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PSYCHOSOCIAL CORRELATES OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG YOUTH IN KEFFI, NASARAWA STATE NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the psychosocial correlates of substance abuse among youths in Keffi Local Government area of Nasarawa state, Nigeria. The participants were a total of 204. With an average age of twenty-six (26) years were drawn .However, the selected sample comprised of 160 Christians and 44 Muslims students from both senior secondary school SS1 to SS3 and university students from 100 to 400 levels. Furthermore, in terms of gender, the study is comprised of one hundred and thirty-nine (139) males and sixty-five (65) females. A self-report questionnaire was employed to assess the relationship between substance abuse and two factors, namely: self-esteem and religiosity. The results of the regression model summary revealed that there was no relationship between religiosity and substance abuse. The major findings showed that there was a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and substance abuse among youth. These findings were discussed in the light of relevant literature and it was recommended that stakeholders create awareness and interventions on these psychosocial factors that increase susceptibility to substance abuse among Keffi youths to stop the menace.

Keyword: substance abuse, self-esteem , Youth, religiosity, Keffi

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Substance abuse is the use of substance in a wrong way, to such an extent that it affects the physical and mental functioning of the abuser. It is a chronic debilitating disease with significant morbidity and mortality which affects individuals and their families. In 2014 alone, about 250 million people between the ages 15 and 64 years were estimated to have used an illicit drug (World Drug Report, 2012). One-tenth of people who use illicit drugs suffer from drug or substance use disorder like drug dependence. Large number of drug dependents use intravenous drugs and more than 10% of them contract HIV with majority of them suffering from hepatitis C (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes, 2018). Substance abuse, which is the abuse of psychoactive materials that exert their major effects on the brain resulting in stimulation or change in mood of person is a universal social problem. According to the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC, 2005) World Drug Report, substance abuse is a major public health problem all over the world. Thus, an estimated 208 million people, or nearly 5% of the world's population between the ages of 15 and 64 years consume illegal drugs.

One hundred and forty-four million people abuse cannabis (marijuana), making it the most prevalent illicit substance, followed by amphetamine type stimulants, opiates and cocaine. Thirty-five million used amphetamine type stimulants, sixteen million are opiates and thirteen million are cocaine users (Naqshbanndi, 2012). Substance abuse does not only expose the individual to major health problems but also serve as a predisposing factor for crimes. The involvement of Nigerians, especially the adolescents in drug abuse and trafficking or narcotic crimes impair the country's image (both at home and abroad), as it has led to the execution of the lives of many Nigerians abroad (Botvin, 1995). The need to control the supply and reduce the demand for narcotic drugs in Nigeria led to the establishment of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in January, 1990 by the then Ibrahim Babangida Administration (Nyameh, et al,2013). According to Oliha (2014), majority of the Nigerian youths ignorantly depend on one form of

substance or the other for their various daily activities including social, educational, political, moral, etc. Such substance or drug include narcotic: analgesics, morphine, opium, heroin, brown sugar: stimulants, cocaine, amphetamine, depressants: alcohol, barbiturates, diazepam, hallucinogens d-lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), mescaline, phencyclidine, psilocybin and cannabis: ganja, charas, hash oil, etc. (Nnaqshbandi, 2012). No single factor could be defined as solely responsible for the abuse of drugs but the following are some of the causes of young people vulnerable to drug abuse in Nigeria. Curiosity to experiment the unknown facts about drugs thus motivates youths into drug use. The first experience in drug abuse produces a state of arousal such as happiness and pleasure which in turn motivate them to continue. Sometime youth's takes drugs in order to find out their effectiveness of a particular drug and if they find out that the drug is effective, they continue using such drugs.

The Government of Nigeria seems to lose sight of its responsibilities, though it claims that tobacco should be regulated in a market oriented frame work, which strikes an optimal balance and the need to ensure healthy work force. The fear is that youths are lured into early death from Cardio Vascular diseases (CVD), lung cancer and other tobacco related diseases. (Abudu, 2008; Giade, 2011). Already, Nigerian adolescents are being offered cigarettes through promotions and musical concerts. Some teens will experiment and stop, or continue to use occasionally without significant problems. While others will develop addiction, moving on to more dangerous and hard drugs and causing considerable harm to themselves and the society at large. Despite the effort of many concerned individuals and organizations to curb this menace, many individuals still present these drugs as though they are harmless. They give them slogans such as "for greatness" "for brighter life" Reports from all over the world about this menace of drug abuse are severe.

