

## Alcohol and Drug Abuse Situation Analysis among Employees in the Public Sector Institutions in Kenya

### Policy Brief No. 1/2011

#### Introduction

NACADA Authority is a State Corporation mandated to coordinate a public education and awareness campaign against alcohol and drug abuse in Kenya. A key objective is to undertake quality research on alcohol and drug abuse in Kenya to guide the country drugs abuse policy and programmes.

Inadequate current data on drugs and substance abuse limits the understanding of the problem. Thus limited evidence based policies and programs. This survey conducted by NACADA Authority in 2011 sought to bridge this gap.

#### Methodology

The study employed a cross-sectional design targeting GoK Ministries, Departments, State Corporations, Public Universities, Tertiary Institutions and Local Authorities. Probability proportionate and systematic random sampling methods were used to sample 1,857 {1,096 males and 761 females} Public Officers in 27 institutions.

#### Findings

- 56% of public officers have drunk alcohol, 23% used tobacco products, 16% chewed miraa/Khat/Muguuka, 6.6% bhang and 1.3% taken other

drugs i.e. mandrax, heroin or cocaine) at least once in their lifetime.

- Currently alcohol is the most abused substance with a prevalence of 33% among public sector employees.
- 17% of the public sector employees who are current users of alcohol reported to be drinking with work-mates.
- In comparison to NACADA, 2007 National Prevalence, current usage of alcohol among employees in the public sector is markedly double the rest of the country (13%). It is imperative to note that the national statistics have changed substantially in the past five years.
- Tobacco products are used by 9%, 3.8% miraa, 1.1% bhang and below 1% other drugs in the range of mandrax, heroin and cocaine.
- 34% of employees have a family member abusing alcohol or other drugs with 47.8% indicating that it affects their work performance.
- 48.5% of employees who currently drink alcohol have received a caution letter for a work related offence within the past one year.

## Discussion

Drug and substance abuse problems have detrimental effects on the productivity, safety and welfare of the public institutions as well as the community.

Alcohol and drug abuse is one of the most critical challenges facing the workplace today. This may be manifested by the use of drugs at the workplace, working while intoxicated or experiencing withdrawal effects, absenteeism, high turnover, enhanced medical claims, safety risk due to poor concentration and reduced productivity. Addiction is associated with disciplinary issues and workplace accidents.

Workplace problems associated with substance abuse may not confine to persons with substance use disorder as their numbers are relatively small. In comparison, moderate abusers/users carry higher liability because their numbers are much higher. If this remains unchecked, it may result to addiction in the long term.

The rapidly escalated alcohol and drug abuse among public sector employees poses serious negative social economic drawbacks and may in the long run hinder the attainment of the country development targets including achievement of Vision 2030.

## Recommendations

The study recommends that:

- Alcohol and drug abuse is a National Problem and all partners and stakeholders need to support efforts geared towards minimizing its impact.
- Drugs and substances abuse programmes be mainstreamed in all public institutions.
- Alcohol and drugs abuse prevention structures be established in all public institutions to effectively spear-head the alcohol and drug abuse prevention programmes
- A comprehensive Workplace Policy on alcohol and drug abuse is essential in all institutions.
- Employers should invest in employees' health insurance that provides comprehensive benefits for substance abuse counseling, treatment and rehabilitation