

## Attitudes towards Cough Syrup Abuse: Results from Adolescents in two Southwest States of Nigeria

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The abuse of substances has become among the major high-risk behaviors of adolescents across cultures in present day, with adolescents abusing substances such as cough syrup, cannabis, alcohol, etc. The willingness of adolescents to be involved in substance abuse is influenced by numerous variables identified in literature. However, Nigerian literature on substance abuse among adolescents stresses the need for further studies on the attitudes of adolescents towards cough syrup abuse, because the pattern of similarities or differences in the attitudes of Nigerian adolescents towards cough syrup abuse remains insufficiently explored, despite increasing reports of cough syrup abuse by Nigerian adolescents and adults (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2019). Furthermore, Nigerian literature on substance abuse among adolescents showed that most previous studies mirrored the similarities or differences in the attitudes of adolescents towards general substance abuse or substances other than cough syrup, consequently such studies are weak enough to inform intervention programs against the increasing practice of cough syrup abuse that is currently threatening the fabric of Nigeria's society. These different studies have identified certain variables accounting for adolescents' similarities or differences in attitudes towards general substance abuse or substances other than cough syrup, for instance, Oshikoya et al. In a survey that knowledge about general drug abuse was a major determinant of substance abuse behaviors among undergraduate students in Lagos, Nigeria. Aina et al. To found that gender was a predictor of substance abuse behaviors, with males being more likely than females to report favorable attitudes towards general substance abuse. Also, Adebowale et al. To found in a survey that, knowledge about general drug abuse and attitude towards general drug abuse contributes towards the likelihood that adolescents will give into drug abuse. Abdu-Raheem et al. To determined that adolescent's family background, peer influence, and family cohesion significantly explained attitudes towards general substance abuse among adolescents in Ekiti and Ondo state, Nigeria. Furthermore, Idowu et al. To found in a survey carried out in Ogbomoso, Southwest Nigeria, that most adolescent participants were substance abusers, with tramadol as their major abused substance; in addition it was found that the perceived benefits associated with tramadol abuse contributed immensely towards the participants' attitude to tramadol abuse. Also, Adenugba et al. To reported in a study that Nigerian female have several high-risk behaviors in relation to general substance abuse. Olumide et al. To found in

a sample of adolescents that cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana are the common substances abused, with males abusing higher compared to their female counterparts. Also, Ani et al. To found in a research that, the attitude of adolescents towards general substance abuse was influenced by factors such as parents' educational levels and, household structure, meaning that adolescents in that study differed in their attitude towards substance abuse according to differences in their parents' educational levels and household structures. In a sample of adolescents in Kaduna state, Nigeria, it was found that adolescents from monogamous family structure abused substances more than adolescents from other family structures. Furthermore, Nasiru et al. To reported in a sample of youths in Sokoto state that, marijuana and cocaine were the main abused drugs, and this abuse was strengthened by the physical and psychological effects of using these substances. Anyanwu et al. To found in a sample of adolescents in Ebonyi state, that males, older students, orphans and persons from divorced homes were amongst the most frequent substance abusers with alcohol as their most abused substance. In a different study, Johnson et al. Materials A consent form and questionnaire with already established psychometric properties were the major materials in this research. The questionnaire had two sections, i.e. section A which focused on obtaining the demographic information of participants, and section B which was the attitude towards cough syrup scale, adopted from the attitude towards general substance abuse scale developed by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. The total score for each participant on the scale is obtained by adding the score of each item answered and dividing it by the total number of items answered. The interpretation of scores on the scale has it that, high scores imply a positive attitude towards cough syrup abuse, while low scores imply a negative attitude towards cough syrup abuse among participants. This scale was found to have been previously adopted and yielded very strong psychometric properties in both African and non-African samples. For the present research, a reliability coefficient of 0.88 was obtained using Cronbach's alpha. Procedure Ethical approval for this research was obtained from the Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Ibadan ethics committee, and approval was also sought from the management of each selected secondary school in this research. The data were collected during school hours to enable the researchers to access a large sample size. Before the collection of data, the purpose of the research was explained to participants, and

informed consent was sought from participants, those that consented were given a consent form to sign on and administered the questionnaires. The administration of questionnaire was achieved in collaboration with the school teachers who were pre- trained for data collection and during administration of questionnaires, all participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses so that they could be more sincere with their responses, and they all had the rights to decline the research request at any time that they wished. The process of data collection from participants lasted for about two (2) months, and at the end of data collection in each research setting, the participants and school management were assured of feedbacks on the findings from this research. This study has been able to explore the attitudes towards cough syrup abuse among adolescents in parts of Nigeria, and this is a unique expansion to the literature of substance abuse among adolescents, because most related studies were either focused on the attitudes of adolescents towards general substance abuse or substances other than cough syrup. As observed in the findings from this research that age and family marital structure were the major variables accounting for the attitudes of adolescents towards cough syrup abuse, professionals in the field of child and adolescent mental health are thus encouraged to consider these variables when designing anti-substance abuse programs for the adolescent population. Further studies are required to determine the predisposing factors for abusing other specific substances that are largely lacking in literature, for the purpose of informing further approaches towards anti-substance abuse programs among adolescents.