

Psychosocial Variables as Correlates of Crystal Methamphetamine (*Mkpuru mmiri*) Consumption among the Youths in Awka Metropolis, Anambra State: Counselling Imperatives

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Abstract

The study investigated psychosocial variables as correlates of crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Awka Metropolis, Anambra State. The design of the study was correlational research design. The population of the study consisted of 5,300 youths selected from Awka metropolis. A sample of 530 youths were randomly selected from four Local Government Areas in Awka and used for the study. An instrument titled Psychosocial and Crystal Methamphetamine Assessment Scale (PCMAS) which was validated by three experts from the fields of Psychology and Counselling / Measurement and Evaluation Departments Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, Umuahia, Abia State was used for data collection. The validity of the instrument was conducted using the internal consistency validity method. The instrument was trial tested on ten adolescents who were selected from two Local Government Areas outside the study area. Cronbach Alpha Statistics was used to establish the reliability of the instrument and the reliability coefficient of .78 was gotten. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to answer the research questions while ANCOVA statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that psychosocial variables such as depression, loneliness, hopelessness, lack of social support correlate with crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Awka Metropolis. Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that the variables such as social support, loneliness, hopelessness and depression are correlated to crystal methamphetamine. Based on the conclusion, it was recommended among others that a well packaged group counselling programme tailored towards teaching the youths who are vulnerable to feeling of hopelessness, loneliness and depression the strategies to adopt to overcome such problems. Counselling imperatives were also highlighted.

Keywords: Methamphetamine, consumption, loneliness, depression.

Introduction

Crystal methamphetamine is a strong and highly addictive drug that is medically revealed to affect the central nervous system. There is no legal use for it and it comes in clear crystal chunks or shiny blue-white rocks. Another name for it is ice or glass (Lee, 2022). Also, it is referred to as *Mkpuru mmiri* in local parlance, which is loosely translated as 'seed of water'. In reality, it is a crystal narcotic hallucinogen (Banjo, 2021). Nkem (2021), is of the opinion that, the substance is highly potent and affects the central nervous systems of the body, as well as, gingers the victims to deviant activities. Similarly, Babafemi, a Spokesperson for the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), opines that, crystal methamphetamine is a very addictive stimulant, which renders the user hyperactive and prone to destructive tendencies (Ekpe, 2022). Youths who are involved with

crystal methamphetamine suffer a high risk of co-occurring mental health problems, which often involve difficult life situations and social problems (Richert, Anderberg, & Dahlberg, 2020). According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), brain imaging studies on people, who have inappropriately used methamphetamine for a long time, suggest that, dopamine system activity changes in such a way that, it can seriously compromise a person's verbal learning and motor skills. A person addicted to mkpuru mmiri may also become depressed, start hallucinating and could hurt themselves or others. Also, they find everyday activities less enjoyable, have rapid mood swing, and become depressed and easily stressed (Health Direct, 2021).

Following from the above, the researcher maintains that, youths who use crystal methamphetamine may experience an array of problems that borders on academic difficulties, physical and mental health (derangement, depression, conduct problems, personality disorders, suicidal thoughts, attempted suicide and suicide), poor interpersonal relationship with others, disability, financial stress as any money that gets into their hand is used to purchase the drug, criminal offenses and juvenile delinquencies, poverty, maladjustment, and even untimely death. These problems affect not only the youths but the family members, communities, and society at large. Investigation showed that the drug has the same effect as cocaine; however, it is more destructive and addictive as well as cheaper (500 can buy a dose). It is commonly produced in illegal, hidden laboratories, by mixing various forms of amphetamine which is another stimulant drug or derivatives with other chemicals to boost its potency. The ways youths consume this drug include; sniffing through the nostrils, melting and injecting it into the body with syringes and drinking (David- Chyddy, 2022).

However, despite the negative consequences associated with crystal methamphetamine, there seems to be an increasing addiction to the drug by youths in Nigeria, especially, in Anambra state which according to reports has reached a worrisome crescendo. Investigations reveal that, many youths use crystal methamphetamine and related drugs to heighten their level of happiness, which unfortunately is a false sense of happiness as it elevates them into hallucinations and poses danger to their health.

