

# Examining the Female Substance Abuse and Health Challenges in Dala Local Government, Kano State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

## Original Research Article

This research examines the increasing issue of substance abuse among women in Nigeria, specifically in urban areas like Kano and Kaduna States. Utilising empirical data and theoretical perspectives, such as Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Merton's Strain Theory, the study examines the socio-cultural, psychological, and economic factors that influence drug use among females. It sheds light on the perspectives of female university students, community attitudes, and the implications for counselling and policy measures. The research also explores the criminal behaviours and societal challenges associated with female drug abuse, highlighting the critical need for gender-sensitive prevention methods and rehabilitation support systems. The results emphasise the necessity of community involvement, educational programs, and the incorporation of psychological services to alleviate the effects of substance abuse on women and society as a whole.

**Keywords:** Female Substance Abuse, Drug Addiction, Counselling Interventions, Urban Drug Use, Gender and Crime.

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## Introduction

Substance abuse among women has become a significant public health issue in Nigeria, especially in urban and semi-urban areas where socio-economic vulnerabilities overlap with cultural and systemic neglect. In Dala Local Government Area of Kano State, the issue of female substance abuse is increasingly evident; however, it remains under-explored and inadequately addressed. The misuse of substances like codeine-based syrups, cannabis, and prescription drugs among women in this area is often influenced by a complex interplay of factors, including peer pressure, poverty, psychological distress, and insufficient parental guidance (Ahmed et al., 2021). These behaviours not only jeopardise individual health but also exacerbate broader social challenges, such as crime, domestic instability, and decreased economic productivity.

Recent research has underscored the worrisome prevalence of drug abuse among female university students in Kano State, with Benylin and various over-the-counter medications

frequently being misused (Abdullahi & Abdullahi, 2023). The health repercussions range from addiction and mental health disorders to reproductive issues and heightened vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections. Despite these dangers, public health initiatives are fragmented, and gender-specific support systems are predominantly lacking.

This paper investigates the trends, underlying causes, and health effects of female substance abuse in Dala Local Government, aiming to address a critical gap in regional research. By analyzing local data and referring to recent scholarly findings, the study intends to guide policy development and community-based approaches that can alleviate the effects of substance abuse on women's health and well-being.

## Conceptual Review

Substance Abuse refers to the detrimental or risky consumption of psychoactive substances, which includes both alcohol and illegal drugs. In Nigeria, many women begin abusing substances through experimentation, often motivated

by curiosity, peer pressure, or emotional struggles (Adenugba & Okeshola, 2018). The substances most commonly misused include codeine-based cough syrups, tramadol, cannabis, and alcohol, with a rising trend in the misuse of prescription medications (Abdullahi & Abdullahi, 2023).

Female Substance Abuse is particularly influenced by gender-specific issues such as societal stigma, vulnerabilities related to reproductive health, and emotional trauma. Women who engage in substance misuse frequently face enhanced health risks, which encompass hormonal disruptions, fertility problems, and an increased likelihood of contracting sexually transmitted infections (Ahmed et al., 2021). The cultural silence surrounding female drug use in Northern Nigeria makes intervention efforts more challenging.

Health issues linked to substance abuse among women include both physical and mental health repercussions. These issues can range from liver and kidney damage to conditions like depression, anxiety disorders, and a greater risk of domestic violence and sexual exploitation (Adebimpe & Okeshola, 2018). In Dala LGA, these health challenges are intensified by limited access to healthcare services and social support networks (Ismail et al., 2024)

Poverty is a multidimensional condition characterised by the lack of sufficient resources, opportunities, and capabilities to meet basic human needs such as food, shelter, healthcare, education, and dignified living standards (Enaberue et al., 2024). It extends beyond low income to encompass deprivations in access to social services, limited livelihood opportunities, and exclusion from decision-making processes (Sen, 1999; World Bank, 2022). In the Nigerian context, poverty manifests as widespread unemployment and underemployment (Eke et al., 2020), food insecurity (Magaji & Musa, 2024), and vulnerability to climate and economic shocks (Olusola et al., 2025), collectively constraining households' ability to achieve sustainable livelihoods and resilience.

