



A Systematic Review on the Effects of PTSD Associated Alcohol Abuse on Social Economic Status among Youth Living in Kiambu County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The deeply rooted issue of alcohol abuse in Kenya continues to negatively impact the well-being of the youth population. In a study conducted in 2018, an estimated 45–50% of alcohol-abusing youth in Kiambu County had post-traumatic stress disorder. The main purpose of this paper is to review and synthesize existing literature articles on the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)-associated alcohol abuse in Kenya's context. The review shows that PTSD related to alcohol abuse, though not well studied in Kenya, is a real challenge facing the youth. It affects their learning processes as well as their transition to colleges and other higher education institutions. Alcohol abuse also affects employment prospects for youth and leads to impoverishment. It also challenges the productivity and entrepreneurial capacities of these youth, leading to further impoverishment and reduced socioeconomic prospects. On the basis of these findings, it is pertinent to come up with psychosocial support mechanisms for alcohol abusers suffering from PTSD. The government should establish funding strategies for the rehabilitation of PTSD-affected youth. Also, government empowerment programs in Kenya should factor in mechanisms for ensuring that youth with PTSD-related alcohol abuse can access funding to enhance their socioeconomic status.

Keywords: Alcohol Abuse, PTSD, Socio-Economic, Youth

I. INTRODUCTION

Research shows post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is often linked with alcohol abuse. Khoury et al. (2010) posit that exposure to traumatic experiences has positive linkages with substance use disorders (SUDs). This is more severe among young people. In the study, Khoury found out that in a highly traumatized population, there were high levels of lifetime dependence on various substances. In such populations, the most abused substances were marijuana (44.8%), alcohol (39%), cocaine (34.1%), and heroin/opiates (6.2%). This impoverishes the populations that abuse such substances.

In South Korea, Emery et al. (2016) found that PTSD-related and non-PTSD-related alcohol abuse pushed families to put in place mechanisms aimed at controlling physical intimate partner violence (IPV). The study shows that random effects regression and zero-inflated Poisson regression models show that family members' interventions checked the negative effects of such alcohol abuse, such as wastage of family resources. In a study focused on a sample of 171 African American women, Watson-Singleton et al. (2019) show that alcohol abuse is catalyzed by IPV as well as PTSD and that this is mediated by other psychosocial factors.

Magidson et al. (2016) argue that PTSD experiences led to increases in alcohol and other drug abuse among adolescents (16–18 years) in Johannesburg, South Africa. Indeed, exposure to violence, other traumatic experiences, and sexual activity were related to alcoholism in females and males. This went on to affect teenagers' futures as well as their well-being.

Adere et al. (2017) in South Africa posit that some of the catalysts of psychoactive substance use among students of Woldia University in Ethiopia were traumatic experiences in the lives of teenagers as well as challenges related to their background, such as poverty. The study reveals that continuous abuse of such substances had long-term effects on the socioeconomic well-being of the children studied.

In Liberia, Petruzzi (2018) posits that exposure to substance abuse has risks such as emotional instability, academic failure, and community poverty. Despite not directly relating to PTSD, the study demonstrates a strong



correlation between alcohol abuse and poverty success, both at the individual and community levels, regardless of its underlying causes.

In Lebanon, a study by Yassin et al. (2018), undertaken using the social ecology framework, shows that alcohol use is a result of various social relations and lax policies. It was also attributable to personal challenges such as exposure to PTSD, among other challenges. Maniglio (2016) shows that peer victimization and other challenges in the lives of teenagers with PTSD and family backgrounds contributed to alcohol use and misuse.

Smith et al. (2017) show that PTSD and depression play a major role as links between deployment stressors and work and family outcomes, as well as alcohol abuse. Ruglass et al. (2016) show that there is a positive association between cumulative trauma, PTSD, substance use disorder (SUD), and arrest probability among socioeconomically disadvantaged African-American and Latino mothers. This went on to further affect their social and economic status.

A study by Karsberg and Elklit (2015) in "Victimization and PTSD in a Rural Kenyan Youth Sample" This shows that exposure to potentially traumatic events (PTEs) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) prevalence among adolescents leads to alcohol abuse, which may have lasting effects in their future, such as financial instability.

As shown in the preceding discourse, there is a positive link between PTSD-related alcohol abuse and socioeconomic challenges and impoverishment. This current study sets out to carry out a systematic review of the effects of PTSD-associated alcohol abuse on social-economic status among youth in Kenya.

