



“The Role of Parents in Prevention and Control of Alcohol and Drug Abuse among their Children in Nairobi”

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INTRODUCTION

Drug and Substance Abuse in Kenya is escalating rapidly from alcohol and cigarettes to more potent drugs such as narcotic and psychotropic drugs.

Families have a key role in protecting children from alcohol and drug related harm. Family based prevention policies and programs should enhance family bonding relationships, parenting skills, discussions and training on alcohol and drug abuse.

Evidently, there is lack of adequate data on parental monitoring, supervision and parent-child communication on drugs and substance abuse.

This study conducted by NACADA Authority in 2010, provides data on parents' knowledge, attitude and practices in relation to ADA among their children.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized non-probability sampling design to identify the respondents. Quota sampling technique was used to select samples from clusters (villages and estates) in South B Estate in Nairobi. 625 households were randomly selected from the cluster. One parent per household was interviewed.

KEY FINDINGS

Parental Knowledge

- 82.5% of the respondents knew of an intoxicating substance, with 94% considering marijuana to be the most harmful.
- 88.6% knew of factors that may influence individuals to consume drugs, with 82.9% reporting peers' or relatives' as most influential.
- 87.8% affirmed knowledge of children abusing alcohol or drugs.
- 70% affirmed that substances of abuse were available in their neighborhoods, with alcohol being cited by 88.1% as the most common, followed by cigarettes 83%, marijuana 77% and miraa 66.3%.
- 89.5% of the respondents were aware that children who abuse drugs can be helped. 67.5% knew of support services for persons with substance abuse disorders (SUD).
- 70.4% of the parents were aware of drug counseling centers, 43% knew rehabilitation centers and 31.8% knew specific facility/institution in Nairobi or elsewhere.
- 34.5% of the parents interviewed did not know their child/children's friends.
- 12.4% of parents admitted that children under their care use alcohol or drugs.

Parental Attitudes

- 76.9% of the parents agreed that children in the neighbourhood were at risk of being initiated into drug and alcohol abuse early in their lives.
- 68.5% of the parents expressed that their own children may be at the risk of engaging in alcohol and drug abuse early in their lives.
- 94.6% agreed that unrestricted use of money by children below the age of 18 years lead them to drug and alcohol abuse.
- 94.1% disagreed that it was okay for a parent to consume alcohol at home in the presence of their children.
- 63.2% of parents agreed that the practice of going with children under the age of 18 years to places where alcohol is sold influences their early initiation into taking alcohol.
- 91.2% of parents were in agreement that parents could prevent their children below the age of 18 years from abusing alcohol or drugs.
- 91.5% of the respondents agreed that they had a role in the prevention of children from alcohol and drug abuse.

Parental Practices

- 31.5% of the respondents do not follow up their children's company.
- 45.7% of the respondents indicated that they do not talk to teachers to know whether their child/children could be abusing drugs.
- 34.7% of the parents reported that they do not monitor the use of money by their children.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the following measures;

- Enforcement of laws regulating the use of drug and substance abuse in totality.
- Capacity building for parents/caregivers to address alcohol and drug abuse among children by creating forums to share experiences and equip them with guidance and counseling skills.
- Establishment of preventive, treatment, and rehabilitative services that are affordable and within reach of parents. Parents also need to be made aware of such services.