CORRELATES OF MENTAL HEALTH AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN IKOM LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA: COUNSELING IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the correlates of mental health among adolescents in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design; stratified random sampling was used to select the sample for the study. The population of the study consists of adolescents in Ikom Local Government Area numbering Five Hundred Thousand (500,000). The sample of 500 adolescent was collected from ten (10) secondary schools in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State. The questionnaire titled Correlates of Mental Health Among Adolescent Questionnaire (COMHAQ) was used for the study. The accruing data was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics. The result of the study indicated a positive relationship between substance abuse, social media on mental health of the adolescents. Based on the result of the study, it was recommended among others that drug education and its effect be included in school curriculum. Rehabilitation counseling and centres to help victims should be established, counselors should encourage and train social media addict on effective usage motivational enhancement therapy. This will make the adolescent adopt effective social media usage.

INTRODUCTION

Mental health is more than mere lack of mental disorder. It is rather more of and neither is it the mere absence of disease. It is rather more of a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being of an individual (World Health Organization, WHO, 2005).

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It is the presence of high-level wellness. Mental health is a component of health, a state of wellness which is essential to human collective and individual's ability to think, interact and economically productive.

Onyejiaku and Onyejiaku (2011) observed that what an individual takes into his or her mind, childhood experiences, as well as lifestyle, social relationship, and family can have effect on his or her mental health. WHO (2005) defines mental health as a process of feeling capable and competent, being able to handle level of stress, maintaining satisfying relationship and living independent life and being able to bounce back or recover from difficult situations. It has to do with adequate functional ability. Mental health includes emotional, psychological and social well-being, its affects how we think, feel and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make healthy choices. Mental health is directly related to the mind. A person with a good mental health should be able to think clearly, solve problem in life, relate and interact freely with others, dress properly, feel spiritually at ease.

Multiple social and structural factors may combine to protect or determine mental health of individuals. Psychological and biological factors such as emotional and environmental deprivation increase people's risk or experiencing mental health conductions; heredity, drug abuse, wars and disasters. Collins (2007) concept of mental health, include subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence and ability to recognize the ability to realize one's intellectual and emotional potentials.

Mental illness conditions include mental disorder and psycho-social disabilities as well as other mental health state. It is any illness experienced by a person which affects his or her emotions, thoughts and behaviour, which is contrary to their negative belief and personality and is producing negative effect on their lives or lives of their family members (WHO, 2001). Mental illness is directly related to the mind, because there is a connection between the physical body, soul and spirit, when one part is sick or healthy, it affects the other (Ojewale, 2004). There is alarming evidence in prevalence of mental health disorders among Nigeria youths. Collins (2007) observed that one in four Nigerian have one form of mental health or the other. Ngwu, Arop, Ekeng and Abuo (2022) opine that drug abuse interferes with the health and social function of an individual.

Due to the depressing economic conditions in many countries of the world, there has been a sharp increase in social ills, crimes and drug use among adolescent, who are the building blocks of the nations. The alarming evidence in the prevalence of substance abuse, the effects and consequences among Nigerian youths had called for concern and challenges to all helping professionals. Drugs have taken the center stage use. The magnitude, suffering and burden in terms of disability and cost for individuals, family and society are staggering. They are therefore a major challenge to global development. No group is immune to mental disorder but the risk is higher among the poor, homeless, unemployed, persons with low level of education, victims of migrants and refugees, adolescent among others (Collins, 2007).

Drugs such as cigarette smoking, marijuana, cocaine, heroin and other substances are regular parts of teens culture and modern day youths. Ngwu, Arop, Ekeng & Abuo (2022) observed that all these substances have negative impact on behaviour. Onyejaku and Onyyejiaku (2011) opined that most adolescents by the time they are 20 years have secretly tried at least cigarette smoking and about 10% or more have become regular users particularly among the poor and uneducated. The longer effect of this substance far outweighs the immediate gratification they offer. Drug abuse impairs the mental health and stability of the adolescents. In a study conducted by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2016), the result specified that 34% of young students were habitual smokers, while 7.4% were addicted, smoking more than 10% per day, within all these addictive behavior disorders, male scored significantly higher than females. Wang, Liu and Wang (2019), warned that drug abusers who exhibit symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression and behavior changes, fatigue and loss or increase in appetite should be treated by medical experts and counselors to save them from deadly diseases. Ngwu, Arop, Ekeng, Abuo (2011) added that drug use by adolescents help them cope with feeling of depression and inadequacy. Alcohol and drug use among adolescents are social evil difficult to control because the use of this substance provide immediate and powerful reinforces with very unpleasant withdrawal symptoms.