The British officer for National Statistics reports that 12 percent of pupils aged (11–15) had used drugs. Oshodi, Aina, and Onajole, (2010) asserted that amphetamines are used among student; barbiturates are used by adolescents with suicidal tendencies rather than for addictive purpose. However, cannabis (marijuana) appears to be the most commonly abused drug by the youths. Self-esteem is simply the positive or negative assessments of the self, as by the way we feel about it. Self-esteem mirrors a man's general subjective passionate assessment of his or her own value. It is a judgment of oneself and in addition a demeanour toward the self. The discoveries of (Abudu 2008, Oshodi, Aina & Onajole, 2010) pointed out that drugs are everywhere in our cities in Nigeria, motor parks, Street corners, joints on campuses, uncompleted buildings, under flyovers.

Statement of the Problem

Youths are the future leaders of any society. They constitute a significant part of the productive sector, globally. Unfortunately, in Nigeria (Keffi inclusive), many youths who are supposed to work for the productive sector have jeopardized their lives as a result of anti-social behaviours, such as substance abuse. They abuse drugs, such as cocaine, nicotine, marijuana, tobacco, alcohol, amphetamine derivatives and even sniffing glue and so on to feel high and enhance social performance to their own detriment (Nyameh, Yakubu, Teru, & Titus, 2013). It is not just enough to acknowledge the fact that a problem exists but also device means and methods of knowing the root cause and eradication of such problems. From the record of drugs abuse in Nigeria, the Northwest has a statistic of 37.47 percent of the drug victims in the country, while the Southwest has been rated second with 17.32 percent, the south-East is been rated third with 13.5 percent, North-central has 11.71 percent, while the North-east zone has 8.54 percent of the drug users in the country (Akannam, 2008). In Nigeria, the estimated life time consumption of cannabis among the population is 10.8 percent, followed by psychotropic substances like benzodiapines and amphetamine-type stimulants 10.6 percent, heroin 1.6 percent, and cocaine 1.4 percent, in both urban and rural areas. Drugs abuse appears to be common among males with 94.2 percent than female's 5.8 percent, and the age of first use is 10 to 29 years. Religion has generally been

assumed to have an effect on individual behaviour, but much of the research has failed to define variables in a theoretical context and thus much of the literature in this area was inconsistent and has merited suggestions that the relationship between religion and anti-social and deviant variables is spurious (Cochran et al., 1994). Therefore, the focus of this study is to examine factors that are associated with substance abuse and religiosity in this population.

Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1. To find out whether there is a significant relationship between self-esteem and substance abuse.

2. To determine whether there will be a significant relationship between religiosity and substance abuse among youth.
3. To examine if there is a relationship between gender and substance abuse among youth