Many communities in Anambra state have declared war on the drug. The trend in many communities is the flogging of consumers. Daily, videos of youths who have been apprehended, tied up in trees or pillars at village squares or village halls usually surface on social media yet, many youths are still desperate about consuming this dangerous drug. In 2021, a 100-level student in one of the federal universities in the eastern region became mentally deranged due to crystal methamphetamine consumption. Investigation revealed that he was addicted to the substance way back in his senior secondary school days. Morisano, Babor, & Robaina (2014), assert that several research reviews revealed that 50% to 90% of youths with a drug like crystal methamphetamine and alcohol problems suffer extensive mental health issues. Considering the rate of crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youth in our society, one begins to wonder about the possible cause(s). One particular area that is of suspicion is the psychosocial variables surrounding the youth. Such psychosocial variables under investigation in this study include: social support, loneliness, depression, and hopelessness.

Social support has been implicated in several drug-related studies, which include crystal methamphetamine. Social support infers the physical and emotional support that, the youths receive from their family members, friend and community members. It helps them to develop a sense of belonging because people around them love, care and value them. Social support can come in the form of practical assistance, physiological and emotional assistance among others. Lack of practical assistance; may serve as a push button, towards crystal methamphetamine consumption, for some youths, when they fail to get financial assistance from family members or significant others. Also, lack of physiological and emotional assistance such as having someone to discuss your problems with, confide in and get encouragement from, may be the reason some youths take to crystal methamphetamine consumption, in a bid to forget their problems. According to Blanchard, Brown, Horan and Sherwood (2000), lack of social support is among the variables reported as the most often associated with substance abuse, such as crystal methamphetamine among the youths. Similarly, Fleury, Grenier and Bamvita (2014) study on a cohort of 297 substance users (crystal methamphetamine and others) with severe mental disorders was interviewed after an 18-month follow-up period. A hierarchical linear regression analysis was carried out using five blocks of independent variables at the baseline of which social support was among them. According to Estevez and Emler (2011), the rate at which youths are frequently presented at psychiatric clinics due to chronic mental health problems owing to drug use is worrisome. Stressing the above fact, the researcher maintains that, a visit to any of the rehabilitation homes in Anambra state as well as other states of the federation, serves as proof that some of the mentally deranged youths in such homes were a result of hard drugs consumption of which crystal methamphetamine is among. Such lifestyles maybe be due to a lack of social support from family members and significant others, in their communities. Some of these youths are products of families that are marked with serious financial challenges. Many of them are unemployed and devoid of means of livelihood. The frustrations, which they experience, due to lack of social support push them into consuming the drug and consequently, mental health problems. Thus, they require the services of professional counselors, to assist them to work on their mindset, developing strong beliefs in themselves; and channel the potentials that they are endowed with into worthwhile activities.

Loneliness may be another factor associated with crystal methamphetamine consumption among youths. Formerly, loneliness was a positive concept that meant withdrawal from daily routine events to achieve more important goals in life (thinking, meditation, and spiritual connection), but nowadays, it is not considered a positive experience in psychological literature but refers to social withdrawal and poor social interaction (Hosseini, Ardekani, Bakhshani and Bakhshani, 2014). According to Shankar; Hamer and McMunn (2013), loneliness negatively impacts both physical and mental health. Similarly, Lamis, Ballard, and Patel (2014), view it as a psychologically destructive and terrifying experience that can lead to severe psychological and physical problems. Also, Moeller and Seehuus (2019), assert that loneliness is associated with anxiety, depression, suicide, and substance use among the youth. Based on the above assertions, the researcher views loneliness as a lack of interaction with others, feeling of being alone, unloved and neglected, not valued, unbelievable or distrustful of others which may predispose an individual to negative experiences

such as anxiety, depression, and consequently, consumption of hard drugs such as crystal methamphetamine for solace.

