



# Substance Abuse and the Nigerian Youth

PREVALENCE, TRENDS AND PREVENTIVE MEASURES

A PRESENTATION AT MANAGING SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND ASSOCIATED MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN NIGERIAN YOUTH,  
JUNE 20, 2018

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# Definitions

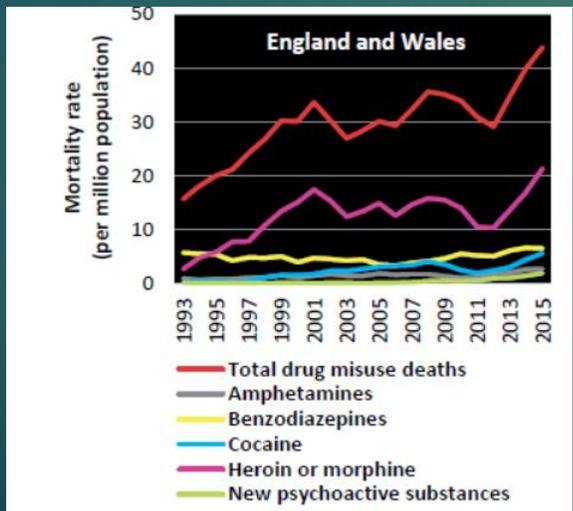
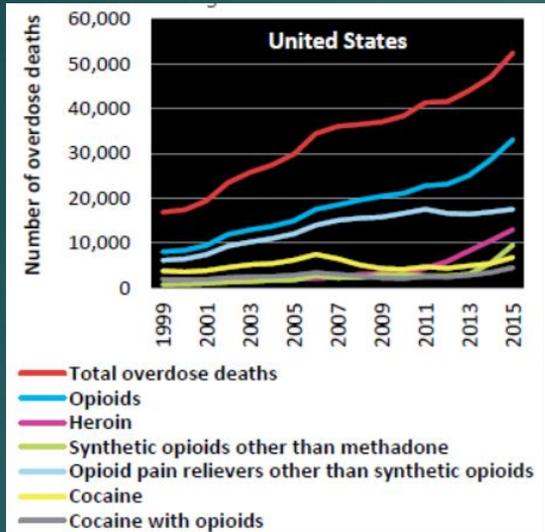
- ▶ Youth/ adolescence - critical development period from childhood to adulthood, aged 14-25 (Oliha, 2014; Akanbi, 2015)
- ▶ Abuse of psychoactive substances begins in adolescence (Akanni & Adayonfo, 2015)
- ▶ Drug abuse – patterned use of a drug in amounts or with methods harmful to self or others (Wikipedia).
- ▶ Drug use disorders – a general term used to broadly define misuse and abuse of drugs
- ▶ Misuse of prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines amongst youths have been reported globally and continue to remain a global public health challenge (Driscoll – Malliarakis, 2009)
- ▶ Non-medical use, misuse, and abuse of drugs - the use of medications without medical supervision for the intentional purpose of getting high, or for some reason other than what the medication was intended ( National Drug Policy report, 2008)
- ▶ Substance abuse - self-destructive with health and social consequences
- ▶ However, many of the abused medications have legitimate medical uses

# Perspective and prevalence

- ▶ Drug use disorder in 5% of world population; with 25% of drug-related deaths worldwide recorded in the US (World Drug report, 2016).
- ▶ An increase of 6.3% was observed in 2005 in abuse of prescription drugs in youths aged 18- 25 in the US (Lessenger & Fein berg, 2008)
- ▶ Globally, an estimated 190,000 premature deaths majorly due to misuse of opioids (World Drug report, 2017)
- ▶ Regionally, increase in the prevalence of substance abuse across African nations – South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria reported
- ▶ Nigeria: majority of those who abuse psychoactive drugs are the youths (Kobiowu, 2006)

