

# **ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG ABUSE AMONG ADOLESCENTS: ATTITUDES, BEHAVIORS AND ASSOCIATED FACTORS IN MOPANI DISTRICT, LIMPOPO SOUTH AFRICA.**

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# BACKGROUND

- Adolescence is marked by considerable existential conflicts as well as exposure and vulnerability to substance abuse. Young people have greater problems regarding alcohol intake and drug use. Moreover, early initiation in alcohol and drug use is one of the most important predictors of future health, socio-cultural and economic problems (Granville-Garcia, Clementino, Gomes, Firmino Ribeiro and Siqueira, 2014:7-16).

## Background continuation

- Alcohol and other drug problems are concerns of the public health and justice systems, including the criminal, civil, and juvenile branches. The impact of alcohol and other drug problems in the justice system are not limited to cases involving drug-related offenses. Alcohol and other drug problems compound many of the complex issues the justice systems handle every day, including assault, vandalism, child abuse, and divorce etc.

## Background continues

- Alcohol and other drug problems place a huge burden on the economy, resulting in high health care costs such as exposure to STI including HIV, productivity losses, and other expenses associated with crime and accidents (Belenko et al, 2005:1007). Matheson et al (2009:80-83) in a survey of adolescent health, among 12 year olds and those between 18-25 years Colorado was ranked in the top ten for rates of past-month marijuana and other illegal drug use (SAMHSA, 2010:5)

## Background continues

Haugland *et al.*, (2013:1140) indicated that factors associated with alcohol and drug use among adolescents include lifestyle, high levels of stress and anxiety, low self-esteem, depressive symptoms, susceptibility to peer pressure and problems associated with school. Harmful alcohol and drug use is a major contributor to the global burden of disease, premature deaths, disabilities, and neuropsychiatric disorders among adolescents. Alcohol and drug misuse can be related to both chronic disease and acute injury, in addition to social, psychological, and economical harm

## Statement of the problem

- The bottle stores around Giyani Township are always full of youngsters' males and females as well as adults. The age group of these people in the bottle store includes younger people qualifying to be at the tertiary institutions furthering their studies, but nobody knows what is happening to these adolescents. During weekends the situation is worse as early as when the bottle store opens till early hours the following day, the bottle store is full to its capacity. Adolescents are roaming around caring cans of alcohol both sexes.

# Statement of the problem continues

- However there is limited research information regarding adolescent alcohol and other drug abuse among adolescents: attitudes, behaviors and associated factors in Mopani district. As a result there is very limited understanding and information on adolescent alcohol and other drug abuse among adolescents. Without this understanding, the ability to intervene effectively to reduce adolescent alcohol and other drug abuse among adolescents is not possible. Therefore it is important to assess adolescent alcohol and other drug abuse among adolescents: attitudes, behaviors and associated factors in Mopani district, Limpopo province of South Africa.



## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to assess the attitudes and behaviors regarding alcohol and other drug abuse among adolescents and associated factors in Mopani district, Limpopo of South Africa.



# Population and sampling

- The population for this study included adolescents' males and females residing in Limpopo Province, South Africa.
- Random sampling was applied to get participants to take part in the study from different areas of greater Giyani.

# METHODS

- A cross-sectional, explorative, descriptive research design was applied.
- Data was collected using the questionnaires. A total of 111 questionnaires were collected to assess the prevalence of alcohol, drugs and substance abuse. The questionnaires comprised of questions which tested the use of alcohol, drug and substance abuse among adolescents: attitudes, behaviors and associated factors amongst adolescents in Giyani Town, Limpopo of South Africa.

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# Data analysis

- Data was analysed using SPSS (Statistical Programme for Social Sciences) version Microsoft Excel Programme.
- Data analysis was done by categorizing, ordering, and summarizing the data, and describing the results.
- All data was analysed for comparisons using Microsoft excel spread sheets. The results identified were then categorized, arranged, and presented in Table I in annexure 1.

# PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

- The results have been categorised into five themes with more subthemes as presented in the subsequent slides
- The presentation of findings will start from the first theme to the last one
- The themes are written in caps and subthemes in small letters

# THE COUNT OF PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR GENDER

- It was noted in the study when comparing and measuring the count of the total number of male and female participants that 34% of the count was male and 66% was female as seen on Figure 1. The female count was greater than that of male.

# THE COUNT OF PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR GENDER

- The participants were of different age group, ranging from **16 to 25** years old. This gave an advantage to see what was really happening among adolescents when it comes to the use of alcohol, drugs and substance abuse between these different age groups. A total of 107 (96%) were currently attending school as shown in Table I, this served as an indication that most of the participants were engaged in learning, which could influence their knowledge and personal lifestyle. Only 4 (4%) were not currently attending school.

# **THE PREVALENCE OF ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG ADOLESCENTS**

- Adolescent prevalence of alcohol, drugs and substance abuse was presented according to different aspects such as smoking cigarette, drug use as well as alcohol use which have been presented underneath.



