American Journal of
Health, Medicine and Nursing Practice
(AJHMN)

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American Journal of Health, Medicine and Nursing Practice
ISSN 2520-4017 (Online)
Vol.12, Issue 1, pp 21- 38, 2026

www.ajpojournals.org

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Article history

Submitted 06.12.2026 Revised Version Received 04.01.2026 Accepted 05.02.2026

Abstract

Purpose: Awareness of one`s environment is a key to prevention of societal vices, such as intake of illicit drug. Again, knowing the effect of such drug is also a right step in the right direction in terms of avoidance. However, often time, secondary school students engage in illicit drug intake without being aware of their environment and the effect of such illicit drugs. The purpose of this article is to ascertain the level of awareness and effects (physical, behavioral, and academic) of illicit drug intake among secondary school students.

Materials and Methods: Descriptive survey study with a population of 415 and 208 sample size of secondary school students, using a self-structured 3-sectioned questionnaire and a-four (4) point rated 4, 3, 2 & 1 Likert scale were tools adopted for data collection. Whereas, descriptive and inferential statistics were methods of data analysis, using tables/percentages mean, percentages, frequency counts, standard deviation, and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient.

Findings: Awareness of illicit drugs -Cut-off mean = 2.50; N = 198. Awareness on Determinants-Cut-off mean = 2.50; N = 198. health effects of illicit drugs- Cut-off mean = 2.50; N = 198. behavioral effects of illicit drugs. Negative academic performance effects of illicit- Cut-off mean = 2.50; N = 198.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice, and Policy: The study therefore, recommended that, the government should review and modify the policy on education to include evidence-based programs such as life skills training (LST) into the curriculum of secondary school students in Bayelsa state. This will complement the other intuition-based programs by creating their awareness on resistant skills against illicit drug use and help them build up these skills.

(Key: < 2.50 = poor level, 2.50 = fair/ average level, > 2.50 = good level).

Keywords: *Awareness of Illicit Drugs, Illicit Drug Usage, Effects of Illicit Drug Usage*

INTRODUCTION

Awareness refers to taking cognisance or well-informed about one's inner and outside environments (Reagan & Christopher, 2021). In another sense, awareness is one`s ability to understand current issues and be attuned to their surroundings. As environments constantly change, maintaining awareness becomes expedient and requires continuous adaptation through interaction between people and their environment, considering it dispels ignorance by providing individuals with accurate, reliable, and accessible information, empowering them to make informed decisions (Vog et al., 2012). For example, Chen *et al*. (2018) found that students in Regular Middle Schools (RMS) in China were more aware of the dangers of illicit drug use and had better resistance skills, leading to lower rates of initiation and indulgence compared to students in Secondary Vocational Schools (SVS) and Juvenile Correction Schools (JCS), where awareness levels were lower. This supports the notion that early education on the harmful effects of drugs can reduce the likelihood of drug involvement (Botvin, 2012).

Global statistics shows, illicit drug use alone causes an estimated 3.3 million deaths per year, with at least 15.3 million people suffering from drug use disorders (Idowu *et al.,* 2018). In 2008, it was believed that 155 to 250 million people worldwide used illicit drugs, with cannabis being the most frequently consumed substance (Idowu *et al.,* 2018). The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates way-back in 2004, 0.7% of the global disease burden was attributed to cocaine and opioid use, and the social cost of drug use in affected countries reached 2% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Onigbogi, Ojo, & Babalola, 2023). Not too long, Kolawole, Ogunyemi and Lucas (2025) determined the prevalence of substance use and knowledge of its effects among secondary school students in Lagos, Nigeria. The authors separated the prevalence to lifetime and current use were 13.6% and 6.9% respectively. While, alcohol, tramadol (52.7%) and marijuana (36.4%). (98.1%) participants were aware of substance use and most students (88.7%) identified the effects of substance use. The complications were (79.1%) and (61.1%). Illicit drugs effect according to the WHO, is illicit drug misuse that involves the harmful use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illegal drugs, and remains a significant public health challenge yet to have solution worldwide. It is clearly known that drug use during adolescence can lead to severe complications such as unsafe sexual behaviour, personality disorders, aggression, criminal tendencies, drug dependence and in more serious cases loss of life.

A recent study in South Africa by Soremokun *et al.* (2020), conducted among 1,048 students, revealed the type of illicit drugs frequently abused by students are: alcohol prevalence (29.1%), followed by opioids (9%). The study further identified predictors of illicit drug prevalence such as gender, educational level, type of school management, and geographic/economic distribution. The study also found significant differences in tobacco and opioid use between students in private and public schools, as well as in cocaine use between low- and high-income regions of Lagos.

