SUMMARY

The literature on Drug Abuse among youths is reviewed. There is a general agreement amongst health policy researchers that drug abuse among adolescents is on the increase. Alcohol, tobacco, Cannabis, and the use of inhalants especially organic solvents have been observed to feature prominently in the drug use scene in the country today.

This study was conducted to assess the use of a wide variety of psychoactive substances by secondary school students in Benin City. A total of 750 Senior Secondary School students in nine schools selected to represent the different secondary schools in the three Local Government Areas in Benin City were assessed to determine the pattern of drug abuse.

Participants were drawn from SS III students. The student drug use questionnaire by WHO was used for the study. The sample of students was made up of 53% male, and 93% were Christian. The age of respondents ranged from 14 – 23 years. The mean age was 17 years with a standard deviation of 1.4 years. The findings of this study showed that: the age at first use of psychoactive substances ranged between 11 and 13 years; the lifetime use of these substances ranged from 1.5% for tobacco and opiates
to 32% for alcohol. Furthermore, more males than females were likely to consume alcohol and cannabis.

Among male students were significantly more current users of only alcohol ($x^2=5.7 \ df \ P<0.05$) and lifetime users ($x^2=4.0 \ df \ P<0.05$) whereas female students reported a more significant current user of stimulants ($x^2=8.8 \ df \ P<0.05$) and lifetime use of inhalants ($x^2=7.8 \ df \ P<0.05$)

Fourteen percent of respondents gave acceptability and sociability as the reason for their first use of drug. Peer group influence serve as the highest source of introduction of drugs and alcohol to the students.

The proportion of literate fathers was 80 percent depicting that the study was carried out in an urban area.

The substances found most commonly used fall mainly outside the class of hard drugs. The majority of users are experimenters and occasional users. Substance use prevention and control programmes should take due note in the design and implementation