

Original Research Article**The prevalence of substance abuse and its mental health effects among the youth:
Implications for social research.****Abstract**

The aim of the study was to assess the prevalence rate of substance abuse, understand the link between mental health and substance abuse, to explore the mental health effects of substance abuse among the youth and to examine services put in place in helping mentally disturbed as a result of substance abuse. The study adopted a cross-sectional qualitative research approach. The data was collected through in-depth face to face interviews with the help of a tape recorder. A total of 18 respondents were sampled and were divided into two sections: youth abusing substances and key informants. Respondents were drawn using purposive and snowball sampling, and data was analysed qualitatively. The findings confirm that the prevalence of substance abuse is high among the youth in Botswana, and mostly males as compared to females are abusing substances. The findings also provide evidence that there is a strong relationship between mental health and substance abuse. Furthermore, the findings show that the early onset of substance abuse is often preceded by mental disorders comprising depression, suicidal tendencies and personality disorders. In conclusion, the paper unveils the significance of rehabilitation centers in Botswana. Furthermore, the paper recommends that specific prioritized interventions be identified for support by social workers, parents, counselors and other professionals dealing with cases of substance abuse and mental health. Lastly, it outlines implications for social work research.

Keywords: substance abuse, mental health affects, social work, youth, Botswana.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of substance abuse and mental health is not only peculiar to youth in Botswana rather it is a worldwide phenomenon. Available studies show that mental health and substance use problems often coexist (Erickson, 2011; Kanyoni, 2015). To illustrate the magnitude of youth substance abuse, according to a 2010 report on substance use in Canada, up to 50% of youth who sought substance abuse treatment were found to have a concurrent mental health disorder, such as depression or anxiety (Buttler Centre for Research, 2010). Comparatively, Shannon (2011) also conducted a study using a larger sample of 538 adolescents at a hospital-based adolescent clinic in Boston; substance abuse was reported in 63% of the 165 girls and 56% of the 79 boys with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms. Moreover, substance abuse is widely among African youth which constitutes to serious social and public health problems (Simatwa, 2014). A quantitative research in Ethiopia on the high prevalence of substance use and associated factors among high school adolescents in 2014 found out that the current prevalence of substance use among Woreta high school students was (47.9%) and the life-time prevalence was 65.4%.

According to Molina, Carroll, Kostas & Perkins (2013) the prevalence rate of substance abuse in Ethiopia was significantly higher than a study done among high school students in Addis Ababa which showed that the life time prevalence was (45.7%). Additionally, Molina et al (2013) points out that in South Africa a study done in similar setting among adolescent students in Cape Town found out the prevalence was (50.6%). Therefore, this shows that the prevalence of substance abuse is high among the youth in Africa. It is the contention of this paper that, despite the efforts of various stakeholders to raise awareness on substance abuse globally, regionally, and nationally more youth continue to abuse substances. It is of utmost importance to note that, substance abuse affects families, communities and nations at large. For this reason, this paper will specifically focus on the prevalence of substance abuse, assess the link between mental health and substance abuse, and identify the mental health effects of substance abuse and it will also assess services put in place in addressing this problem.

In Botswana, most of the available studies in the country focus on the effects and impact of substance abuse, leaving a gap of knowledge to explore further on how substance abuse relates with mental health. According to literature (Winga, 2005; Ani, 2014; Maurice, 2015) alcohol and marijuana are the most abused substances in Africa, in which Botswana is no exception. This present study was conducted in Serowe, Botswana owing to the fact that, a lot of cases in the psychiatric ward in Serowe (Sekgoma Memorial Hospital) are a result of substance abuse. Evident from the statistics obtained in the psychiatric ward at Sekgoma Memorial Hospital (SKM), out of 457 registered patients in the year 2014, 148 were alcohol and drug abusers. In the year 2015, from July to December, 162 patients were registered from which 95 patient were a result of alcohol and drug abuse, aged between 18 to 35 years old. This registered aged group indicates that there is high drug and alcohol abuse rate. From 2014 to 2015 the statistics gives credence that the number of cases related to drug and alcohol abuse reported at SKH escalated among the youth.

Therefore, it is the contention of this paper that the high number of drug and alcohol abuse by the youths of in Botswana is a great concern for the Ministry of Health and the community at large. All this clearly demonstrates that efforts to curb alcohol abuse has not only fallen short but has worsened the situation. Furthermore, in Botswana there are limited services provided for people living with mental illnesses due to substance abuse. It is against this background that this present study sought to explore the relationship between substance abuse and mental health among the youth in Botswana. Lastly, it outlines implications for social work practice with regards to impact of substance abuse, and mental health survivors.