Significance of Study
This project is relevant to knowing the health status and the pattern of substance use among youths. The findings obtained from this study will advance our knowledge about the mental and behavioural functioning of youths who use drugs. The consequences of drug addiction or substance abuse are so devastating and very shameful to the extent that both the nation and international organizations all over the world are also worried about the spread of this scourge among the youths and adolescents and some of these consequences includes: Mental disorder, drop out from school, cultism, social violence, internet frauds, gang formation, destructions of normal academic activities, armed robbery 419 syndrome, social miscreants (area boys and girls) lawlessness among youths, lack of respect for elders, rape, instant death and wasting of precious and innocent lives and many more and loss of senses. However, the findings of these studies would help to understand and create awareness about what young adults are experiencing so as to provide specific suggestion for parents and family as well help youths to be successful. This research extended the scientific literature on religion and substance abuse by studying illicit substances rather than alcohol alone in order to capture a fuller picture of factors related to substance abuse, especially since alcohol abuse is not illegal. This work is designed to capture and analyze the influence of self- esteem, religiosity and sex on substance abuse among youths and this is purposively limited to the youths in Jos plateau state. This study will not digress from it proposed domain in order to investigate the psychosocial correlates of substances among youths.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Learning Theory of Substance Abuse
According to Bandura (1977), people observe others behaviours, and outcomes of those behaviours. This theory holds that behaviour is moulded by rewards and punishments or reinforcement. Social learning theory has a clear-cut application to substance use. It proposes that the use of drugs or psychoactive substances can be explained by different exposure to groups in which drug use is rewarded. The definitions are learned through imitation and social reinforcement by members of the group with whom 'me' is associated (Akers, 1992). Drug use, is determined "by the extent to which a given pattern of behaviour is sustained by the combination of the reinforcing effects of the substance with social reinforcement, definitions through bad effects of the substance and or the negative sanctions from peers, parents, and the law" (Akers et al, 1979). Social learning theory, then, proposes that the extent to which drugs will be used depends on the extent to which the behaviour has been differentially reinforced. More so, parental

characteristics and behaviours of family members like parental substance or drug use, criminal conduct, and incarceration are associated with drug use among youths.

Biological Theory of Substance Abuse

Biological theory holds that certain behaviours are primarily due to a person's biochemistry, metabolism and genetic predisposition. Biological theory postulates that specific physical mechanisms in individuals that impel or influence them to experiment with substance or to abuse them once they are exposed to them. Others are partly environmental; that is, inborn factors in conjunction with environmental factors generate drug using behavioural pattern. Biological theory explains that the genetic make-up of individuals predisposes them toward drug use. A gene or combination of genes influences the biological mechanisms relevant to substance use such as being able to achieve a certain level of intoxication when using drugs, becoming ill at low doses, or having the capacity to metabolize chemical substances in the body. This level of genetic loading in combination with environmental and personality factors could make for a significantly higher level of substance use in certain individuals or groups in the population.

Social Comparison Theory of Self Esteem

Social comparison theory is a theory that can be used to explain self-esteem. It was first proposed in 1954 by psychologist Leon Festinger. He believed we engaged in this comparison process as a way of establishing a benchmark by which we can make accurate evaluations of ourselves and learn how to define self, this definition of self can either increases self-esteem or lower it. The social comparison process involves people coming to know their effectiveness, capacity and self-esteem by evaluating their own attitudes, abilities, and beliefs through comparison with others. Self-Evaluation: According to Thorton and Arrowood (1966). Self-evaluation is one of the functions of social comparison. This process underlines how an individual compares him or herself with others to determine and certify his ability, capacity, self-beliefs, it is when this person have compared himself or herself with others, that he can properly define self. Thorton & Arrowood (1966) each individual's specific goals will influence how they engage in social comparison target that is similar to them (Wood, J.V. 1989). Specifically, they are most interested in choosing a target who shares some distinctive characteristics with themselves. Self-Enhancement: Individuals may also seek self-enhancement, or to improve their self-esteem. They may interpret, distort, or ignore the information gained by social comparison to see them more positively and further their self-enhancement goals. Specifically, when an individual believes that their ability in a specific area is low, they will avoid making upward social comparisons in that area. Unlike for self-evaluation goals, people engaging in social comparison with the goal of self-enhancement may not seek out target that are similar to themselves. In fact, if a target outperforms the individual on some dimensions, the individual may downplay the similarity of the target to themselves.

Summary

Substance or Drug abuse is a global problem that usually affects youths and young adults causing serious physical, social and health related problems. There are many forms of abused drugs but cannabis remains the most commonly abused drug. Social and economic problems with easy availability of the substances are increasingly contributing to the menace of substance abuse especially among youths. In this review, the main implications of substance abuse have been highlighted and with fully elaboration of the solutions to the problems. In consonance with the above findings, (Withya et al. 2007) revealed that one of the causes of substance abuse is low self-esteem. The review revealed that reliable epidemiological and clinical data on substance abuse were relatively scarce in African countries including Nigeria. Empirical studies on prevalence of substance abuse behaviours showed that recorded addictive behaviour abound in civilized countries of the world. They also showed that boys had significantly higher probability of

