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## Drug Demand Reduction through Collaborative Intervention in Delta State Universities

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### Abstract

*The study focused on drug demand reduction through collaborative intervention in Delta State universities. Two research questions were raised and two null hypotheses were formulated in the study. A mixed-methods design was adopted in the study. It combines qualitative and quantitative research approaches to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The population comprises 126,350 undergraduate students from universities in Delta State. A multistage and snowball sampling technique was used in this survey. The first stage involves selecting three universities (Delta State University, Abraka, Southern Delta University, Orerokpe campus and University of Delta, Agbor) from the study area. The second stage involves selecting two departments, each from the selected faculties, so that each faculty will be represented. The next stage involves selecting 100, 200, 300 and 400 Level students from each selected department (Psychology & Political Science, Delta State University, Abraka; Electrical Electronics & Civil Engineering, Southern Delta University, Orerokpe campus; English Education & Religious Studies Education, University of Delta, Agbor). Due to the sensitive nature of the study, we used a snowball sampling technique to select a sample of 450 participants. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Drug Demand Reduction through Collaborative Intervention Questionnaire (DDRCIQ) with psychometric value of validity and reliability. The instruments were duly validated, and reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.74 and above (coefficient of determination; a benchmark of 2.50 and above is considered agreed, and 2.49 and below is considered disagreed). The process used to generate the questionnaire items is called Scale Development. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Statistic was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance, while Thematic analysis was used to interpret responses. In conclusion, collaborative approaches to drug demand reduction in Nigerian universities are crucial for addressing the growing substance abuse problem.*

**Keywords:** *Collaborative Approaches, Drug Demand Reduction, Nigeria*

### Introduction

Drugs are primarily created to heal, repair, and rejuvenate biological systems, rather than to cause harm. These bioactive substances alter biological functions through chemical interactions, impacting perception, cognition, mood, behavior, and bodily processes (Balogun, 2016). Pharmacologists describe drugs as chemical agents used for managing diseases, treating ailments, preventing illnesses, diagnosing conditions, or promoting mental and physical well-being (Obiechina & Isiguzo, 2016). Rising public concern emphasizes the urgent need to collaboratively address the prevalent misuse and abuse of drugs. Drug abuse, often referred to as substance use disorder, has become a global issue, significantly affecting both global and Nigerian stability (Okoye, 2022). It acts as a primary driver of numerous antisocial, economic, health, and political challenges worldwide.

The effects include criminal activities such as murder, kidnapping, sexual assault, gang activity, suicide, and armed robbery, as well as self-harm outcomes like accidents, withdrawal symptoms, dependency, depression, aggression, and poor academic performance (Alemika, 2021). To clarify drug abuse, Kerochio (2018) defines it as the use of drugs for non-medical purposes that lead to negative consequences for the user. These consequences can be social, cognitive, or physical. Social consequences might involve increased conflicts with peers, teachers, and in academic settings. Kalunta (2015) describes a drug as any substance besides food or water that alters how individuals feel, think, perceive, and act. Cognitive repercussions may include trouble focusing on studies and memory impairments. Due to their chemical characteristics, drugs can impact physical, mental, and emotional functioning, with administration methods ranging from chewing and eating to smoking, drinking, topical application, or injection. The World Health Organization (W.D.E, 2017) defines drug addiction as "persistent, excessive drug use that is contrary to accepted medicinal practices."

In Nigeria, particularly in Delta State drug use/abuse is a widespread occurrence among students in higher institutions. Parents, peer groups, and society as a whole have all been blamed for the growing rise of drug use. Acts of vandalism, weapon carrying, alcohol abuse, rape, examination malpractices, school violence, strikes, bullying, cultism, truancy, and school drop-outs, as well as other anti-social conduct, are all common in universities, which may be a result of drug use/abuse. Drug abuse among students has become a pressing issue with significant implications for academic performance. Despite extensive research on the topic, there appears to be a gap in understanding the nuanced relationship between drug abuse and academic achievement, particularly concerning students' reading culture, success rate in exams and their level of concentration.