THEORETICAL DISCOURSE

This section discusses the theoretical framework that has been adopted in the present study. According to Bandura (1986) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) considers the unique way in which individuals acquire and maintain behavior, while also considering the social environment in which individuals perform the behavior. The theory takes into account a person's past experiences, which factor into whether behavioral action will occur. These past experiences influences reinforcements, expectations, and expectancies, all of which shape whether a person will engage in a specific behavior and the reasons as to why a person would engage in such behavior. Furthermore, the social cognitive theory stresses that evaluating behavior change depends on the following factors; the environment, people and behavior which constantly influence each other (Thompson, 2005).

Reciprocal Determinism

Reciprocal Determinism is the central concept of SCT, which refers to “the dynamic and reciprocal interaction of person (individual with a set of learned experiences), environment (external social context), and behavior (responses to stimuli to achieve goals)” (Bandura, 1986: 24). This explains how people acquire and maintain certain behavior, in that it stresses that the individual learned experiences, social environment including societal pressures and role models provide a framework for understanding behavior. Therefore, since the results of the study shows a high prevalence rate of substance abuse among the youth in Botswana, this paper bring this discussion into perspective as we observed that the youth learned the behavior of using illicit drugs and alcohol from their social environment. Having said that, this paper argues that the high These high prevalence rates of substance continue increasing due to the societal pressures that the environment instills on the youth. However, it must be noted that, the prevalence rate of substance abuse was lower in females compared to males. This observation was caused by the lower female rate on responding to stimuli on achieving societal goals. Through the selective interactions with their environment, adolescent reciprocal interact with drug dealers, available alcohol and behaviors associated with drug consumption which generate a high prevalence rate in the findings of this study.

Learning how, what, when to use alcohol and other drugs occurs in a social context, that is among peers who are also engaging in the drug use hence high rates of prevalence of substance use (Leslie & Jacobsen, 2001). The role of modeling is apparent in many instances, especially among high-risk children who are exposed to the drinking and drugging of their parents. Children who are raised in a substance saturated environment learn early in their life to use alcohol and other drugs as a normal part of everyday life. Therefore, the study shows a significant prevalence rate of substance abuse in Serowe village, Botswana.

Observational Learning

This asserts that people can witness and observe a behavior conducted by others, and then reproduce those actions. This is often exhibited through "modeling" of behaviors (Payne, 2005). It is argued that, if individuals see successful demonstration of a behavior, they can also complete the behavior successfully. This present study has shown that the high prevalence rate of substance abuse by the youth in Serowe is caused by the modeling of alcohol and marijuana practices adapted from the elders of the village. The study further show that the youth copy and model drinking behaviors of their village role models which show a high prevalence rate of substance abuse.

Behavioral Capability

This refers to a person's actual ability to perform a behavior through essential knowledge and skills (Robbins, 2001). In order to successfully perform a behavior, a person must know what to do and how to do it. Through continuous learning, adaptation and successfully abusing substances such as marijuana and alcohol youths are more prone to developing mental illness. The findings of the study verify the link between mental health and substance abuse. Likewise, the National Institute of Health ‘NIH’ (2008) discovered that patients with schizophrenia have higher rates of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse than the general population. Based on nationally representative survey data, 41% of respondents with past-month mental illnesses are current smokers, which is about double the rate of those with no mental illness. In clinical

samples, the rate of smoking in patients with schizophrenia has ranged as high as 90% (NIH, 2008). Hence, by using a survey on a population of patients at Sekgoma Memorial Hospital, this study showed a link and/or a positive relationship between substance abuse and mental health.

Expectations

The above tenet according to Bandura (1986) refers to the anticipated consequences of a person's behavior. Outcome expectations can be health-related or not health-related. People anticipate the consequences of their actions before engaging in the behavior, and these anticipated consequences can influence successful completion of the behavior. Expectations derive largely from previous experience. While expectancies also derive from previous experience, expectancies focus on the value that is placed on the outcome and are subjective to the individual (Payne, 2005). This present study gives credence to the fact that substance abuse has mental health effects on the youth. Globally, numerous epidemiological studies have found that, for many adolescents (45%–66%), substance use disorders precede the onset of trauma exposure. substance abuse and dependence have been clearly associated with trauma and PTSD (Ginzler, Garrett, Baer, & Peterson, 2007; Thompson, 2005).

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a common childhood disorder that often persists into adolescence and adulthood and has been associated with an increased risk for substance use (Molina et al., 2013). Youth underestimate the expectations of their substance abuse behavior on their mental health effects because of observed successful experiences from environmental and societal role models. It is in this manner that this study discovered that less value was put by the youth on the negative mental health effects of substance abuse. However, it must be noted that this study also discovered that not all mental illnesses have been propounded by substance abuse.