abusing substance than girls. Studies revealed that boys abuse substance more often than girls. And also, low self-esteem is predicted to cause high rate of substance abuse. The literature reviewed reveals that substance abuse and self-esteem are intricately linked. Low self-esteem often serves as a precursor to substance use, while prolonged substance use further diminishes self-worth. This cyclical relationship highlights the importance of addressing psychological and emotional factors in substance abuse prevention and rehabilitation. The literature reviewed demonstrates a consistent inverse relationship between religiosity and substance abuse. Individuals with strong religious faith and involvement are less likely to engage in substance use due to moral prohibitions, supportive faith communities, and effective coping strategies. Theories such as Social Control Theory, Religious Coping Theory, and Social Learning Theory explain how religious values and institutions shape behaviour and influence individual choices. However, the strength of this relationship may vary depending on cultural, denominational, and personal factors.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a correlational research design.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

A total number of two hundred and four (204) participants with an average age of twenty-six (26) years were drawn from secondary and tertiary institutions in Keffi local Government Area in Nasarawa state. However, the selected sample comprised of 160 Christians and 44 Muslims students from both senior secondary school SS1 to SS3 and university students from 100 to 400 levels. Furthermore, in terms of gender, the study is comprised of one hundred and thirty-nine (139) males and sixty-five (65) females.

Method of Data collection

Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST)

The Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST) was designed to be used in various settings to provide a quick index of drug-related problems. The DAST yields a quantitative index of the degree of consequences related to drug abuse. The 10-item DAST has internal consistency reliability of 0.92 – 0.98. Scoring: Score 1 point for each question answered "Yes," except for question 3 for which a "No" receives 1 point.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE)

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a 10-item scale, was introduced in 1965 in Rosenberg's study of a large sample of high school students in New York State. Rosenberg intended the instrument to be uni-dimensional, and it was originally presented as a Guttmann scale, but it is typically administered using a Likert-type response format, employing 4-, 5-, or 7-point scales ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire (SCSORF)

The Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire (SCSORF); Plante & Boccaccini, (1997) is a 10-item self-report measure. It was designed to measure strength of religious faith, regardless of religious denomination or affiliation, for use within both research and clinical contexts. Moreover, it is intended to provide researchers with a quick and easy to administer measure of religiosity. Sample items include 'My religious faith is extremely important to me' (item-1) and 'My relationship with God is extremely important to me' (item-7). The scale uses 4-point Likert response formats, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (4) strongly agree. Scores

can range between 10 and 40, with higher aggregate scores reflecting stronger levels of 'Strength of Religious Faith'.

Techniques for Data Analysis

The statistics used in this study were descriptive and inferential statistics for the test of hypothesis. Pearson product-moment correlation or Pearson *r* was used to determine the relationship between substance abuse, self-esteem and religiosity. A correlation matrix was developed to identify the significance level at 0.05. While independent sample t-test was used to test the difference between male and female youths. The data was analysed using descriptive and (SPSS) statistical packages for the social science, via tables, frequency and percentage.

Ethical Considerations

The respondents were advised to read the instructions before responding to the question items on the questionnaire. The instruction was to guide the respondent to respond to the question items and respond based on true reflection of them. Each student was required to fill the questionnaire voluntarily, independently and truthfully. Moreover, participants were assured of confidentiality and possible concealment of their identity since no provision was made for names in the questionnaire. Participants were conveniently sampled and the questionnaires were retrieved from the participants on the same day preventing misplacement. Informed consent: All participants completed an informed consent and informed of the purpose of the study and its procedures. The participants were told all information would be confidential, and at any time, they may withdraw from the study.

RESULTS

The descriptive and inferential results are as presented below. The descriptive results show the mean, standard deviation of self-esteem, religiosity, and substance abuse, in table 1.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Self-esteem, Religiosity, and Substance Abuse

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Self-esteem	28.44	3.19
Religiosity	29.27	7.03
Substance abuse	3.52	2.47

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviation of self-esteem, religiosity, and substance abuse. The table indicated that the mean score of self-esteem was 28.44 (SD = 3.19), mean score for religiosity was 29.27 (SD = 7.03), and the mean score for substance abuse was 3.52 (SD = 2.47).

