

Managing Abuse of Hard Drugs/Methamphetamine (Mkpuru Mmiri) and its Effect on Mental Health of University Students in Nigeria

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Abstract

Drug abuse is as old as the drug itself. Therefore, the emphasis is mainly on the rate at which Nigerian students take or consume Methamphetamine (Mkpuru Mmiri) with other drugs and the corresponding effect of taking the substance. Many students deviate from what should be their original engagement of learning and understanding to taking of all kinds of narcotic substance thereby affecting the level of their academic performance in school. The mental health of most students has been badly punctured and this usually contributes to illness amongst the youths. There are many hard drugs already in existence which the youths are taking: cannabis, rafenol, tramadol, alcohol etc but with the discovery and addition of 'Mkpuru Mmiri' or crystalmeth to the chains of narcotic substance by the students pose a great concern for the public. Some reasons for the intake were outlined and its effect for the down level of academic performance of the students in school were mentioned. In conclusion, it was concluded and agreed that abuse of hard drugs effect the students negatively both academically, financially, mentally and otherwise. It was recommended amongst others that, government should trace and track down the traffickers of crystalmeth. Provide more rehabilitation centres for the affected people.

Keywords: Management, methamphetamine (Mkpuru Mmiri), mental, health, illness.

Introduction

One of the new trending narcotic substance in Nigerian nowadays is call Crystalmeth but its botanical or scientific given name is Methamphetamine but the street especially in Nigeria renamed it to 'Mkpuru mmiri or ice' which as a hard drug that it is, is as old as mankind even thou it was just discovered here in Nigeria few years ago. Meth (Mkpuru mmiri), is highly addictive stimulant that affects or hits the central nervous system in the body which causes disorder mentally, emotionally and otherwise. Okorie (2021) has it that too much intake of narcotic substance leads to loss of judgment which in turn leads to risky life style like sexual harassment, unprotected sex, rape, stealing and murder. University students that are addictive to taking of meth and other hard drugs also stand a chance of facing serious dental coloration disorder, anxiety, weight loss, memory loss, brain disorder and death.

Naturally, man goes out in search of anything that can help to relief stress, heal sickness and quench taste so as to keep the body fit. This in several cases is the main reason many persons take hard drugs either to relief stress, get high, seek for healing that never comes from the same drugs or quench taste of the drug as addicts. Unachukwu (2015), opined that anything called drug has both negative and positive effect when not abused. Nowadays, the mental health of most addictive Nigerian university students cannot be guaranteed due to the menace of hard drugs. A mentally healthy person tends to be one who is in full control of his emotions, senses and also being able to make judgment or take drastic positive decisions for his wellbeing.

However, it is very necessary to note that plenty of the substances being taken by humans are capable of harming the body, causing negative behavior or bad mood amongst the users of such narcotic substance. The abuse or wrong usage of drugs by the university students has become one of the major societal problems or challenges facing the country which also raises a major alarm for the government to control.

Managing and controlling drug addicts is as difficult as taking the drugs. However, junkies, insane people in the society needs succor, help, assistance and counseling to help fill the gap between them and normal people in the society. Amadi (2020) suggested that, teenagers should be pampered and counseled regularly on the need to abstain from drug intake. A good counselor with regular counseling goes a long way into bring out depressed junkies out of depression. Some strategies for managing drug addicts are as follows: regular checkup and counseling, change of environment, rehabilitation centres, provision of relief drugs and good diet etc.

In addition to the above, a good mental condition possesses a sense of humor, maturity, responsible character, realistic life style, self-made charisma and calculative mindset etc. A drug addict has little or nothing to contribute to the society instead, they become nuisance and junkies that cause social unrest to the country.

In this paper, the researchers shall be looking at the following;

1. Management
2. All about 'Mkpuru Mmiri'
3. The effect of 'Mkpuru Mmiri' amongst students
4. Types of drugs
5. Reasons for drug intake
6. Mental health status of Nigerian students
7. Mental illness and ways of controlling it

Management

Management entails the act of organizing, coordinating, and putting together both human and material resources for effective and efficient quality output. In this context, human being is a complex resource to be managed. In the same vein, Okorie (2021) agreed that managing human being is one of the most difficult things to manage. However, adopting all the management strategy makes it much easier to carry out the task of bringing people together. Insane people who cannot reason or think very well needs much care, love and follow up as a way of reviving and integrating them back into the society. More so, it is a fact that narcotic

substance users are lagging behind in the society due to lack of sensitization, awareness and proper rehabilitation either from the side of the government. Non-governmental organizations or private individuals. To reduce the number of junkies, insane, mad people and addicts in the society, full managerial know how ought to be adopted by carrying along the mental ill health persons.

