

# NMA/AGSM/2022/PUBH/011 - Pattern of Psychoactive Substance Use and its Determinant Factors among Adolescents in Urban and Rural Communities in Abia State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

**Background:** World Health Organization refers to substance use as the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances (PAS) including alcohol and illicit drugs which could lead to “dependence syndrome.

**Methodology:** This was a rural-urban comparative household survey using a multi-stage sampling technique. Information was obtained through an interviewer-administered questionnaire and an in-depth interview guide. Data generated were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Statistical significance was set at  $P < 0.05$  and a confidence interval of 95%. In-depth interview data were analyzed using a phenomenological approach.

**Results:** A total of 1600 adolescents participated in this study. Their mean age was  $17 \pm 1.6$  years, male to female ratio of 1.2:1 and the majority were students (84.4%). The overall prevalence of PAS use was 64.8% with more rural users compared to urban; ( $p=0.010$ ). Alcohol was the first substance used by adolescents with a higher proportion in the rural compared to urban setting ( $p=0.035$ ) and the more regularly used PAS. Most adolescents used a combination of PASs in both urban and rural communities. Factors associated with the use of PAS were parents’ education, peer influence, and lack of emotional support ( $P < 0.05$ ). Other factors identified were curiosity, accessibility of substances, and the feeling of being high.

**Conclusion:** A high prevalence of PASs use was reported in this study with higher use among adolescents living in rural areas than in urban. A holistic approach to prevention and early identification of PASs use by adolescents is advocated.

**Keywords:** Psychoactive Substance; Adolescents; Rural; Urban.

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