Whatever the motives for abuse of alcohol and drugs, the use of this substance has adverse cumulative effects on the central nervous systems impoverishment of hormonal activity, memory learning ability and reasoning. Drugs addiction dependency is one of the problem faced the youths. Addiction is anything or behavior that is habitual, repetitive and very difficult or impossible to control (Collins, 2007). He further observed that addiction bring short term pleasure, but with longer term consequences in terms of one's health, relationship, psychological well-being and spirituality. Addiction have become a major health hazards worldwide especially among youths. Drug addiction have resulted to mental disorders which result to anti-social personalities, and behaviour. The American Society of Addiction Medicine (2019), defines addiction as a chronic disorder that affect the reward, motivation and memory functions of the brain based on the use of substance that have psychoactive effect. This result in change in behavior and emotional response to stimuli related to substance use, including inability to abstain from drug use consistently, impaired control of other behaviours, craving for the substance of abuse, decrease inability to recognize the personal problems that have arisen with drugs abuse, dysfunction in emotional response to situations.

Addiction does not only refer to dependence on substances such as heroin or cocaine. Some addiction also involves as inability to stop partaking in activities such as gambling, eating and social media. There are substance addiction and non-substances addiction or behavioral addiction, with both having similar symptoms liking craving, impulse control problem, tolerance building, withdrawal mood swing, daily-life disturbance, relapse and being preoccupied with the addiction (Okwaraji, Aguwa, Onyebueke & Chinweobi-Eze, 2015). The addictive use could result in accidents (in facts, several eyewitnesses" report stated domestic accidences of young people being killed by gas explosion via phones), psychological detachment, countless negative effect on physical health and various types of mental illness (Elhai, Duorak, Levine & Hall, 2017; Kwon, Limicho & Yang, 2013). Smart phone addiction often occurs along with medical conditions in other mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety and cognitive disorders.

Adolescents in this paper covers, early adolescent and late adolescent. Adolescents and youths under 25 makeover 40 percent of the world's population according to World Data Bank (2014). This period is when there are physical, hormonal development, changes in their mental abilities, social skills, relationship with parents, peers, and others. Adolescents may accept parental standard with little question or challenge. As they grow older, adolescents begin to question parental view points and peers have greater impact on the moulding of core beliefs and values. This change, create the need for adjustment, experimenting with new ways of thinking, acting and relating with others. Pressure on adolescent to take their toll as adolescents often act out their problems in socially disapproved ways, excessive drinking, substance abuse, lying, stealing crime, gang violence, other forms of rebellion or delinquency gives adolescent a sense of power, feeling of independence as means of gaining a retaining the attention and acceptance of peers.

Often however, they lack the critical skills to differentiate between valid information and that which can be harmful and manipulative. Aware that they are no longer children, adolescence want freedom in large doses. During the time many older adolescent feel pressure to make decision about career, values and life styles, and what to do with their lives. Some adolescents' decision can have lifelong implications and affect their mental health. Ngwu, Arop, Ntui, Ebuara (2023), opine that internet exposure, provides information and materials that are detrimental to the mental health, socio-emotional development and well-being of young individuals.

Several factors are attributed to mental Health disorders which is classified under biological, psychological, social and spiritual. Biological disposition according to Collins (2007) include influence of drugs toxins or pollutants hereditary, physical Health and congenital effects, insufficient sleep among others.

Psychological stressors include, frustration, feeling of insecurity, inner conflicts, pressure, disappointment, family disharmony, parental neglect or abuse, upbringing that was so rigid or demanding. Uche, Orji and Ngwu (2019), observed that parenting style (whether intact or non-intact families) predict child well-being with respect to social competence, academic performance, psychosocial development and problem behaviour.

In addition Uche and Ngwu (2016), added that styles of parenting have also been shown to have impact on the adjustment and behaviour of adolescents.