Methamphetamine/Mkpuru Mmiri/Crystal Meth

Crystal meth was first imported into Nigeria through Mexico by drug cartels in Nigeria. According to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) as cited by Dumbili (2020), it was first used in Japan in the year 1919 and same time, it was seriously abused by the military during the second world war. In the same vein, Dumbili (2022) posited that meth was used for medical purposes as a medication for depression and weight loss but was banned after a short while because of the abusive intake of it by people. Most Nigerian students cannot stay without taking crystalmeth which contributes negatively to their health and financial status. In agreement to this, a national newspaper agency reported that:

‘Mkpuru Mmiri’ is the Igbo slang for a very dangerous hard drug called Methamphetamine Or crystal meth. It is also known as ice. Nowadays, Thousands of youths are addicted to Mkpuru Mmiri And it has become a serious issue. If nothing Is done to curb this menace, it will lead many more Youths astray as it does to the present drug users. (National daily Newspaper, 2021).

Furthermore, the production and distribution of crystal meth in Nigeria revolves among the major cartel or drug barons in the country which they monopolized to themselves alone. This was achieved because the laboratory for the production of the substance is not common and requires some rigorous processes before being produced as ‘Mkpuru Mmiri’ for it to be consumed by the youths. Going by percentage:

S/N	Nigerian youths (male and female) drug rate
1	Cannabis and other narcotics 35%
2	Alcohol and other liquid drugs 40%
3	Cigarettes and tobacco 25%

Source: Unachukwu, C.C (2015). Youths and drugs in Nigeria. In Ojiakor,N.E; Unachukwu, C.C; & Obiajulu, A (Eds). Challenges of national growth and development in Nigeria. Jacobs classic publisher, Enugu.

The above analysis shows that, Nigerian students take more drugs which contributes to the poor academic performance in school. Methamphetamine or Mkpuru Mmiri as a hard drug has contributed majorly to the cause of most insane people in Nigeria today hence the surge of mentally disabled persons in the country. The urge and the feelings to experiment how it taste or react in the body is what drives the users to consume the substance thereby making them addicts and prone to many diseases around.

Effect of Crystal meth Amongst Students

The body system is like a television set, whatever you put in is what it will bring out. The effect of hard drugs on the students are usually on the negative side because it brings down or hampers the level of their academic performance in school which in most cases leads to school dropout. Also, every hard drug has two major kinds of side effect to the body. These two side effects are as follows:

1. Quick side effect
2. Prolonged side effect

Quick side effect of hard drugs

1. Headache/Nuisance: the side effect of narcotic drugs to humans cannot be over emphasized. Quick reaction of drugs to the body usually leads to serious headache and seizure. Many at times too, the seriousness of the headache can as well cause partial blindness or temporal malfunction of the sense organs in the body.
2. High Body Temperature: most drug addicts are aware while some are not aware that crystalmeth or hard substances causes instant high body temperature which can as well increase the heart beats of the individuals and can also cause partial or full stroke to the students.
3. Fast Breathing: narcotic substances when taken, regulates in abnormal way the respiratory system of the individual by making them breath so fast. Breathing fast from the normal way can cause death or severe damage that will need a medical attention on the life of the users.
4. No Sleep: the intake of hard drugs like crystalmeth can make one to stay awake all through the night. Ordinarily, not having enough sleep as at when due has its own medical effect to the body system which is insomnia.
5. Loss of Appetite for food
6. Gaining of more strength than usual
7. Fear
8. Euphoria

Prolonged side effect of hard drugs

1. Memory loss: good percentage of drug addicts fall within this region. Memory loss or madness comes in two different ways which are instant memory loss or gradual memory loss. Most persons get mad instantly after taking hard substances like crystalmeth, this is as a result of low brain capacity to carry what the drug deposited to their brain. Secondly, some persons get mad gradually even without them knowing that they are going mad as a result of constant and steady intake of narcotic substance.
2. Stroke/ Parkinson Disease: it has been proven that regular intake of harmful drugs can cause or lead to stroke. This happens as a result of shrinking of the major blood vein thereby reducing the pressure of blood and oxygen pump from the heart to the brain.
3. Severe Dental problem: the chemical reaction of Methamphetamine (Mkpuru Mmiri) usually starts from the mouth by damaging the natural dental arrangement of the person.

This can come in the form of tooth decay, loss of teeth, ulcer of the mouth, offensive mouth odor and even body odor as the case may be.

