

## **Effects of Intoxicants on the Mental Health of Young Adults: A Case Study of Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

**Introduction:** Mental health covers a very broad spectrum. It includes emotional, physiological and social wellbeing that affects how we act, think and feel, which in turn determines the choices we make and how we relate to others. The mental strength of young adults (age range of early teens to early twenties) is quite unbalanced due to many factors bordering on physiological and environmental factors and as such are more predisposed to the use and subsequent addiction to intoxicants. This is why young adults are the subjects of interest in this study.

There are many factors that affect mental acuity, ranging from 'quite' serious (as anything that affects the mental health is considered serious no matter how trivial it may seem) to extremely serious. One and perhaps the most serious factor is the indiscriminate use of intoxicants. Intoxicants are substances, which when taken into the body produces a condition of diminished mental and accompanying diminished physical abilities; after all, the mind determines the state of the body. Intoxicants include pharmaceuticals like codeine, tramadol and other uncategorized classes like the gas emitted from sewage, concentrated ammonia from urine and so on.

**Aims & objectives:** The aim of this study is to show the adverse effects of intoxicants on the mental health of young adults, which contribute a very significant population percentage in Nigeria.

**Subjects and methods:** Yaba Psychiatric Hospital, a neuropsychiatric hospital in the western region of Nigeria attend to the mental health care of thousands of patients. About 61,091 cases were addressed in 2017 and there has been a 15% increase. Of this percentage, about 35% are young adults. Over 50% of this young adult population are admitted for drug related problems. The patients were evaluated and other factors that could have led to mental health problems were ruled out.

**Results:** The evaluation of the patients to rule out other possible causes proved that the cause of mental dysfunction is as a result of intoxicant use and this shows that intoxicants have an adverse effect on the mental health of young adults.

**Conclusion:** The use of drugs amongst young adults is at an alarming increase and is a serious cause for concern. The drastic effects cannot be over emphasized and as such should be treated with the seriousness it demands. A lot of young adults have been permanently damaged as a prolong use of most of these intoxicants cause irreversible damage most of the time. Thus it is import to tackle this issue and solve the problem of intoxication.

**Keywords:** Intoxicants, Young adults, mental health, Nigeria, Physiological and environmental factors.