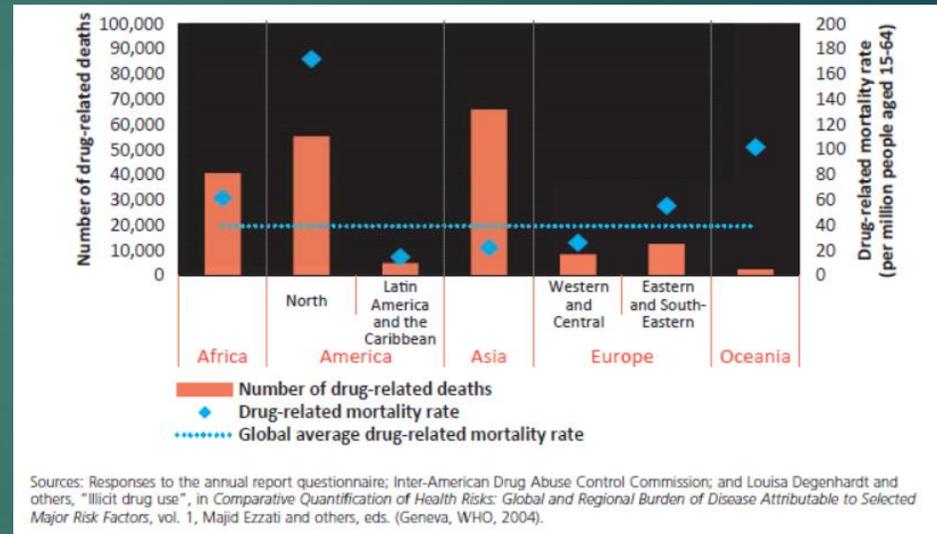
# A minimum of 190,000 drug related deaths

Mostly overdoses, mostly opioid-related



## Drug-related deaths

### Regional variation in drug-related deaths, 2015



Sources: United States, National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Center on Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research; and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Office for National Statistics, "Deaths related to drug poisoning in England and Wales: 2015 registrations", Statistical Bulletin (Newport, 9 September 2016).

# Prevalence and perspective

- ▶ Nigerian youths are vibrant, full of life, resilient and prone to experimentation and risk-taking (Oliha, 2014)
- ▶ Substance abuse - major risk behaviour among youth, with consequent physical and or mental health complications (Oshodi, Aina & Onajole, 2010)
- ▶ No relation between ethnicity, type of drugs abused or patterns of abuse (Oluwole, Adeleke & Gandonu, 2018)
- ▶ Impact of drug abuse among Nigerian youths has also been associated with the loss of our societal values and ideals culminating in violence, crime (Aluede, 2000)
- ▶ Weak health care system, poor implementation of national drug policy and chaotic drug distribution coupled with poverty, lack of youth empowerment, parents' absenteeism/ neglect, broken homes (Akinyandenu & Akinyandenu 2014; Ogbonna, Ilika & Nwabueze 2015).
- ▶ 46.6% of the sample respondents in a Benin study have at one time or the other used drugs for non-medical purposes with higher proportion of use in males (Adeyemo, 2016).

# Types of substances abused

- ▶ Current twin epidemics of codeine and tramadol in Nigeria
- ▶ Prescription drugs: 5 broad categories
- ▶ Opioid analgesics – morphine and its derivatives, tramadol,
- ▶ Sedatives - barbiturates
- ▶ Anxiolytics – benzodiazepines
- ▶ Stimulants - amphetamines
- ▶ Image drugs – anabolic steroids
- ▶ OTC – cough preparations containing codeine, diphenhydramine, dextromethorphan
- ▶ Other commonly abused substances – alcohol, cigarette, caffeine, cocaine, glue,