Again, Yang *et al* (2020) affirmed the prevalence of illicit drugs use among adolescents in schools and facilities on prevalence of illicit drug use in Taiwan in three cities, (Taipei, Taichung & Kaohsiung). The retrospective survey from 2014-2017 with 2,190 cohort school students and 125 detained juveniles. It recovered 87% response rate, of which 1.5% were students and 65.8% of detained juveniles have ever used drugs within the period under review. From 2014 to 2017, the survey indicates that over 60% of detained juveniles have ever possessed and used drugs. The study recommended intentional wide-ranging survey be conducted to track and monitor youths illicit drug use. Thus, this study is apt, judging the

purpose is to ascertain the awareness and effects of illicit drugs in school to increase knowledge.

Awareness is described as knowledge, understanding or perception of a state of affairs or circumstance. In this article, awareness has same connotation, but has to do with having adequate knowledge of the illicit drug itself and the effect of its usage by school children in a local setting, where the intake is prevalence. Judging from Mamati, and Maseno (2021) perspective of climate change awareness, creating awareness among youths' groups is crucial drug related issues in an academic environment to ensure health, well-being and enhance academic achievement as well as personal growth. Again, in Mamati, and Maseno (2021) opinion creating awareness is holistic approach of incorporating ways of creating consciousness and awareness of contemporary issues amongst youths, especially school children.

Secondary school students are children studying in their second rank order of educational institutions, basically classified into junior and senior categories (ISCED, 2013**)**. The junior or lower secondary school students in Nigerian context are same as junior high school (JSS 1 – 3), middle school or intermediate school students mainly in grade 7 – 9 (ISCED, 2013). On the other hand, senior or upper secondary school students are equivalent to grades 10 – 12, (SSS 1 – 3) (ISCED, 2013).

In Nigeria, the prevalence of illicit drug use among secondary school students was relatively low, with 35 out of 422 respondents (8.3%) admitting to substance misuse, a reduction from the 20.9% reported in a previous study by Idowu *et al.* (2018). However, Nigeria's overall drug prevalence rate is still alarming, with a 15% rate nearly three times the global average of 5.5%, particularly among teenagers. Jatau *et al.*, (2021) admit that students illicit drug intake prevalence is estimated at 20-40% in some places. Additionally, Onigbogi, Ojo, and Babalola (2023) cited the 2010 World Drug Report, which stated that around 200 million people, or 5% of the global population aged 15-64, had used an illicit substance in the previous year, including secondary school-aged children (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2018). Using the secondary school students to ascertain whether or not they are aware of the effect of the illicit drug intake and misuse is apt and would enable researcher have answer to the posed question and achieve the stated objective: to ascertain the level of awareness and effects (physical, behavioral, and academic) of illicit drug intake among secondary school students of Gbarain Owei Grammar School Okolobiri Bayelsa state. Why this local context is for the reasons that the authors as health professionals encountered these school children at the local school where illicit drug intake is prevalent. Meaning, the study looked at unique risk/environmental factors where the issue was at stake and in the event of help, the context specific factors would be considered.

Statement of the Problem

Although, it was earlier stated that in Nigeria, the prevalence of illicit drug use among secondary school students was relatively low, with 35 out of 422 respondents (8.3%) admitted to substance misuse, a reduction from the 20.9% reported in a previous study by Gobir *et al.* (2017), there are still a number of areas that has high rates. Obiechina and Isiguzo, (2016) stated that, the transition from childhood to adolescence, which is the school age is a critical phase, and it is characterized by the onset of illicit drug abuse/misuse when the student is exposed to it. Often time, inquisitiveness, ingenuousness, and gullibility push secondary school students to engage in the undesirable attitude and behaviour, without knowing the consequences.

For instance, students engage in illicit drug intake without given consideration to the negative impact this might create in him/her mental, academic and physical as well as general well-being (Bassi *et al.,* 2017). Earlier on, Oshodi *et al.* (2010) had uncovered data from British officer's reports on National statistics indicating that 12% of students aged 11 to 15 have engaged in one form or two drug usages. Which was reaffirmed in a later study which measured the prevalence of illicit drug use amongst students of junior and senior secondary schools aged 10–15 years (Somerekun *et al.,* 2020). But an earlier study Hamed Al-Alawi and Shaikh (2018), identified even lower age group of secondary school students who are primarily introduced to this behaviour, i.e, as early as ninth grade (Junior Secondary School 3 (JSS3), according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), (2013). While these students are aware of names of the illicit drugs, their understanding of the harmful effects of these drugs on health, behaviour and academic performance has remained unknown to the students as confirmed by Okafor and Babalola, (2021); Divya *et al.,* (2018). As clinical/public health nurses in public health unit in a government health facility in Okolobiri Bayelsa State; researchers noted a high frequency of admission of secondary school students from Gbarain Owei grammar school Okolobiri. Again, there is frequency of over dose of prescribed analgesics. For instance, students frequently take Tramadol 100-150mg; without being recommended by a physician.

