

**PATTERN AND DETERMINANTS OF THE USE OF PSYCHOACTIVE  
SUBSTANCES AMONG INMATES OF UYO CUSTODIAL CENTER IN AKWA  
IBOM STATE, NIGERIA**

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Psychoactive substance abuse among inmates in custodial centers is a serious public health problem. The escalating issue of public health and societal concern is on the rise, with detrimental effects across various dimensions, particularly impacting the younger demographic.

**Methodology:** A descriptive cross-sectional research design employing a quantitative data collection approach was implemented for this investigation. The study focused on 376 inmates aged between 15 and 45 years within the Uyo custodial center in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The participant selection process involved a systematic sampling technique. Data collection utilized a self-administered, pre-tested, semi-structured questionnaire adapted for this context. The collected data underwent analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23 software. Descriptive statistics were employed to present the findings, utilizing tables and figures for clarity. The relationship between categorical variables was assessed through the chi-square test. Additionally, logistic regression analysis was conducted to identify factors associated with psychoactive substance use experiences among inmates, with statistical significance set at a  $p$  value  $\leq 0.05$ .

**Results:** The mean age of respondents from this study was  $29.2 \pm 4.20$  years. The pattern of psychoactive substance use among the respondents has it that a higher proportion of respondents (63.2%) agreed that they have been smoking for more than 6 months, of which majority of the respondents (66.3%) had not tried stopping smoking. Of the proportion that often smoke cigarette, a higher proportion of respondents 52.6% agreed that smoking affect their daily routine and more than half of the respondents 53.2% smoked 5-10 wraps/ sticks per day. The determinants of psychoactive substance use among the respondents opined that a higher proportion of respondents (67.9%) smoked cigarette with friends. Of the proportion of respondents that smoked cigarette with friends, (51.9%) did it weekly. A higher proportion of respondents agreed that family members do also smoked cigarette 53.7%. A higher proportion of respondents (79%) drank alcohol with friends. Of the proportion of respondents that drank alcohol with friends, (57.0%) did it daily. However, a higher proportion of respondents who drinks alcohol (47.9%) agreed that peer pressure was the reason for drinking alcohol while (33.5%) agreed that curiosity was the reason for smoking cigarette. Respondents who smoked cigarette had 1.65 times likelihood of experiencing the use of psychoactive substance 1.65 compared to non- smokers (95% CI: 1.093-2.493). Also alcohol intake significantly ( $p=0.0001$ ) increased the likelihood of being psychoactive substance user by 2.653 (95% CI: 1.741-4.044).

## Conclusion

The respondents exhibited a high incidence of engaging in the use of psychoactive substances. The findings from this investigation revealed a predominant tendency toward alcohol consumption and cigarette smoking among the majority of participants. The participants demonstrated significantly elevated levels of consequences and risk factors associated with psychoactive substance use, particularly related to alcohol and cigarette smoking. The factors perceived to influence psychoactive substance use among inmates included peer group influence, curiosity, parental guidance, and increased disposable income for leisure activities. Addressing substance use among inmates requires a comprehensive approach, encompassing correctional centers and family environments.

**Key words:** psychoactive substance use, inmates, pattern and determinants

## INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, the issue of substance utilization within the prison system is escalating, as evident from the noteworthy recurrence of relapses and the prevalence of drug dependency among former inmates. The misuse of drugs has evolved into a persistent challenge, posing a threat not only to public safety but also extending to national security. Despite the robust security measures in place across various prisons nationwide<sup>1</sup> the expectation that these substances would be effectively intercepted is regrettably unmet. Drugs and other psychoactive substances continue to find their way past stringent security measures and infiltrate our prison compounds, as highlighted in a study<sup>2</sup> emphasizing the persistence of drug use among prisoners. A diverse array of drugs is being consumed by inmates, creating a significant security concern within the immediate prison environment and the nation as a whole. Beyond the security implications, the utilization of drugs among inmates also