The high rates of substance abuse among Nigerian youth are alarming. Addiction often leads individuals, especially young people, into destructive cycles that can be deadly. The affected demographic ranges from street children using inhalants to adolescents experimenting with ecstasy, and individuals addicted to heroin and cocaine (NACADA, 2015). Drug use can lead to lost income, property damage in schools, rising healthcare expenses, and family breakdowns, impacting various societal groups including parents, children, educators, government officials, taxpayers, and employees. In response, the national government in Nigeria has enacted comprehensive strategies to combat drug and substance misuse. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) was created to enforce regulations, facilitate stakeholder interventions, and guide communities. While drug addiction predominantly affects the youth, older individuals are also at risk, particularly through excessive alcohol consumption.

Thus, raising public awareness about the dangers of drug abuse has become a national imperative in Nigeria. Students often misuse a variety of substances, including tobacco, alcohol, stimulants such as caffeine and nicotine, cannabis, Indian hemp, amphetamine, tramadol, codeine, volatile solvents like glue and correction fluid, as well as psychotropic medications including sedatives, anxiolytics, hypnotics, LSD, mescaline, vasodilators, anesthetics, and gases (Ubom, 2024; Grissmer, 2023). Substance abuse significantly affects Nigerian youth and students, contributing to family breakdown and community decline.

Addressing this issue necessitates a cooperative approach to lessen the risks associated with drug and substance abuse. Effective interventions require coordinated efforts and collaborative responsibilities among all educational stakeholders, including information

professionals who manage knowledge and resource accessibility. These professionals have advanced qualifications and specialized skills in the information lifecycle, including generation, recording, processing, storage, preservation, retrieval, dissemination, and communication across various fields (Kolawole & Igwe, 2016).

The repercussions for university students can be severe and varied. Substance abuse correlates with poor academic outcomes, higher dropout rates, mental health struggles such as depression and anxiety, risky sexual behaviors, criminal involvement, and long-term health complications like addiction and organ damage (Balogun, 2016). In the Niger Delta region, socio-economic factors like unemployment, environmental degradation due to oil activities, and cultural norms may further increase vulnerability. NDLEA reports and local media frequently highlight Delta State as having one of the highest rates of drug prevalence in southern Nigeria, linking it to wider societal issues such as cultism and violence on and off campuses.

While demand reduction strategies and traditional law enforcement approaches, such as those by the NDLEA, are necessary, they are not sufficient on their own. Emphasizing prevention, education, treatment, rehabilitation, and recovery has emerged as a crucial public health-oriented complement. The UNODC and Nigeria's National Drug Control Master Plan (2021–2025) stress evidence-based prevention programs, school-based initiatives, and community involvement to lessen the allure and normalization of drug use. Within university environments, isolated efforts such as awareness campaigns, counseling services, or policy enforcement tend to have limited lasting effects due to resource constraints, stigma, and lack of coordination (Dembo, 2017).

Collaborative interventions and partnerships involving universities, NDLEA's Drug Demand Reduction Units, government agencies, NGOs, community leaders, health services, and student organizations provide a more effective framework. These can encompass peer education, curriculum integration, screening and brief interventions, harm reduction where necessary, and ongoing monitoring. Examples from Nigeria and elsewhere demonstrate the advantages of collaboration. The multi-tiered model at the American University of Nigeria (prevention, enforcement, recovery) has achieved success through continuous sensitization and support. In Delta State, collaborations among the NDLEA, state government, educational institutions, and parents have included awareness campaigns and calls for mandatory drug testing or policies, though implementation challenges remain. This approach may necessitate random testing to determine admission eligibility.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Nigeria faces a severe drug abuse crisis, with a national prevalence high rate. This epidemic, driven largely by cannabis, opioids (e.g., tramadol, codeine), and rising youth involvement, leads to significant public health, social, economic, and security consequences, including increased substance use disorders, family breakdown, and lost productivity. While supply-reduction efforts dominate, demand reduction through prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation remains under prioritized and fragmented. Existing collaborative interventions among government agencies, NGOs, communities, and health sectors suffer from poor coordination, inadequate funding, limited access to services, stigma and weak implementation. This gap hinders effective, sustainable reduction in drug demand. There is an urgent need for strengthened collaborative interventions to enhance prevention, treatment access, and community ownership for measurable impact.