Self-efficacy

This is the level of a person's confidence in his or her ability to successfully perform a behavior (Robbins, 2001). Self-efficacy is unique to SCT although other theories have added this construct at later dates, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior. Self-efficacy is influenced by a person's specific capabilities and other individual factors, as well as by environmental factors 'barriers and facilitators' (National Institute of Health, 2008). It is the argument of this paper that substance abuse is a complex problem and there is no one strategy that will work in all situations. The delivery of effective treatment for substance use disorder to persons with severe mental illness continues to be a major challenge. If efficient services and motivating factors are put in place in the environment of substance users, the findings of this present study was not able to deduce positive response and self-efficacy from the youth. However, due to inadequate service delivery from most government health facilities, the confidence and self-efficacy of the substance abuse users was low.

METHOD

Participants

The sample included 18 participants (15 youth aged between 15 to 35 years and 3 social workers) employed in the health setting. There were more male participants represented in the study than their female counterparts. This is shown by the frequency of males which is represented by 70% as opposed to 30% of females. This might be an indication that more males are involved in substance abuse as opposed to females.

183

184 *Sampling Technique*

185 This present study adopted non probability sampling, namely purposive and snow ball. Purposive
186 sampling was chosen on the grounds that, the study focused on a certain group of individuals
187 being youth aged 15-35 years with experience in substance abuse. It was also used to select the
188 key informants knowledgeable on issues of substance abuse and mental health. In addition, the
189 technique was used on the basis that, it is less time consuming since it allowed eliminating of
190 participants that did not fit in the study. It was very handy in selecting the key informants
191 knowledgeable on issues of substance abuse and mental health who receive cases on substance
192 abuse and mental health on their line of duty in daily basis.

193 Snowball on the other hand was used in finding participants (youth) who have been
194 involved with substance abuse. The sampling technique was convenient owing to the fact that
195 participants with whom contact has already been made used their social networks and referred us
196 to other respondents who participated in the study. Snow ball was also used for the reason that
197 participants involved in substance abuse desire privacy. Furthermore, it was going to be difficult
198 to locate participants as all respondents did not stand equal chance of being selected. We used
199 the support group to locate other participants abusing substances. However, it is worth noting
200 that although sampling technique has advantages it has certain disadvantages as well. For
201 example, it is heavily reliant on other participants to make appropriate contacts, and since the
202 population is hidden its characteristics are likely to be unknown hence it was time consuming to
203 arrive to our target participants.

204

205 *Data collection*

206 Data was collected through the use of in-depth face to face interview. This data collection
207 method enabled us to have full control of the interview as a result producing a higher response
208 rate. The participants were assured of confidentiality and allowed to express themselves with
209 minimal interruptions. From the interview guide as researchers, we were able to elaborate more
210 on questions that needed clarity on prevalence of substance abuse, link between mental health
211 and substance abuse, mental health effects of substance abuse among the youth and whether
212 there are any services specifically meant for people who are mentally disturbed as a result of
213 substance abuse.

214 Data from the interviews was recorded through the use of a tape recorder. However, it is
215 worth noting that, the respondents were asked for permission to record before the interview. The
216 interview session took 30-40 minutes and the interview guide consisted of 12 questions which
217 were derived from the study objectives.

218

219 *Ethical consideration*

220 Considering ethics in research is of paramount importance. Therefore, it is important that
221 researchers are well aware of and understand the basics of ethical research and how they might
222 affect the research project (Babbie, 2007). As noted earlier on, participation by respondents was
223 voluntary and free, they were not be coerced into providing information. This was ensured by
224 informing the participants fully about the nature and purpose of the research, how far the
225 research would go and how it would possibly benefit the society in general. The participants of
226 the study were Batswana hence familiar with both Setswana and English therefore the interview
227 guide was translated to local language to prevent communication barriers.

Permission was sought before proceeding with the interview and preceded only after the participant signed the consent form. To adhere to anonymity, information from each participant was analysed in such a way that it cannot be traced to any specific individual. For instance, names of participants were not used rather they were assigned numbers.

Limitations of the study

The study findings should be cautiously interpreted due to some limitations. The findings of this study cannot be generalised to the larger population on the grounds that the sample size was small and unique to the people who participated. Furthermore, the study was cross sectional as it was done at one time at a particular place. Lastly, it was location specific and as this was not a national study thus limiting external validity.