However, the students view the intake of such drugs as coping mechanism to a large extent. For instance, on one-on-one discussion, a number of students disclosed they consume alcohol in the form of gin or beer in order to eliminate dread and develop a sense of superman without giving a careful thought to the side effects such as addiction, stealing, hooliganism, gang rape, street fighting in school and of course voracity, of which these vices have negative impact on themselves, immediate families and society in general. If this trend continuous, there will be an incredible rate of absenteeism and school drop outs to increase the world`s number of out of school that would either be quacks or outright useless adolescents to adulthood, who most likely would cause societal nuisance contrary to expectation.

These young secondary school students are the future leaders of a society, and they need to be physically and psychologically healthy to carry out the leadership position, but if this issue of illicit drug misuse is not curbed, it is tantamount to raising serial killers and unproductive persons, which is detrimental to the nation at large and to their own health, physical and social well-being contrary to the precepts of Universal Health Coverage and Sustainable Development Goals.

Against this background, this article attempts to establish how aware and effects of illicit on secondary school students regarding illicit drugs (Vogl, e*t al.,* 2012).

While, numerous studies have been conducted on this subject matter (abuse of illicit substance) overseas and other parts of Nigeria, none has been seen to be conducted in Gbarain-Owei Grammar School Okolobiri Bayelsa State. Hence, this study will be carried out in this scenario to bridge this gap with the help of the objective stated.

Theoretical Review

Social Learning Theory, also known as Differential Association Theory, was initially introduced by Edwin Sutherland (1883–1950), an American sociologist and criminologist, who first proposed Differential Association Theory in 1939. Later, Albert Bandura, regarded as the father of general psychological Social Learning Theory (1977), expanded on this concept. This dual-faceted theory suggests that drug use is a learned behavior acquired through observation, imitation, and interactions within close social groups like family and friends. Its key principles assert that criminal behavior is not inherited or innate but learned through social connections,

including the adoption of motives and justifications. Other important elements include reinforcement, imitation, and attitudes that support violating established rules. Additionally, rewards, punishments, and imitation are used to explain how new behaviors or attitudes are adopted and developed.

Implications of Social Learning Theory to this Study

The implications of Social Learning Theory, also known as Differential Association Theory, for a study is that school children learn behaviors, including drug use while in school, through their interactions and associations with other students, sometimes without taking into cognizance of what they indulge in that is, rewards (positive or negative) to themselves. This suggests that awareness programs should consider the social environment and peer influences that contribute to drug-related behaviors. Understanding that drug use can be a learned behavior emphasizes the importance of targeting social networks and promoting positive role models to effectively raise awareness and prevent illicit drug intake amongst school children in the context- (Gbarain Owei Grammar School) the study is conducted in particular and the state in general.

Empirical Review

Empirically, a number of investigations have been undertaken on the subject matter "Awareness on Illicit Drugs among students in Secondary School" diversely in terms of nomenclatures. Some on awareness, others on knowledge while others focused on effects separately, thus, presented as the article appears. For instance, Sai – Sandhya *et al.,* (2018) undertook an online cross-sectional study on knowledge of drug usage among teens in India, and a sample size of 100 students between the age of 14 and 19 years were employed. Data were acquired using questionnaire. It composed of 17 questions which were presented to the participants using the survey globe link. The responses were gathered and results were derived using descriptive statistics (percentages & pie charts). The data showed that 67% of the adolescents have attended many drugs awareness workshops (thus are aware) and 45% of them ascribed drunkenness and drug addiction to hereditary inheritance. Meanwhile, another descriptive study by Divya *et al.,* (2018) on the level of awareness and attitude on the ill-effects of substance abuse among adolescent students in selected high school in India; used a convenient sampling technique to select 320 participants from class 8th to 10th standard, both male and female, and the questionnaire was used to obtain data. The results of their investigation revealed that the overall level of awareness regarding the adverse consequences of drugs was around average (43%). They are poorly educated (38%) about the concept of substance abuse and their knowledge of the concept concerning substances was equally poor (32%). They recommended that there is need for methods to raise the awareness and attitude of high school pupils regarding substance usage. Again, another descriptive and comparative study was recently conducted in Tanta city, Egypt by El-Kazh and El-Mahdy (2017) named "knowledge and attitude of secondary school and college students regarding drug misuse and participation in prevention programs. The sample comprised of two groups (technical secondary school and faculty of Nursing Tanta University, all in Tanta city), all of which were 406 respondents. The instruments for the study were structured interview and a questionnaire. The study found that, most of both college and secondary school students (74.88% and 98.03% respectively) had inadequate score understanding on drug abuse. In terms of participation in prevention activities, both college students and secondary school students had fair score awareness about the prevention programs. The researchers therefore concluded that students from both schools are poorly educated regarding drug usage, but both groups are adequately knowledgeable regarding

participation in preventative programs. The study so recommended that secondary school and college-based drug education program be implemented in their respective curriculum including societal activities that engages parents and faith-based organizations. Contrary to the Egyptian study above, a cross sectional study by Zipporah *et al,* (2018) was carried out in Kenya to investigate the knowledge on usage and effect of drug and substance abuse among adolescents aged 13 – 24 years. The study utilised both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and employed a random sampling procedure to pick 87 respondents.