4. **Sleeping Problem:** virtually every addict usually experiences the problem of not sleeping both day and night because their body system has so synchronized with the hard drugs that they regularly take.
5. **Weight Loss:** consumption of narcotics makes one to lose much weight. This is so because, is either the person has no money to eat and take balance diet or the appetite for food will not be there to look for food.
6. **Steady Aggression**
7. **Hallucination**
8. **Paranoia**
9. **Itching and Rashes**
10. **Addiction**

Types of Drugs and its Effect on the University Students

1. **Alcohol:** alcohol is a liquid of different colours and its usually taken orally and the main brands are whisky, brandy, beer, wine etc. According to Uwe (2019), alcohol has different street given names which are chemical, holy water, shakis, kai kai, booze, shanyo. The most abused substance in Nigeria is alcohol and it contains large quantity of ethanol which when it enters the blood stream it begins to instantly navigate and control the students by causing more harm than good to them.
2. **Marijuana/ Cannabis/ Weed:** intake of weed by student leads to obvious decline in their academic performance which most times lead to expulsion and wafting from school. Again, being addictive to it contributes to social vices like fighting, cultism, rape, stealing and unwarranted behavior to their fellow students. Marijuana as a hard drug is usually taken like cigarette by smoking or chewing the leaf even thou some student prefer to use it and cook in other to get more high and unusual state of the mind.
3. **Cocaine:** cocaine being the strongest substance among them all, negatively contributes to economic melt down of the student. Some persons refer to it as Coco or white powder which can be sniffed, licked or injected into the system. In agreement to this, Eko (2017) stated that cocaine has street names as crack, white coke and it is odorless in powder form when processed. Student that takes cocaine finds it very difficult to stop taking it because they believe that it gives them more strength to carry out either negative or positive task. Among all the hard drugs in the street, cocaine do cause more harm than good to the users. It can be taken through injecting it to the blood stream or sniffing or burning it.
4. **Tramadol/ Raphnol/ codein:** these are pain relieving medicines but now turned to hard drugs because of how the youths have abused it and it can be licked like a sweet or taken orally as prescribed by them.
5. **Colos or Colorado:** this is a type of drug that has almost the same looks, texture, colors and features with that of marijuana but its quite different from that of marijuana. Colos is gotten from dry leaves and spread with dangerous chemicals that can give the smoker a high feeling. It's been wrapped and smoked like marijuana by the takers. The side effect

of this drug is extreme anxiety, vomiting, severe hotness of the head and increase heart rate which can lead to death.

Reasons for Abuse of Drug

There are so many reasons or factors that contribute to the abuse of hard drug by the students. Jim (2017), outlined few reasons for the abuse of drugs which are curiosity to know, failure of the parents, peer groups, openness to the drug.

- a) Curiosity to Know: being eager to know when, where and how is to be taken and the feelings that comes with it is what usually drives the youths into taking hard drugs. Most cases, the happiness feelings they get by taking it is what push them into experimenting more.
- b) Failure of the parents: the failure of the parents to monitor and properly supervise their children movement, association and interactions with their friends makes it much easier for them to indulge in drug taking.
- c) Peer groups: this is the major bad influencer group whereby the kind of friends one keeps determines the kind of life they live. Most friends initiate their friends into cult groups and there they smoke and take all kinds of drugs, in turn they become bad influence to the society.
- d) Openness to the drugs: the unrestricted nature of the harmful substance by the sellers and the government plays a major role and the availability of the drugs to the teenagers and adults also makes it simple to be accessed.
- e) Inferiority complex: most students don't feel among or usually feel rejected by their friends since they don't take hard drugs. On that note, they force themselves into taking the substance which their friends take just to feel among and as well stop being bullied by their peers.

Mental Health Status of Nigerian Students

Health is wealth and there is no health without mental health. According to Ejidokun (2018) mental health is seen as a state of mind whereby one is free to make use of his full senses by knowing or being able to differentiate between good and bad. On the other hand, for a student to be mentally sound, okay and healthy he must possess the ability to love and be loved, be able to take full responsibility of his life positively, have feelings for others and also take good decisions within and around him. Nigerian University student mental health differs in the sense that most persons are not addict and that leaves their mind set in good condition so as to give room for a positive learning outcome. Although, the health of the students are usually ignored, overlooked and or not been considered by educational planners within the university shores before, during and after learning which pose a major threat in the lives of the students. According to World Health Organization (WHO) in Dumbili and Ebuonyi (2021), there are two characteristics of a healthy mental health which are the ability to love and the ability to take good decisions. In the same vein, there are some characteristics of a mental healthy person which guides the mind and they are:

- Having the ability to take calculative decisions
- Being in control of the mind by knowing the difference between good and bad

- Thinking properly before taking any action
- Comportment
- Friendly and loving
- Having a good sense of humor
- Good communication
- Good relationship with others
- Free from violence
- Care freely
- Neatness.



