



The assessment of drug use experiences among Junior Secondary School students: a pre-evaluation for Keepin'it REAL pilot intervention in Lagos State

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Background:

The study aimed to assess junior students' experiences with drug use to identify the needs for the implementation of the keepin'it REAL intervention, an efficacious school-based program that aims to reduce drug and substance use among adolescents.

Methods:

The survey was conducted among junior secondary school students in 8 selected public schools that had not received drug abuse prevention intervention in the Agege and Alimosho local government area of Lagos State Education District 1. The respondents were 510 junior students from randomly selected classrooms from the Junior Secondary Class 2. Data were collected using a self-reported structured questionnaire, and analyzed using SPSS software.

Results:

The sex distribution of the respondents was 52.2% males and 47.8% females, with mean age of 13.3 years. The prevalence of lifetime drug use among respondents was: alcohol (25.0%), tobacco (3.1%), marijuana (2.9%), inhalants (3.3%), other hard drugs (5.5%). Those who have received drug offers from peers were 15.5% ranking the highest among the other categories such as from adults in family, other adults, siblings, and cousins. The easiest drugs to obtain were alcohol (16.9%) and tobacco (16.7%).

Conclusion:

The results show the experience of junior students with drug use, emphasizing substance initiation at an early age by a small group of students, the influential role of peers in drug offers, and the accessibility of substances, particularly alcohol and tobacco. The findings underscore the need for the implementation of an evidence-based and culturally adapted preventive program, such as the keepin'it REAL curriculum for adolescent prevention.

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