

Prevalence and Determinants of Substance Use Among Adolescents in Keffi, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: Adolescent substance use is a worsening global and national public health concern, with serious health, social, and economic consequences. In Nigeria, rising use of alcohol, codeine, tramadol, and cannabis among young people underscores an urgent need for local data to ensure effective interventions. However, evidence from semi-urban communities such as Keffi, Nasarawa State, remains limited.

Objective: This study aimed to determine the prevalence, patterns, and determinants of substance use among adolescents in Keffi, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 242 adolescents aged 10–19 years residing in selected communities across five wards of Keffi Local Government Area. Participants were selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected through interviewer-administered structured questionnaires adapted from the WHO Student Drug Use Survey and analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics summarized prevalence and patterns of substance use, while inferential analysis using chi-square and multivariate logistic regression identified significant determinants at a 95% confidence level.

Results: The lifetime prevalence of substance use among adolescents in Keffi was approximately 45%, while current use was about 30%. The most commonly used substances were alcohol, codeine, tramadol, cannabis, and tobacco. The mean age of initiation was 15 years, with males reporting higher rates of use than females. Peer influence emerged as the strongest determinant of substance use ($p < 0.001$), followed by parental substance use, poor academic performance, and easy access to drugs within the community. Adolescents with strong family support and religious engagement demonstrated significantly lower likelihood of use.

Conclusion: Substance use among adolescents in Keffi is widespread and influenced by a complex interplay of social, familial, and environmental factors. The findings highlight the urgent need for community-based, family-centered, and school-driven preventive interventions tailored to local contexts.

Keywords: Adolescents, Substance Use, Prevalence, Determinants, Keffi, Nigeria, Public Health