jeopardizes their physical and mental well-being, undermining the core objectives of imprisonment, which are centered on reformation and rehabilitation. The issue of psychoactive substance use has evolved into a burgeoning problem in society, reaching epidemic proportions. Over the past years, the global landscape has witnessed a concerning escalation in the patterns of psychoactive substance use<sup>3</sup> Within the Nigerian context, the consumption of substances such as cocaine has shown a noteworthy increase since 2014, as documented<sup>3</sup>. The prison environment, characterized by a regimented lifestyle, overcrowding, social deprivation, and interpersonal challenges, induces stress among inmates<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, it serves as a high-risk setting for both the initiation (Plos One, 2019) and perpetuation of drug use<sup>4,5</sup>. Whether incarcerated for drug-related offenses or other violations, individuals within the prison system may persist in the use of psychoactive substances as a coping

mechanism, defying institutional prohibitions<sup>6</sup>. Factors such as age, adverse childhood experiences, a polygamous family setting, and parental deprivation resulting from separation or divorce have been identified as demographic and family-related contributors that heighten the susceptibility to psychoactive substance use and other behavioral issues<sup>7,8</sup>. Despite prohibitions, health experts consistently express concern over the unauthorized diversion of substances or medications within prison walls. Instances of psychoactive substance use, as well as the misuse of illicit drugs, including the improper utilization of opioid maintenance treatments, have been noted. The challenges associated with the misuse of mind-altering substances in society and the impact on the lives of those who misuse them cannot be overstated. It is crucial to undertake an investigation of this nature to evaluate the pattern/ trends and factors influencing the use of such substances among inmates at Uyo Custodial Center in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Study area**

The research was conducted at the Uyo Custodial Center in Akwa Ibom State, situated in the South-South region between latitudes 4°32' and 5°33' north and longitudes 7°35' and 8°25' east. Akwa Ibom shares its borders with Rivers state to the west, Cross River state to the east, and Abia State to the west and north. Uyo, serving as the state capital, stands out as the bustling hub of diverse activities, attracting people of various age groups. Akwa Ibom state comprises three senatorial districts, with Uyo being one of them. Each senatorial district hosts a Custodial Center.

The study area was built by the Colonial Masters in 1960 and called Uyo Prisons until 2019 when the Nigerian Correctional Service Act was signed into law by the President that the name was changed to Custodial Center. The organogram of the custodial center is from the top down. The controller general is in-charge of the prison

formation. Then to the Located on Barracks Road by the police station before the Government House. Uyo Custodial Center was built in 1960 with initial lock up capacity of 613 inmates by the Colonial Masters, the Custodial Center has over the years exceeded its initial lock up capacity which has doubled as at the time of this study to about 1400 inmates in custody with no improvement to the structures erected by the Colonial Masters. There are four categories of inmates; Convicted inmates, awaiting trial inmates, Inmates sentenced to life imprisonment, and Inmates on death roll, all of which comprises both sexes. There are eleven blocks of cells in Uyo Custodial Center Akwa Ibom State, one cell block is exclusively for inmates on death roll. New convicts undergo an initial period of confinement in a distinct cell pending their appearance before the prison admission board.

**Study Design-** This study utilized a descriptive cross-sectional design

**Study Population-** The population of the study shall comprise all the inmates in Uyo Custodial Center Akwa Ibom State

**Study Tool-** The researcher employed a closed-ended structured questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Pre-test was conducted with a subset of the sample involving 40 inmates from Ikot Ekpene Custodial Center, representing 10% of the total sample size. Any questions that was found to be unclear or confusing was revised to enhance clarity and facilitate easy responses

### **Sample size determination**

Sample size shall be determine using Cochran formular ( ) for sample size determination.

$$N = Z^2PQ/E^2$$

where n = sample size?

Z = standard level of deviates corresponding to the significance (1.96)

P = prevalence of psychoactive substance abuse (57.4%) (Okoro et al 2021).