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between the effect of drug abuse on undergraduate students' academic accomplishment in Delta State universities.
2. There is no significant relationship between the prevention and intervention strategies to reduce drug abuse among undergraduate students in Delta State.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study was based on the Opponent Processes Theory of Emotion propounded by Solomon (1980). The theory states that every process that has an affective valence, i.e. is pleasant or unpleasant, is followed by a secondary, "opponent process". This opponent process sets in after the primary process is quieted. With repeated exposure, the primary process becomes weaker, while the opponent process becomes stronger. The most important contribution is Solomon's findings on work motivation and addictive behaviour, though it does not fit the "economist's standard model" and how there are growing suspicions that addiction is a much broader phenomenon than first believed. According to opponent-process theory, drug abuse and addiction is the result of an emotional pairing of pleasure and the emotional symptoms associated with withdrawal. At the beginning of drug or any substance use, there are high levels of pleasure and low levels of withdrawal. Over time, however, as the levels of pleasure from using the drug decrease, the levels of withdrawal symptoms increase, thus providing motivation to keep using the drug despite a lack of pleasure from it. The theory was based on a study Solomon conducted in 1974, in which the researcher analysed the emotions of skydivers. It was found that beginners have greater levels of fear than more experienced skydivers, but less pleasure upon landing. However, as the skydivers kept on jumping, there was an increase in pleasure and a decrease in fear.

A similar experiment was done with dogs. Dogs were placed in a so-called Pavlov harness and shocked with electricity for 10 seconds. This shock was the stimulus of the experiment. In the initial stage (consisting of the first few stimuli), the dogs experienced terror and panic. Then, when the stimuli stopped, the dogs became stealthy and cautious. The experiment continued, and after many stimuli, the dogs went from unhappy to joyful and happy after the shocks stopped altogether. In the opponent-process model, this is the result of a shift over time from fear to pleasure in the fear-pleasure emotion pair. Beyond addictive behaviour, opponent-process theory can, in principle, explain why processes (i.e. situations or subjective states) that are aversive and unpleasant can still be rewarding. For instance, after being exposed to a stressful situation, human participants showed greater physiological signs of well-being than those in the control condition. Accordingly, opponent-process theory can also help to explain psychopathic behaviour such as non-suicidal self-injury. The theories are relevant to this work because they provide a foundational explanation of how emotion and behaviour can lead to certain behaviours in humans, especially students.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Concerns are growing worldwide regarding the rising prevalence of illegal substance use among youth. Drug use is now recognized as a critical issue in educational settings, adversely affecting various aspects of student learning and performance. Taylor, (2023) defined drug as substances that modify mental, emotional, and behavioral functions, have seen increased use, particularly among young people. Substance abuse can lead to or exacerbate mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, aggression, and suicidal thoughts. Continued use can

disrupt neurochemical balance, fostering psychological dependency, mood swings, and social withdrawal. A study conducted at Niger Delta University revealed a strong link between alcohol and psychoactive substance use and depression among students. The psychosocial impacts include heightened anxiety, loneliness, strained relationships, and compulsive behaviors, which further hinder academic and personal success. Research in Nigeria has also established connections between substance use, personality changes, sleep disorders, mental instability, and an elevated risk of psychiatric issues (Priye, 2020).