# Heroin and synthetic opioids

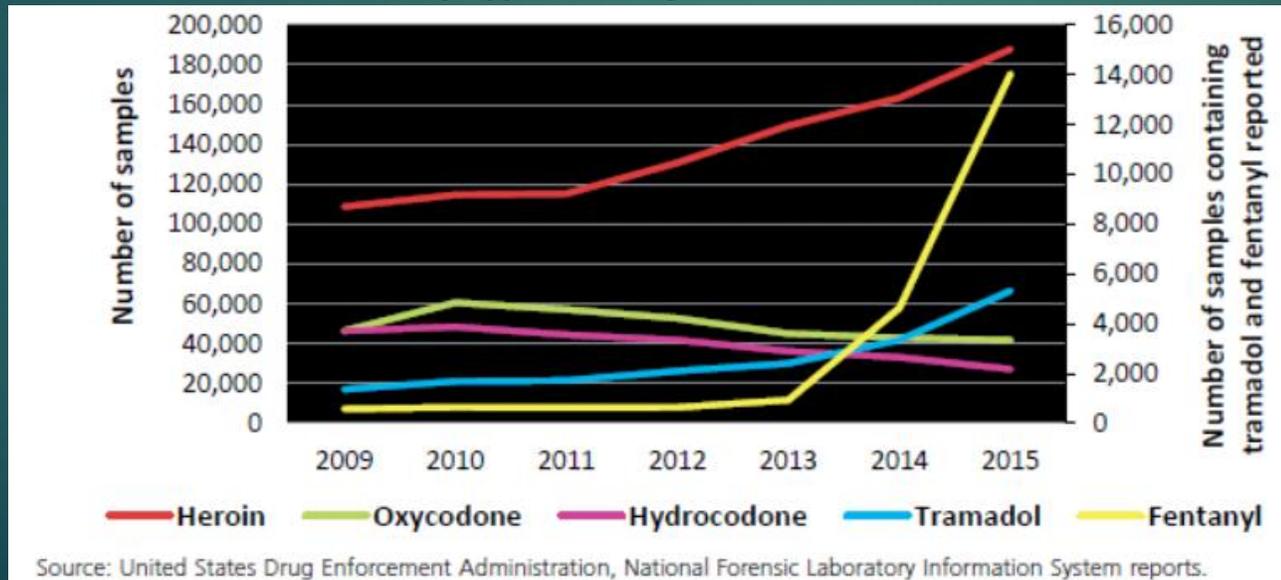
The opioid market is becoming more diversified

Misuse of pharmaceutical drugs

Prescription forgery, diversion, illicit manufacture, counterfeit medicines

*Research opioids on the market (NPS)*

Number of samples submitted to and analysed by laboratories, by type of drug identified, United States



# Associated factors with substance abuse

- ▶ Economic and social factors (WHO, 2000)
- ▶ Experimental curiosity – adolescence (energy burst)
- ▶ Peer influence – 84.7% (Adeyemo, 2016)
- ▶ Parental influence/neglect
- ▶ Ready availability and ease of access – 73.7% (Adeyemo, 2016)
- ▶ Withdrawal syndrome – motivates further abuse

# Sources of abused substances

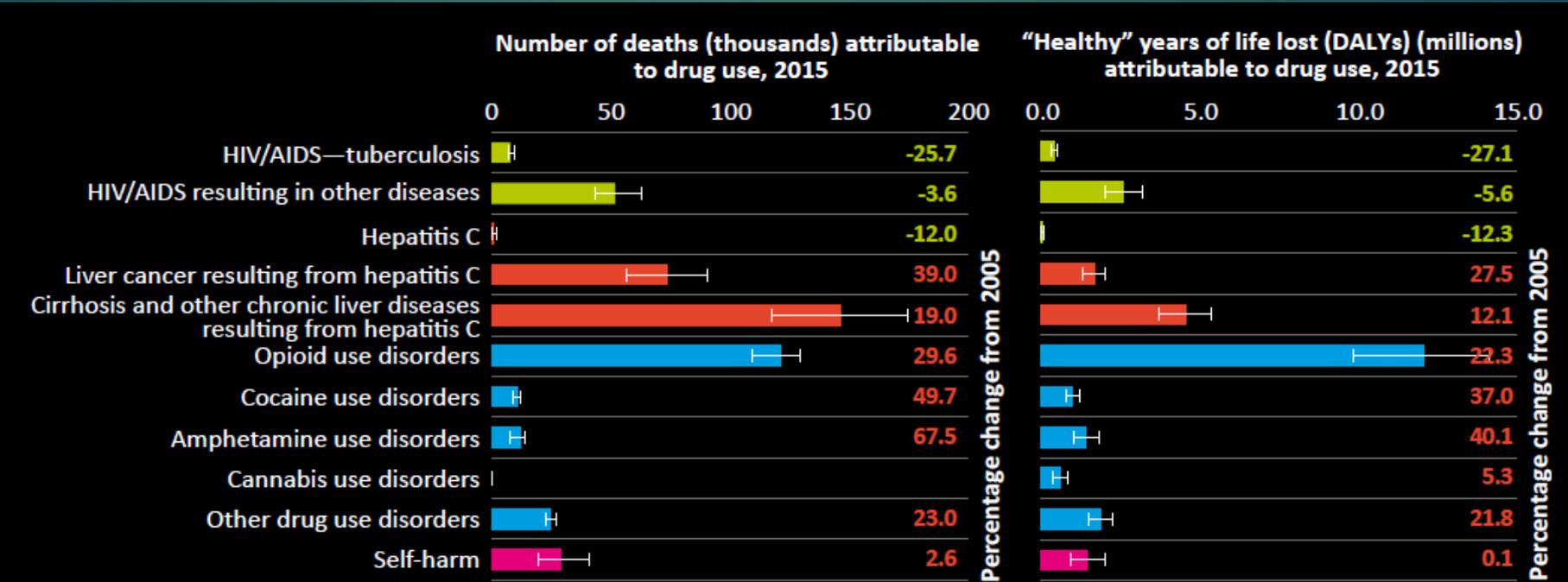
- ▶ Medicine cabinets at home
- ▶ Doctor shopping
- ▶ Ease of access at retail pharmacy and PPMVs
- ▶ Peers/friends
- ▶ Previous prescriptions