The data collection instrument for the study was the questionnaire, and the results were analyzed using version 20 of the SPSS and Micro soft excel. The results revealed that majority of the kids (77) are highly educated on the usage and effects of drugs and substance misuse. Although, despite understanding of the negative effects, some of them were still taking these narcotics. The survey also found out that 50% of the young who were misusing drug and substances were those who are through with secondary education but had not gone to postsecondary institution, and those who did not complete secondary school. Furthermore, Adebowale *et al.*, (2013) conducted a similar study in Lagos Nigeria to ascertain the knowledge, attitude and practice of drug abuse among public secondary school students with mean age of 13.8 years, used a multistage sampling method to select 400 participants and obtained data via semi-structured pre tested interview sheet questionnaire. The study indicated that, more than 50% were educated of what drug abuse is all about, the inherent dangers linked in their misuse and the legislative implication of drug abuse. Most respondents (58.5%) had good attitudes to consuming illegal drugs. Coffee and painkiller were the common medicines mostly utilised by the students, on the other hand, Indian hemp, alcohol, and cigarettes were hardly used. Those researchers reported that the students generally had a fair level of information concerning illicit drug misuse and most of them had good attitudes towards utilising illegal drugs. Also, the drugs mostly taken seem socially acceptable, but are likely to lead to the use of heavier ones later in life (gate way drug impact), they noted.

Another study was conducted by Anetor and Oyenka – Thomas (2018) in Lagos Nigeria, which investigated the knowledge and attitude of youth towards substance usage. A cross sectional study design was adopted. 350 youth aged 18 – 35 years old were recruited by a multistage random selection approach and data were collected utilising the questionnaire. 340 analysable questionnaires were returned (attrition rate of 3%); the data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Findings indicated adequate knowledge of the risk of substance misuse among adolescents, and there was indifference in the attitude of youth to the use of drugs.

However, the study by Awosusi and Adeboyega, (2013) took a different perspective by determining the association between knowledge of health impacts and substance use among students of post-secondary institution in south western Nigeria. The survey design was employed for the investigation, utilising 2, 297 respondents as sample from a multipurpose sampling technique. The questionnaire was utilised as the tool, and the data was evaluated utilising descriptive statistics and inferential (PPMC) analysis. Findings revealed that most participants take alcohol while a few of them tried with tobacco/cigarette and marijuana; and that, there is a substantial correlation which exist amongst awareness of the health implications with respect to physical, social and psychological health and substance use. Also, from the findings, it reveals that if the understanding of the health impacts involving physical, social and psychological health is strong, then the prevalence of substance use by the respondents is lowered. Richert *et al* (2020) therefore concluded that the needs of treatment are different

between these group; the girls require more comprehensive intervention of treatment than boys because they report higher levels of mental health issues than the boys.

Another effect of illicit drug's usage and its attendant consequences on the physical health of the individual, resulting in various sickness and diseases including cancer was conduct by Bagnadi *et al,* (2015) earlier on. Bagnadi *et al,* (2015) researched on the effect of alcohol on 23 types of cancer through a meta- analytic approach.

Secondary data were collected from literatures in MEDLINE, ISI web of science, and EMBASE for studies published on line before 2012. The dose – response meta- regression model was used to investigate potential source of heterogeneity. A total of 572 studies including 486, 538 cancer cases were identified. Relative risks (RRs) for heavy drinkers compared with non - drinkers and occasional drinkers were 5.13 for oral and pharyngeal cancer, 4.95 for oesophageal squamous cell carcinoma, 1.44 for colorectal, 2.65 for laryngeal and 1.61 for breast cancer. For the neoplasms, there was a clear dose – risk relationship. Heavy drinkers also had a significantly higher risk of cancer of the Stomach (RR 1.21), Liver (2.07), Gall bladder (2.64), Pancreas (1.19) and Lung (1.15). The findings showed a positive relationship between alcohol intake and risk of melanoma and prostate cancer. Alcohol consumption however, and risk of Hodgkin's and non - Hodgkin's lymphomas were inversely related. The study concluded that the risk of cancer of oral cavity and pharynx, oesophagus, colorectum, liver, larynx and female breast is increased by alcohol. However, melanoma and prostate cancer were also shown to have association with consumption of alcohol.