On a physical level, drug abuse can lead to organ damage, weakened immune systems, addiction, and increased overdose risk. Behavioral consequences may include risky sexual behaviors, criminal activities, and financial difficulties. In Nigerian universities, users report increased aggression, engagement in social vices, and compromised well-being, contributing to campus insecurity and strained relationships, with broader societal implications (Emovon et al., 2018). Peterson (2020) pointed out that drug abuse has several physical repercussions for university students, including impaired cognitive abilities and memory, a higher risk of addiction, cardiovascular issues, respiratory problems, sleep disturbances, digestive issues, and increased susceptibility to infections due to risky practices.

Adebayo (2021) indicated that substance abuse can also lead to significant psychological effects, including heightened anxiety and depression, mood swings, hallucinations, and loss of motivation, which can deteriorate self-esteem and induce suicidal thoughts and actions. Ferguson (2019) underlined that drug abuse severely hampers university students' academic performance, contributing to increased absenteeism, concentration difficulties, and reduced critical thinking skills. Peterson (2020) further noted the social consequences, including strained relationships, social isolation, and increased vulnerability to violence.

Substance abuse is a pervasive global issue, complicating public health and affecting communities, families, institutions, and nations at large (Unaogu et al., 2017). Research by Obiamaka (2014) and UNODC (2018) highlighted that the menace of substance abuse transcends social and economic boundaries, undermining societal peace and development, while Obot (2019) pointed out that it leads to severe mental health issues and physical health degradation. Studies, including those by Obiechina and Isiguzo (2016), Adeyeye (2018), and UNODC (2018), have identified common substances of abuse such as alcohol, cannabis, cocaine, heroin, opioids, tobacco, and various psychotropic drugs.

Research shows that substance abuse creates a subculture in Nigerian universities, adversely affecting educational performance and future opportunities. Psychologists argue that heavy drinking and drug misuse negatively impact academic expectations (Botvin, 2019). Studies by Muoti (2014) and Washington and Lee University (2019) reveal the detrimental effects of substance abuse, manifesting as impaired judgment, poor academic performance, risk of dropouts, and increasing incidents of sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancies. Various factors contribute to student substance use, including peer influence, parental guidance, and exposure from media (Adeyeye, 2018). To combat substance abuse, effective prevention strategies must be implemented, targeting at-risk youth through education and community engagement. This includes awareness programs, campus initiatives, and collaboration among families, schools, and community leaders (Danny, 2023; Isola et al., 2025).

Robust prevention efforts should address issues such as peer pressure and substance accessibility. Strategies may involve comprehensive education programs, peer support systems, and collaboration with non-governmental organizations. Additionally, intervention strategies for those struggling with substance abuse should include counseling, therapy, and supportive academic accommodations (Eugene, 2020; Peterson, 2020). Successful interventions require collective responsibility and involvement from the community, law enforcement, educational institutions, and families (Adebayo, 2021; Nwachukwu et al., 2015).

Despite the existence of the National Drug Control Master Plan and various initiatives by NDLEA, UNODC, NGOs, and state agencies, significant gaps persist in demand reduction efforts (prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and reduction) compared to supply-side enforcement. This could be that most prevention programs rely on sensitization/awareness campaigns with little rigorous evaluation of effectiveness, scalability, or long-term impact. School-based and family programs have been piloted but lack robust outcome data, especially across diverse geopolitical zones. Poor coordination among government agencies, NGOs, communities, and faith-based organizations leads to fragmented efforts. There is limited research on effective models for collaborative interventions involving stakeholders. Limited studies on interventions tailored for youth in rural areas, people who inject drugs and those with co-occurring mental health issues and this is the gap the study tends to fill.

