

P1.8. Circumstances Surrounding Initiation to Illicit Drug Use among Out -of-School Youths in Ibadan, Nigeria - Olanrewaju Onigbogi, University College Hospital, Nigeria; Omobola Ojo; Lagos University Teaching Hospital; Oluwaseun Akinyemi, University College Hospital, Nigeria
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Background/Significance: Drug use has become a major problem in most parts of the developing world. Nigeria is not an exception to this trend. The drug of exposure or “gateway drug” is of importance in determining the progression to other drugs and the

Methodology: Two focus groups discussion sessions were conducted with open-ended questions on onset of exposure to illicit substances, the gateway drug, motivation to quit and methods that seemed to be the best to quit the use of illicit substances. The discussions were recorded in an audiotape, transcribed and coded using the NUDIST software. Inter-observer reliability was 83%.

Findings: There were 15 participants in all. Nine (56%) reported the use of cannabis as the first drug of exposure. They were exposed despite previous warnings about its dangers due to fear of rejection by peers. Other reasons for initiation were the need to be accepted and feared by all and avoidance of being called “weak”. Statements made by respondents include “I will fall out with the boys if I don’t” and “I can always quit when I grow older”. All the participants eventually proceeded to use other illicit substances.

Knowledge Contribution: Cannabis is commonest gateway of exposure by most youths using illicit drugs. Efforts should be made to re-educate youths about the addictive nature of these substances and the dangers of their use.