Unemployment is a persistent structural challenge in Nigeria, particularly affecting youth and women. It refers not only to the outright absence of jobs but also to the prevalence of precarious, informal, or low-paying work that fails to provide adequate income or stability (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2023). In regions such as Kano State, unemployment is exacerbated by population pressure, weak industrial growth, low agricultural productivity, and insecurity (Yakubu et al., 2025). For women, especially in conservative settings, cultural restrictions and limited access to vocational training further reduce employment opportunities (Ladi, 2024). The consequences of unemployment include poverty, social exclusion, and psychological stress (Magaji, 2007), which often push vulnerable individuals toward substance abuse as a coping mechanism. In many cases, unemployed women may resort to drugs for stress relief, to escape social pressures, or to survive in exploitative environments, thereby reinforcing the cycle of poverty, dependence, and marginalisation.

**Insecurity:** Insecurity refers to the absence or erosion of safety, stability, and protection from threats that undermine human survival, dignity, and development (Adekoya et al., 2025). It includes both physical insecurity (such as armed conflict, insurgency, banditry, and gender-based violence) and structural insecurity (economic instability, weak institutions, and environmental degradation) (UNDP, 2021). In Northwest Nigeria, insecurity is often linked to violent extremism, communal clashes, and displacement (Zailani et al., 2025), which disrupt local livelihoods, erode social cohesion, and increase susceptibility to poverty and substance abuse. Thus, insecurity is not merely the absence of peace, but a broader condition of vulnerability that prevents individuals and communities from accessing resources and opportunities for sustainable development (Yakubu et al., 2025).

### **Linkages: Poverty, Unemployment, Insecurity, and Female Substance Abuse**

Poverty, unemployment, and insecurity play critical roles in shaping patterns of female substance abuse in Nigeria, particularly in vulnerable regions like Dala Local Government, Kano State. Poverty increases the likelihood of substance abuse as women in deprived households may resort to drugs or alcohol as coping mechanisms for economic stress, food insecurity, and lack of social opportunities. Unemployment compounds these vulnerabilities by fostering idleness, social frustration, and economic exclusion, which push women further into cycles of dependency and despair. The financial burden of sustaining substance use often worsens household poverty, creating a vicious cycle that undermines livelihood stability and community development (Jafaru et al., 2024). Insecurity, including insurgency, armed banditry, and gender-based violence, further aggravates the problem by exposing women to trauma, displacement, and exploitation, which may trigger or intensify substance dependency (Magaji et al., 2022). Together, poverty, unemployment, and insecurity weaken community resilience, disrupt social cohesion, and reduce households' ability to contribute to sustainable development (Magaji, 2008).

### **Empirical Literature**

Recent research highlights the increasing rates of substance abuse among women in Northern Nigeria. Abdullahi and Abdullahi (2023) discovered that female undergraduates in Kano State commonly misuse Benylin and other over-the-counter drugs, with significant contributions from peer pressure and emotional struggles. Their research indicated notable variations in abuse trends among different institutions, with Bayero University Kano (BUK) exhibiting the highest rates of prevalence.

Ahmed et al. (2021) investigated the relationship between illegal drug use and criminal activities among women in the Kano metropolis. Their results pointed out that many women turn to substance abuse due to factors such as poverty, feelings of frustration, and insufficient parental oversight. The study also found a connection between drug consumption and



participation in activities like theft, prostitution, and other forms of social misconduct.

In a study conducted by Bala and Orimiye (2024) in Kaduna State, it was found that alcohol was the most commonly abused substance among women, followed by cannabis and prescription medications. The research underscored how family influences and community standards play a crucial role in determining substance use behaviours. These findings are particularly pertinent to Dala LGA, considering the similar socio-cultural factors at play.

