

Influence of parental behavior on the prevention of drug abuse among students in public secondary schools in Nakuru west Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

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Abstract

Drug abuse among the young people is an increasing problem in many countries. There has been an increasing number of students under the influence of drugs in Kenya. Parental involvement can play a critical role on the prevention of this phenomenon that is now being practiced in many societies around the world. Available literature has indicated that parents have a significant influence on the prevention of drug abuse among many school going children. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to establish the influence of parental behavior on the prevention of drug abuse among students in public secondary schools in Nakuru west Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya. To achieve this objective, the study adopted *ex-post facto* research design. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 302 participants from a target population of 2515. Data was collected using Parental Management Behaviour Questionnaires (PMBQ). Data was collected using a self administered questionnaire. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that parental behavior had a positive influence in the prevention of drug abuse among students. Therefore, the study concluded that there was influence of parental behavior on drug abuse among students in public secondary schools in Nakuru west Sub-county. The implication of this finding was that school administrators; teachers and counselors can organize school motivational programs which are specifically targeted at stakeholders. From the findings of the study it is recommended that parents need to design strategies for effective communication with a purpose of preventing drug abuse.

KEYWORDS: Parental behavior and prevention of Drug abuse

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1. Introduction

Drug abuse is known to have serious consequences at home, schools and in the communities (Elizabeth, Susan & Suman, 2013). History reveals that most of the drugs that are abused were first used for medicinal purposes. There is evidence that intentionally fermented alcohol existed from as early as 10,000 BC when it was used in religion and worship, for recreation, medicinal use and quenching thirst by long distance travelers (Hanson, 2012). Marijuana was used as medicine from 2,737 BC in China then later in the 19th century, active substances used in production of drugs like cocaine and morphine were extracted and freely prescribed by physicians for various ailments and even sold over the counter until problems of addiction gradually started being recognized (Fort, 2007).

According to Mbalu (2012) children's earliest interactions occur within the family. For this reason, risk factors for taking illicit drugs that affect early development in the family are probably the most crucial. One explanation as to why individuals first become involved with drugs and then escalate to abuse is a biological cause which includes; having a family history of illicit drug abuse (Mbalu, 2012). According to Kingendo (2010) social-economic set-up children influence their habits. The abuse of drugs and other substances by parents and other caregivers can impede bonding to the family and threaten feelings of security that children need for healthy development (Mbalu, 2012).

On the other hand, families can serve a protective function when there is a strong bond between children and their parents, parental involvement in a child's life, supportive parenting that meets financial, emotional, cognitive, and social needs and clear limits and consistent enforcement of discipline (Mbalu, 2012).

Parental involvement and a supportive parent-child relationship make children more receptive to parental influence (Zechmeister 2011). Parental control that uses high levels of punishment and authority has been

linked with behavioral problems in adolescence (Bender *et al.* 2007). Similarly, the use of coercive control (such as threatening, yelling or slapping) has been rejected as an effective strategy for parents.

2. Theoretical Framework

The study was informed by the Social Development Theory (SDT) is an extension of the social control theory in the area of substance use and drug abuse. Social development theory is an extension of the social control theory in the area of substance use and drug abuse. For Hawkins and Catalano (1996), bonds developed between adolescents and socializing agents (families and school officials) around them during adolescent development influence their participation in deviance and drug use. Depending on whom the adolescents bond with (law-abiding or deviant adults), it will directly influence their behavior on drug use. The adolescents who bond with drug-using adults will likely gravitate into drug use themselves.

According to the Social Development Theory (SDT) close association with parents and siblings, law abiding peers and teachers are quite critical in controlling individuals' behavior. Ineffective bonding with parents and poor child rearing will produce people with low-self-control. This in turn will adversely affect a person's ability to accurately calculate the consequences of his or her actions. Adolescents with low-self-control find it difficult to resist drug abuse. These students decide to get into the behaviour of drugs abuse more often than not out of choice. The study was informed by the Social Development Theory (SDT) was identified as a theoretical model that could provide insight on parental behavior and drug abuse.

3. Methods

Nakuru west Sub-county of Nauru County, Kenya was chosen because it was considered as rich of information sought in the study. Data from central Bureau of Statics has indicated that Nakuru West Constituency is located in one of the most populated locations within Nakuru County, this sub-county had a high number of secondary to meet the needs of the rising population. The study, whose main concern was about influence of parental behavior on the prevention of drug abuse among students in public secondary schools in Nakuru west Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya targeted teachers, parents and counselors.