Economic burden is yet another effect of illicit drug misuse among adolescent students. An investigation to highlight the effects of the economic burden of Bipolar I Disorder (BDI) in the United States was carried out by Cloutier *et al,* (2018) to estimate the cost of BDI for 2015. It comprised of direct health care cost, non - health care cost, and indirect costs, calculated based on a BDI prevalence of 1%. The excess costs of BDI were estimated as the difference between the cost incurred by individuals with BDI and those incurred by the individuals without BDI, or individuals from the general population. Three large US claims database were used to asses direct health care cost for insured individuals, and the literature for uninsured individuals. Direct non – health care and indirect costs were based on the literature and publications by the government. The findings revealed that overall, the cost of BDI were estimated at $2021.1 billion in 2015, which corresponds to an average of $81,559 per individual, while the excess costs of BDI were estimated at $119.8 billion, which also corresponds to an average of $48,333 per individual; and that the largest contributors to excess cost were care giving (36%), direct health care cost (21%) and unemployment (20%). It was concluded that besides direct health care costs, the BDI was linked to a significant direct non – health care and in direct costs, and so, more effective treatments and practices are needed to optimize therapeutic strategies and contain direct and indirect costs.

Furthermore, the effect of illicit drugs use among adolescents has led to increasing crime rate and delinquency. For instance, a cross sectional study on substance abuse by Umukoro *et al,* (2021) among 315 secondary school students in Delta state Nigeria revealed that 34 (10.79%) had gotten into fights under the influence of alcohol. Similarly, a study by the National Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education (PRIDE) (1997), extracted from an article by (Drug Identification and Testing in the Juvenile Justice System, 1998), found a significant association between crimes committed by adolescents (in grade 6 to 12), with their illicit drugs use. The result revealed that, the percentage of the respondents that said they had used various substances, and had been involved in threatening or delinquent activities are higher than the percentage of students who were involved in these same activities but had neither used alcohol

nor other substances. This therefore implies that the tendency to commit a crime is higher under the influence of drug use.

Research Gap

The above literature indicates that this topic is widely treated in sundry places, such as India, Ethiopia and the United States of America. Here in Nigeria, most of the studies are from Lagos South-west Nigeria and Delta State South-south Nigeria. However, here in Bayelsa State, same South-south Nigeria, no such study was identified, so this study is aimed to fill that research gap. Again, some studies focused on elementary schools, while others secondary, this study took on secondary as well, sequel to the prevalence among the students at the school under study.

Research Methodology

This section considers the various methods and techniques used in conducting this study.

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to obtain a true descriptive analysis of characteristics of a sample which can be used to make propositions concerning a given population as proposed by Kothari and Garg (2019). The study setting was at Gbarain-owei Grammar School Okolobiri Bayelsa State, one of the oldest secondary co-educational institutions and a district headquarters of that clan where the biggest school and mini hub is located, and a teaching hospital frequently visited by secondary school students along Igbogene – Polaku road.

Target Population

The target group of persons used for this study are students from junior to senior secondary school (JSS 3 100, students -SSS1, 111, SSS2, 97 students & SSS3,107) (216 boys &199 girls) of Gbarain Owei grammar school Okolobiri Bayelsa State.

Inclusion Criteria

Respondents were strictly secondary school students in Gbarain Owei grammar school Okolobiri, from JSS 3 to SSS 3, and must be present and willing at the time to participate in the study.

Sampling Technique/Sample size

The judgmental and proportionate stratified random sampling techniques were used for this study due to the homogeneity of study population. A sample of 208 out of 415 students was generated using Taro Yamen's formula. Representatives from each of the classes were then selected using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Below is a table showing the summary of sample size as represented by the various classes.

Table 1. Summary of Sample Sizes of the Classes

Class	Sample (n)	No. males	No. females
JSS3	50	31	19
SSS1	54	19	35
SSS2	49	22	27
SSS3	55	33	22
TOTAL	**208**	**105**	**103**

Instrument for Data Collection

Considering the focus, a self-structured 3-sectioned questionnaire was utilized as the tool for data collection in this study. Section A, demographics; Section B, level of awareness; Section C, the health, behavioral and academic performance effects of illicit drugs. A-four (4) point rated from Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD) and ranked 4, 3, 2 & 1 Likert scale was adopted.

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

All authors who are experts in Mental and Community Health Nursing scrutinized the questionnaires for face and content validity, in order to ensure the questions appropriate and will achieve the research objective. For Reliability**,** the "Awareness and Effects of Illicit Drugs Usage among Secondary School Students Questionnaire (AEIDUSSSQ)" was piloted with 20 students from a smaller secondary school in Igbogene. Cronbach's Alpha analysis was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument's reliability. The following reliability coefficient values were obtained: awareness of illicit drugs (0.77), effects on health (0.74), effects on behavior (0.73), effects on academic performance (0.76), and the entire instrument (0.87). These values were deemed sufficient for data collection in the study.

