

THE IMPACT OF HARD DRUG USE ON MARITAL INSTABILITY AND OUTCOMES IN NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS IN MITIGATING THE IMPACT

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Abstract

The negative impact of hard drug use on marriages and families is a persistent issue in Nigeria that is of great concern to policymakers and researchers alike. This paper examines the impact of hard drug use on marital instability and outcomes in Nigeria and the role of social work interventions in mitigating this impact. The paper finds that hard drug use has a detrimental effect on marriages and families, leading to financial instability, physical and mental health problems, and social isolation. In addition, several bottlenecks can complicate the work of social workers, including limited resources, stigma and discrimination. Despite these challenges, social work interventions can still be effective in helping individuals and families affected by hard drug use to improve their health and well-being. However, it is important to consider the limitations and challenges faced by social workers in implementing these interventions and to address them to ensure the best possible outcomes for those affected. Overall, the paper highlights the need for continued research and action on the issue of hard drug use and its impact on marriages and families in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, has been grappling with numerous social issues that have negatively impacted its population. One of these issues is the persistent rise in hard drug abuse, which has become a significant concern for policymakers and researchers alike. It is important to note that Nigeria has a serious problem with hard drug use, with an estimated 3.4 million people addicted to drugs. The most commonly abused drugs in Nigeria are opioids, particularly heroin, which is imported from Asia and trafficked through West Africa (International Centre for Drug Policy, 2019). Other hard drugs that are commonly abused include cocaine and methamphetamine. These drugs are smuggled into the country and then sold on the black market. Simultaneously, the country has experienced an alarming increase in the divorce rate over recent years, leading to the breakdown of families and subsequent socio-economic consequences. Consequently, it is essential to examine the potential relationship between hard drug use and the divorce rate in Nigeria. Background information unveils the severity of the drug abuse problem in Nigeria.

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According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Nigeria is a transit, consumption, and production hub for illicit drugs, exposing its citizens to the harmful effects of substance abuse (UNODC, 2021). This high rate of drug use has been linked to various social and economic problems, including a rise in crime, unemployment, and poverty. It has also been suggested that drug use is a contributing factor to the rise in divorce rates, as it can lead to a breakdown in communication and trust within relationships. Worryingly, the prevalence of drug abuse among Nigerians, particularly illicit substances such as cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine, has been on the rise over the past decade (Haruna et al., 2020; Fabode et al., 2014). This trend is fueled by various interrelated factors, including poverty, unemployment, societal pressures, and inadequate drug control policies (Duru & Kwetishe, 2020).

Coupled with the burgeoning drug abuse problem, Nigeria has witnessed a concerning surge in divorce rates. Traditional Nigerian society holds marriage and family values in high esteem, making the rising divorce rates a significant cause for concern. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the divorce rate in Nigeria increased by 126% between 2010 and 2019 (NBS, 2020). The causes of this upward trend are multifaceted and complex, including factors such as incompatible personalities, financial issues, infidelity, and substance abuse (Adeyemi, 2017). While it is important to acknowledge that drug abuse is not the sole cause of divorce, it is crucial to explore its potential influence on the disintegration of marital unions in Nigeria. One possible reason why drug abuse may contribute to divorce is the negative effects it can have on an individual's mental health and behaviour. For example, drug use can lead to aggression, mood swings, and a lack of empathy, all of which can strain relationships and make it difficult to maintain a healthy and happy marriage. Additionally, the financial burden of supporting a drug habit can also lead to marital stress and conflict. Furthermore, the stigma surrounding drug use can cause shame and isolation, leading to further tension and resentment within the relationship.

Another important factor to consider is the impact of drug abuse on the family unit as a whole. Children who live in a household where one or both parents are abusing drugs may suffer from emotional and behavioural problems, as well as a lack of parental guidance and support. This can create a cycle of dysfunction and instability within the family, further increasing the risk of divorce. Additionally, drug use can also lead to domestic violence, which is a major risk factor for divorce. Social workers play a vital role in supporting families affected by drug abuse and divorce. They provide counselling and guidance to individuals and families struggling with addiction, as well as resources and referrals to other community services. They can also help with child protection and custody issues, as well as advocating for the needs of children in the family court system. Additionally, social workers can help families navigate the challenges of divorce, such as coping with loss and adjusting to new living arrangements.