Social stressors are easy to see especially in Nigeria where the standard of living is becoming unbearable for the common man. Unemployment for the young people, political instability, insecurity, social class among others. Sani (2023) exposed circumstances that aggravate mental health of individuals to include, widespread hardship ravaging Nigerian occasioned by economic down turn massive youths' unemployment has given rise to all kinds of youth restiveness in country, thus Nigerian youth are susceptible to mental health challenges. Ngwu, Arop, Ntui and Ebuara (2003), this is the bit to escape from depression occasioned by their harsh reality.

Religion also has a role to play as every religion has wonderful ethical codes which should guide attitude or adherents to life in general. Religion for instance condemned all manner of vices and avaries and warns people of the danger awaiting them. Religion seems to be losing its control or grip on the moral virtues of the society. There is a glaring picture of secularization, materialism, humanism as negative aftermath of globalization. Consequently, the cherished values which have given people direction have been eroded. Robbery, rape, hard drugs, violence, shameless nudity, glaring terrorism have taken over the moral values (Anyacho, 2009). Parental and adult example also predisposes adolescent to drugs, because some adolescent grew up in culture of drug takers as most children become well acquainted with drugs. Teenagers watch parents consume drugs and adolescents follow the adult example, peers and other social influences. NAFDAC (2020) list some social factors that have resulted in abuse of drugs/substance as decline in family values and systems, parents not playing their roles property, children and youth not receiving proper guidance, peer pressure, social media influence, poverty and unemployment. In recent times, some remarkable changes have been observed across the globe regarding the qualitative and quantitative expansion of the internet with a large number of adolescents being addicted to social media. It is observed that adolescent overstay on social media.

Social media refers to the new form of media that allows interactive communication amongst online connected individuals. This platform, is utilize to access information in various sources (Lei, 2021). Research has proven that addiction to social media has strong relationship with health relational, performance and emotional problems (Yubo, Dan, Tonglin, Lily & Wang, 2019). Facebook and other social media addictions are related to mental health issues, such as Insomia, depression and anxiety, thus the important of public enlightenment which is applicable in the area of promoting mental health (Koc & Gulyagei, 2013; Denwigwe, Eke, Ngwu 2022). Also addiction to social media was seriously link to depressive symptoms found in high school students in Central Serbia (Igor, Aleksande, Jouana & Dubarauke, 2012) and among young adult in United States (Lin et al., 2016).

Findings from China during Corona Virus pandemic showed that alongside upsurge in pathological internet activities by adolescents there was also increase in alcohol and substance misuse (Sun et al., 2020). Some of the negative effects or social media addiction on users mental health are forgetfulness, anxiety, sleeplessness, isolation, fatigue depression, restlessness, eye disease, neck or back pain (Rotimi, 2021). The constraint overstay on social media is not good to health because it stops students from establishing personal links unnecessary usage of social media has been shown to care increased unhappiness, anxiety, pain, sadness and dissatisfaction with life, resulting in decline in psychological well-being (Social Media and Mental Health, n.d).

Onyejiaku & Onyejiaku (2011) observed that video, games, and internet networking have a strong influence on mental health of today's youths. The type of films, video and game and music, adolescents watches or listen to will shape his lifestyle. Ngwu, Arop, Ntui and Ebuara (2023) the internet represent one of the greatest modern day technological advancement that have both its positive and negative sides, it provides a platform for the young and venerable to be preyed upon and victimized, causes the young mind to be fixated on victual world to the exclusion of meaningful relationship with significant others, and also provide information and materials that are detrimental to mental health, socio-economic development and well-being of young individuals.

A survey conducted by National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in 2014 revealed that students of secondary schools and institution of higher learning are the highest group at risk of substance abuse in Nigeria. The secondary school students across gender between ages 10 years and 14 years in various locations in Lagos State, Nigeria, abused different substances for a number of reasons, feeling high, bullying, feel good, get excited, reduce tension among others.

Some theories have been put forward to answer the question of drug use, which include: Disease genetic: Theories maintain that, otherwise healthy people experiment with drugs, perhaps in response to curiosity or peer pressure and get hooked physically so that substance abuse become a disease that needs medical treatment. This theory assumed that there are behaviours that lead to dependencies, so both the causes and treatment need to involve some elements behaviour change.