### **Methodology**

A mixed-methods design was adopted in the study. It combines qualitative and quantitative research approaches to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The population comprises 126,350 undergraduate students at universities in Delta State. A multistage sampling technique was used in this survey. The first stage involves selecting three universities (Delta State University, Abraka, Southern Delta University, Orerokpe campus and University of Delta, Agbor) from the study area. The second stage involves selecting two departments, each from the selected faculties, so that each faculty is represented. The third stage involves selecting 100, 200, 300 and 400 Level students from each selected department (Psychology & Political Science, Delta State University, Abraka; Electrical Electronics & Civil Engineering, Southern Delta University, Orerokpe campus; English Education & Religious Studies Education, University of Delta, Agbor). Due to the sensitive nature of the study, we used a snowball sampling technique to select a sample of 450 participants. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled “Drug Demand Reduction through Collaborative Intervention Questionnaire (DDRCIQ) with psychometric value of validity and reliability.

The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled “Drug Demand Reduction through Collaborative Intervention Questionnaire (DDRCIQ), with psychometric value of validity and reliability. Collecting data matrix  $x$  (rows = participants, columns = variables / questionnaire). The instruments were duly validated and the reliability was tested using Cronbach Alpha which yielded a coefficient index of 0.74 and above (coefficient of determination questionnaire items remark, with a benchmark of 2.50 and above considered agreed and 2.49 below considered disagreed). The process used to generate the questionnaire items is called Scale Development.

The questionnaire is divided into Parts A and B. Part A collects participants’ personal information, while Part B addresses the research questions. Each item was anchored on a

four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Also, 10 participants were interviewed in the study area. Five (5) were females, and five (5) were males. The instrument was administered by the researcher and two research assistants familiar with the study area and adhering to ethical standards. The researcher and research assistants administered the questionnaire on face to face interval. For the interviewed participants, interview protocols and recording was adopted. Simple percentage, mean scores, and standard deviation provided answers to the research questions. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance, while Thematic analysis was adopted for the interpretation of responses.

**Table 1 Gender of Respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	200	44.44
Female	250	55.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2 Level of Respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
100 Level	140	31.11
200 Level	120	26.67
300 Level	110	24.44
400 Level	80	17.78
<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100</b>

**Results**

**Table 3**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	STD	Mean	Remark
1	Undergraduate students who abuse drugs frequently experience poor concentration and memory problems during lectures and examinations	117 (26%)	140 (31.11%)	92 (20.44%)	101 (22.45%)	.96	3.88	Agreed
2	Drug abuse increases the likelihood of examination malpractices among undergraduate students in	135 (30%)	120 (26.67%)	105 (23.33%)	90 (20%)	.85	3.46	Agreed

	universities							
3	Regular drug abuse leads to mental health challenges	95 (21.11%)	189 (42%)	111 (24.67%)	55 (12.22%)	.91	2.81	Agreed
4	Drug abuse contributes to high dropout and withdrawal rates among undergraduate students	150 (33.33%)	103 (22.89%)	97 (21.56%)	100 (22.22%)	.86	2.96	Agreed
5	Students who abuse drugs are more likely to engage in cultism and violent activities on campus	125 (27.78%)	130 (28.89%)	112 (24.89%)	83 (18.44%)	.87	3.79	Agreed

Table 3 shows responses on the effects of drug abuse on undergraduate students' academic accomplishment in Delta State universities. From the remark, the respondents agreed on all items.

**Table 4**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	STD	Mean	Remark
1	Regular awareness and sensitization campaigns on the dangers of drug abuse are effective in reducing drug demand among undergraduate students in Nigerian universities.	131 (29.11%)	120 (26.66%)	106 (23.56%)	93 (20.67%)	.80	3.42	Agreed
2	Establishing functional counseling and psychological support centres in every Nigerian university would	128 (28.44%)	127 (28.22%)	80 (17.78%)	115 (25.56%)	.90	2.90	Agreed

	help prevent drug abuse among students							
3	Peer education programmes where trained students educate their colleagues on drug refusal skills are effective for drug demand reduction	140 (31.11%)	110 (24.45%)	105 (23.33%)	95 (21.11%)	.86	2.78	Agreed
4	Strict enforcement of anti-drug policies and sanctions on campus (e.g., suspension or expulsion) can deter undergraduate students from abusing drugs.	125 (27.78%)	136 (30.22%)	100 (22.22%)	89 (19.78%)	.82	2.90	Agreed
5	Involvement of parents and guardians through regular orientation and communication programmes can significantly reduce drug abuse among undergraduates	60 (13.33%)	90 (20%)	189 (42%)	111 (24.67%)	.72	2.42	Disagreed