$q = 1 - e = \text{margin error (0.05)}$

10% non-response rate gives  $n=376$

**Inclusion criteria** All the inmates in Uyo Custodial Center.

**Exclusion criteria-** a. Inmates who were absent or unavailable during the time of collecting data. b. Inmates that did not give their consent for the study. c. Inmates that their stay was less than one month in the facility

### **Sampling method**

Systematic sampling technique was used to ensure that all participants have an equal chance of being included in the study. The number of inmates in Uyo Custodial Center as at the time of this study is about 1400 of which 168 are convicted inmates and 1300 are undergoing trial. There are about 13 blocks of cell in the Custodial Center, the convicts are housed in 4 of the cells and the remaining cells are for those awaiting trial,

. During the data collection process, we utilized three diligent data collection assistants who administered a maximum of 35 questionnaires per day. We set a target of collecting 105 samples each day from each block of cell. The team responsible for collecting data waited until there is open out of the inmates from the cells so as to take them to a convenient hall where they will be seated for data collection. To ensure fairness in the selection process, they employed a simple random sampling technique. This involves assigning unique identification numbers to each inmate, writing them on separate pieces of paper, folding them, and placing them into a small bag. Finally, one number is chosen blindly.

### **Method of data collection**

The researcher provided training to two research assistants who played a pivotal role in data collection. The questionnaires were structured into five distinct components. The initial section aimed at extracting socio-demographic information from the

respondents, while the subsequent sections (2, 3, 4, and 5) explored aspects such as knowledge, attitude, patterns, prevalence, and determinants related to the use of psychoactive substances. Concerning Attitudes to Drug Use (ADU), the questionnaire utilized for assessment was the Attitudes to Drug Use Questionnaire (Harmon, 1993), with certain modifications. This 12-item scale was crafted to gauge an individual's stance toward drug use. Responses were evaluated on a 5-point Likert Scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Total scores were computed by summing up responses to each question and dividing by the total number of questions in the questionnaire, which stands at 12. In instances where participants did not respond to a question, any missing scores led to the exclusion of their overall response from the analysis. Higher scores on the scale indicate a more favorable attitude towards drug use, while lower scores suggest a less favorable stance. On this scale, scores range from 1 to 5, with 5 indicating the highest

achievement and 1 representing the lowest. Notably, items 1, 4, 5, 9, and 11 are inversely scored. As indicated by Hulin et al. (2001), the internal reliability of this measurement tool is notably high, standing at  $\alpha = .89$ , signifying a robust level of consistency in its assessments.

### **Data analysis**

SPSS version 23.0, a statistical tool was used to analysed data. The variables were presented in frequency and percentages. Chi-square tests were used to examine the potential relationship between independent and dependent variables. statistical significance at a p-value set at 0.05 (5%) within a 95% confidence interval. Each variable's significance will be evaluated, and only those with P-values equal to or below 0.05 will be regarded as statistically noteworthy.

### **Ethical considerations**

Approval for this research endeavor will be sought from the University of Port Harcourt's Health, Research, and Ethical

Committee, ensuring ethical clearance. Concurrently, permission to conduct the study will be secured from the Nigerian

Correctional Service. Ensuring privacy, confidentiality and other ethical principles were noted in the study

## RESULTS

**Table 1: Socio-demographics characteristics of the respondents**

| Variables                 | Frequency(n)=376 | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| <b>Age group</b>          |                  |                |
| 15- 25                    | 89               | 23.7           |
| 26-35                     | 126              | 33.5           |
| 36-45                     | 97               | 25.8           |
| Above 45years             | 64               | 17.0           |
| Mean age 29.2 $\pm$ 4.2SD |                  |                |
| <b>Gender</b>             |                  |                |
| Male                      | 284              | 75.5           |
| Female                    | 92               | 24.5           |
| <b>Religion</b>           |                  |                |
| Christianity              | 350              | 93.1           |
| Islam                     | 22               | 5.8            |
| Others                    | 4                | 1.1            |
| <b>Educational Status</b> |                  |                |
| None                      | 83               | 22.1           |
| Primary                   | 99               | 26.3           |
| Secondary                 | 129              | 34.3           |
| Tertiary                  | 65               | 17.3           |
| <b>Marital Status</b>     |                  |                |
| Married                   | 79               | 21.0           |
| Single                    | 180              | 47.9           |
| Divorced/separated        | 79               | 21.0           |
| widowed                   | 38               | 10.1           |