Gonzalez and Skewes (2013), reveal that, there is a positive relationship between loneliness and drug consumption. Similarly, Hosseinbor, Ardekani, Bakhshani, and Bakhshani, (2014) report that, two hundred and twenty-eight youths were enrolled in a cross-sectional study. Hundred and eighteen drug abusers were recruited through random sampling. The Social and emotional loneliness scale for Adults (SELSA-S) was used to evaluate the participants. Findings revealed that feelings of loneliness were stronger in drug abusers and increased the probability of involvement in high-risk behaviors and drug abuse. Thus, it was concluded that the feeling of loneliness is one of the high-risk factors which may initiate one into drug abuse of which crystal methamphetamine is among.

Based on the above forgoing reports, the researcher maintains that, a lot of factors may predispose the youths to feel disconnected. These factors include; bereavement, the feeling of inadequacy and insecurity, relationship break-up, inability to express oneself, feeling of not being appreciated or loved, difficulty interacting with peers, maltreatment and the likes. Thus, the consumption of crystal methamphetamine which seems affordable could be a way for such youths to believe that their emotional and psychological needs are satisfied.

Hopelessness may be linked to crystal methamphetamine consumption, among youths. This is because, some youths who feel that there is no hope in life or their chances of making it may out of frustration, resort to crystal methamphetamine consumption. Hopelessness is an emotion that is marked by a lack of hope, optimism, and passion in life. In our society today, a lot of youth are unhappy with the way things are going. Lack of job opportunities and means of livelihood owing to poor governance is pushing many youths to the boundary. Gradually, many of them begin to lose interest in activities and people around them hence, taking solace in hard drug consumption such as crystal methamphetamine in a bid to forget their predicament and cope with the negative situation they are exposed to. A study by Park, Armeli, and Tennen (2004) establishes that, youths consumed more alcohol and drugs of which crystal meth is among, owing to the feeling of hopelessness. Similarly, Shalit, Rehm, and Lev-Ran (2019) establish a higher prevalence of feelings of hopelessness, considering and attempting suicide among adolescents who take drugs like crystal meth, among others. Presently, the poor economic situation in the country is enough to push the youths into drugs like crystal methamphetamine. Many of these youths are graduates who lack financial empowerment, owing to unemployment problems. The prevalence and odds of hopelessness, suicidality and co-occurring substance use, among adolescents were evaluated. Findings revealed a high prevalence of hopelessness, suicidality, and co-occurring substance use among youth hallucinogen users (Desai, Jain, Xavier, and Wei Du, 2022). Hallucinogens are a class of drugs that can produce an altered state of consciousness by inducing hallucinations and distorting one's perception of reality just like crystal methamphetamine does (Carhart-Harris & Goodwin, 2017). Research findings revealed that crystal meth users also abuse hallucinogens such as Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD), and Psilocybin mushrooms, commonly referred to as "magic" mushrooms among others.

Depression is another factor that is often correlated with a hard drug like crystal methamphetamine. According to Stecker (2004), depression is defined as a mood disorder in which feelings of sadness, loss, anger, or frustration interfere with everyday life for an extended period. Aghadinazu (2021), identified causes of depression among the youths to include; lack of prospects and future security; inability to secure admission; the influence of Western culture; family structure; parental separation and divorce; poor parenting; learning pressure, and examination failure. The issue of depression among the youth is currently on the increase in our contemporary society. Depression is marked by a feeling of persistent sadness and loss of interest in any activity which the individual previously enjoyed. A depressed person often loses appetite for food and develops difficulty in sleeping resulting in the consumption of the drug in most cases. McKetan., Lubman., Lee., Ross., & Slade, (2011), reported that a cross-sectional survey of 500 individuals who were seeking treatment for methamphetamine addiction revealed that 40% of the sample identified that they had suffered major depression at some point in the previous year. Furthermore, a study of 526 methamphetamine consumers found that their severity of depression was significantly associated with their self-reported use of methamphetamine 30 days prior (to receiving treatment, and that more frequent consumers had higher Beck Depression Index scores than those who abstained from it (Glassner-Edwards et. al., 2009). Similarly, the study on the assessment of anxiety and depression among substance use disorder patients by Mohammed, Ahmad, Hassan, and Hassan (2020), showed that, substance use disorders of which crystal meth is among are associated with high levels of depression and anxiety. More specifically, it is associated with severe depression and anxiety. Thus, how can depression be a possible link to crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youth is one of the subjects of this study?