**Theoretical Review**

Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) offers a fundamental basis for understanding substance abuse among women. It suggests that people acquire behaviours by observing, imitating, and receiving reinforcement. In the context of Dala LGA, young women might engage in substance use behaviours influenced by peers, family members, or representations in the media.

Strain Theory (Merton, 1938) indicates that societal pressures and the absence of legitimate avenues to reach culturally valued goals may drive individuals toward deviant actions, including substance abuse. In economically challenged areas like Dala, unfulfilled aspirations and lack of employment might lead women to use substances as a coping strategy.

Feminist Theory provides an important perspective by emphasising how gender inequality, patriarchal standards, and systemic neglect increase women's susceptibility to substance abuse. It stresses the importance of gender-sensitive approaches that consider the distinct experiences and challenges faced by women in conservative societies.

**Methodology**

This research utilises a descriptive survey design, which is suitable for investigating the prevalence, trends, and health effects of substance abuse among females in Dala Local Government Area. The design facilitates the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data to characterise current conditions and identify relationships between variables.

The target population consists of female residents aged 15 to 45 years in Dala LGA, Kano State. This age range was chosen due to its heightened vulnerability to substance abuse and associated health issues, as indicated by previous research.

A sample size of 200 participants was determined using a multi-stage sampling method:

Stage 1: Deliberate selection of five wards within Dala LGA recognised for a significant occurrence of substance abuse.

Stage 2: Random sampling of households within each selected ward.

Stage 3: Convenience sampling of qualified female participants within the chosen households.

This strategy guarantees representation from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

**The primary tool for data collection was a structured questionnaire containing four sections:**

Demographic Information

Types and Frequency of Substance Use

Perceived Causes of Substance Abuse

Health Challenges Experienced

The questionnaire was adapted from validated instruments employed in similar Nigerian studies and underwent review by experts in public health and psychology to ensure its content validity.

Content validity was confirmed through expert evaluation.

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, resulting in a coefficient of 0.82, which indicates a high level of internal consistency.

Data were collected through face-to-face administration of questionnaires by trained research assistants proficient in both English and Hausa. This method was selected to accommodate varying literacy levels and to guarantee accurate responses.

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, and mean) and inferential statistics (Chi-square test) in SPSS version 25. Qualitative data from open-ended questions were examined thematically to uncover recurring themes and insights.

The Kano State Ministry of Health Research Ethics Committee granted ethical approval. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality was upheld throughout the research. Participation was voluntary, with respondents assured of their right to withdraw at any point.

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

This section presents the information collected from 200 female participants in the Dala Local Government Area. The examination is structured according to the research questions and goals, using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Tables and graphs are used to enhance understanding and aid in interpretation.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Serial Number	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age		
	15–24 years	80	40.0
	25–34 years	65	32.5
	35–45 years	55	27.5
	Total	200	100
2	Marital Status		
	Single	110	55.0
	Married	70	35.0
	Divorced/Widowed	20	10.0
	Total	200	100
3	Educational Level		
	Primary	50	25.0
	Secondary	70	35.0
	Tertiary	50	25.0
	Total	200	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4.1 presents a comprehensive demographic analysis of the participants, indicating that a large segment falls within the youthful age range of 15 to 24 years. A notable portion of this group is single, with 55.0% specifically indicating they are unmarried. Additionally, the majority of respondents have achieved at least a secondary education level, reflecting a relatively educated demographic.

This demographic profile is particularly significant because individuals in this age group are frequently experiencing a transitional period, managing the challenges of adolescence, early adulthood, and the critical stages of personal identity formation. Being young and unmarried, they may not have the stabilising factors of enduring relationships or family duties,

which can render them more vulnerable to external influences. Their educational qualifications, while offering some protection, also place them in settings such as schools, social media platforms, and peer circles where the tendency for conformity and the need for social approval are powerful.