**Occupation**

|               |     |      |
|---------------|-----|------|
| Civil servant | 41  | 10.9 |
| Artisan       | 51  | 13.6 |
| Trading       | 148 | 39.4 |
| Farming       | 136 | 36.1 |

**Status in Custody**

|                    |     |      |
|--------------------|-----|------|
| Awaiting trial     | 167 | 44.4 |
| Short term convict | 120 | 31.9 |
| Long term convict  | 74  | 19.6 |
| Lifer              | 10  | 2.7  |
| Death roll         | 5   | 1.4  |

**Duration of stay in Custody**

|             |     |      |
|-------------|-----|------|
| ≤ 6months   | 88  | 23.4 |
| 6-12 months | 184 | 48.9 |
| ≥ 1 year    | 104 | 27.7 |

With the data obtained from 376 respondents who took part in the study, majority 126 (35.5%) were of age ranges from 26-36 years, with the mean age 29.2 years ( $\pm 4.20$  SD). Majority of the respondents were males 284 (75.5%). A higher proportion 129 (34.30%) of them had

secondary level of education as their highest level of education. Also, a higher proportion 180 (47.9%) of the respondents were single. Majority of the respondents 148 (39.4%) were into trading as a form of business followed by farming 136(36.1%)

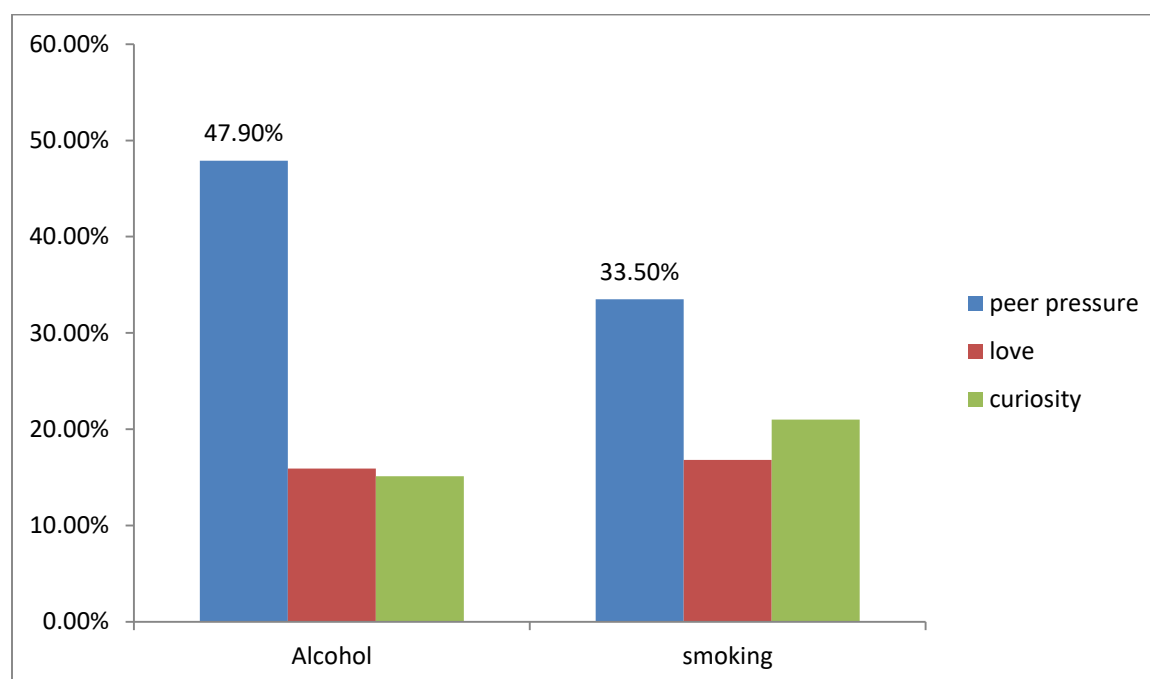


Figure 1 shows the reasons for alcohol intake and smoking of cigarette among the respondents. A higher proportion of respondents who drink alcohol 180(47.9%) agreed that peer pressure was the reason for drinking alcohol while 126(33.5%) agreed that curiosity was the reason for smoking

cigarette. Also, there was the same proportion of respondents each 79(21.0%) who curiosity and pleasure was a reason for drinking alcohol while 97(25.8%) and 89(23.7%) agreed that peer pressure and pleasure was the reasons for smoking cigarette.

**Table 2: Patterns of psychoactive substance use of the respondents**

| Variables                          | Frequency(n)=190 | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| <b>How long have been smoking</b>  |                  |                |
| < 6 months                         | 70               | 36.8           |
| >6months                           | 120              | 63.2           |
| <b>Ever tried stopping smoking</b> |                  |                |
| Yes                                | 64               | 33.7           |
| No                                 | 126              | 66.3           |

|                                                     |     |      |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----|------|
| <b>Does smoking affect daily routine</b>            |     |      |
| <b>Yes</b>                                          | 100 | 52.6 |
| <b>No</b>                                           | 90  | 47.4 |
| <b>Number of wrap/stick ever smoke a day</b>        |     |      |
| <b>&lt; 5</b>                                       | 56  | 29.8 |
| <b>5-10</b>                                         | 101 | 53.2 |
| <b>&gt;10</b>                                       | 33  | 17.0 |
| <b>Do you have urge to increase the number</b>      |     |      |
| <b>Yes</b>                                          | 88  | 46.3 |
| <b>No</b>                                           | 102 | 63.7 |
| <b>Do you think you can stop smoking at anytime</b> |     |      |
