CORRELATES OF CANNABIS AND OTHER ILLICIT DRUG USE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NIGERIA

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Background

The burden of cannabis and other illicit drug use on adolescents represent a serious public health problem. The majority of studies on risk factors for substance use originate from developed coutries, while limited data are available from developing countries. The aim of the present study is to explore factors associated with cannabis and other illicit drug use among Nigerian secondary school students of the six geo-political zones of the country.

Methods

The survey involved 32 secondary schools and 4,078 pupils of six geo-political zones (SS, SW, SE, NC, NW and NE) and two metropolitan cities (Abuja and Lagos) between December 2015 and January 2016. The association of socio-demographic characteristics, parental smoking, parental permissiveness to drink, friends' marijuana and other drugs use, risk perceptions and beliefs on marijuana and other drugs with lifetime cannabis and other illicit drug use were examined through multilevel logistic regression models.

CORRELATES	Cannabis (n=3,710) AOR* (95% CI)	Other illicit drug (n=3,724) AOR* (95% CI)
Gender (ref: Girls)		
Boys	1.01 (0.70-1.46)	1.19 (0.91-1.55)
Age (Continuous)	**1.30 (1.14-1.49)**	**1.23 (1.11-1.36)**
Family possession of car (ref: None)		
One	**1.95 (1.20-3.18)**	-
Two or more	**1.82 (1.10-3.00)**	-
Family composition (ref: Both parents)		
One parent	**1.74 (1.06-2.87)**	**1.53 (1.03-2.25)**
Other	**1.49 (1.07-2.07)**	**1.32 (1.04-1.67)**
Parents smoke cigarettes (ref: No)		
Yes	**2.63 (1.49-4.64)**	**2.69 (1.71-4.23)**
Parental permissiveness to drink (ref: Wouldn't allow at all)		
Would not allow at home	**2.65 (1.54-4.56)**	**2.01 (1.32-3.06)**
Would allow	**5.52 (2.94-10.36)**	**4.23 (2.53-7.08)**
Don't know	**3.99 (2.41-6.60)**	**2.64 (1.74-4.02)**
Friends use marijuana or other illicit drugs use (ref: No)		
Yes	**5.89 (3.93-8.81)**	**3.96 (2.80-5.61)**
Risk perceptions (ref: Great risk)		
Slight risk	**4.36 (2.68-7.08)[1]**	**1.45 (1.09-1.92)[2]**
No risk	**2.23 (1.29-3.88)**	**2.42 (1.69-3.47)**
Positive beliefs on cannabis and other drugs (ref: Low)		
Middle/High	**2.99 (1.92-4.65)**	**1.92 (1.46-2.52)**

[1] Risk perception on smoking marijuana regularly
[2] Risk perception on using other drugs occasionally
*AOR – Adjusted odds ratios

Results

The prevalence of ever cannabis use was 7.5%, while the prevalence of other illicit drug use (e.g. amphetamines, cocaine, ecstasy, heroin, inhalants, LSD, codeine, tramadol) was 12.0%. Age, living in family structures different from both parents' families, parental smoking, parental permissiveness to drink, friends' cannabis and other drug use, risk perceptions and beliefs were associated with an increased probability of cannabis and other drug use. The indicator of socio-economic position measured through the number of family cars was related to cannabis use, but not to illicit drug use.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the present study highlights some correlates that influence the uptake of cannabis and drugs among Nigerian adolescents: socio-economic status, parental behaviours, perception of friends' substance use, risk perceptions and beliefs on cannabis and drugs. Preventive programs addressing these factors can help to reduce the burden of the problem and should be adopted soon.