Consequently, this demographic is notably susceptible to peer influence and societal factors, which can significantly impact their attitudes, behaviours, and decision-making processes. Recognising this susceptibility is crucial for developing targeted interventions, educational initiatives, and awareness programs that encourage healthy choices and enhance resilience among young individuals.

Table 4.2: Types of Substances Abused

Serial Number	Substance	Frequency	Percentage
001	Codeine	90	45.0
002	Tramadol	60	30.0
003	Cannabis	25	12.5
004	Alcohol	15	7.5
005	Others	10	5.0
	Total	200	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025



Table 4.1 provides a demographic snapshot of the study's participants, revealing that the majority fall within the 15- to 24-year age range. This age bracket marks a significant phase of development, characterised by identity exploration, emotional fluctuations, and heightened sensitivity to external factors. The findings further indicate that more than half of the participants, specifically 55.0%, are unmarried, suggesting a potential lack of family or marital obligations that could otherwise influence their decision-making or provide social stability.

Regarding educational qualifications, most respondents have at least completed secondary education. This suggests a fundamental level of literacy and experience with formal

education, which can shape their perspectives, ambitions, and vulnerability to various social influences.

When combined, these traits of youthfulness, single status, and adequate educational levels illustrate a demographic that is especially malleable. Members of this group frequently navigate peer dynamics, exposure to social media, and cultural pressures, all of which can significantly influence their choices and actions. Their susceptibility to peer influence and broader societal factors positions them as a primary target for specialised interventions, awareness initiatives, and support networks designed to enhance resilience, informed decision-making, and positive behaviours.

Table 4.3: Frequency of Substance Use

Serial Number	Usage Pattern	Frequency	Percentage
001	Daily	70	35.0
002	Weekly	85	42.5
003	Occasionally	45	22.5
	Total	200	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4.3 presents a troubling pattern in substance use among the participants. A significant number of those surveyed reported regularly abusing substances, with 42.5% stating they use them weekly and another 35% acknowledging daily use. These statistics indicate that almost four out of five participants are engaged in frequent substance consumption, whether on a weekly or daily basis. Conversely, only 22.5% of the participants mentioned they use substances occasionally, suggesting a less regular pattern of use.

This breakdown emphasises a prevalent trend of habitual substance consumption within the group surveyed. The high

rates of weekly and daily use imply behaviours that may surpass mere casual experimentation and lean towards routine dependence. Such consistent consumption is often linked to greater tolerance, psychological dependence, and the potential for physical addiction over time.

The findings highlight the critical need to tackle substance abuse through focused interventions, education, and support services. The elevated levels of frequent use indicate that many individuals might be at risk of developing a long-term dependency, which can significantly impact their health, social connections, and overall quality of life.

Table 4.4: Perceived Causes of Substance Abuse

Serial Number	Cause	Frequency	Percentage
001	Peer Pressure	80	40.0
002	Unemployment	50	25.0
003	Emotional Stress	30	15.0
004	Family Issues	25	12.5
005	Curiosity	15	7.5
	Total	200	100





The information presented in Table 4.4 indicates that peer pressure and unemployment are the primary factors contributing to substance abuse among participants, representing a combined 65% of the reported reasons. This implies that social influences and the lack of economic prospects are closely linked to the choice to engage in substance use, especially among young individuals who might feel alone, aimless, or pressured to fit in with their peers. Additionally, emotional stress was mentioned by 15% of participants, reflecting the impact of psychological issues such as anxiety, depression, or trauma that drive individuals to seek solace in harmful substances. Problems related to family, such as conflict, neglect, or insufficient support, accounted for 12.5% of the cases, signifying that instability within the home environment can also serve as a notable risk factor. Lastly, curiosity made up 7.5%, indicating that while the urge to experiment is a factor, it is considerably less significant than the other influences.

