

DRUG AND SUBSTANCE POLL

Marijuana, Codeine;
Mostly Abused Substances in Nigeria



91%
of Nigerians

Affirm that there is a high level of Drug and Substance abuse



90%
of Nigerian Youths

Between 15-29 years old Abuse Drugs and Substance the most

The most abused Drugs or Substance in Nigeria

34%
Marijuana

22%
Codine

20%
Alcohol

9%
Tobacco

9%
Prescription
Drugs

6%
Hard drugs
(Cocaine/ Heroin)

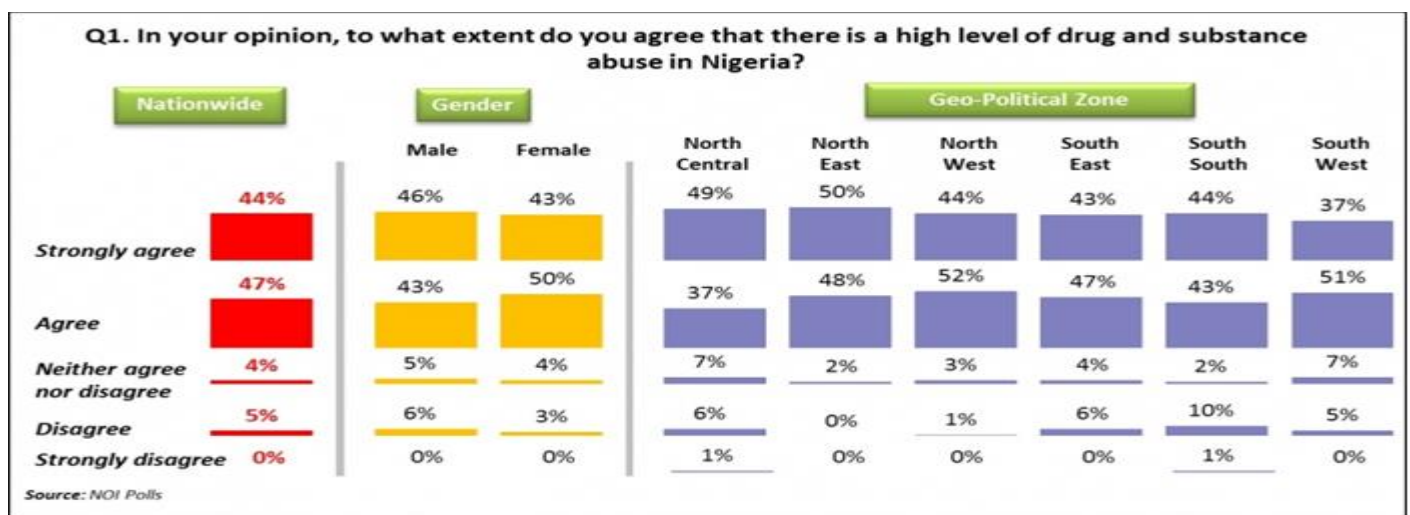
THROWBACK; DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLL RESULTS RELEASE

Marijuana and Codeine; Mostly Abused Substances in Nigeria

Abuja, Nigeria. May 8th, 2018 – Following the recent documentary by the [BBC](#)¹ on widespread abuse of cough syrup with codeine, titled “Sweet Sweet Codeine”; and the subsequent ban on the importation and sale of codeine as an active pharmaceutical ingredient in Nigeria, NOIPolls presents results and findings from its previous public opinion poll on the prevalence of drug and substance abuse in Nigeria. The poll which corroborates the findings from the BBC documentary revealed that 91 percent of Nigerians believe that there is a high level of drug and substance abuse in the country. In addition, the poll found that marijuana, codeine and alcohol are the top three drugs and substances mostly abused in Nigeria, particularly amongst the teenagers and young adults aged between 15 – 29 years.

In line with the above report, the Nigerians Senate, during its plenary in October 2017, raised alarm that 19 Northern states of the federation were under serious threat due to the high level of drug abuse encountered in across these states. According to vanguard news report, the lawmakers further lamented that an estimate of over three million bottles of codeine syrup were consumed daily in Kano and Jigawa states alone.² It further disclosed that in 2015 alone, over 2,205 people were arrested in the North-West geo-political zone by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) over drug-related abuses.³

Nigeria’s drug abuse problem has been put under the spotlight by this new investigative documentary. Across several major Nigerian cities, many young adults are known to be addicted to several illicit drugs but, in recent times, opioid-based cough syrups in particular have become a serious menace. In 2013, a public opinion poll conducted by NOIPolls revealed that drug and substance is prevalent in the country and this assertion cuts across gender and geo-political zones.