| <b>Yes</b>                                          | 123 | 64.7 |
| <b>No</b>                                           | 67  | 35.3 |

A higher proportion of respondents 120(63.2%) agreed that they have been smoking for more than 6 months, of which majority of the respondents 126(66.3%) had not tried stopping smoking. Of the proportion that often smoke cigarette, a higher proportion of respondents 52.6% agreed that smoking affect their daily routine and more than half of the respondents 53.2% smoked 5-10 wraps/ sticks per day

**Table 3: Determinants of psychoactive substance use among the respondents**

| <b>Variables</b>                           | <b>Frequency(n)=190</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Do you smoke with friends</b>           |                         |                       |
| <b>Yes</b>                                 | 129                     | 67.9                  |
| <b>No</b>                                  | 61                      | 32.81                 |
| <b>How often do you smoke with friends</b> |                         |                       |
| <b>Daily</b>                               | 45                      | 34.9                  |

|                                                                  |     |      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|
| weekly                                                           | 67  | 51.9 |
| monthly                                                          | 17  | 13.2 |
| <b>Does your parents/ family member smoke</b>                    |     |      |
| Yes                                                              | 88  | 46.3 |
| No                                                               | 102 | 53.7 |
| <b>N=100</b>                                                     |     |      |
| <b>Do your friend drink alcohol</b>                              |     |      |
| Yes                                                              | 79  | 79   |
| No                                                               | 21  | 21   |
| <b>How often do you drink with friends</b>                       |     |      |
| daily                                                            | 45  | 57.0 |
| weekly                                                           | 28  | 35.4 |
| monthly                                                          | 6   | 7.6  |
| <b>Does your parents/ family member drink alcohol</b>            |     |      |
| Yes                                                              | 71  | 71   |
| No                                                               | 29  | 29   |
| <b>Have you been punished for using psychoactive substance</b>   |     |      |
| Yes                                                              | 276 | 73.4 |
| No                                                               | 100 | 37.6 |
| <b>Does use of psychoactive substance affect your daily life</b> |     |      |
| Yes                                                              | 250 | 66.5 |
| No                                                               | 126 | 33.5 |

A higher proportion of respondents 129 (67.9%) smoked cigarette with friends. Of

the proportion of respondents that smoked cigarette with friends, (51.9%) did it weekly.