One key approach is to focus on building resilience within the family. This includes helping family members develop coping skills, build healthy relationships, and strengthen communication. Social workers can also help family's access community resources, such as food banks, housing assistance, and mental health services (Spencer, 2019). They can also advocate for policies that support families facing drug abuse and divorce, such as affordable housing and substance abuse treatment. Understanding the impact of hard drug use on marital instability and outcomes in Nigeria is crucial for devising effective intervention strategies to mitigate the adverse effects on individuals, families, and society as a whole. Epidemiological studies on drug abuse in Nigeria have demonstrated that the burden of drug abuse is still high despite the existing drug laws, policies, and strategies for prevention (Jatau et al., 2012). By addressing this issue, policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders can work collaboratively towards reducing drug abuse rates and sustaining healthy family structures. This paper aims to explore the existing literature on the impact of hard drug use on marital instability and outcomes in Nigeria,

providing insights into the underlying factors and potential interventions of social workers necessary to address this pressing social issue.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Hard Drug

In simple terms, a hard drug is a type of drug that is illegal and has a high potential for abuse and addiction (Odimegwu, 2009). Examples of hard drugs include cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and prescription opioids. These drugs are classified as hard drugs because they have serious, potentially fatal, health consequences and can be highly addictive. In contrast, soft drugs are legal drugs that have a lower potential for abuse and addiction, such as marijuana or alcohol. It's important to understand that hard drugs are not only dangerous because of their addictive properties, but also because of their potential for serious health consequences. For example, hard drugs can lead to physical damage to the brain and other organs, as well as mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and paranoia. In addition, hard drugs are often associated with violent behaviour, including physical and sexual assault, and can also lead to financial difficulties, job loss, and homelessness. All of these factors make hard drugs extremely dangerous and detrimental to society.

According to a study by the Nigerian National Drug Law Enforcement Agency [NDLEA], hard drugs are psychoactive substances and have the potential to cause physical or psychological dependence and addiction (NDLEA, 2018). The study further asserted that hard drugs are a serious public health problem in Nigeria, and the prevalence of hard drug use is increasing. It is estimated that over 10% of Nigerians have used hard drugs at some point in their lives. Hard drugs are widely available, and the most commonly used hard drugs are cannabis, opioids, and cocaine. In layman's terms, a psychoactive substance is any substance that alters the way the brain works. This can include substances that affect mood, behaviour, thoughts, and perceptions. Hard drugs meet this definition because they produce these effects in the brain. In addition, hard drugs are also physically or psychologically addictive, meaning that users develop a tolerance for the drug, and experience withdrawal symptoms if they stop using it (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2017). The development of tolerance and withdrawal symptoms is a sign that the brain has been altered by the drug and has become dependent on it. Despite the negative physical, mental, and social consequences." In other words, users may continue to use the drug despite the negative effects it is having on their lives. This can include physical and mental health problems, relationship problems, financial problems, and legal problems. In extreme cases, users may even commit crimes to obtain the drug.

As mentioned before, physical dependence means that the body needs the drug to function normally. Physical dependence can lead to withdrawal symptoms when the drug is stopped. Withdrawal symptoms can be severe, depending on the drug, and may include tremors, seizures, and even death. Psychological dependence is a strong need to use the drug, often for the feelings of pleasure or relaxation it produces. Psychological dependence can be just as difficult to overcome as physical dependence, as users may crave the drug and feel unable to function without it. One of the most serious effects of hard drugs is addiction. Addiction is a chronic, relapsing brain disease that causes compulsive drug-seeking and use, despite the harmful consequences. Addiction can lead to the inability to stop using the drug even if the user wants to. It can also cause the user to spend all their time and money on the drug, to the point of neglecting their responsibilities and relationships. Addiction can be very difficult to overcome and may require professional treatment.