# Smoked cigarette

- Figure 1 show that most of the participants have never smoked any cigarette with their percentage sitting high at 90% when compared to that of those who have smoked a cigarette before sitting low at 10%. The percentage of those who have smoked before is low when compared to that of those who have never smoked before. In the study it was noted that 5 (5%) had stopped hanging around old friends because they do not do drugs while the other 106 (95%) never stopped hanging around old friends because they do not smoke drugs as reflected in table 1 in annexure 1.

## Drug use

- Figure 2 shows that most of the participants have never used any form of drugs with their percentage sitting high at 92% when compared to that of those who have used drugs before sitting low at 8%. The percentage of those who have used drugs before is low when compared to that of those who have never used drugs before. This served as an indication that majority of the youth had a good behavior and a positive attitude against the use and abuse of drugs.

# Drinking pattern

- It was noted in the study when comparing and measuring the number of participants who have ever drunk before and those who have drunk in the past 30 days. The count of those who have drunk before was 45% and those who have never drunk were 55% as seen in Figure 3. This indicated that most of the youth had drunk alcohol before with their percentage sitting slightly below that of those who have never drunk before. Only 14% had drunk in the past 30 days and 86% had not consumed any alcohol in the past 30 days which served as an indication that most of the youth did not use the alcohol regularly or were not heavy drinkers as seen in Figure 3. And 11 (10%) had drunk alcohol so much that they got sick before and 100 (90%) had never drunk so much that they got sick.

## Drinking pattern continued-----

- The study results were supported by the 2nd South African National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey conducted in 2008, which had reflected that provincial alcohol consumption prevalence amongst learners varies greatly according to provinces. The provinces with the highest rates of alcohol consumption reported by learners included Western Cape, Gauteng, Free State and North West.

## Drinking pattern continued-----

- The provinces with highest rates of female learners consuming alcohol in their lifetime were Limpopo and Western Cape. While Gauteng and Western Cape reported a significantly greater proportion of past month drinkers than of past month binge drinkers, which suggests that there was a large proportion of learners in these provinces who had drunk alcohol during the prior month but whose drinking did not constitute binge drinking (National Institutes for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), 2009:3). This is line with the results of this study where a lower percentage of adolescent had a drink of alcohol in the previous thirty days.

# **ALCOHOL USE DISORDER SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS IN ADOLESCENTS**

- The study results indicated that adolescents displayed different signs and symptoms due to the effect of alcohol abuse such as poor performance at school, forgetfulness, lying in order to get money for buying alcohol and drugs, poor personal hygiene, avoiding social events and risky sexual behavior. These effects have been presented underneath reflecting the percentages of the effects amongst the adolescents.

## Performance at school

- Figure 4 shows that most of the participants have a higher level of performance at school sitting above at 93% of student whose performance had not declined at school when compared to that of those whose performance had declined at school sitting at 7%. This indicated that most of the participants were doing well at school and not engaging on the bad use of alcohol, drug and substance abuse which could have affected their performance at school and result in a decline in their performance at school. The decline in the participants performance of 8 (7%) as seen on table I could be due to the use of alcohol, drugs and substance abuse; however the possibility of other social issues could not be ruled out since they could be contributing factors to the decline in performance of the participants.



# Performance at school conti-----

- According to a study conducted by Granville-Garcia et al (2014:7-16) showed that drug and alcohol use by adolescents can result in many problems for adolescents and their families. Adolescents alcohol and other drug (AOD) misuse can lead to problems (such as skipping school, bad grades, conflict in relationships with friends and peers, rocky family relationships, and can cause poor brain function, concentration, and affect brain development (Granville-Garcia et al, 2014:7-16). This is line with the results of this study regarding poor performance though reflected as poor brain function and concentration problems

# Forgetfulness

- Out of 111 participants only 19 (17%) were found to becoming more forgetful and 92 (83%) were not found to be coming more forgetful. And 39 (35%) were experiencing extreme mood changes whereas 72 (65%) were not experiencing any extreme mood changes. This could have resulted from the use of alcohol and drugs, but the possibility of other factors could not be ruled out since they could be the cause of the results above.

## Forgetfulness conti----

- WHO (2013:18) has reflected that a person who is intoxicated may present with different signs namely the smell of alcohol on their breath or skin, argumentative, and/or deterioration in the person's appearance or hygiene. Cognitively, the person may experience decreased ability to pay attention and a propensity toward memory loss which may lead to poor performance and forgetfulness (WHO, 2013:18)

## Lied to get money

- Table I shows that 9 (8%) of the participants had lied to get money to buy drugs and alcohol, Only 102 (92%) never lied to get money to buy drugs and alcohol. Out of 111 participants, 6 (5%) of the participants had stolen money before to buy drugs and alcohol and 105 (95%) had never stolen money to buy drugs and alcohol before.

## Poor personal hygiene

- It was also noted that 17 (15%) were paying less attention to personal hygiene and 94 (87%) were paying good attention to their personal hygiene. This could have resulted from the use of alcohol and drugs, but the possibility of other contributing factors could not be ruled out. The results have been supported by WHO (2013:18) which has revealed that a person who is intoxicated may present with different deterioration in the person's appearance or hygiene.