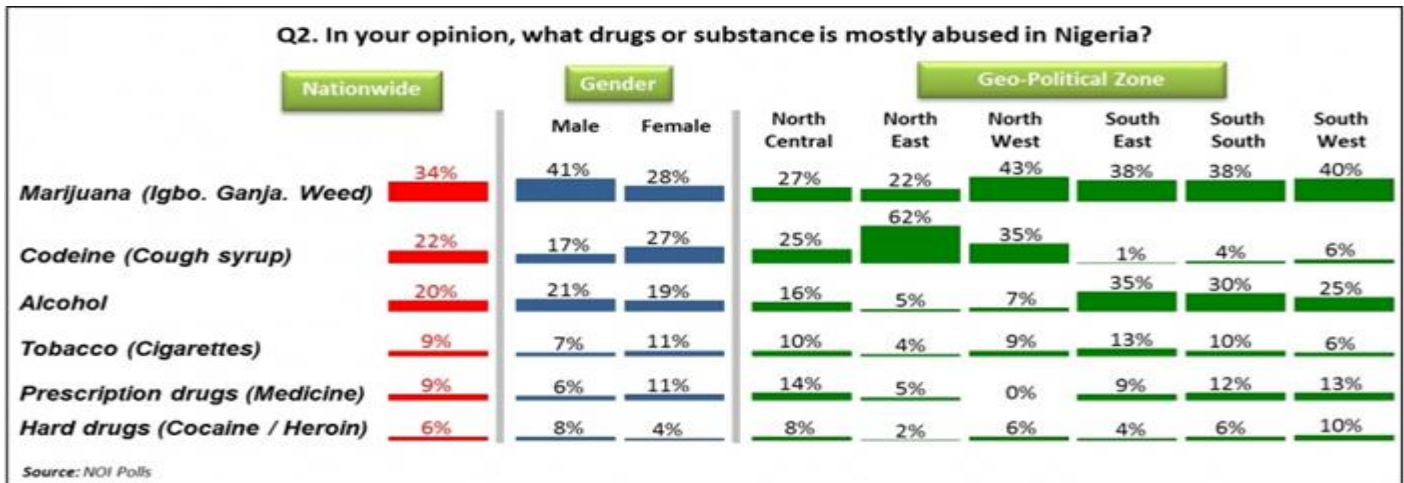
The opinions of Nigerians on drugs or substances that are most abused in Nigerians revealed that Marijuana (34 percent), codeine [Cough syrup (22 percent)] are the most abused drug and substance. Residents from the North-

¹ British Broadcasting Corporation

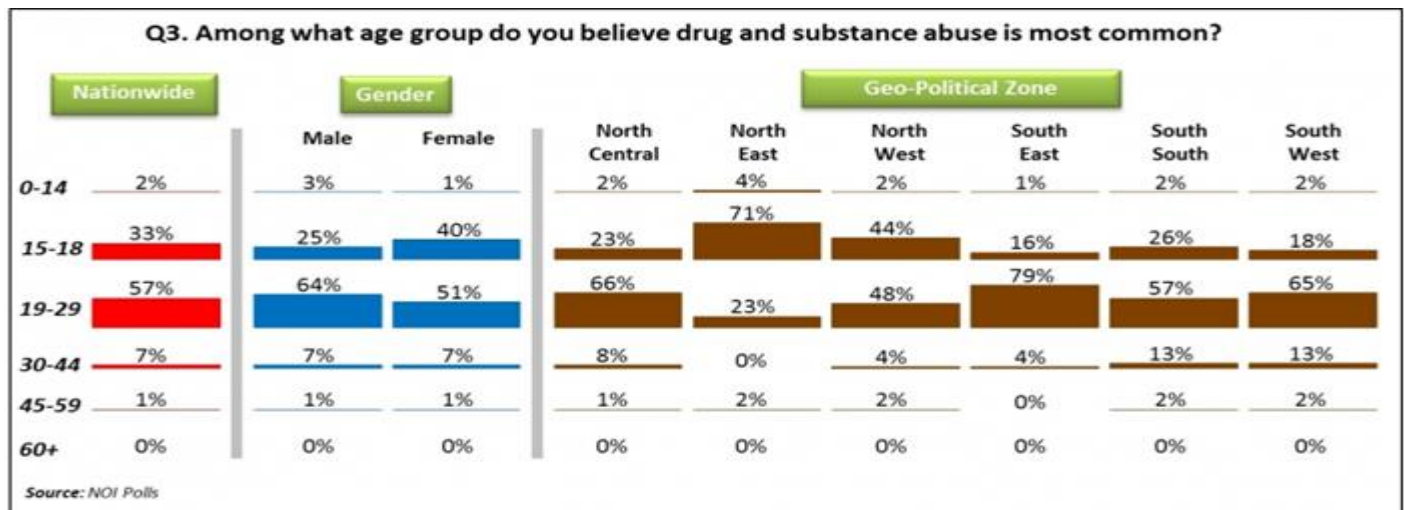
² <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/10/drug-abuse-3m-bottles-codeine-consumed-daily-north-senate/>