PRESENTATION OF STUDY FINDINGS

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Age of the Respondents

The study participants were divided into two sections: youth and key informants. It shows that the respondents who participated in the study were aged from 18 to 50+ years. Fifteen (15) youth were interviewed and three (3) key informants thereby bringing the study total population to eighteen (n= 18). There were more male respondents represented in the study than their female counterparts. As stated earlier on this might be an indication that more males are involved in substance abuse as opposed to females.

Prevalence of substance abuse among the youth

Introduction to drugs and age youth start indulging in drugs

Respondents were asked to indicate who introduced them to drugs and the age they started indulging in drugs. In responding to these questions, several answers were mentioned and with respect to the introduction of drug; a majority of respondents (7/15) reported to have taught themselves while some were introduced to drugs by their friends (5/15), classmates (2/15), family members (1/15). One female respondent who stated that she has been influenced by a friend had this to say:

“At the time I was really stressed and I went to leave in a house filled with people who were bad influence, It was just after I finalized my divorce and that is when I started to do crack as a friend of mine said it will help me forget everything that I was going through”.

With regard to the age when they started indulging in drugs, it was observed that a majority of the youth start indulging in substances at the ages between 14 and 18 years old. Only (5/15) reported to have started indulging in drugs at the ages between 19 and 23 years of age.

The most abused substance and frequency

With regard to the most abused substance, of the fifteen youth interviewed (6/15) reported marijuana to be the drug that they have ever abused the most compared to other drugs. However, few participants (4/15) reported alcohol to be the substance they abuse the most. Still on that note, very few participants (2/15) reported to having used both alcohol and marijuana the most at the same time while one respondent reported to having used cocaine the most. One respondent also stated that the most abused substances were a combination of cigarette and alcohol whilst one participant reported to have used Marijuana the most. However, the key informants including two social workers and a psychiatrist also found marijuana to be the most prevalent substance

among the youth in Serowe looking at some of the cases they receive. During the interview a psychiatrist pointed out that:

“Substance abuse is one of major problems that we are dealing with in our work place, this affects mostly young people, from the time I started working here, I have been working closely with the police and families of my patients. The patients are usually brought in by their families and the police. Most cases which I receive are a result of marijuana”.

In reaction to the issue of frequency, all the youth participants (15/15) reported smoking daily usually three times or more in a day. In relation to alcohol the general consensus was that respondents reported drinking alcohol four times in a week usually from Thursdays until the weekend. Commenting on the issue of smoking, one male participant said:

“While I am talking to you just now, I was smoking few minutes before you came, I would not know what to say but I smoke a lot to be honest. My demand is very high, if it was according to me I would smoke after every 30 minutes but problem is money”. Additionally, the psychiatrist emphasized that they mostly receive cases associated with substance abuse daily.

Reasons for substance abuse

To find out factors contributing to abuse of substances, participants were asked to outline reasons for using substances. During the interview participants indicated that people abuse substances due to different reasons. Moreover, when interviewed the significant minority of the respondents (6/15) pointed out that, they use substances because of the influence from their friends. They laid a point that they usually want to fit into the crowd and to please their friends. In addition among the six participants, one female participant stated that she was influenced by her boyfriend. She emphasized that she could not refuse as her partner at times tend to be violent when he is high.

In contrast, during the interview only (5/15) of participants reported to be using substances to reduce boredom as it always keeps them busy. Very few (3/15) reported to be using substances to boost their confidence as they indicated that it makes them feel alive and helps them to be able to concentrate. The remaining two of the fifteen participants (2/15) indicated that they are using substances to relieve stress.

Signs experienced when substances are not used

When participants were asked on the signs that they experience when they do not indulge in substances, a majority (8/15) indicated that they cannot function when they do not use the drugs as they indicated that substances kept them going. When interviewed on the issue, few participants (4/15) reported that they tremble when they do not take in the substances. Nonetheless, two of the fifteen youth participants stated being depressed when they do not indulge in substances, one respondent reported that she hallucinate when she does not take in substances for a long time. Furthermore, of the fifteen respondents interviewed only three respondents were female while the rest were male which clearly shows the differences of the abuse of substances between the two genders.

Link between mental health and substance abuse

Participants were asked about the interface between substance abuse and mental illness, whether the former causes the latter or is the other way around. They expressed different viewpoints and the predominant answer was reported to be that substance abuse cause's mental illness. Out of the total population, a majority of participants (8/15) indicated that substance abuse leads to

mental health. However, though majority of participants reported that substance abuse leads to mental illness, other respondents had difference views, as they stated that mental illness causes drug abuse. One respondent addressed the issue by saying:

“Well I would like to think the two are interrelated so there is no definite answer, I believe drug abuse causes mental illness and also people who have mental health problems tend to abuse drugs. This is so, because people who abuse drugs tend to become violent and they behave in a way they would not behave on a normal day. Therefore, abusing drugs have severe effects on the brain and a way a person functions and usually people who have mental illness tend to abuse drugs”.