The Nigerian National Drug Control Master Plan defines hard drugs as "substances that are controlled under international law because of their potential for abuse, dependence and social harm. The National Drug Control Master Plan also notes that "controlled" substances are regulated by international treaties, such as the United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in

Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (National Agency for the Control of Aids, 2013). These treaties prohibit the production, distribution, and use of certain drugs, and require countries to take measures to prevent and control drug abuse. Many hard drugs are classified as controlled substances under these treaties. A study by the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital in Nigeria defines hard drugs as "substances that cause physical or psychological dependence and have the potential to disrupt the functioning of .and have the potential to disrupt the functioning of individuals, families, and society (Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, 2015).

From a psychological perspective, hard drugs can disrupt individuals' ability to think, make rational decisions, and regulate their emotions. This can lead to problems with work, school, and relationships. At the family level, hard drug use can cause family conflict, violence, and financial instability. On a broader level, hard drug use can contribute to unemployment, crime, and homelessness. Drugs with a high potential for abuse and dependence, which may lead to addiction and social harm (Ihekwereme & Nwosu, 2013). Drug abuse is the misuse of drugs, such as taking them for non-medical purposes or taking more than the recommended amount. Drug dependence is when a person's body becomes used to a drug and they experience withdrawal symptoms when they stop taking it. Addiction is a more severe form of drug dependence, in which a person has an overwhelming urge to use the drug, despite the negative consequences. Drug addiction can lead to social harm, which refers to the negative effects on a person's relationships, job, and social functioning.

In other words, hard drugs are drugs that are illegal or regulated by international treaties because of their potential for abuse, dependence, and social harm. They can lead to addiction, which is a chronic condition that can cause major problems in a person's life. The use of hard drugs is highly problematic, both for the individual and for society as a whole. It can cause problems with health, relationships, and social functioning, and can lead to addiction. It is important to understand the risks of hard drug use and to seek help if someone is struggling with addiction.

Types of Hard Drugs Intake that Causes Marital Instability and Outcome

Many different types of hard drugs can contribute to marital instability and outcomes in Nigeria. The most common according to Jatau et al. (2021) and Aloba et al. (2019) include:

Heroin: is a highly addictive and dangerous opioid drug that can have a major impact on marriage and family life. People who use heroin may become depressed, irritable, and withdrawn, which can damage relationships. They may also become unable to fulfil their family responsibilities, such as parenting and providing financial support. In addition, heroin use can lead to health problems, legal problems, and financial hardship, all of which can strain a marriage. Heroin use can also lead to overdose and death, which can be devastating for families. Overall, heroin use can cause serious problems for both individuals and families.

Cocaine: is a powerful stimulant that can have serious effects on relationships. People who are addicted to cocaine may become obsessed with obtaining and using the drug, which can cause them to neglect their relationships. They may also become emotionally distant and paranoid, leading to trust issues and conflict. In addition, cocaine use can lead to financial problems and risky behaviour, which can hurt marital stability. Many marriages involving cocaine use end in divorce, and children of these marriages often suffer from emotional problems. So, cocaine can have a devastating impact on marital stability and family life

Amphetamines: are a class of stimulant drugs that can have several negative effects on marital stability. These drugs can cause users to become irritable, paranoid, and aggressive, which can create conflict in relationships. They can also lead to problems with impulsivity, which can damage trust and communication within a marriage. Additionally, amphetamines can cause sleep problems, which can lead to fatigue and a lack of energy for relationship activities. In some cases, amphetamine use can also lead to financial problems, which can cause additional stress and conflict in a marriage.

Cannabis, or Marijuana: is a complex substance when it comes to its impact on relationships. On one hand, some research has found that cannabis use can lead to lower relationship satisfaction and increased conflict. However, other studies have found that cannabis use can have a positive effect on relationships, leading to increased intimacy and communication. The effects of cannabis use on relationships can vary depending on the individual, the frequency of use, and the overall quality of the relationship. So, while cannabis use can have an impact on relationships, it is not always negative.

Diazepam, also known as Valium: is a benzodiazepine, a class of drugs that are often prescribed for anxiety and insomnia. Like other benzodiazepines, diazepam can be addictive and can lead to problems with relationship functioning. People who are addicted to diazepam may become secretive, isolated, and emotionally distant from their partners. They may also experience mood swings, irritability, and problems with concentration and memory. These problems can cause strain on relationships and make it difficult to maintain a stable marriage

Other common hard drugs include methamphetamine, opioids, and sedatives. "Ice" is a slang term for methamphetamine, while Tramadol is an opioid painkiller. Cough syrups can contain codeine, which is also an opioid. These substances are all considered hard drugs, as they have a high potential for abuse and addiction, and can lead to negative effects on relationships and health. Sources where abusers obtained drugs, were pharmacies/patent medicine shops, open drug markets, drug hawkers, fellow drug abusers, friends, and drug pushers (Abe et al., 2021). Drug abuse was common among undergraduates and secondary school students, youths, commercial bus drivers, farmers, and sex workers.