With regards to procedure for data collection, the researchers obtained permission to conduct a research, permission was granted by Ministry of Education and the school principal to proceed. Researchers administered 206 questionnaires and retrieved 198 during recess to avoid disruption of school activities mainly on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, that were convenient by virtue of the school. Two students opted out, and 8 incomplete forms were discarded. The study took place over about a-3 weeks' period in March 2023 uninterruptedly.

Method of Data Analysis

The completed questionnaire from responses were retrieved, organized and serial numbers allotted, the data was reviewed, scored, and fed into the computer. The analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics, (mean, percentages, frequency counts, standard deviation, and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMC)) were adopted.

Ethical Consideration

The research topic underwent scrutiny and approval by the ethical committee of faculty Nursing, Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State was obtained, following the defence of the research proposal. The Faculty of Nursing Sciences issued an introductory letter which researchers` represented to Bayelsa state ministry of education to gain access as identity. In turn, an ethical approval was obtained from the Ministry to the head of the school, who also permit and informed consent was given to the student who indicated interest in filling the forms. Otherwise, the head teacher filled the consent form on behalf of all the students after proper explanation of the intent of the research. Above all the students were informed that the participation was voluntary, anonymity and privacy were ensured.

Results and Analysis

This section analyzed, presented results/interpreted and summarized the major findings for this study.

Analysis of Demographic Data

Table 2: Respondents` Socio-Demographic Data

Gender	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Male	101	51
Female	97	49
Age		
10-14 years	62	31
15-19 years	135	68
20- 24 years	1	1
Class		
JSS 3	44	22
SS1	53	27
SS2	47	24
SS3	54	27
Religion		
Christianity	193	98
Islam	5	2
Total	**198**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The data presented in Table 4.1 reveals that 101 (51 %) of the respondents were male, while 97 (49 %) were female. This implies that there were more male respondents than their female counterparts in the study. Also, the data presented in the above table indicates that 62 (31%) of the total respondents were within 10-14 years, 135 (68%) were within 15-19 years and 1 (1%) were within 20-24 years. This implies that the students between age 15-19 years were more in number than the other respondents in the study. Again, Table 4.1 shows that 44 (22%) of the total respondents were of JSS 3, 53 (27%) were from SS 1, 47 (24%) were from SS 2 and 54 (27%) were of SS 3. This implies that SS 3 students were more in number than the other categories of JSS 3, 53 (27%) were from SS 1, 47 (24%) were from SS 2 and 54 (27%) were of SS 3. This implies that SS 3 students were more in number than the other categories of respondents in the study while the JSS3 students were the least. The data presented in Table 4.1 further reveals that 193 (98%) of the total respondents were of Christianity while 5 (2%) were Islam. This implies that there were more Christians than the Islamic students in the study.

American Journal of Health, Medicine and Nursing Practice
ISSN 2520-4017 (Online)
Vol.12, Issue 1, pp 21- 38, 2026
www.ajpojournals.org

Table 3: Respondents` Level of Awareness of Illicit Drugs

S/N	Examples of illicit drugs	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	SD
1	Alcohol	70 (280)	99 (297)	26 (52)	3 (3)	198 (632)	3.19	0.74
2	Tobacco (e.g. cigarette, snuff & shisha)	110 (440)	68 (204)	16 (32)	4 (4)	198 (680)	3.43	0.73
3	Cannabis / marijuana (ganja, igbo, S.K, weed)	121 (484)	58 (174)	13 (26)	6 (6)	198 (690)	3.48	0.75
4	Tramadol	93 (372)	80 (240)	21 (42)	4 (4)	198 (658)	3.32	0.75
5	Cough syrup with codeine	56 (224)	56 (168)	70 (140)	16 (16)	198 (548)	2.77	0.95
6	Cocaine	120 (480)	57 (171)	15 (30)	6 (6)	198 (687)	3.47	0.76
7	Morphine	51 (204)	70 (210)	69 (138)	8 (8)	198 (560)	2.83	0.86
8	Opium	50 (200)	61 (183)	67 (134)	20 (20)	198 (537)	2.71	0.96
9	Solvent (e.g. glue, paint, nail polish)	34 (136)	50 (150)	84 (168)	30 (30)	198 (484)	2.44	0.95
10	Nicotine	39 (156)	63 (189)	53 (106)	43 (43)	198 (494)	2.49	1.04
	Total mean	**74 (296)**	**66 (198)**	**43 (86)**	**15 (15)**	**198 (595)**	**3.01**	**0.95**

Cut-off mean = 2.50; N = 198

(Key: < 2.50 = poor level, 2.50 = fair/ average level, > 2.50 = good level).