The remaining two of the fifteen respondents reported not knowing which one causes the other but they do not think abusing substance can lead to mental illness. The key informants were also asked on their opinion on whether mental illness causes substance or substance abuse cause mental illness. Out of the three key informants interviewed, they reported that the two are related and they cannot be separated.

To substantiate the above one them said:

“In my opinion, dagga use is a mental aid but sometimes the people that have no mental ill after using dagga they start having disorders, but is true that the mental ills are associated to dagga use. The patient will have depression, epilepsy, personality disorder, Bipolar, alcohol consumption associate, Dagga associate such as marijuana. They cannot be separated”.

The key informants were also asked on the frequency of substance abuse among people with mental illness. All of the key informants reported that they are very often and they indicated that there are more than ninety percent drug problems among people who have a mental illness.

Mental health effects of substance abuse among the youth

One of the questions asked to participants was on whether substance abuses have some mental health effects and they were asked to elaborate such effects. They reported that likely mental health effects include depression, suicidal attempts, stress disorder, mood disorders, psychotic disorders, personality disorder.

Depression

A majority of the participants (9/18) emphasized that substance abuse can lead to depression. During the in-depth interview, the respondents pointed out that due to drug addiction which comes with a variety of problems such as financial constraints can lead to depression. Additionally, three of the eighteen participants said that they were once diagnosed with depression due to the abuse of substances such as cocaine, marijuana. In addition, the in-depth interview which was done by the key informants also found depression to be one of the mental health effects which is associated with the abuse of substances. For instance the social worker stressed that the clients that she is dealing with at the psychiatric unit are mostly diagnosed with depression.

Suicidal Tendencies

With regard to suicidal tendencies, it was noted by some participants (5/18) that usually abusing substances can lead to suicidal attempts. The participants reported that suicidal attempts are associated with stress and depression. To corroborate this proposition one respondent said:

365 *“In my opinion, I believe suicidal attempts are one of the mental health effects, because I have*
 366 *been there, tried to commit suicide couple of times and was diagnosed with depression due to*
 367 *cocaine”.*

368 *Mood disorders*

369 From the study findings, other participants reported that mood disorders are some of the mental
 370 health effects associated with substance abuse. On the grounds that mood disorders is associated
 371 with depression and bipolar disorder, (5/18) of the participants said substance abuse can lead to
 372 mood disorders because people indulging in drugs may feel irritable at times and feel hopeless.
 373 In reaction to this issue the psychiatrist emphasized that the most common psychiatric co-
 374 occurring disorders are substance abuse and mood disorders. She further pinpointed that it is
 375 common for people with mood disorders to turn to substance abuse and the substance abuse, in
 376 turn, exacerbates the effects of the mood disorder.

377 *Psychotic disorders*

378 With respect to psychotic disorders, (6/18) of the participants reported psychotic disorders as one
 379 of the mental health effects associated with abusing substances. They reported that usually
 380 people indulging in substances especially those using more than one substance tend to lose touch
 381 of reality and get to see things that are not even there (hallucinations). Among the six
 382 respondents one reported to having been diagnosed with the disorder when she was abusing
 383 cocaine and crack. She reported that she used to see things which did not even exist.

384 *Personality disorders*

385 With reference to this issue, it was noted that (4/18) of the participants believes that personality
 386 disorders are associated with substance abuse. The psychiatrist has this to say:

387 *“Many studies were carried out to determine the link between those who abuse drugs and*
 388 *alcohol and those who have personality disorders. The majority of data collected points towards*
 389 *a direct correlation between the two. Some specific personality’s disorders have been shown to*
 390 *result in an increased risk of drug use”.*

391 **Services put in place to help people who are mentally disturbed as a result of substance abuse**

392 In terms of services that are put in place to help people who are mentally disturbed as a result of
 393 substance abuse participants were asked to name services which are in place, and they were also
 394 asked to indicate whether they are effective and accessible. According to the study findings, a
 395 majority (14/18) stated that they are aware of services such as the psychiatric unit from Sekgoma
 396 Memorial Hospital as well as the support group run by medical social workers. One of the social
 397 worker summarized this by saying:

398 *“They receive help from clinics and hospital at the psychiatric ward where they have a*
 399 *chance to meet with social workers who engage them with behavior modification techniques, find*
 400 *ways to deal with their addiction if they are willing to quit what they should do and how they*
 401 *should do it, how to overcome challenges that come with quitting, psychosocial education which*
 402 *involve general education on the effects of substance abuse, cognitive restructuring because they*
 403 *have negative perceptions and needs like they feel intelligence so they need cognitive*
 404 *restructuring. The other service is a support group for those still using and who have stopped, it*