Social theories: conclude that race, age, social economic status, neighborhood where people live, educational level, peer influence and similar issues can combine to determine if one take drugs, what drugs are likely to be used and how the habit is supported financially.

Psychological theories looks within the abuse to see if personality traits, psychological stress, inner conflict, hidden fears, or individual needs contribute to substance abuse or the development of addictions. Many substance users have inner tensions and frustrations. Some look for drug experience that will bring excitement, stimulation, intoxication and feeling of freedom from worries and problems of life.

Peer cluster theory assumed that peers are major influences leading to substance abuse. Friends, acquaintances, and siblings often provide the drugs, and teach the younger person how to use them.

Health Belief Model (HBM) y Hochbaum, Rosenstock and Kegels (1950) is a psychological model that renders more predictions and explanation about health behaviours. The model was considered suitable because, it explains with threats and beliefs of taking and not-talking necessary health actions with regards to social media use.

Apart from making daily life better and earie in every smartphone can have negative consequences. Interpersonal relations, physical and psychological health and general functioning. A study in University in Malaysia revealed that students who spent more times on their mobile phones were vulnerable to psychological disturbance such as anxiety, depression problematic mobile phone behavior, addiction and lack of sleep resulting to stress due to interference of the overall psychological functioning of an individual (Zulkeply & Baharudin, 2009). Furthermore, Njoku and Ofoegbu (2020) noted that social media has overtaken study time of students who are primarily in school to acquire knowledge in their respective fields of study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Mental health is an essential part of person's well-being. Whatever affect mental health of a person will directly or indirectly affects person's general health. Mental health is crucial at every stage of development from childhood to adolescent to adulthood. Substance addiction and non-substance on behavioural addictions affect the mental health of the adolescent in several ways. Various other psycho-social factors such as unemployment, anxiety, peer group influence impact negatively on the adolescent. The alarming rate of addiction to drugs and social media in Ikom Local Government Area has become a cause of concern to parent, families, government and society at large. Adolescent stage is a period experimentation, initially the person is induced to try a new experience through combined influence of family, personal heroines, peer group, curiosity, or physiological needs. In most cases, the initial experimentation leads to small steps that fellow a downward progression that can involve behaviour change, physical deterioration, family stresses, financial problem, career is disruption, increasing psychological disintegration, high cost of treatment. Even more pathetic are the shattered lives of the young persons, many are seen moving aimlessly in the streets, broken bodies, destroyed relationship, dulled brains, and even death are among the cost of addiction.

Depending on the addiction, some young persons are able to withdraw from it with the little or no help but some needs professional counselling and medication. Government, NGOs, faith based organization have intervened in several ways but the problem still persist. A pertinent question therefore, if drug use and social media has effect on mental health of the adolescent in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Research Question

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.
1)   To what extent does drug abuse relate with mental health problem among the youths in Ikom Local Government Area?
2)   To what extent does social media relate with mental health of the youths in   Ikom Local Government Area?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study to guide the study.
1)   There is no significant relationship between drug abuse and mental health of the youths in Ikom Local Government Area.
2)   There is no significant relationship between social media and mental health of the youths in Ikom Local Government Area.

METHODOLOGY

The correlational design was utilized for the study. The area of the study comprised of all adolescent in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State. A population sample of 500 adolescents was drawn from ten (10) secondary schools using the questionnaire titled Correlates of Mental Health Among Adolescents Questionnaire (COMHAAQ). The first section of the questionnaire contains demographic data and second section contain 20 Likert type items that sought information on the mental health of the adolescent as regards to drug use and social media addiction. The questionnaire was validated by two experts, one from Measurement and Evaluation, and also from the Department of Guidance and Counselling. Reliability was obtained with a co-efficient of 0.89 which was adjudged to be reliable. Data was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. To further ensure that ethical principle are observed, the purpose of the study was clearly spelt out in the questionnaire and read at the point of administration to the respondents. Confidentially was also guaranteed.

Presentation of Result
Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between drug abuse and mental health of the adolescent in Ikom Local Government Area.