From Table 4.2 above, it shows that, all the item mean scores of 3.19, 3.43, 3.48, 3.32, 2.77, 3.47, 2.71 except those of items 9 and 10 with mean scores of 2.44 and 2.49 respectively, were greater than the cut-off mean score of 2.50. Overall, the total mean score of 3.01 was also greater than the cut-off mean score of 2.50. This implies that, there exists a good level of awareness on illicit drugs among secondary school students of Gbarain Owei Grammar School Okolobiri in Bayelsa State.

Table 4: Respondents` Level of Awareness on The Health Effects of Illicit Drugs Usage

S/N	Effect of hard drug on the health of the individual	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	SD
19	It causes dry mouth	88 (352)	80 (240)	24 (48)	4 (4)	198 (642)	3.27	0.77
20	It can lead to kidney failure	61 (244)	102 (306)	29 (58)	6 (6)	198 (614)	3.10	0.75
21	It results to liver damage	55 (220)	64 (192)	62 (124)	17 (17)	198 (553)	2.79	0.95
22	It leads to brain damage	90 (360)	81 (243)	21 (42)	6 (6)	198 (651)	3.29	0.78
23	It makes one to see what others cannot see	66 (264)	91 (273)	33 (66)	8 (8)	198 (611)	3.09	0.81
24	It makes one to hear what others cannot hear	54 (216)	69 (207)	57 (114)	18 (18)	198 (555)	2.80	0.94
25	It can lead to death	55 (220)	71 (213)	63 (126)	9 (9)	198 (568)	2.87	0.87
	Total mean	**67 (268)**	**80 (240)**	**41 (82)**	**10 (10)**	**198 (600)**	**3.03**	**0.87**

Cut-off mean = 2.50; N = 198

The data presented in Table 4.4 shows that, all the item mean scores of 3.27, 3.10, 2.79, 3.29, 3.09, 2.80 and 2.87 were more than the cut-off mean score of 2.50. On the whole, the total mean score of 3.03 was also more than the cut-off mean score of 2.50. This implies that, there exist a good level of awareness of the health effects of illicit drugs usage among students of Gbarain Owei Grammar school Okolobiri.

Table 5: Respondents` Level of Awareness on the Behavioral Effects of Illicit Drugs Usage

S/N	Effect of illicit drug use on behavior	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	SD
26	It causes anxiety and depression	55 (220)	67 (201)	50 (100)	26 (26)	198 (547)	2.76	1.00
27	It brings about happiness	74 (296)	97 (291)	22 (44)	5 (5)	198 (638)	3.21	0.74
28	It results to aggressiveness (violence)	114 (456)	70 (210)	13 (26)	1 (1)	198 (693)	3.50	0.64
29	It raises self confidence	120 (480)	63 (189)	13 (26)	2 (2)	198 (697)	3.52	0.67
30	It improves performance of activity	116 (464)	69 (207)	10 (20)	3 (3)	198 (674)	3.51	0.67
31	It can result to Personality disorder	63 (252)	75 (225)	53 (106)	7 (7)	198 (590)	2.98	0.86
32	Sleep disorder can also occur	53 (212)	75 (225)	54 (108)	16 (16)	198 (561)	2.83	0.92
33	It may also lead to Dependence to drugs	126 (504)	59 (177)	9 (18)	4 (4)	198 (703)	3.55	0.68
34	It can cause forgetfulness	72 (288)	98 (294)	21 (42)	7 (7)	198 (631)	3.19	0.76
35	Tobacco and nicotine are “gate –way” drugs that can lead to the use of higher drugs of addiction sooner or later in life.	21 (84)	36 (108)	93 (186)	48 (48)	198 (426)	2.15	0.91
36	It can make someone to do bad things	79 (316)	90 (270)	22 (44)	7 (7)	198 (637)	3.22	0.78
	Total Mean	**81 (324)**	**73 (219)**	**33 (66)**	**11 (11)**	**198 (620)**	**3.13**	**0.89**

Cut-off mean = 2.50; N = 198

Table 4.5 above reveals that, all the item mean scores of 2.76, 3.21, 3.50, 3.52, 3.51, 2.98, 2.83, 3.55, 3.19 3.22 except item 35 with mean score of 2.15 were higher than the cut-off mean score of 2.50. On the whole, the total mean score of 3.13 was also higher than the cut-off mean score of 2.50. This implies that, there exist a good level of awareness of behavioral effects of illicit drugs usage among students of Gbarain Owei Grammar school Okolobiri in Bayelsa state.