Fig 1: Picture of a mental healthy person
Source: Researchers Idea

Mental illness

Mental illness is seen as a variety of mental disorder which always affects one's mood, thinking, analytical mind set and good behavior. A healthy mental health becomes a mental illness when the disorder becomes so difficult to solve or it took time before intervention to the problems that affected the brain is solved. Ola (2016), stated that mental illness is a wide range of health issues which were not given proper and adequate attention needed on time.

Causes of Mental Illness: there are some factors that usually lead to mental disorder. They include

- i. Medical Problems: sickness like typhoid or malaria can cause an acute mental disorder when not treated early.
- ii. Heredity: some mental health challenge comes from genes or inherited from family background. Some mad people are as a result of what they inherited from their parents.
- iii. Drug abuse: when the brain is being giving a hard substance that it can't contain, there is every possible traces that the brain will fail from the substance taken.

- iv. Stress: over stress and over thinking also contribute to mental illness.

Ways of Controlling or Avoiding Mental Illness: mental disorder can be controlled, managed and stopped through these outlined ways.

- a. Setting up good rehabilitation centres: early rehabilitation of the affected persons goes a long way in curbing the menace of mental disorder. These centres can be a psychiatric hospital, counseling centres, churches etc where professionals can comfortably handle their case and proffer solution to the problems.
- b. Empowering communities to take actions: when communities are allowed to take actions or discipline that will help to curb drug abuse and other social vices, the rate of mental illness will drastically be reduced. The actions could be flogging defaulters, seizing of their properties, close marking, severe punishment etc.
- c. Empowerment: with a good empowerment, the youths will not think of taking hard drugs that will affect their brain this is to agree with the saying that an idle mind thinks evil all the time.

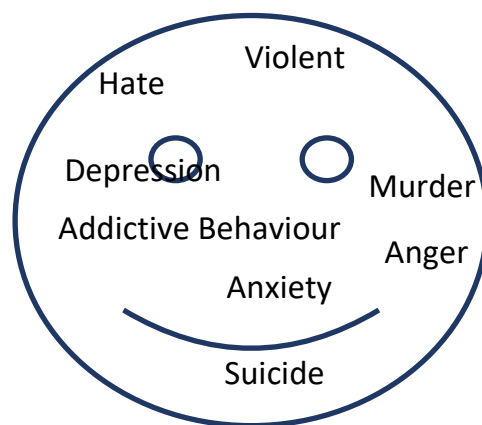


Fig 2: Structure of a mental illness or disorder
Source: Researchers Idea

Difference between mental health and mental illness

Mental health	Mental illness
Can tolerate and accommodate others	Cannot welcome people
Love wholeheartedly	Doesn't know what it means to love
Self-respect	No respect for anybody
Takes positive decisions	Always taking negative decisions
Appears neat and calm always	Appear dirty, unkept and violent all the time
Knows their boundaries	No boundary/ limitation

Result of drug abuse on academic performance of University students:

In Nwadike and Godwins (2016), academic performance is the evaluation and assessment of students' educational background or it's a way of examining how far a student, the teacher or the institution have gone in achieving their academic goals. With the growing nature of drop out and poor performance by the students, there is need for all stakeholders to come together and make policies that will help to stop drug abuse within the University. Any negativity will

always come out negative. On that note, here are some endpoints to drug abuse among University students:

- i. Quack products: drug addicts are usually junkies and these set of people turn out to be quacks in the society. It's a garbage in, garbage out which means one cannot give what he does not have because they don't have time to seat down and study to better themselves and the society at large when they graduate from school.
- ii. Prostitution and thuggery: most female graduates, haven graduated with a low grade that cannot fetch them any job they normally end up as prostitutes, strippers and bad gangs' informants. The male graduates also end up as thugs, armed robbers, kidnappers, motor park touts, cultist etc.
- iii. Emotional / psychological trauma: a University drop out will always be tortured by his own emotions or conscience for not finishing or graduating like his mates and not being recognized by the society same way his peers are being accorded respects and accolades.
- iv. Divorce: many wives and husbands do not accommodate drug users when they discover that their partner is a smoker or addict. This act usually leads to divorce, termination and suspension of contract, sack etc.

Conclusion

In this paper, good efforts have been put in other to analyze all kinds and categories of drug and its abuse with much emphasis on methamphetamine (mkpuru mmiri) in Nigeria. In this paper also, it was established that both the quick side effect and the prolonged side effect all have negative inputs to the lives of the students.

Recommendation

It was recommended that:

1. Government should trace and track the traffickers of crystalmeth.
2. Swift action on banning of all narcotic substance in circulation.
3. Increase of public awareness on the effect of taking crystalmeth.
4. Provision of more rehabilitation centres.
5. Empowerment for the youths and empowering the communities in other to help track down drug offenders amongst them.

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