Inferential Results

Three hypotheses were tested with the Pearson and Spearman correlation using at the 0.05 significance level. The results are presented table 2 below.

Hypothesis 1:

There will be a significant relationship between self-esteem and substance abuse among youth. Hypothesis one was tested with the Pearson correlation statistic and results revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and substance abuse among youth, r = 0.196, *p* = 0.005 (*p*<.05). This implies that that an increase in self-esteem leads to a corresponding increase in substance abuse and vice versa. Table 2 shows the details of the result.

Table 2: **Pearson Correlation for Self-esteem and Substance Abuse**

	Substance abuse	
	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value
Self-esteem	.196	.005

Hypothesis 2

There will be a significant relationship between religiosity and substance abuse among youth.
Hypothesis two was tested with the Pearson correlation statistic and the results revealed that there was no significant relationship between religiosity and substance abuse among youth, r = 0.011, *p* = 0.879 (*p*>.05). Table 3 shows the details of the result.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation for Religiosity and Substance Abuse

	Substance abuse	
	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value
Religiosity	.011	.879

Hypothesis 3

There will be a significant relationship between gender and substance abuse among youth.
Hypothesis three was tested with the Spearman correlation statistic and the results revealed that there was a significant negative relationship between gender and substance abuse among youth, rho = - 0.201, *p* = 0.004 (*p*<.05). Table 4 shows the details of the result.

Table 4: Spearman Correlation for Gender and Substance Abuse

	Substance abuse	
	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value
Gender	- 0.201	.004

DISCUSSION

The result of Hypothesis one was tested with the Pearson correlation statistic and results revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and substance abuse among youth therefore, it was supported. This implies that that an increase in self-esteem leads to a corresponding increase in substance abuse and vice versa. Self-Esteem: is an evaluation of one's self concept; it is a positive or negative orientation towards one's self. An individual could have high social esteem or low self-esteem while Substance abuse is the use of substance in a wrong way, to such an extent that it affects the physical and mental functioning of the abuser. It is a chronic debilitating disease with significant morbidity and mortality which affects individuals and their families.

The result is in line with the previous study conducted by Withya, Leeb and Renger (2007), revealed that one of the causes of substance abuse include low self-esteem. Kumpulaine and Roine (2002), also noted that low self-esteem was potentially connected to later substance use. This present study agrees with the findings of Taylor and DelPilar (1992) who conducted a study among adolescent in the 90's found a significant and positive correlation between self-esteem and substance abuse. This submission is in agreement with the findings of Hamid (2011). The Role of Self-esteem in Tendency

towards drugs, Theft and Prostitution. The results, found that those who are involved in addiction, theft and prostitution have a lower self-esteem compared with the ordinary person, both in earlier and later studies. On the contrary, Liem and Lustig et al., (2010) have found a significant negative correlation between self-esteem and substance abuse substance abuse among adolescents. In a study conducted by James (2003), a significant negative correlation was found between self-esteem and substance abuse. Research studies have shown that self-esteem is a predictor of substance abuse among youths. Therefore, most of the literature reviewed on substance abuse supported the current study.

The outcome of hypothesis two revealed that, there was no significant relationship between religiosity and substance abuse among youth. Therefore, the result rejected the hypothesis which states that There will be a significant relationship between religiosity and substance abuse among youth. Religiosity is a complex, multidimensional construct and for the purpose of this project refers to the degree to which a person is religious from a primarily social and doctrinal perspective and is thus more easily quantifiable than abstract terms such as religion.