1.1 Problem Statement

There is a plethora of literature on PTSD-related alcohol abuse and its negative effect on the socioeconomic well-being of youth. Most extant literature focuses on various parts of the world, but not Kenya. Although studies have been undertaken in Kenya, most studies do not relate PTSD to alcohol abuse or, by extension, socioeconomic status. This leaves key knowledge gaps about the effect of PTSD-related alcohol abuse on the socio-economic status of alcohol-abusing youth in Kenya. Without studies such as this current one, it may remain untenable to bridge this gap. Consequently, the government and psychosocial support professionals would remain at a loss for how to best mitigate the negative influences of alcohol abuse on the socioeconomic status of youth with PTSD. This would impede the country's economic development because everyone's input is required. This study sets out to bridge this knowledge gap.

1.2 Research Objective

Find out the effect of PTSD related alcohol abuse on the socioeconomic status of alcohol-abusing youth in Kenya.

1.3 Review Themes

- PTSD Related Alcohol Abuse
- Socioeconomic Status
- Youths in Kenya

1.4 Significance

Alcohol abuse is a deeply rooted issue in Kenya that continues to negatively impact the well-being of the youth population. This study could help psychosocial support professionals come up with tangible ways of helping youth with PTSD. The government could also learn how to put in place policy measures aimed at helping persons who suffer from PTSD control their propensity to take to alcohol abuse, which could predispose them to alcohol abuse. Other researchers and scholars could also benefit from this study through increased literature on the subject. Non-state actors could also garner valuable information that could guide their programming processes.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

This study is based on the Social-Ecological Model (SEM). The Social-Ecological Model (SEM), as expounded by Stokols (1996), is a theory-based framework that considers the multifaceted and interactive effects of personal and environmental factors that determine behaviors. It can be argued that five nested, hierarchical levels of the SEM, namely: individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, and policy/enabling environment, predict behavior. Within the scope of this study, it can be claimed that individual factors related to traumatic experiences and



PTSD could affect the alcohol abuse behaviors of youth. As such, and as conceptualized by this current study, the presence of traumatic experiences at community and family levels could contribute to the likelihood of the youth abusing alcohol and drugs, factors that can affect their socioeconomic status.

2.2 Empirical Review

Adere et al. (2017) carried out a study titled "Determinants of psychoactive substance use among Woldia University students in North-Eastern Ethiopia." This study aims to determine the levels and catalysts of psychoactive substance use among students at Woldia University in Ethiopia. Self-administered questionnaires to a sample of 730 drawn from these students in April 2015 were used to carry out an institutional-based quantitative cross-sectional study. Data analysis using SPSS version 20 reveals that there is a high prevalence of psychoactive substance use among students with PTSD histories at Woldia University.

Petruzzi (2018) studied "Contributing Risk Factors for Substance Use among Youth in Post-conflict Liberia." This study used qualitative methods to determine the risks associated with substance abuse among public school students in Liberia. A sample size of 72 students grouped into nine focus group discussions was conducted to address this study objective. The qualitative analysis findings show that exposure to substance abuse has risks such as emotional instability, academic failure, and community poverty. There was a positive link between substance use and PTSD.

Yassin et al. (2018) studied "There Is Zero Regulation on the Selling of Alcohol": The Voice of the Youth on the Context and Determinants of Alcohol Drinking in Lebanon." The goal of this study is to present an in-depth analysis of the patterns and determinants of youth alcohol consumption. Focused group discussions conducted with a sample of 100 students in Lebanon and analyzed using the social ecology framework show that alcohol use is termed a serious public health problem that is a result of various social relations and lax policies, as well as PTSD, among other causes.

Karsberg and Elklit (2015) carried out a study titled "Victimization and PTSD in a Rural Kenyan Youth Sample." This study's main goal was to find out more about the rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and exposure to potentially traumatic events (PTEs) among teens by repeating six non-clinical studies that had already been done in Denmark, Iceland, Lithuania, the Faroe Islands, Israel, and India. The research methods were similar in all countries, and the findings show that there is a complex interaction of variables that leads to this disorder. Regardless of its origin, PTSD was also associated with alcohol abuse and the socioeconomic consequences of those who engage in it.

Brown et al. (2016) carried out a study titled "Neuroticism and Its Associated Brain Activation in Women with PTSD." This study focused on the examination of previously established neural correlates of neuroticism. A sample size of 61 women was used, of whom 48 had interpersonal violence (IPV) and PTSD and 13 were healthy. The findings show that women who had PTSD experienced higher neuroticism levels than healthy women. PTSD also contributed to an increase in alcohol consumption among these women.