410 *consist of both male and females who use different substances and it is an open group basically*
 411 *they share experiences and explore side”.*

412
 413 With respect to the effectiveness and the accessibility, a majority of the respondents
 414 (13/18) indicated that the services are effective and accessible. However, there is still more
 415 which needs to be done. One male respondent had this to say:

416 *“I would say they are accessible but not effective because workers are not trained for*
 417 *such and also there is shortage of workers as we usually need special care when admitted but*
 418 *there is shortage of that”.*

419 Furthermore the participants were also asked to come up with recommendation in relation to the
 420 issue of substance abuse and mental health effects among youth. A majority of them (11/18)
 421 reported that it is high time the government initiate rehabilitation centres and that programme
 422 should be initiated at primary school level to sensitize children on the impacts of substance
 423 abuse.

425 **DISCUSSION**

426 **Prevalence of substance abuse among the youth**

427 It is evident from the results that there is a high prevalence of substance abuse among the youth
 428 in Botswana. All the key informants indicated that there is a high prevalence of substance abuse
 429 among the youth by reporting that they receive cases daily which are associated with substance
 430 abuse which make substance abuse one of the very important problems among the youth in the
 431 contemporary days. The results concur with Maurice (2015) who says that the use of alcohol,
 432 tobacco, cannabis and other psychoactive substances constitutes one of most important public
 433 health problems among youth worldwide. Still in relation to the prevalence of substance abuse
 434 the findings revealed that the majority of the respondents have taught themselves while some
 435 were introduced to drugs by their friends, classmates, family members. Therefore, these findings
 436 are consistent with social cognitive theory which explains how people acquire and maintain
 437 certain behavior, in that it stresses that the individual learned experiences and the social
 438 environment including societal pressures and role models provide a framework for understanding
 439 behavior. The findings of the study revealed that the youth have learned the behavior of using
 440 illicit drugs and alcohol from their social environment such as classmates and friends. This high
 441 prevalence rate of substance will continue increasing because of the societal pressures that the
 442 environment instills on the youth.

443 Another observation made in the research finding with regard to the most abused
 444 substance, of the fifteen youth a majority reported marijuana to be the drug that they have ever
 445 abused the most compared to other drugs. In contrast, some participants reported alcohol to be
 446 the most drug they abuse the most. Along the same line, few participants reported to having used
 447 both alcohol and marijuana the most at the same time. Furthermore, few participants argue that
 448 the most abused substances were a combination of cigarette and alcohol whilst only one
 449 participant reported to have used Marijuana the most. From the results it is evident that marijuana
 450 is the most abused drug followed by alcohol respectively. It is worth noting that the results are
 451 supported by a survey in the United States of America (USA) which concluded that marijuana
 452 was the most common illicit drug chosen by teenagers, and more than 50% of high-school
 453 seniors had used it (Ani, 2014). Additionally, the findings are also supported by a study
 454 conducted among high school students in Botswana which also reported Marijuana to be the
 455 most commonly used substance among secondary school students (Diraditsile & Mabote, 2017).

On the flip side, it should be noted that the above results are not consistent with study done at Limpopo, South Africa which reveals that the most commonly used substances are Cannabis (49%), Inhalants (39%), bottled wine (32%), home-brewed beer (30%), and commercially brewed beer used by (54.8%) of the youth (Development, 2013). However, comparatively, another study by Texas Department of Health Services (2008) in conjunction with the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas University (2008) found out that alcohol continued to be the most abused substance by secondary school students (63%), followed by tobacco (30%), marijuana (25%), inhalants (9.3%), and cocaine (6.8%). These findings hold different results in relation to the most abused drug. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this present study is that there are more males abusing substances as compared to females. This observation is also evidenced by the previous studies which were conducted in this area. To substantiate this, Erickson (2011) conducted a study on prevalence of substance use among college students in Eldoret, western Kenya and results indicated that lifetime prevalence rate of any substance use was (69.8%), with males having statistically significantly higher rates than females. On yet another study done by Shaheen (2009) results has also shown that males had higher prevalence (13.4%) than females (4.9%).

Moreover, the above results are supported by social cognitive theory which posits that the prevalence rate of substance abuse could be lower in females compared to males which might be caused by the lower female rate on responding to stimuli on achieving societal goals. Through the selective interactions with their environment, adolescents might reciprocally interact with drug dealers, available alcohol and behaviors associated with drug consumption which generates a high prevalence rate in the findings of this study. Participants expressed different viewpoints on the question of the reasons for abusing drugs. The results reveal that majority of the respondents pointed out that they use substances because of the influence from their friends. Whereas few respondents reported to be using substances to reduce boredom as it always keeps them busy, and to boast their confidence as they indicated that it makes them feel alive and helps them to be able to concentrate.