The result is in line with the previous study conducted by Kim (2007) found that those who are more religious, part of which includes attendance at religious services, may view their bodies in more positive ways. Religious individuals may have higher levels of sanctification, or tend to view their bodies as being a manifestation of God and as possessing sacred qualities; these individuals in turn have higher levels of health-protective behaviours that can increase satisfaction with one's body (Mahoney et al., 2005). However, these findings contradict Abiodun et al. (2014) who noted that family factors like genetic heritability, attitude, personality problems and availability of illicit drugs are the main psychosocial problems of substance abuse among youths. Findings also indicated that youth can result to substance abuse due to poor coping skills and frustration from poor religious upbringing as revealed by the outcome of this study. Most churches lack guidance and counselling units to respond to such situations. Spearheading the exploration into the religiosity/misconduct relationship were Hirschi and Stark (1969), who anticipated that through social control, church participation would diminish adolescent wrongdoing. Strikingly, they neglected to discover a connection amongst religiosity and wrongdoing. Nonetheless, it is conceivable that the measures of religiosity utilized (adolescent church participation and self-esteem in the great beyond) did not truly or enough measure religiosity, particularly since adolescent religiosity can be bewildered by different impacts (Evans et al., 1995).

Hypothesis three was tested with the Spearman correlation statistic and the results revealed that there was a significant negative relationship between gender and substance abuse among youth. Religiosity refers to the degree of an individual's religious belief, commitment, and practice, and the extent to which these influence their behaviour, values, and worldview. The result of this study is in line with the findings of Koenig et al. (2001) conducted a meta-analysis showing that individuals with higher religious involvement were less likely to use alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs. Similarly, Wills, Yaeger, and Sandy (2003) found that adolescents who frequently attended religious services and viewed religion as important in their lives reported lower rates of substance use.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made:

1. Based on the findings, there is urgent need for community participation in sensitization and mass campaign to mitigate the entry into substance abuse among youths

2. There is need to strengthen government institutions that are in charge of drug control to step up their strategies to curb illicit drug production and supply

3. The family values of morality and proper parenting through adequate monitoring of youths should be strengthened in order to re-orientate the mindset of the adolescents

4. There is need for proactive drug counselling for university students and immediate review of the school curriculum to include illicit drug education.

Limitation Of Study

This study has certain limitations. Firstly, the data were drawn from university students. These students may have already developed an array of self-regulatory strategies for achieving their academic goals, a pattern that may not be found with younger students who are more diverse in terms of achievement levels, knowledge, value development, and skills. Studies with younger students would address this limitation. Secondly, all of the issues addressed in this study are relevant to interest inventories, bio-data instruments and honesty tests so it would also be worthwhile to study these issues using other non-cognitive measures. Self-reported data is limited by the fact that it rarely can be independently verified, you have to take what the respondents said whether is true or false. Specifically, all of the validity hypotheses need to be re-examined utilizing other attitude tests as well as all other non-cognitive measures.

Thirdly, the literatures that were reviewed in chapter two were mostly international journals; most of the findings that are related to this research work are international journals, the national journals are very scanty. Also, this study is limited in scope in that it was carried out in university environments in Keffi.

Conclusion

From the study we can therefore recommend that the society should be educated on the dangers involve in substance abuse that the government should try find solution to the problem of substance abuse especially among adolescent and undergraduate whose cognitive abilities are still developing. Religiosity has been viewed, for the most part, as an individual-level variable. However, because youths are under the authority of their parents, their religious involvement may be dictated by their parents. As Hodge et al. (2001) pointed out, "In cases in which religious participation is seen as an expression of individual spirituality, it may be more likely to express the parents' rather than the adolescent's spirituality". Many youths may be required, or at least strongly encouraged, to attend religious services as part of a family practice. In such cases, participation in religious services does not reflect youths' spirituality or even a desire to participate in religious activities. Therefore, parent shouldn't dictate religiosity to their children instead guide their children towards being religious, because not every child practising their respective religion are religious, some only feign because they are under parental custody but will be good if they can be given little freedom and watch them alongside to know what they really are so that parents will know where and how to guide them when going astray.

Finally, government should encourage non-governmental organizations, guidance and counsellors and psychologist who are consultants by contributing their quotas to the society through establishment of canters which will help in educating and gives orientation to the society at large about the health risk involve in substance abuse and as well as the damages it brings to the society and also to help in reducing substance abuse among undergraduates.

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