Smith et al. (2017) carried out a study titled "The Role of PTSD, Depression, and Alcohol Misuse Symptom Severity in Linking Deployment Stressor Exposure and Post-Military Work and Family Outcomes in Male and Female Veterans." This study focuses on the relationship between deployment stressors at work and family outcomes, as well as post-military functioning and satisfaction, with a focus on PTSD, depression, and alcohol misuse. A sample of 522 veterans was assessed longitudinally through the use of structural equation models. Findings show that PTSD and depression play a major role as links between deployment stressors and work and family outcomes.

Ruglass et al. (2016) studied "Direct and Indirect Effects of Cumulative Trauma, PTSD, and Substance Use Disorder on Probability of Arrest among Lower-Income African American and Latina Women." This study focused on the association between cumulative trauma, PTSD, substance use disorder (SUD), and arrest probability among socioeconomically disadvantaged African-American and Latino mothers. A sample size of 158 was used. Secondary analysis of the cross-sectional data was done. The findings after logistic regression show that 34% of the respondents had an arrest history, and cumulative trauma was associated with probabilities of arrest. The findings also show that PTSD and SUD influence these traumas and the probability of arrests.

Brown et al. (2014) carried out a study titled "Affective Dispositions and PTSD Symptom Clusters in Female Interpersonal Trauma Survivors." The focus of this study was to compare self-reported trait negative affect (NA) and positive affect (PA) as predictors of PTSD in 54 female survivors of interpersonal trauma (IPT) who met the Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS). The findings show that NA is a consistent cause of PTSD symptoms, unlike PA.



Pollard and McKinney carried out a study titled “Parental Physical Force and Alcohol Use in Emerging Adults: Mediation by Psychological Problems.” This study aimed at examining the effects parental physical force has on emerging adult functioning, specifically alcohol and psychological problems. Data collection was done through questionnaires administered to a sample of 488 young adults. The findings indicate that there is a direct link between parental physical force and adult emerging alcohol and psychological problems. Though directly focused on PTSD, the findings of the study show traumatic events in one’s childhood fed into the propensity to abuse alcohol.

Ferrajão and Oliveira (2015) studied “Portuguese War Veterans: Moral Injury and Factors Related to Recovery from PTSD.” This study focused on the factors attributed to recovery from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in a sample of 60 Portuguese war veterans. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic and categorical analysis. The findings show that unrecovered veterans showed a higher rate of post-war betrayal, social stigmatization, a lack of personal support, and a lack of personal resources. These veterans were also more likely to abuse alcohol compared to their counterparts who were not suffering from PTSD.

Arbona and Schwartz (2016) did a study titled “Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptom Clusters, Depression, Alcohol Abuse, and General Stress among Hispanic Male Firefighters.” This study aimed at examining the association of four posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptom clusters in the dysphoria factor model with depression, substance abuse, and general stress. In a United States city, 551 Hispanic male firefighters were included in the sample size. The analysis was done through bivariate correlations, and regression analyses show that approximately 11% of the participants had a high rate of PTSD.

Breet et al. (2016) carried out a study titled “Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Depression in Men and Women Who Perpetrate Intimate Partner Violence.” This study aimed at examining the prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) perpetrated by men and women and the association between symptoms of depression or posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and IPV perpetration between men and women. Data were collected through self-report questionnaires administered to a sample size of 210 people from three peri-urban areas in South Africa. The findings show that gender differences were not a contributing factor to physical assault and psychological aggression.

Riber (2017) carried out a study titled “Trauma complexity and child abuse: A qualitative study of attachment narratives in adult refugees with PTSD.” The focus of this study is to identify the types of trauma in the lives of refugees and to explore their experiences of maltreatment during childhood. Interviews using a “Trauma Coding Manual” were conducted with a sample size of 43 adults drawn from Arabic-speaking refugees with PTSD receiving treatment in Denmark. The findings show high levels of trauma and childhood maltreatment (63%) in refugees with Iraqi and Palestinian-Lebanese backgrounds.

Hollingsworth et al. (2018) carried out a study titled “Intolerance of Uncertainty Mediates Symptoms of PTSD and Depression in African American Veterans with Comorbid PTSD and Substance Use Disorders.” This study aimed at examining intolerance of uncertainty as a mediator between PTSD and depression. A sample of 113 veterans was drawn from African Americans being treated with PTSD and substance use disorders (SUD) at a Veterans Affairs Medical Center. After conducting five mediation analyses, the findings show that African American veterans displayed higher levels of PTSD and were associated with higher levels of intolerance uncertainty.