To achieve this objective, the study adopted *ex-post facto* research design. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 302 participants from a target population of 2515. Data was collected using Parental Management Behaviour Questionnaires (PMBQ). Data was collected using a self administered questionnaire. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that parental behavior had a positive influence in the prevention of drug abuse among students. Therefore, the study concluded that there was influence of parental behavior on drug abuse among students in public secondary schools in Nakuru west Sub-county. The implication of this finding was that school administrators; teachers and counselors can organize school motivational programs which are specifically targeted at stakeholders. From the findings of the study it is recommended that parents need to design strategies for effective communication with a purpose of preventing drug abuse.

4. Results

4.1. Establishing the influence of parental behavior on the prevention of drug abuse among students

A descriptive analysis was run to determine whether parental behavior had any relationship with drug abuse among secondary school students in public secondary schools in Nakuru west Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

The findings revealed that there was a strong positive correlation coefficient of 0.588 The null hypothesis therefore was not rejected and it was inferred that at 95% confidence level, parental behavior had a positive influence on the prevention of drug abuse among students in public secondary schools in Nakuru West Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

Therefore, the study revealed that family behaviour which includes attachment are quite significant in determining a child's behaviour and hence important in delaying alcohol initiation in early adolescence and even after the influence of deviant peers. Parenting rules, rewards for good behaviour, a strong values system, and well developed negotiation skills with adolescents predicted lower alcohol abuse and dependence at the age of 21 years.

The study findings revealed that 10.5% of the participants the secondary school children always accompanied their parents to places where alcohol was sold while 7% reported that this happened 'often'. It was observed that 12.3% of the participants reported that their parents 'always' allowed them to make their own decisions with regard to drug use compared to 12.6% who indicated they were 'often' allowed to make their own choices. It was established that 35.1% of the participants were reported 'always' being complimented by their parents for not engaging in alcohol and drug abuse.

According to Wood *et al* (2004) Behavior management encompasses parents' active efforts to shape the behavior of their adolescents. This includes the use of incentives, positive reinforcement, setting limits for appropriate behavior, providing consequences for misbehavior, and negotiating boundaries and rules for appropriate behavior. Less effective behavior management methods include harsh and punitive discipline, or conversely, lax, inconsistent, and over-permissive approaches.

5. Discussion

Effective parenting is a key factor in reducing adolescent risk-taking behavior (Barnes *et al.*, 2006). "Effective parenting" incorporates a warm and supportive parent-child relationship that includes setting clear and consistent boundaries and is accepting of the need for psychological autonomy. Monitoring (or tracking) of adolescents' behavior has been found to reduce problematic behaviors including substance misuse (Barnes *et al.*, 2006). However, to be effective, monitoring should reflect a good parent-adolescent relationship, where the parent's efforts to solicit information from their child is matched by the adolescent's willingness to disclose information about their activities, whereabouts and company.

Parental supervision on school work reduces the risk to drug abuse. Behavior management encompasses parents' active efforts to shape the behavior of their adolescent. This includes the use of incentives, positive reinforcement, setting limits for appropriate behavior, providing consequences for misbehavior, and negotiating boundaries and rules for appropriate behavior (Wood *et al.*, 2004). Less effective behavior management methods include harsh and punitive discipline, or conversely, lax, inconsistent and over-permissive approaches.

The study sought to establish the influence of parental behavior on drug abuse among students in public secondary schools in Nakuru west Sub-County. Parental behaviour was observed to be a critical variable on this regard as reported by 76.5% of the participants. With a strong significant positive correlation coefficient of 0.588($p=0.00<0.05$), parental behaviour positively influences prevention of drug abuse among students in public secondary schools. A strong negative correlation coefficient between gender and parental behavior, -0.138($p=0.018<0.05$) showed that at 95% confidence level, parental behavior is negatively related to gender among students in public secondary schools in Nakuru West Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

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6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study sought to determine the relationship between parental behaviour and alcohol and drug abuse among students in public secondary schools in Nakuru West, Correlation analysis was used to test hypotheses (to test the relationship between the independent and dependent variables). The findings revealed that there was a strong positive correlation coefficient of 0.588 The null hypothesis therefore was not rejected and it was inferred that at 95% confidence level, parental behavior had a positive influence on the prevention of drug abuse among students in public secondary schools in Nakuru West Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

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The study concluded that parents behaviour is significant and beneficial to all milestones of human development. Following this, the study recommended that parents should be role models to their own children by not accepting children's company whenever they know that they shall join friends for alcohol.

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