Considering the rate of crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youth in our society today, experts (educationists, counselors) are worried because individuals who consume it usually develop emotional and cognitive problems. According to a World Health Organization report (2016), the drug severely affects the brain's structure and functioning. Also, Nkem (2021), pointed out that the substance is highly potent and affects the central nervous systems of the body as well as gingers the victims to deviant activities. Similarly, the researcher has seen youths whose destinies were put in jeopardy owing to the consumption of illicit drugs.

It is against this background that the researcher investigates psychosocial variables which correlate with crystal methamphetamine (*Mkpuru mmiri*) consumption among the youths. Thus, this work explores the psychosocial correlates of crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youth in the Awka metropolis, Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Several research reviews revealed that 50% to 90% of youths with drug-related problems of which crystal methamphetamine is among suffer extensive mental health issues. Although the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Police Anti-Cult Unit, and other relevant law enforcement agencies usually arrest the dealers and consumers of the illicit drug, its sales and consumption by the youths persist. Also, many communities in Anambra state together with their

youth leaders are waging war against the hydra-headed monster, which happens to be the root cause of criminal and related activities, yet, some youths are not deterred from using the drug.

Considering the rate of consumption of this drug among the youths, the future of the society is in jeopardy if the root of the problem is not traced and properly tackled. Although there are a lot of studies as it concerns youth and drug addiction but none has been able to address psychosocial variables which correlate with crystal methamphetamine consumption among youths. Thus, the problem of this study put as a question is, how psychosocial variables correlate with crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate how psychosocial variables correlate with crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra state.

Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. examine the extent of the relationship between social support and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state.
- ii. determine the extent of the relationship between loneliness and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state.
- iii. find out the extent of the relationship between hopelessness and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state.
- iv. establish the extent of the relationship between depression and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state.
- v. ascertain the extent of the relationships between (social support, loneliness, hopelessness, and depression) combine as related to crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

1. What is the extent of the relationship between social support and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state?
2. What is the extent of the relationship between loneliness and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state?
3. What is the extent of the relationship between hopelessness and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state?
4. What is the extent of the relationship between depression and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state?
5. What is the extent of the relationship between the four independent variables when combined and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: there is no significant relationship between social support and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state.

- H02:** there is no significant relationship between loneliness and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state.
- H03:** there is no significant relationship between hopelessness and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state.
- H04:** there is no significant relationship between depression and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state.
- H05:** there is no significant relationship between the four independent variables when combined and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state.

Methodology

The study utilized a correlational design to find out the relationship between the variables under study. The population of the study was five thousand, three hundred (5,300) youths from four local government areas in Awka who volunteered to be part of the study formed the population. A simple random sampling technique was used to draw five hundred and thirty (530) subjects who formed the sample for the study. A researcher developed instrument titled "Psychosocial and Crystal Methamphetamine Assessment Scale" (PCMAS) with a four-point Likert Scale of strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1) was used for data collection. The instrument had 20 items and the mean rating of 2.5 indicates acceptance of the items while that below 2.5 indicates rejection. The instrument was face validated by three experts from the fields of Psychology and Counselling / Measurement and Evaluation Departments of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, Umuahia, Abia State. They criticized the items with respect to the response format, pattern of questions and number of items. Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was trial tested on ten (10) adolescents who were selected from two Local Government Areas outside the study area. Cronbach Alpha Statistics was used to establish the reliability of the instrument and the reliability coefficient of .78 was gotten which was considered high enough. The copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents by the researcher and two research assistants. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to answer the research questions while ANCOVA statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance

Results

H01: There is no significant relationship between social support and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra state.

Table 1: Relationship between social support and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra state.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardize d Coefficient	T	Sig.	Remarks
	B	Std. Error	Betaz			
Social support						sig
Crystal Meth	5.023	.447		11.232	.000	
Consumption	.742	.021	.826	4.741	.000	

Table 1 shows that the relationship between social support and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra state is high and statistically significant ($B=.826$, $t=11.232$, $p>0.05$). The null hypothesis, was, therefore, rejected. The conclusion is that the consumption of crystal methamphetamine is dependent on the social support available to the youths. The more the youths lack social support, the more they are exposed to crystal methamphetamine consumption.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between loneliness and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra state.