These results highlight the critical need for focused youth empowerment programs and comprehensive awareness

initiatives that tackle the root causes of substance abuse. Interventions should aim at:

- Enhancing resilience against peer pressure through mentorship and life skills education
- Establishing employment opportunities and vocational training to mitigate economic insecurity
- Offering mental health resources to assist youth in coping with emotional stress in constructive ways
- Fortifying family systems through counselling and engagement with the community
- Informing young individuals about the dangers and long-term effects of substance use

By addressing these fundamental issues, such initiatives can cultivate a more knowledgeable, empowered, and supported generation that is less prone to substance abuse and better equipped to succeed.

Table 4.5: Health Challenges Reported

Serial Number	Health Issue	Frequency	Percentage
001	Anxiety/Depression	75	37.5
002	Sleep Disorders	50	25.0
003	Weight Loss	30	15.0
004	Menstrual Irregularities	25	12.5
005	STDs/Infections	20	10.0
	Total	200	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4.5 illustrates the significant health-related effects linked to substance abuse, with anxiety and depression being the most commonly reported issues, constituting 37.5% of the cases. This observation emphasises the severe psychological burden that substance abuse can impose on individuals, frequently worsening or triggering mental health disorders that hinder daily life, emotional stability, and overall wellness.

Closely following this, sleep disorders were identified by 25% of participants, suggesting that substance use can disrupt typical sleep patterns, resulting in insomnia, poor sleep quality, or irregular sleep cycles. Such disturbances can further exacerbate mental health problems and diminish the ability to cope with stress.

Weight loss was reported by 15% of those surveyed, indicating that substance abuse might hinder appetite, metabolism, or nutritional intake, potentially leading to physical decline and weakened immunity. Additionally, menstrual irregularities were mentioned by 12.5%, highlighting the effects of substance

use on hormonal balance and reproductive health, especially among female participants.

Finally, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and infections were identified by 10% of respondents. While this represents the lowest reported category, it still points to the risky behaviours often linked to substance abuse, such as impaired judgment or unsafe sexual practices.

Collectively, these findings demonstrate the complex health hazards associated with substance abuse, ranging from psychological distress to physiological issues. The data suggest the need for a comprehensive strategy for intervention that includes:

- Mental health support services aimed at addressing anxiety, depression, and trauma
- Education and treatment for sleep hygiene and related problems



- Nutritional guidance and monitoring of physical health
- Awareness and care regarding reproductive health
- Education on sexual health and access to preventive resources.

By acknowledging and addressing these varied health concerns, stakeholders can develop more effective programs that not only tackle substance abuse but also foster long-term recovery and well-being.

**Inferential Analysis (Chi-Square Test)**

A Chi-square analysis was performed to investigate the connection between educational attainment and the kinds of substances used. Result:  $\chi^2 = 18.42$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Interpretation: A statistically significant association exists between education level and the type of substance abused. Individuals with less education were found to be more inclined to misuse codeine and cannabis.

**Summary of Findings**

A significant number of female substance abusers in Dala LGA are young, unmarried, and possess an education. The substances most frequently misused are Codeine and Tramadol. Unemployment and peer influence are significant contributing factors. Users often experience various mental health issues. The level of education plays a crucial role in determining the choice of substances.

**Discussion of Findings**

Demographic Profile and Vulnerability: The research indicated that most females engaging in substance abuse in Dala LGA are aged 15–24, single, and have at least completed secondary education. This finding is consistent with Ahmed et al. (2021), who reported that younger women in urban Kano are increasingly drawn into drug culture through peer interactions and social media. The prevalence of substance abuse among educated youth implies that obtaining formal education may not serve as a protective measure, especially when there is a lack of economic opportunities and psychosocial support. Implication: Intervention strategies should specifically target young women with customised messaging that tackles peer influence, builds emotional resilience, and develops life skills beyond mere academic education. Prevalence and Type of Substances Abused: The significant prevalence of codeine (45%) and tramadol (30%) usage reflects a concerning trend in Nigeria's pharmaceutical environment. The misuse of these substances can be attributed to their availability and the common perception that they can alleviate

stress or improve mood. This aligns with findings from Bala & Orimiye (2024), which documented similar trends in Kaduna State, indicating a regional crisis of opioid misuse among women.