Nöthling et al. (2016) carried out a study titled “Differences in Abuse, Neglect, and Exposure to Community Violence in Adolescents with and Without PTSD and Depression.” This study aims to assess the contribution and differences of demographic factors, trauma, community violence, and types of abuse and neglect in the prediction of PTSD levels among participants with and without this disorder. The study area was the Western Cape region in South Africa, where a sample of 215 adolescents with emotional and behavioral problems was selected. After clinical assessments and regression analysis, the findings show that adolescents with a history of trauma, depression, and PTSD had a higher level of emotional abuse and community violence exposure in comparison to those who were exposed to trauma but did not have these disorders.

III. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a systematic review approach, with data collected from existing literature articles. The study used qualitative meta-synthesis. The findings obtained confirmed that there was a significant effect of alcohol-related PTSD on the socio-economic status of the youth living in Kiambu County, Kenya. Alcohol abuse and PTSD have social and economic effects that include relationship breakdown and loss of income, among other related effects. This paper reviews various effects of alcohol use, and PTSD further stresses the importance of treating alcoholism



through initiating rehabilitation programs that should be individualized according to the specific situation of the affected person(s).

3.2 Inclusion Criterion

Be based on primary data

Between 2016-2020

Kenya or study area

Focused on youth (18-35 years in Kenya)

IV. ANALYSIS

Various studies were reviewed. These were drawn from over 30 relevant studies. Most of these were excluded, and five of them were analyzed. PTSD-related alcohol abuse was recorded by Kinyua et al. (2019) in "Socio-economic Factors Influencing Alcohol and Substance Abuse among College Students in Murang'a County, Kenya." A sample of 417 students from 5 colleges was selected using descriptive cross-sectional research design, stratified sampling, and systematic random sampling. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used, where data was collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS version 23 and the chi-square test. The findings show that there is a need to increase awareness of alcohol resulting from PTSD and its effects, such as diminishing socioeconomic impacts.

Chege et al. (2017), in "An Investigation of the Factors Contributing to Drug and Substance Abuse among the Youth in Kenya: A Survey of Select Rehabilitation Centers in Mombasa County," sampled 89 students. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS Version 21 and descriptive and inferential statistics. Students suffering from PTSD were more likely to abuse drugs compared to those not doing so. High levels of substance abuse challenge the performance of students and could have long-lasting implications for their socioeconomic status.

Jenkins et al. studied "PTSD in Kenya and Its Associated Risk Factors: A Cross-Sectional Household Survey." The findings show that 48% have experienced severe trauma and a 10.6% prevalence of PTSD, which indicates a prevalence of PTSD in rural Kenya. The risk factors included being female, single, self-employed, having previous life experiences, and having a common mental disorder (CMD). Those who took to alcohol as a coping mechanism ended up more impoverished than those who did not do so. This emanates from the fact that alcohol abuse reduced their ability to work or access other socioeconomic opportunities.

Mbwayo et al. (2020) carried out a study titled "Trauma among Kenyan School Children in Urban and Rural Settings: PTSD Prevalence and Correlates." This study focused on estimating the prevalence and correlates of PTSD during the post-election violence period among Kenyan schoolchildren. The UCLA PTSD index was used in data collection and analysis on a sample of 2482 schoolchildren aged 11–17 years, both in urban and rural Kenya. The findings show that a majority of these children experienced or witnessed a form of violence during this period, translating to high levels of PTSD. They went on to be more prone to poverty and missed opportunities due to their propensity to abuse alcohol and other hard drugs.

Kiambi (2018) carried out a study titled "Factors Influencing Drugs and Substance Abuse among Public Secondary School Students in Kiambu County, Kenya." This study used a descriptive survey design to achieve its objective. A sample of 140 respondents drawn from three students and teachers using simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques was used during this study. Data was collected through the use of questionnaires, analyzed using SPSS software version 21.0, and presented in the form of frequencies and percentages. The findings show that there is a high prevalence of the use of drugs and substance abuse among the student population, especially in male students, and this behavior was influenced by PTSD and peer pressure, among others. Alcohol abuse had immense negative socioeconomic ramifications for the abusers, especially after school, due to the likelihood of poor grades, affecting their transition to higher levels of learning.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study shows that PTSD related to alcohol abuse, though not well studied in Kenya, is a real challenge facing the youth. It affects their learning processes. This impacts their transition to colleges and other higher learning institutions. Alcohol abuse also affects employment prospects for youth and leads to impoverishment.



5.2 Recommendations

It is pertinent to come up with psychosocial support mechanisms for alcohol abusers suffering from PTSD. The government should establish funding strategies for the rehabilitation of PTSD-affected youth. Also, government empowerment programs in Kenya should factor in mechanisms for ensuring that youth with PTSD-related alcohol abuse can access funding to enhance their socioeconomic status.

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