Table 2: Relationship between loneliness and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra state.

Model coefficients	unstandardized coefficients		standardized	T	Sig	Remarks
	B	std. error	beta			
Loneliness	6.232	.475			13.121	Sig
.000 CMC	.682	.023	.787		30.162	
.000						

$P < 0.05$

The table shows that the relationship between loneliness and crystal methamphetamine consumption among youths in the Awka metropolis is high and statistically significant ($b=.787$, $t=30.162$, $p<0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. It could be concluded that loneliness is a major contributor to crystal methamphetamine consumption. This implies that the feeling of loneliness increases the rate of crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in the Awka metropolis.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between hopelessness and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra state.

Table 3: Relationship between hopelessness and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra state.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig	Remarks
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Hopelessness	8.533	.464		18.407	.000	Sig
Crystal Meth Consumption	.690	.027	.739	25.954	.000	

$P<0.05$

Table 3 indicates that the relationship between hopelessness and crystal methamphetamine consumption among youths in the Awka metropolis is high and statistically significant ($b=.739$, $t=25.954$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. It could be concluded that crystal

methamphetamine consumption is highly dependent on the feeling of hopelessness among the youths in the Awka metropolis, Anambra state.

H04: There is no significant relationship between depression and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra state.

Table 4: Relationship between depression and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra state.

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	T	Sig	Remarks
	Coefficients		Coefficients			
	B	std. Error	Beta			
Depression	12.135	.506		24.004	.000	
Crystal meth consumption	.435	0.26	0.714	16.647	.000	sig

$P < 0.05$

The above table shows that there is a high relationship between depression and crystal methamphetamine consumption ($b=714$, $t=16.647$, $p < 0.05$). Nevertheless, the results in the table show that depression is statistically significant to crystal methamphetamine consumption ($b= 714$, $t=16.6647$, $p < 0.05$) hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

H05: One-way ANOVA Analysis of difference in the extent of the relationship between the variables when combined with crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra state.

Table 5: Relationship between psychosocial variables and methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra state.

Model	Sum of squares		Df	Mean square	F	Sig
1	Regression	2824.103	4	706.026	4.823	.000
	Residual	81530.372	557	146.374		
	Total	84354.475	561			

Table 5 above indicates that there is no significant difference in the extent of the relationship between the independent variables (social support, loneliness, hopelessness, and depression) when combined and crystal methamphetamine among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra state. ($F(4,557)= 4.823$, $P < 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected which is an indication that social support, loneliness, hopelessness, and depression significantly differ in the extent they relate to Crystal Methamphetamine consumption among youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra state.

Discussion of Findings/Implications

The first hypothesis states that “ there is no significant relationship between social support and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Awka metropolis, Anambra state”. However, the findings showed that there is a very high positive correlation between social support

and Crystal methamphetamine consumption. This finding is in line with Blanchard, et al (2000), assertion that lack of social support is among the variables reported as the most often associated with substance abuse among youths. According to the researcher, crystal methamphetamine is one of the substances abused reported by (Blanchard, et al (2000). Similarly, Fleury, Grenier, and Bamvita (2014), study on a cohort of 297 substance users (crystal methamphetamine and others) with severe mental disorders was interviewed after an 18-month follow-up period. A hierarchical linear regression analysis was carried out using five blocks of independent variables at the baseline of which social support was among them. Also, Estevez and Emler (2011), maintained that the rate at which the youths are frequently presented at psychiatric clinics due to chronic mental health problems owing to drug use such as crystal methamphetamine and others are worrisome. Following the above reports, the researcher agrees that crystal methamphetamine consumption exposes youths to mental health issues. Some of these youths are products of families that are marked with serious financial challenges. Many of them are unemployed and devoid of means of livelihood. The frustrations which they experience due to lack of social support push them into consuming the drug and consequently, mental health problems if care is not taken. Thus, they require counseling to live more productively.