A higher proportion of respondents agreed that family members do also smoked cigarette 53.7%. A higher proportion of respondents (79%) drank alcohol with friends. Of the proportion of respondents that drank alcohol with friends, (57.0%) did it-daily.

**Table 4: Regression analyses for the variables significantly associated with psychoactive substance use (controlling for confounders). (n=376)**

| Variables     | Category          | p-value | Odd Ratio | 95% CI<br>Lower-upper |
|---------------|-------------------|---------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Social habits | Smoking           | 0.016   | 1.651     | 1.093-2.493           |
|               | No smoking        |         |           |                       |
|               | Alcohol           | 0.0001  | 2.653     | 1.741-4.044           |
|               | No alcohol intake |         |           |                       |
| Occupation    | Civil servant     |         |           |                       |
|               | Artisan           | <0.0001 | 2.591     | 1.695-3.962           |
|               | Trading           | 0.0003  | 2.152     | 1.414-3.275           |
|               | Farming           | 0.0001  | 1.591     | 1.395-4.962           |
| Constant      |                   | 0.007   | 13.927    |                       |

Respondents who smoked cigarette had 1.65 times likelihood of experiencing the use of psychoactive substance 1.65 compared to non- smokers (95% CI: 1.093-2.493). Also alcohol intake significantly (p=0.0001) increased the likelihood of being psychoactive substance user by 2.653 (95% CI: 1.741-4.044). Respondents with artisan

as occupation had significantly 2.5 times likelihood of psychoactive substance use compared to civil servants (95% CI: 1.695-3.962 (p=0.0001).

**DISCUSSION**

The average age of the participants was 29.20±4.20 years, spanning from 15 to 45 years. This contrasts with the age

distribution observed in a study conducted in Romania, where the mean age was  $21.09 \pm 1.48$  years, and the age range was 18-25 years.

The predominant religious affiliation among the respondents is Christianity. Most religious doctrines strongly discourage the consumption of psychoactive substances. Inmates actively participating in religious activities demonstrate a decreased likelihood of engaging in drug experimentation. Furthermore, their involvement in religious pursuits increases the probability of spending time with like-minded peers who are less inclined towards drug use.<sup>9</sup> Religion could play a crucial role in anti-drug initiatives for inmates if concerted efforts are made to engage religious organizations in identifying and counseling individuals using psychoactive substances.

Self-reported academic struggles, as evident in the educational levels achieved by participants, displayed a notable correlation with substance use. In this present investigation, individuals lacking formal

education indicated a higher prevalence of engaging in psychoactive substance use, coupled with subpar academic performance. This trend was similarly identified among respondents who had only completed primary education. This aligns with findings from previous research<sup>10</sup>. In a study examining substance use among inmates in Lagos, southwest Nigeria, Fatoye (2003) established a significant connection between self-reported below-average academic performance and psychoactive substance use. Logistic regression analysis further revealed that these individuals had elevated odds of indulging in psychoactive substances compared to those with more favorable academic records.