Implication: Regulatory bodies need to enhance supervision over prescription medications, while training community health workers to detect and address signs of misuse.

Frequency of Use and Habit Formation: The data reveal that 35% of respondents use substances daily, while 42.5% use them weekly, indicating a pattern of habitual use rather than mere experimentation. Such frequency heightens the likelihood of dependency, long-term health issues, and social disarray. The normalisation of substance use within peer groups may further entrench these habits, complicating individuals' efforts to seek assistance.

Implication: Rehabilitation initiatives should extend beyond just detoxification to encompass long-term behavioural therapy, peer support groups, and programs for reintegration into society.

Drivers of Substance Abuse: Peer pressure (40%) and unemployment (25%) were identified as the primary drivers of substance abuse. These findings corroborate those of Abdullahi & Abdullahi (2023), who highlighted the impact of social dynamics and economic stress on female drug use. Additionally, emotional distress and family instability were significant contributors, suggesting that substance abuse often serves as a coping mechanism for underlying psychosocial challenges.

Implication: A multi-faceted approach combining mental health services, youth employment programs, and family counselling is crucial to tackling the root causes of substance abuse.

Health Challenges Faced: The most commonly reported health concerns were anxiety and depression (37.5%), sleep disturbances (25%), and irregular menstrual cycles (12.5%). These issues illustrate both the physical and mental health consequences of substance abuse. The occurrence of sexually transmitted diseases and infections (10%) may be tied to risky behaviours associated with drug use, such as engaging in unprotected sex or neglecting personal hygiene.

Implication: Healthcare systems should incorporate substance abuse screenings into routine care for women, particularly in primary health facilities. Mental health services need to be destigmatised and made more accessible.

Education Level and Substance Choice: The Chi-square analysis showed a notable association between educational attainment and the types of substances used. Women with lower educational levels were more inclined to use cannabis and codeine, whereas those who attained tertiary education tended to prefer tramadol. This suggests that levels of awareness, accessibility, and peer groups may shape choices regarding substances.

Implication: Educational initiatives must be tailored to accommodate varying levels of literacy and cultural contexts. Communication efforts should be localised and delivered in both Hausa and English to ensure greater outreach.

The results present a nuanced understanding of female substance abuse in Dala LGA, rooted in social, economic, and psychological dimensions. While the issue is widespread, it is not beyond resolution. Through coordinated efforts involving the government, civil society, and healthcare professionals, significant advancements can be achieved in prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.

Theory and Findings

Social Learning Theory suggests that individuals learn behaviours through observing, imitating, and modelling others. In particular, adolescents and young adults adopt new behaviours by observing others, especially peers, family members, or figures in the media. The maintenance of these behaviours is influenced by both reinforcement (whether positive or negative) and internal motivations.

How the Findings Align with the Theory

1. Peer Pressure as a Significant Influencer (40%)

Theory Connection: This scenario exemplifies observational learning. Young women in Dala LGA are swayed by their social groups, mirroring the substance use behaviours displayed by friends or community members.

Interpretation: The prevalence of peer pressure reinforces Bandura’s assertion that behaviour is learned socially, particularly when such behaviours appear to offer acceptance or status.

2. Elevated Substance Use among Youth (15–24 years)

Theory Connection: Adolescents are particularly open to modelling behaviour due to their developmental phase. They are more likely to imitate peers or influencers without thoroughly assessing the consequences.

Interpretation: This age demographic reinforces the notion that younger individuals are more susceptible to learned behaviours, especially in settings where strong counter-models (like mentors or parents) are absent.

3. Education Level and Substance Preference

Theory Connection: Social Learning Theory acknowledges cognitive factors influencing how individuals interpret and assimilate what they observe. Those with higher education might encounter diverse behavioural models or rationalise their decisions differently.