Table 4 shows responses on the prevention and intervention strategies to reduce drug abuse among undergraduate students in Delta State. From the remark, the respondents agreed on items 1, 2, 3 &4 while respondents disagreed on item 5.

**Table 5**

Variables	N	X	r-Cal.	r-Crit.	Level of Sign
Effects of drugs abuse	450	2.86	0.102	0.013	0.05
Undergraduate students		2.90			

Data in table 5 revealed Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis on the effects of drugs abuse on undergraduate students' academic accomplishment in Delta State universities. The mean was 2.86 and 2.90 respectively. The calculated r - value was 0.102 while the critical r-value was 0.013 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated r - value was greater than the critical r-table value, the null hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 6: Pearson “r” on Response to the prevention and intervention strategies to reduce drug abuse among undergraduate students in Delta State**

Variables	N	X	r-Cal.	r-Crit.	Level of Sign
Prevention and intervention strategies	450	3.50	0.011	0.015	0.05
Undergraduate students		2.98			

Data in Table 6 present Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients for prevention and intervention strategies to reduce drug abuse among undergraduate students in Delta State. The means were 3.50 and 2.98, respectively. The calculated r - value was 0.011 while the critical r-value was 0.015 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated r - value was less than the critical r-table value, the null hypothesis is retained.

**Table 7: Thematic Analysis on effects of drugs abuse on undergraduate students' academic accomplishment in Delta State universities**

Themes	Effects of drugs abuse on undergraduate students
<b>Responses</b>	Drug abuse significantly lowers the academic performance
	Students who abuse drugs are more likely to engage in cultism and violent activities on campus
	Drug abuse negatively affects the physical health of undergraduate students
	Drug abuse promotes risky sexual behaviours
	Students who abuse drugs tend to waste limited financial resources on procuring drugs instead of academic materials and upkeep.
	Drug abuse reduces the ability of undergraduate students to develop leadership and interpersonal skills needed for national development.
	Undergraduates abusing drugs are more prone to safety risks.
	Drug abuse leads to social isolation and poor peer relationships among undergraduate students
	Involvement in drug abuse diminishes the future employment and career prospects of undergraduate students
	Drug abuse erodes moral values and ethical behaviour among undergraduate students
	Undergraduate students who abuse drugs frequently experience memory problems during lectures and examinations.
	Regular drug abuse leads to mental health challenges
Sub-Themes	<b>Mental Health, Cultism, Violent Activities</b>

### **Theme: Effects of Drug Abuse on Undergraduate Students**

The central question sought to understand the effects of drug abuse on undergraduate students in Delta State universities. Some of the participants agreed that drug abuse significantly lowers academic performance. Other participants are of the view that students who abuse drugs are more likely to engage in cultism and violent activities on campus. While others agreed that drug abuse leads to social isolation and poor peer relationships among undergraduate students. Some of the participants are of the view that drug abuse erodes moral values and ethical behaviour among undergraduate students. While other participants agreed that involvement in drug abuse diminishes the future employment and career prospects of undergraduate students. Thus, drug abuse has significant effects on undergraduate students in Delta State universities, leading to physical health problems, low academic performance, involvement in cultism and violent activities. Hence, there is an urgent need to tackle this menace of drug abuse that has eaten deep into our prospective undergraduate students by proffering prevention and intervention strategies to reduce drug abuse among undergraduate students in Delta State.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The study focused on the effects of drug abuse on undergraduate students in Delta State universities. The indicated that drug and substance abuse has significant negative effects on undergraduate students such as declined academic performance (lower GPA, poor concentration, reduced reading culture, higher failure rates, and increased dropout risk), psychosocial issues (depression, anxiety, social isolation, strained relationships), physical health risks (addiction, weakened immunity, and other complications), and behavioural problems such as risky sexual behaviours, violence, and cultism involvement.