³ <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/10/drug-abuse-3m-bottles-codeine-consumed-daily-north-senate/>

East accounted for the largest proportion of Nigerians who mentioned codeine. Codeine is an addictive opioid that is often prescribed to treat pain and is mixed in with some cough syrups. Although legal in certain circumstances, consuming large amounts of it can cause addiction and organ failure. According to media report, though the codeine is imported, the syrup is made in Nigeria by more than 20 pharmaceutical companies and codeine syrup is commonly mixed with soft drinks and often consumed by students. NAFDAC has been fighting this epidemic and in a recent raid, it seized about 24,000 bottles of codeine syrup from a single lorry in Katsina State.⁴



Perception on age-group showed that those aged between 15 – 29 years accounted for the largest proportion (90 percent; (15 – 18 years) 33 percent + (19 – 29 years) 57 percent) of Nigerians associated with the abuse of various drugs and substances in the country. For instance, according to news reports, the target market in the illicit codeine trade typically consists of teenagers and young adults looking for a cheap high. Although it is illegal to sell codeine cough syrups without a doctor’s prescription, these drugs remain widely available as it is common to find them casually consumed, sometimes as part of mixtures, at local bars and parties. The thousands of young Nigerians already addicted are at risk of suffering from effects of sustained opioid abuse ranging from schizophrenia to organ failure and the issue is slightly higher in the Northern region where millions of young adults are unemployed.⁵



⁴ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-43961738>

⁵ <https://qz.com/1266823/bbc-investigates-nigeria-codeine-opioid-crisis-from-cough-syrups/>

In conclusion, the poll revealed that 90 percent of Nigerians acknowledged that there is a high level of drugs and substance abuse in Nigeria particularly amongst teenagers and young adults aged between 15 and 29 years. The top three drugs or substances commonly abused by this age demographics are Marijuana, Codeine (cough syrup) and alcohol. Although the Federal Government has recently banned the importation and permit for issuance of codeine in the country, the ban alone is not enough considering that most banned items have always found their way back into the black market. Moreover, there are many other dangerous and addictive substances outside of codeine that are still freely consumed on the streets of Nigeria.

Tackling this menace requires a multi-pronged approach and collaboration amongst parents/guardians, school and religious authorities and all stakeholders in the medical and health sector. Parents and guardians must be aware of the happenings in their wards' lives and become more involved while Government must not only create rehabilitation centres for addicts, there is a need to work with the health practitioners, stakeholders like NAFDAC and SON to regulate these opioid substances and enforce strict punishments to defaulting pharmacies and dispensaries. Teachers can be trained to enable them educate their pupils and students about the dangers of substance abuse and addiction

It is therefore pertinent for parents, government, school authorities, religious organisations, NGOs, and other stakeholders to synergise efforts towards developing sustainable polices and effective counselling and rehabilitation centres to manage addicts from the bondage of drug abuse. Policies should include the establishment of a federal drug control centre, under the auspices of the ministries of health and internal affairs with the aim of collating information on drug use and liaising with similar smaller units in each state. Lastly, public education on the effects of drug and substance abuse should be targeted at the vulnerable segment of society, such as the older children, adolescent and young adults, and should be carefully presented through open campaign rallies in public places like motor parks, NYSC camps, Universities, and other institutions of higher learning including Mosques and Churches.

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