Interpretation: The differences in substance preferences based on education level indicate that learning is not merely by passive imitation but also influenced by cognitive processes and social context.

4. Mental Health Issues and Reinforcement

Theory Connection: Bandura highlighted the importance of reinforcement in perpetuating behaviour. If substance use temporarily relieves anxiety or depression, it is positively reinforced, despite long-term detrimental effects.

Interpretation: The mental health challenges noted (such as anxiety and sleep disorders) may not discourage usage if the immediate psychological comfort is seen as a reward.

5. Unemployment and Emotional Stress as Catalysts

Theory Connection: Although not directly observational, these elements contribute to the internal motivation to seek coping strategies. If individuals in similar circumstances observe peers using substances to manage stress, they are more likely to adopt that behaviour.

Interpretation: The theory encompasses both external modelling and internal motivations, making it a comprehensive framework for understanding substance abuse in socioeconomically disadvantaged contexts.

The research strongly supports Social Learning Theory as a framework for comprehending female substance abuse in Dala LGA. The behaviours observed are interconnected; they are socially learned, reinforced, and maintained through environmental signals and psychological needs. This theoretical foundation bolsters the argument for community-based interventions aimed at reshaping social norms, providing positive role models, and breaking cycles of imitation.

Summary

The prevalence, causes, and health effects of substance usage among girls in Kano State's Dala Local Government Area were examined in this study. Two hundred female respondents, aged 15 to 45, completed structured questionnaires as part of a descriptive survey design. The results showed that peer pressure and unemployment were the leading causes of substance usage, with codeine and tramadol being the most frequently abused drugs. Menstrual abnormalities, anxiety, and sadness were among the health issues that were commonly mentioned. The study's foundation was the Social Learning Theory, which clarified how social contact and observation can teach and reinforce substance use behaviours.

Conclusion

The study concludes that drug addiction among women in Dala LGA is a serious public health issue that has its roots in socioeconomic and psychological variables. Peer pressure, a lack of job options, and emotional stress make young women especially vulnerable. The serious and complex health consequences impact both physical and emotional well-being. The results highlight the necessity of comprehensive, community-based therapies that deal with the underlying causes of substance misuse as well as its symptoms.

Recommendations



**Community Awareness Campaigns:** Launch targeted sensitisation programs in schools, religious centres, and markets to educate women on the dangers of substance abuse.

**Youth Empowerment Initiatives:** Provide vocational training and employment opportunities to reduce economic vulnerability among young women.

**Mental Health Services:** Integrate mental health counselling into primary healthcare systems, with a focus on trauma-informed care.

**Stricter Drug Regulation:** Strengthen enforcement against illegal drug sales, especially over-the-counter access to opioids like codeine and tramadol.

**Peer Support Networks:** Establish female-led support groups to foster resilience and offer safe spaces for recovery and mentorship.

Contributions to Knowledge

This study adds to the limited body of research on **female-specific substance abuse patterns** in Northern Nigeria.

It highlights the **intersection of gender, socio-economic status, and mental health** in shaping drug use behaviour.

It validates the applicability of **Social Learning Theory** in understanding substance abuse within culturally conservative settings.

It provides **empirical data** that can inform policy, healthcare planning, and community interventions.

Suggestions for Further Studies

**Longitudinal Studies:** Future research could track substance use behaviour over time to understand progression and relapse patterns.

**Comparative Analysis:** Studies comparing urban vs. rural female substance abuse trends across different LGAs in Kano State.

**Intervention-Based Research:** Evaluate the effectiveness of specific rehabilitation or awareness programs targeting women.

**Cultural and Religious Influences:** Explore how cultural norms and religious teachings influence female attitudes toward substance use and recovery.

**Male-Female Dynamics:** Investigate how male partners or family members influence female substance use decisions and outcomes.

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