.5
To increase intelligence	30	27.3
Parents/ teachers used them	15	13.6
Stress issues	10	9.1
Feel grown	5	4.5
Total	110	100

Source: field survey, 20224

According to data in Table 2 above, 45.5% of young people misused drugs as a result of peer pressure, 27.3% did so in order to boost their IQ, 13.6% did so because their parents or teachers did so, 9.1% did so in order to cope with stress, and 4.5% because they felt like they were grown-ups. Since most of the youth in the survey were contacted, it follows that the reason young people use Kush is due to peer pressure.

Table 3: Responses on in your opinion, which are the main sources of Kush intake

Sources	AF	RF (%)
Fellow students	30	33.3
Pubs/ Ghettos	42	46.6
Pharmacies	10	11.1
Drug peddlers	5	5.5
Others (friends)	3	3.3
Total	90	100

Source: field survey, 20224

According to Table 3 above, 33.3% of young people reported receiving Kush from friends, 46.6% reported getting it from bars or ghettos, 11.1% reported getting it from pharmacies, 5.5% reported getting it from drug dealers, and 3.3% indicated they received it from friends or other sources. This suggests that the respondents could readily obtain Kush from bars and ghettos, and that the young people who lived near to them did the same.

Table 4: Response on what is the impact/ effect of the Kush drug on the youth in term of physical health, mental well-being and overall quality of life.

Response	AF	RF (%)
Sudden Death	10	11.1
Liver disorder	3	3.3
Swollen Legs	37	41.1
Mental Disorder	20	22.2
Increase crime rate	15	16.6
Decrease academic performance	5	5.5
Total	90	100

Source: field survey, 20224

According to Table 4, 11.1% of respondents selected sudden death, 3.3% said it results in liver disease, 41.1% said it causes leg swelling, 22.2% selected mental illness, 16.6% said it raises the crime rate, and 5.5% said it lowers scholastic achievement. It demonstrates that the main effect of Kush ingestion on young people's physical, emotional, and social welfare in the research area was swollen legs.

KEY FINDING

According to the data, youths who had used Kush for two years were more likely to be contacted during the survey, and the majority of respondents who used narcotics other than for medical purposes were approached more frequently than those who hadn't used Kush for any other reason. Peer pressure was the primary reason for youth misuse of Kush, as seen by the study's findings. The majority of the youths were contacted, which led to peer pressure. Increasing intellect was the second reason, and parents and teachers were the third factor, according to the percentages. When it came to the degree to which respondents agreed with claims that peer pressure was a factor in Kush abuse, a sizable portion of respondents strongly agreed.

Based to the data gathered, many young people who use drugs are aware of how Kush consumption affects young people's physical, emotional, and social welfare in the study area. Additionally, it was shown that the main effect of Kush ingestion on the physical, emotional, and social welfare of young people in the study area was swollen legs. Among other behaviors within the study community, the majority of respondents agreed that public annoyance was the primary antisocial conduct of youths during the study.

According to the investigation, the majority of respondents had observed that the police and other stakeholders were more frequently visiting their community to deal with Kush consumption and antisocial conduct than other stakeholders in the study area. The majority of respondents stated that stakeholders are doing a very good job in the study area of addressing Kush intake, but their efforts were not enough.

CONCLUSION OF THE FINDINGS

Based on the study, it can be said that reducing the negative effects of cannabis addiction on the lives of young people in Western Urban areas is difficult since it affects their wellbeing. Kush misuse is still a concern among youths because the inquiry revealed that many of them had used the drug for medical purposes. Additionally, residents of the Western Urban Area community have reported experiencing anti-social behavior and Kush abuse. The government and other organizations have made numerous attempts to address this issue, but to no avail. Nevertheless, a sizable portion of young people use Kush, and there are numerous explanations for why young people misuse Kush.

Young people can easily obtain Kush. The majority of them purchase drugs via pharmacy over-the-counter sales, many from their peers, others from bars and impoverished areas, and still others from street vendors who are desperate for their narcotics to move quickly and easily. In the research community, Kush abuse and juvenile welfare are frequent topics of discussion.

According to the numerous causes that have been identified, young people misuse Kush for a variety of reasons, including peer pressure, family history, stress-related problems, IQ enhancement, and media impact, lax regulations regarding substance use, and the prevalence of drug abuse in educational institutions. Considering all of these elements, they are aware of the detrimental effects.

Kush abuse has considerably more detrimental effects on youth welfare than positive ones. Teenagers abusing Kush can have a variety of negative effects on them, including impaired judgment, sudden death, swollen legs, mental disorders, poor academic performance, strange behaviors like public nuisance, fighting, destroying public property, and stealing from other young people. It can also have an adverse effect on their health.

Since young people realized that youth Kush abuse is a social threat, it has been suggested that, in addition to strict community-level drug regulations, youth should always be held accountable for their actions. This includes providing guidance and counseling services to youth who are caught abusing Kush.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To help lessen the severe Kush abuse not just in Freetown but across the nation, the government must concentrate on the Kush Abuse Act policies and its full force ratifications. This is due to the fact that community restrictions will be extremely ineffective in combating the problem, regardless of how strict they are regarding juvenile Kush misuse; as a result, Kush abuse and antisocial conduct are prevalent in the nation.

Every city and large town should have at least one rehabilitation facility to support the mental health of young people who have been found to have been abused by Kush. Non-governmental organizations should build up offices in every community to offer expert assistance and counseling services to young people who use Kush. This will help by providing for the young people with emotional needs who want to talk to someone in confidence but don't have the space to do so, thus they end up going to Kush abusers.

In addition to making sure that they don't give their kids too much money because that could encourage them to abuse Kush, parents should handle their marital problems in a way that won't harm their kids and encourage them to participate in problem-related activities.

Lastly, parents need to know what kind of pals their kids are hanging out with and keep a close eye on them at all times. Recall that friends are the primary cause of drug misuse among the majority of today's adolescents and even adults.

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