In line with this, Emovon, Samuel, Mgbemena & Adeyeri (2018); Priye (2020), who asserted that drug abuse exacerbates or triggers mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, aggression, and suicidal ideation. Chronic use disrupts neurochemical balance, leading to psychological dependence, mood swings, and social withdrawal. Psychosocial effects include heightened anxiety, loneliness, strained relationships, and compulsive behaviours that worsen academic and personal functioning. Nigerian studies also link substance use to personality changes, sleeping disorders, mental instability, and increased risk of psychiatric morbidity. Drug abuse leads to organ damage, weakened immunity, addiction, and overdose risks. Behavioural consequences include risky sexual activities, involvement in crime or cultism, and financial strain. In Nigerian universities, users report aggressiveness, involvement in social vices, and compromised overall well-being. These effects extend beyond the individual, contributing to campus insecurity, strained peer and family relationships, and long-term societal costs.

The study also proffers prevention and intervention strategies to reduce drug abuse among undergraduate students in Delta State. The findings revealed that prevention and intervention strategies for drug demand reduction among undergraduate students in Nigeria indicate that multi-component approaches—such as school-based awareness campaigns, peer education programmes, curriculum integration, counselling services, life skills training, parental involvement, sports/extracurricular activities, and collaborations with NDLEA/NGOs—can improve knowledge, shift attitudes, and reduce substance use initiation. Interventions also include strict campus policies (e.g., sanctions, drug testing), mental health support, religious/faith-based programmes, and media campaigns. This is in support of Kerochio (2018); Danny (2023); and Isola et al. (2025), who opined that drug prevention strategies are

methods and approaches aimed at reducing the initiation and use of substances, particularly among vulnerable populations such as youth, adolescents, and young adults. Effective drug prevention strategies typically involve a combination of education and awareness programs, such as workshops, seminars, and lectures on substance abuse risks, campus-wide initiatives, and training student peers to educate and support fellow students. Stakeholder partnerships involving educational institutions, families, community leaders, religious organisations, law enforcement, health services, and NGOs.

Robust prevention requires concerted efforts across these groups to address peer pressure, academic stress, and accessibility of substances like codeine, tramadol, and cannabis. University-Based Programs such as peer education, awareness campaigns, counselling centres, and policy enforcement. Social media campaigns in universities have potential in reducing illicit drug use among undergraduates. Coordinated actions involving educational institutions, religious bodies, law enforcement, and healthcare providers. Adaptation of models like Screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment (SBIRT), life-skills training, and mentorship programs. NDLEA partners with universities to deliver sensitisation lectures and refer individuals for rehabilitation.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, collaborative approaches to drug demand reduction in Nigerian universities are crucial for addressing the growing substance abuse problem. The issue of drug/substance abuse has been a thorn in the flesh. Unless care is taken to curb it, the effects will be disastrous for individuals and society at large. Thus, collaborative approaches involving the universities, communities, students, parents, police, lawyers, clinicians, NDLEA and other relevant institutions are crucial for effective drug demand reduction in Nigerian universities.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the research findings, the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. The government should prevent the cultivation/sales of Indian Helm and other deadly herbs that encourage drug abuse.
2. Parents and guardians should endeavour to monitor their children and wards so that they do not engage in drug abuse.
3. School security should be heightened, and regular checks should be carried out.
4. Counselling education should be introduced in campuses to save those who have already been engaging in the act.
5. The government should strictly enforce its existing laws against drug abuse through its regulatory agencies.

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