# Consequences of substance abuse

- ▶ Varied and devastating – individuals, family and nation
- ▶ Medical problems include not limited mental disorder, liver cirrhosis, lethargy, cardio-vascular disorders (DALYs)
- ▶ Social implications – school absenteeism, school drop out, increase in social vices such as crime, robbery, rape, loss of productivity, cultural disorientation, lawlessness

# Health related harm

## Number of deaths and “healthy” years of life lost (DALYs) attributable to drug use, 2015



Source: “Global, regional, and national comparative risk assessment of 79 behavioural, environmental and occupational, and metabolic risks or clusters of risks, 1990–2015: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2015”.

Notes: Error bars represent uncertainty intervals. Numbers given in charts are percentage changes from 2005.

# Drug use disorder prevention and treatment

- ▶ Aim – to prevent or delay the initiation of drug use & transition to drug use disorders
- ▶ Gold standard of opioid addiction care – medication-assisted treatment
- ▶ Cues from other nations' success stories of “no to drugs crusade”
  - Iceland: (alcohol, tobacco) - strengthen preventive/protective factors, reduce risk factors, life skills training, organized activities' participation – sports, arts
  - Portugal: (heroin, cannabis, cocaine) - decriminalizing all drug use, policy reviews & programs that treat addicts, prepare for re-integration into society
- ▶ Long term commitment of government to national project, not only short-term grants funded health programs

# Recommendations on substance abuse decline in Nigeria

- ▶ Multi-sectoral collaboration – professional, trade, non-governmental
- ▶ Preventive health education/public health awareness – use of media
- ▶ Increased parental monitoring and supervision
- ▶ Community and religious – vigilante groups, places of worship
- ▶ Youth groups – positive use of peer group influence
- ▶ Government – effective regulatory control and policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation, job creation for unemployed and under-employed, sustained political will to invest in Nigerian youth
- ▶ Adequate data bank and investment in research to provide evidence-based solutions
- ▶ Pharmaceutical industry players – sanitized drug distribution to reduce access: manufacturers, importers, distributors and retailers
- ▶ Adequate prescription monitoring, careful record-keeping of refills
- ▶ Integrated team work involving all healthcare professionals – physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, pharmacists, nurses, laboratory scientists

# Current measures to curb medicines' abuse by pharmacy profession

- ▶ Pharmacists' Council of Nigeria (PCN)
  - Codeine and related substances working group report for implementation before Health Minister in April 2018 ( PCN Registry, 2018)
  - Empower regulatory agencies - adequate funding and security
  - Sanitized and better organized distribution in the country – national drug distribution guidelines: mega drug distribution centre
    - Improved data repository to assist improved distribution of medicines – retail pharmacy practice standardisation, PPMVs and hawkers
  - Increased ethical and moral responsibilities – issuance of permits to manufacturers, importers, distributors
  - Economic interest and financial considerations not override health implications associated with substance abuse

# Current measures cont'd

- ▶ Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN)
- ▶ Recent effort by the PSN seeking implementation of prescription policy to curb drug abuse in the country
- ▶ National & State platforms to enforce stricter controls in prescription filling and improved pharmaceutical care for clients/patients
- ▶ Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN) – a hearing at the Senate on the distribution and availability of controlled prescription drugs

# Conclusion

- ▶ The menace of increased drug abuse in the nation is a harsh reality that did not happen overnight.
- ▶ However, it can be managed and brought under control by multi-sectoral collaborations and gleaning lessons from research and countries that have success stories
- ▶ Youths remain the future of our nation hence investment of this nature in them holds great promise for the next generation, nation and globe at large.

Closing question – is our health system ready to combat this epidemic?

Thank you for  
listening

Ilupeju Lagos, 20 June 2018