This study additionally identified a robust association between adolescents' substance use and having parents in the lower socioeconomic class. The odds of substance use exhibited a twofold increase among those in the lower social class, a pattern consistent with findings in other studies such as those by<sup>11</sup>. In the study<sup>12</sup>, it was noted that

lower socioeconomic status, gauged through indicators like parental educational attainment and income, is correlated with substance use among teenagers. Notably, in this multi-racial study, the association was particularly pronounced among black inmates, suggesting that heightened levels of poverty, unemployment, and political instability in certain black communities may contribute to substance-taking behavior among inmates. However, the specific indices used to derive socioeconomic status were not explicitly stated in the study. This underscores the consistent trend observed across various studies regarding the linkage between lower socioeconomic status and increased susceptibility to substance use among adolescents<sup>13-15</sup>

In the context of this study, parental substance use emerged as a factor associated with inmates' substance use, although the association did not reach statistical significance in the case of paternal substance use. This phenomenon might be attributed to the prevailing societal norms in this region,

where substance use is more prevalent and socially acceptable among men than women, as highlighted in studies<sup>16-18</sup>. An alarming implication of this observation is that psychoactive substances might be present in the home environment, potentially serving as a model for inmates' drug use behavior. In many traditional settings, fathers, pastors, and influential leaders often serve as role models for inmates, and this, coupled with inheritable biological factors, could offer a plausible explanation for the observed association between paternal substance use and inmates' psychoactive substance use. The present study's finding aligns with the consistent trend observed in other studies, such as those by<sup>18,19,20</sup> affirming that parental substance use is strongly linked to adolescent substance use. This underscores the importance of considering familial influences, both societal and biological, in understanding and addressing the complex dynamics of substance use among adolescents.

A study conducted in Nigeria<sup>20</sup> proposed that family substance use significantly influences the substance-using behavior of inmates. Inmates with parents engaging in psychoactive substance use face a notable risk of getting caught in a cycle involving drug use, association with peers involved in substance use, and strained family relationships. The heightened susceptibility to substance use and its associated issues in children of parents with substance abuse problems is attributed to a combination of genetic and environmental factors.

Numerous factors contribute to the predisposition toward psychoactive substance use. In the current study, peer group influence, curiosity, and pleasure emerged as the most commonly perceived factors, acknowledged by over nine out of every ten respondents. Additionally, seven in ten respondents identified love and increased leisure money as predisposing factors. A parallel investigation noted that 23% and 27% of respondents attributed substance use to peer group influence and

curiosity, respectively. Another study<sup>5,20</sup> reported a higher percentage of 50.77% associating substance use with peer group influence. Furthermore, in the current study, a significant 85.4% of respondents reported obtaining drugs from friends. This underscores the influential role of peer relationships, as youths often emulate their peers to foster a sense of belonging. A separate study highlighted that 67% of males with marijuana experience had friends who had taken drugs, in contrast to just over 25% of males without marijuana experience but with friends engaging in drug use. This association was similarly non-significant among females, as 74% of females with marijuana-using friends succumbed to the habit, compared to 21% with similar friends who did not indulge in drug use.

In an additional study that compared users and non-users of psychoactive substances, peer influence, curiosity, and a sense of growing up emerged as the primary reasons for initiating psychoactive substance use. Non-users, in contrast, abstained due to



adherence to personal and family values and awareness of the health impact. Within the current study, users cited boosting confidence (62.1%) and motivation (55.4%) as the most common reasons for substance use. Moreover, parental psychoactive substance use emerged as a significant predisposing factor, with almost half of the respondents in the present study considering it influential. This proportion surpasses the 40.77% reported in a study conducted among inmates in urban areas in Ilorin, Kwara state. The diverse motivations for substance use underscore the multifaceted nature of this behavior, influenced by social, psychological, and familial factors.

The correlation between the utilization of psychoactive substances within peer groups and the respondents' own usage lacked statistical significance in the current investigation. A substantial portion, exceeding one-third, of individuals engaging in substance use in this study shared this behavior with their peers. Nevertheless, a substantial proportion, surpassing two-

quarters, of respondents whose peers partook in substance use did not adopt the same behavior. This implies that those who did succumb to the practice might have been more susceptible, potentially influenced by other underlying factors. Notably, nearly half of those experiencing unsatisfactory relationships within their families were found to be substance users. A related study highlighted the association between challenging parent-child relationships and tobacco use (OR = 2.725,  $p = 0.004$  for males; OR = 3.699,  $p < 0.001$  for females). In the current research, it is noteworthy that approximately two-thirds of substance users reported satisfactory intra-family relationships. This underscores the complexity of factors contributing to an individual's engagement in psychoactive substance use.