The different opinions that exist on the reasons for the abuse of substances are also reflected in the divergent views in the literature review regarding the matter. For instance, according to Simatwa (2014) international studies have shown that nearly 92% of the youth experiment with both licit and illicit alcohol, tobacco, bhang, inhalants (glue, petrol) and heroin among others during the growing up process for different purposes such as influence from friends and some have a believe that it will increase their level of thinking hence making them confident.

Furthermore, when asked on the signs they experience if they do not use substances, participants revealed quite different experiences. Majority of respondent reported not being able to function when they do not use the drugs as they indicated that substances kept them going. The research results correlates with all literature reviewed on the subject of the prevalence of substance abuse among the youth and it shows that the rates of abuse are high among different substances and causes significant physical and psychosocial problems in this population.

Link between mental health and substance abuse

From the findings of the study, it is clear that there is a strong relationship between mental health and substance abuse. This is validated by Garland et al (2003) who indicate that youth/young adults with mental health conditions have higher rates of substance-related disorders. From the present study findings, most of the respondents indicated that substance abuse leads to mental

health. The majority of the respondents attributed this link to dependence to drugs. These findings concur with the National Institute of Health (2008) that many people who regularly abuse drugs are also diagnosed with mental disorders and vice versa. Similarly, according to the social cognitive theory through the concept of behavioral capability which states that continuous learning, adaptation and successfully abusing substances such as marijuana and alcohol; youth are more prone to developing mental illness. The findings of the study show the link between mental health and substance abuse.

Furthermore, all key informants stipulated that mental health and substance abuse are related and cannot be separated taking into consideration that most of the substance abusers frequent have more than one mental illness such as depression, bipolar, epilepsy and depression. These present study findings are consistent with the National Institute Health (2007) survey on comorbid drug abuse and mental illness which show that drug abuse and other mental illnesses are often comorbid. However, the results of the study show that few of the respondents do not recognize a link between substance abuse and mental health. This confirms Simatwa (2014) discovery that substance abuse does not always lead to mental health or that there is always a correlation between the two. This concurs with the social cognitive theory component of expectations which states that people anticipate the consequences of their actions before engaging in the behavior, and these anticipated consequences can influence successful completion of the behavior. Expectations derive largely from previous experience. The results show that the respondents that abuse substance but not have mental illness anticipated the consequences of their substance intake and managed their substance intake hence; they never developed mental illness as a result of substance abuse.

Mental health effects of substance abuse among the youth

The early-onset of substance use and abuse is often preceded by mental disorders (Fergusson, Horwood, & Boden, 2008; Wittchen et al, 2007). This is similar to the results of the present study that show that substance abuse has negative effects on mental health. Moreover, substance abuse leads to mental health disorders comprising depression, suicidal tendencies, mood disorders, psychotic disorders and personality disorders which will be explained below.

Depression

Most of the study participants stated that drug addiction leads to financial constraints which facilitate depression. The literature shows that substance use increases with the severity of depressive symptoms (Kelderet et al, 2001). According to social cognitive theory on observational learning; people can witness and observe a behavior conducted by others, and then reproduce those actions. This is often exhibited through "modeling" of behaviors. Therefore, it became apparent that participants in the study observed and learned abusing substance and alcohol, from the people in their environment and modeled the behaviour until they developed mental health illness such as depression.

In addition females interviewed in the study revealed that they had depression. The findings replicate the results of earlier research by Deykin (1987) who pointed out that 16 to 19 year old females were more than six times more likely to experience depression if they were alcohol abusers than if they were not, and that drug abuse was strongly associated with a lifetime prevalence of depression. However, the findings of the study reveal that depression is the most common mental health illness among the respondents as validated by the key respondents but it is hard to determine whether depression is directly caused by substance abuse.

Mood disorders

From the findings a few participants reported that substance abuse lead to mood disorders. One of the key informants stated that people with mood disorders turn to substance abuse because of the social problems that they encounter in their lives. According to Alli (2006) mood disorders is associated with several psychosocial problems, including employment problems, criminal behavior, and lower academic achievement. Similarly, a research that was done among college students suggests that students with greater symptoms of mood disorders are at risk of many problems, including academic failure, dropping out of school, interpersonal problems, and risky behaviors such as drug use or risky sexual activities (Blase et al, 2009; Javorsky and Gussin, 1994; Rabiner et al, 2008). In addition the findings of the study revealed that half of the participants reported psychotic disorders. Comparatively studies of adults have found that psychotic disorders in general tend to be positively related to abuse of, and dependence on, both alcohol and illicit drug (Book & Randall 2002; Falk et al, 2008).