## Avoiding social events

- It was also noted that 14 (13%) of the participants had avoided family or social events because they were not expected to smoke or drink and 97 (87%) of the participants had never avoided family or social events because they couldn't smoke or drink.
- Study findings by NIAAA (2009) had similar results and indicated that adolescents who abuses alcohol have a problems in their lives and on their future work life, family relationships, friendships, and overall health and the community as a whole resulting in isolation from others and depression

## Risky sexual behavior

- It was noted in the study when comparing and measuring the number of participants that have had unprotected sex under the influence of alcohol, drugs and substance abuse. Only 10% of the participants have had unprotected sex under the influence of alcohol, drugs and substance abuse and 90% never engaged in any risky sexual behaviors under the influence of alcohol, drugs and substance abuse as seen in Figure 5. The majority of youth was having a good attitude against having unprotected sex under the influence of alcohol, drug and substance abuse.



## Risky sexual behavior contin-----

- Amongst the participants 5 (5%) indicated they have sexually taken advantage of someone else while they were under the influence of alcohol and had 106 (95%) had never sexually taken advantage of someone else while they were under the influence of alcohol.

## Risky sexual behavior contin-----

- This was supported by the results from a study conducted by Granville-Garcia *et al.*, (2014:7-16) which has indicated that alcohol use has a great number of consequences such as risky sexual behavior, familial conflicts, conflicts with friends, a greater risk of accidents and illicit drug use. Therefore risky sexual behaviour is considered a serious public health problem and increases the risk of contracting HIV infection with other problems such as pregnancy.

## Driving under the influence of alcohol and arrest

- It is shown in table I that 9 (8%) of the participants drove under the influence of alcohol and 102 (92%) never drove after drinking alcohol. It was also noted that only 1 (1%) had been arrested, even for a few hours, because of drunken behavior and 110 (99%) had never been arrested, even for a few hours, because of drunken behavior.

# **ASSOCIATED FACTORS RELATED TO THE USE OF ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE OF ADOLESCENTS**

- **There are associated factors mainly related with alcohol, drugs and substance abuse by adolescents.**

# Drinking parents

- It was noted in the study when comparing and measuring the number of parents of all the participants and found that only 13% of the parents consumed alcohol and 87% did not consume any alcohol as seen in Figure 6. The count of parents that consumed alcohol was very low when compared to that of those who were not consuming alcohol at all. This could be a key contributor to the use of alcohol by the youth in families and in the community as a whole . In the study it was noted that 14 (13%) of the participants parents were using alcohol and 97 (87%) were not using alcohol. The use of alcohol by parents could affect the participants both positively and negatively. Only 3 (3%) of the parents were heavy drinkers and 6 (5%) were normal drinkers.

## Drinking parents conti-----

- Goldstein (2011:160) revealed that family risk factors included family history of AOD (Alcohol and Other Drug) abuse, poor modeling from parents, chaos at home, and poor communication between parents and children. Community risk factors were high incidence of AOD (Alcohol and Other Drug) abuse and availability of drugs in the community. Obviously if adolescents never encounters AODs (Alcohol and Other Drug), they had no opportunity to use, thereby reduced their risk of addiction to zero.

# Drinking to escape pain

- The results indicated that 9 (8%) drunk alcohol to escape pain, either physical or emotional and 102 (92%) never drunk to escape pain, either physical or emotional. Many people go through extremely traumatic events in their life, sometimes as children, and turn to drugs to cover the horrifying memories. Lynskey Agrawal and Heath (2010:1208) revealed that victims of abuse may begin abuse alcohol for a variety of reasons some of which include an attempt to adapt and distance themselves from the painful physical and emotional traumas experienced in life.



# **STRATEGIES TO CURB ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE AMONGST THE ADOLESCENTS**

- The majority of the participants suggested 85 (77%) agreed that if the community was to set up an action group to deal with the current drug and alcohol use issue and indicated that they would be willing to be a part of this group and 26 (23%) disagreed.

# National Provincial Council strategies

- Strategies to be used to curb the problem of alcohol and drug abuse which is escalating amongst the youths and includes:.
- Educate youth and adults about the risks of drug abuse including prescription misuse and excessive drinking.
- Work with media outlets and retailers to reduce alcohol marketing to youth. Increase awareness on the proper storage and disposal of prescription medications. Implement programs for reducing drug abuse and excessive alcohol use such as student assistance programs, parent networking or peer-to-peer support groups. Public policies and law enforcement alone are not sufficient. Support from family, school and society is essential to curtail early alcohol use and its consequences (NPC, 2010:5).

# ETHICAL ISSUES

- Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Municipality.
- Every interviewed participant was assured of confidentiality of the information given and that the information will be used for scientific purposes only.
- Participants were given an introduction to the study and told the purpose of the study. Participants could refuse to participate or withdraw from the interview at any time. Confidentiality was assured using codes for participant's information. Before commencement of the interview participants were requested to sign consent forms.



# Thank you

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