Regarding the factors linked to the use of psychoactive substances, a higher percentage of respondents at this center were engaged in smoking and alcohol consumption compared to other facilities.

Approximately forty percent of respondents had a history of cigarette smoking, and over one-third had participated in alcohol consumption. Significantly, this variation in proportions was statistically noteworthy. This outcome aligns with the results of a study conducted in South-eastern Nigeria, where around one-third of respondents were implicated in alcohol, smoking, and psychoactive substance use. A plausible explanation for this trend might be the frequent attendance of inmates in this study area at various social events like birthday parties, funeral ceremonies, and marriage ceremonies. These occasions often feature a notable availability of alcohol drinks, providing respondents with unrestricted access to such substances.

The findings documented in this research stand in contrast to a study conducted in South Western Nigeria, where over two-thirds of participants were found to have engaged in smoking. The pivotal elements contributing to behavioral tendencies towards psychoactive substance use were

identified as alcohol intake and cigarette smoking. Research indicates that individuals in confinement exhibit a diminished control over their emotions, and the consumption of alcohol may exacerbate this situation by impairing their capacity to make reasoned decisions. Consequently, the public health implications and policy considerations underscore that the consumption of alcohol and cigarette smoking heighten the proclivity of inmates towards risk-taking behaviors, particularly concerning the use and misuse of psychoactive substances. Adolescents in confinement typically exhibit an inclination towards experimentation.

Inmates, particularly adolescents, engage in diverse human behaviors, encompassing experimentation with smoking and alcohol consumption. The ready availability of alcohol, the sale of cigarette sticks, and the incorporation of alcohol as a beverage in social gatherings collectively contribute to the widespread use of these substances. The ingestion of alcohol or drugs by inmates impedes their ability to discern and

effectively respond to warning signs, rendering them more susceptible to societal vices. This heightened vulnerability, in turn, increases the likelihood of engaging in psychoactive substance use. Furthermore, the indulgence of inmates in alcohol and cigarette smoking has far-reaching consequences, contributing to the breakdown of law and order and an escalation of social issues. These substances can alter an individual's perception, influencing their behavior and leading to experiences with psychoactive substances. Unfortunately, the lifelong repercussions for inmates include engagement in antisocial behaviors associated with alcohol and smoking, such as sexual abuse and rape. The study highlights a notable correlation between alcohol or smoking and the incidence of date rape, emphasizing the imperative need for intervention strategies to mitigate the syndromes of alcohol-smoking and sexual abuse among inmates.

## **Conclusion**

High prevalence of psychoactive substance use was observed among the respondents, emphasizing the pressing need for interventions within correctional settings. The dominant pattern of substance use primarily involved alcohol intake and cigarette smoking, shedding light on specific substances that require targeted preventive measures. Moreover, the study highlighted the presence of significantly higher consequences and risk factors associated with psychoactive substance use, particularly focusing on alcohol and cigarette smoking. This underscores the urgency of addressing potential health and behavioral implications within the inmate population. Perceived influencing factors, including peer group influence, curiosity, parental influence, and increased leisure money, emerged as crucial aspects to consider in designing effective preventive strategies.

Drug education initiatives encompass a variety of approaches, including lectures, rallies, seminars, and film presentations

elucidating the detrimental consequences of psychoactive substances. Stringent penalties are imposed on individuals engaged in victimless offenses, specifically those involved in the trafficking of illicit drugs.

**Limitation:** The custodial facility situated in Uyo is merely one among several correctional centers within Akwa Ibom State. Consequently, the outcomes derived from this investigation are solely indicative of the inmate population confined in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, and should not be extrapolated to encompass inmates from other correctional facilities in the same state.

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**Conflict of Interest:** None declared

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- 21.