The study rejected the second hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between loneliness and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state. The study revealed a positive correlation thus, the hypothesis was rejected. This finding is in line with Moeller and Seehuus (2019), who assert that loneliness is associated with anxiety, depression, suicide, and substance use of which crystal methamphetamine is among. Based on the above assertions, the researcher opines that loneliness may cause youths to feel neglected and not valued. Also, it may cause them to be distrustful of others as well as predispose them to negative experiences. To overcome such negative experiences, they may find temporary solace in crystal methamphetamine consumption.

Hypothesis three states that “there is no significant relationship between hopelessness and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state. This hypothesis was rejected as a high positive correlation between hopelessness was revealed to exist between them. This finding agrees with the report of Shalit, Rehm, and Lev-Ran (2019) that a higher prevalence of feelings of hopelessness, considering, and attempting suicide among adolescents who take drugs. Similarly,

Saral et al. (2022) reports that the prevalence and odds of hopelessness, suicidality, and co-occurring substance use like crystal methamphetamine among adolescent were evaluated and findings revealed a high prevalence of hopelessness. Following the above reports, the researcher is of the opinion that, in recent times, the poor economic situation of the country is enough to push the youths into drugs like crystal methamphetamine. Many youths have lost hope in their ability to make it owing to their lack of unemployment and means of livelihood. The ugly situation may be the reason some youths sees crystal methamphetamine consumption as an option and way out of their ugly situation which they are confronted with daily.

The study also rejected hypothesis four which states that there is no significant relationship between depression and crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths in Anambra state. This finding is in line with McKetan et al. (2011), which report that a cross-sectional survey of 500 individuals who were seeking treatment for methamphetamine addiction revealed that 40% of the sample identified that they had suffered major depression at some point in the previous year. Furthermore, a study of 526 methamphetamine consumers found that their severity of depression was significantly associated with their self-reported use of methamphetamine 30 days prior to receiving treatment, and that more frequent consumers had higher Beck Depression Index scores than those who abstained from it (Glassner-Edwards et al., 2009). Similarly, the study on the assessment of anxiety and depression among substance use disorder patients by Mohammed, Ahmad, Hassan, and Hassan (2020), showed that substance use disorders with which crystal methamphetamine is associated had high levels of depression and anxiety. The researcher agrees with the above findings because depression which is a mental illness exposes its victims to mood disorders making them experience deep, strong feelings of sadness as well as a loss of interest in daily activities. Any youth who gets to the point of losing interest in his/her daily activities owing to depression definitely takes a substance like crystal methamphetamine as the next available option.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that the variables such as social support, loneliness, hopelessness, and depression are correlated to crystal methamphetamine.

Counselling Imperatives

The findings of this study revealed that psychosocial variables such as social support, loneliness, hopelessness, and depression correlate with crystal methamphetamine consumption. The implication is that when youths are exposed to any of the variables, the resultant effect is that they take to crystal methamphetamine consumption. Thus, it is vital for counselors to corroborate with those in the medical field such as medical doctors, clinical psychologists, mental health counselors, and social workers in carrying out assessment exercises to identify youths who are vulnerable to feelings of hopelessness, loneliness, and depression utilizing behaviour modification techniques, rational emotive therapy, reality therapy among others in addressing the issue of crystal methamphetamine consumption among the youths. Counselors should as a matter of urgency sensitize the youths on the different government agencies and NGOs that offer social support to the youth as well as how to go about it.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Well-packaged group counseling programme tailored towards teaching the youths who are vulnerable to a feeling of hopelessness, loneliness, and depression the strategies to adopt to overcome such problems.
2. Counselors to propagate different ways youths can improve their social support network through their different programmes (conferences, publications, and postings on the net).

3. Professional Counselors should sensitize the youths against the consumption of crystal methamphetamine through group counseling, orientation programmes, and seminars.
4. Government at both state and national levels to sponsor drug education for the youths.
5. Government to establish functional counseling clinics in different communities where youths can obtain counseling and proper treatment for their socio-personal issues such as depression, loneliness, and hopelessness among others.
6. Government should employ qualified psychiatrists, mental health counselors, and clinical psychologists for intervention
7. Organizing seminars and orientations regularly in the state to re-orientate youths' mindset on the use of psychotic substances.

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