Table 6: Respondents` Awareness on the Negative Academic Performance Effects of Illicit Drugs Usage

S/N	Effect of illicit drugs on Academic performance	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	SD
37	It makes the abusers (students) not to be regular in school for instance, truancy.	27 (108)	64 (192)	77 (154)	30 (30)	198 (484)	2.44	0.91
38	It results to low performance in their grades in examinations.	23 (92)	54 (162)	85 (170)	36 (36)	198 (460)	2.32	0.91
39	The contribution of someone in drugs will not be taken seriously in class	74 (296)	83 (249)	32 (64)	9 (9)	198 (618)	3.12	0.84
40	It deprives others from concentrating in class due to fear of bullying and intimidation from the abuser.	67 (268)	89 (267)	32 (64)	10 (10)	198 (609)	3.08	0.84
	Total Mean	**48 (192)**	**73 (219)**	**56 (112)**	**21 (21)**	**198 (544)**	**2.75**	**0.94**

Cut-off mean = 2.50; N = 198

The data from Table 4.6 reveals that, item 37 and 38 with mean scores of 2.44 and 2.32 respectively, were less than the cut-off mean of 2.50 while those of items 39 and 40 with mean scores of 3.12 and 3.08 respectively were above the cut-off mean score of 2.50. Generally, the total mean score of 2.75 was also above the cut-off mean score of 2.50. This implies that, there exist a good level of awareness on the negative academic performance effects of illicit drugs usage among students of Gbarain Owei Grammar school Okolobiri in Bayelsa State.

Discussion of Findings

Socio Demographic Data

The result of this study reveals that more males (51%) per took in the study while the females were slightly less than half (49%). This implies that the gender distribution is about equal, which is similar to the findings of Bassi *et al* (2017), Abasuibong *et al*, (2014) and Adebowale *et al*, (2013). Also, this study revealed that the age range of the students in Gbarain Owei gramma school is mostly between 10 and 19 years. This age range is in line with that of the international high school students (ISCED, 2013).

Awareness of illicit drugs

This study showed that the students of Gbarain Owei grammar school had a good level of awareness about illicit drugs and their examples, with total mean score of 3.01. This is in consonance with studies by Adebowale *et al* (2013). However, this study is contrary to that of El kazh and El Mahdy (2017) who had overall score knowledge of drug abuse by students to be poor, which implies that those students had a limited level of awareness about drugs. Divya *et al*, 2018 also had a contrary view to this study, because according to their study, the overall level of awareness is (43%) which is about average.

Effects of Illicit Drug

This study revealed the awareness of some adverse effects about the use of illicit drugs by secondary school students of Gbarain Owei grammar school. These findings are in keeping with other studies, for instance the physical health and mental health (behavioral) damages, illicit drugs cause to students agree with the studies conducted by National, Higway Traffic Safety Administration (2015); Bargnadi *et al*, (2015), Stahre *et al*, (2014), Rudd *et al*, (2016), Baliunas *et al (*2010) which reveals that illicit drugs usage causes physical health issues such as diseases, accidents, psychosocial problems, suicidal tendencies and death. Also, the adverse effects of this vice on academic performance as revealed by this study is in concordance with Muritala *et al* (2015), Abdu-Raheem (2013) and Drug identification and testing in the juvenile justice system, (1998); which shows that illicit drugs usage causes lack of concentration in their studies and fear of bullying and intimidation which leads to truancy in class and eventual low grades.

Conclusion

The level of awareness concerning illicit drugs and their effects among students of Gbarain Owei Grammar school is adequate. However, they lack awareness on skills to prevent them from indulging in the use of illicit drugs. This therefore calls for the government and appropriate authorities to put in policy to inculcate practical skills educational programs geared towards drug prevention into their curriculum in secondary schools.

Recommendations

By way of recommendation, the government should review and modify the policy on education to include evidence-based programs such as life skills training (LST) into the curriculum of secondary school students in Bayelsa state. This will complement the other intuition-based programs by creating their awareness on resistant skills against illicit drug use and help them build up these skills. Also, the government and stake holders should sponsor impactful programs in the communities from time to time to encourage youth seminars or role plays that depicts the dangers of illicit drugs use and how to resist them.

Not only that, parents/guardians should not relent in educating their children/wards against drug abuse; continue to teach them how to say no to drug abuse.

In addition, our religious leaders should act as positive role models for these adolescents to emulate and very significantly, self – help groups and rehabilitation centers should be established within the community to re-in cooperate drug users into positive activities. This should involve the governmental, community and non-governmental organization (NGO).

Recommendations for Further Studies

Following the aforementioned findings, this study recommends that future studies be conducted using qualitative research design to truly comprehend the phenomenon under study from the perspective of the students. Secondly, this study recommends that, a mixed method approach should be adopted to cover a wider area.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest identified**.**

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