Services put in place to help people who are mentally disturbed as a result of substance abuse

According to the study findings, majority of respondents reported awareness of services such as the psychiatric unit from Sekgoma Memorial Hospital as well as the support group run by medical social workers. The results reveals that patients who are admitted at SMH in the psychiatric ward are provided with a chance to meet the social worker who engage them with behavior modification techniques to find ways to deal with their addiction if they are willing to quit and how they should do it, how to overcome challenges that come with quitting. There is also psychosocial education which involves general education on the effects of substance abuse and cognitive restructuring. The results concur with (Miller & Rollnick, 1991; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1992) that motivational interviewing can also be used to help people engage in treatment, key elements of this technique include expressing empathy, providing feedback, avoiding argumentation, refraining from directly confronting resistance, and encouraging an individuals' belief that he or she has the ability to change.

Sciacca (1997) adds that the technique has been used with individuals with co-occurring disorders to enhance intrinsic motivation, explore and resolve ambivalence, and develop strategies for change which is mostly done at the psychiatric ward as they emphasize on personal choice, responsibility, and awareness of the risks and benefits of continued substance use. The findings of the present study also resonate with available literature which also emphasizes that groups are very helpful, not only in maintaining sobriety, but also as a safe place to get support and discuss challenges. It is therefore the contention of this paper that the findings of this present study can be used to inform policy and practice intervention in Botswana and elsewhere in Africa and around the world.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

This section suggests some strategies in the form of recommendations to mitigate substance abuse and its mental effects among the youth in Botswana and elsewhere in the globe. It is reasonable to expect that social workers advocate for policies and programs that address over incarceration by diverting low level drug offenders to treatment orientated alternatives. Since its inception as a profession, social work has been dedicated to social justice (Lucas, 2013). More importantly, the profession has contributed knowledge of evidence informed practice and

policies to national discussions that seek to address needs of vulnerable populations. Therefore, this paper suggest recommendations that should be designed for the future researchers, the government and other relevant ministries as well as social workers and other professionals dealing with the issues of substance abuse and mental health.

Further research needs to be conducted on this study but on a wider scope covering more geographical areas in Botswana in order to explore on the prevalence of substance abuse and its mental health effects among the youth. Social workers and Psychiatrists need to conduct various from of epidemiological research to provide scientific baseline data on the problem facing youth in Africa and elsewhere in the world. This will go a long way in formulation and implementation of appropriate policies in order to influence political decisions with regards to substance abuse and mental health issues. In the same way, social workers, parents, counselors and other professionals dealing with cases of substance abuse and mental health should become knowledgeable about the link of substance abuse and mental health. Future research should consider using both qualitative and quantitative method to complement one another. With quantitative method more respondents will be reached given the nature of analysis it uses, for example analyzing numbers.

This is not the case with qualitative method which was adopted in the study as it analysis respondent's words hence a small sample. The government should initiate rehabilitation centers to avoid a situation where the patients feel uncomfortable at the psychiatric ward and for better interventions. Furthermore, there should be some useful prevention strategies such as enforcing legal action against perpetrators smuggling illegal drugs in the country. The government should hold workshops which can help in sensitizing the youth on the mental health effects of substance abuse. Social workers are sorely needed to provide direct practice, administrative, and program evaluation services to programs treating the mentally ill client therefore more social workers should be hired in these settings.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, taking everything into consideration this paper reiterates that the problem of substance abuse constitutes one of most important public health problems among the youth worldwide. Based on the study results, the paper has demonstrated that there is a high prevalence of substance abuse among the youth and the findings concluded that more males are affected by the problem as compared to female's counterparts. This paper has explicitly and implicitly shown that mental health and substance abuse are related and cannot be separated because most of the substance abusers frequent have more than one mental illness and it is not clear which one causes the other.

However, it is evident from this study that substance abuse leads to mental health disorders such as depression, suicidal tendencies, mood disorders, psychotic disorders and personality disorder. The findings suggest that most of the respondents stated that drug addiction leads to financial constraints which facilitate depression. Furthermore, the theory of social cognitive was used to explain the prevalence of substance abuse and its mental health effects among the youth. Lastly, based on the findings, the study concludes that there is need for establishment of programs which can help people who are mentally disturbed as a result of substance abuse such as rehabilitation centres and support groups so that they share experiences.

Conflict of interest

As authors of this article we have no competing interests

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