The independent variable in the hypothesis is drug abuse and the dependent variable is the mental health of the adolescents. The result of the analysis are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Pearson Product Moment Analysis of the relationship between drug abuse and mental health of the adolescent in Ikom Local Government Area (N = 500)

VARIABLE	$\sum x$ $\sum x^2$	$\sum y$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-value
Drug abuse	13976	398136		
			688402	0.124
Mental Health	623865	93636		

* Significant at p<.05, df = 498, critical r = 0.062

The result of the analysis shows that the calculated t-value of 0.124 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.062 at 0.05 level of significant with 498 degrees of freedom. This means that there is a significant positive correlation relationship between drug abuse and mental health of the adolescents in Ikom Local Government. Based on the result, the null hypothesis is rejected that is drug abuse by the adolescent have a great impact in mental health of the adolescent.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between social media and mental health of the adolescents. The independent variable in the hypothesis is social media and the dependent variable is mental health. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between social media and mental health of the adolescents in Ikom Local Government Area (N = 500)

VARIABLE	Ex Ex²	Ey Ey²	Exy	r-value
Social media	13976	398136		
			186190	0.15
Mental Health	6640	92348		

* Significant at p<.05 level, df – 498, critical - 0062

The result of the analysis in Table 2 shows that calculated r-value of 0.15 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.062 at 0.05 level of significant with 498 degrees of freedom. This means that there is significant positive relationship between social media and mental health of the adolescents. Based on the result the hypothesis was rejected, this implies that social media relate with mental health of the adolescents.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of the first hypothesis revealed that drug abuse significantly influence mental health of the adolescents. These findings is in line with the view of Collins (2001) who observed that drug addiction bring short term pleasure, but there are longer term consequences in terms of one's health, relationship, psychological well-being and spirituality. Anyacho (2007) supported this finding that substance abuse and crime go together, causing pain to the victims and great detriment to communities and to the whole country. Even more pathetic are the shattered lives in the part that fellows addictions, spiritual emptiness, broken bodies, destroyed relationship, ruined careers, dulled brain, deep feelings of grief are among the cost of substance abuse. Ngwu, Arop, Ekeng, Abuo (2022) observed that all this substances have negative impact on behavior.

The result of the second hypothesis revealed that social media influence mental health of the adolescents, this is in line with the view of Onyejiaku (2011) who observe that the type of films and video games, music adolescent watches and listen to shape their lifestyles. Similarly, Ngwu, Arop, Ntui and Ebuara (2022) supported this finding that internet represent one of the greatest modern day technological advancement that have both positive and negative sides and also provide information and materials that are detrimental to mental health, socio-economic development and well-being, of young individuals. In addition, Zulkephy and Baharudin (2009) study is in line with the result of the finding which revealed that students who spent more time in mobile phones are vulnerable to psychology disturbance resulting to stress due to the interference of the overall psychological functioning of an individual. Elhai, Duorak, Levire and Hall (2017), supported this finding with the report of domestic accidences of adolescents being killed by gas explosion via phones. Psychological distatement, countless negative effect on physical health and various type of mental illness.

Counseling Implications

Students should invest their time on productive venture such as studying rather than wasting time on social media.

• Students should maximize the presence for knowledge and academic purpose.

• Students should guide against activity in social media that may be inimical to their mental health such as taken lives, presented there that paints the picture of glamour and good living, but in reality are fantasies.

• Counseling centres should be established to help the adolescents.

Mental health programmes should not be solely concerned with mental disorders, but should also recognize and address issue which promotes mental health.

- Mental health promotion should involve actions that create living conditions and environments that support positive mental health and allow people to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles.

- Avoiding excessive consumption of alcohol and use of drugs.

- Providing psychological interventions to those affected by disasters.

- Seminars on positive life styles.

- Value clarifications, family life education through parental consultation and group work on guidance and counseling.

- Group work on role of negative effective of drug abuse.

- Role play, film shows and video vignettes on lives wasted by drugs as a deterrent.

- Posters on drugs as killers and life wasters.

- Public enlightenment which is applicable in area of promoting mental health should be emphasized

CONCLUSION

The study investigates the correlates of mental health among adolescent in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The adolescents' years is a period of transition with lot of changes, experimentation, impacting on the mental health of the young person negatively. Considering this changes, counseling at every stage of development is key to help the young navigate through this period. Parent, counselor have a key helping the adolescents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

i) Adolescents could benefit from preventive, educative and supportive counseling.

ii) In counseling them, try to understand their world and be non-judgmental or condemning them.

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