Hard Drug Use and its Associated Risks

Several factors contribute to the risks associated with hard drug use. One of these is the addictive nature of the drugs themselves. Hard drugs can hijack the brain's reward system, causing cravings and withdrawal symptoms when the drug is not used. This can make it very difficult for a person to stop using the drug, even if they want to. Another factor is the potential for overdose, which can be fatal (Elaine, n.d.). Hard drugs can also lead to long-term health problems, including organ damage and mental health disorders. In addition, the illegal nature of hard drugs can lead to problems with the law, including criminal charges. So, the associated risk of hard drug use (American Psychiatric Association, 2021) includes:

On a Societal Level: the use of hard drugs can have several negative consequences. Drug-related crime, such as theft and violence, can increase, which can make communities unsafe and lead to a breakdown of social cohesion. The cost of treating drug addiction and related health problems can also be a significant drain on resources, both for individuals and for society as a whole.

On the Family: Another negative consequence of hard drug use is the impact it can have on families. Children of drug users may be neglected or abused and may be more likely to use drugs themselves in the future. Spouses or partners of drug users may experience emotional distress, financial problems, and relationship difficulties. Even extended family members can be affected by the stress and strain of having a loved one who is addicted to drugs. The impact of drug use can also be felt in the workplace, where productivity and safety can be affected. Drug users may also have difficulty holding down a job or advancing in their careers.

On an Economic Level: the use of hard drugs can have significant costs. These include direct costs such as health care and criminal justice expenses, as well as indirect costs such as lost productivity and increased insurance premiums. The total economic cost of hard drug use in the United States is estimated to be over \$700 billion per year. While there is no definitive data on the economic cost of hard drug use in Nigeria, it is estimated to be in the billions of dollars. This estimate is based on factors such as the cost of health care, lost productivity, and criminal justice costs. It is important to note that these figures are likely to be underestimated, as they do not take into account the full impact of hard drug use on families and communities. Additionally, they do not account for

the "hidden costs" of hard drug use, such as increased crime and social disorder. Hard drug use also has significant environmental costs, including environmental pollution from drug production and waste disposal. The use of hard drugs has a wide range of negative consequences, which affect individuals, families, communities, and the economy.

Role of Stigma: Another important aspect of hard drug use is the role of stigma. People who use drugs are often stigmatized, which can lead to discrimination and a lack of access to treatment and support. Stigma can also make it difficult for people to talk openly about their drug use, which can prevent them from getting the help they need. Stigma can also lead to a cycle of shame and guilt, which can make it even harder to overcome addiction. Finally, stigma can impact the way the public views and responds to drug policy, leading to a "war on drugs" approach that focuses on punishment rather than treatment.

The issue of hard drug use also raises questions about the role of the criminal justice system. In the United States, people convicted of drug crimes often receive harsh sentences, which can lead to overcrowded prisons and increased costs for taxpayers. In Nigeria, drug offenders are also subject to significant penalties under the law. However, the specific sentences imposed can vary depending on the type and amount of drugs involved, as well as other factors such as prior criminal history. Overall, though, drug offences are treated very seriously in Nigeria and can result in lengthy prison terms (Oyebamiji et al., 2017). There is also debate about whether drug use should be seen as a public health issue or a criminal issue. Public health approaches tend to focus on harm reduction and treatment, while criminal approaches focus on punishment and deterrence. However, some argue that both approaches are needed to address the problem of hard drug use.

Marital Instability and Outcome

Marital instability refers to the breakdown of a marriage, whether through divorce, separation, or other types of conflict. Marital outcome refers to the outcome of a marriage, whether it ends in divorce or stays intact. Marital instability and outcome can be influenced by a variety of factors, including hard drug use (Oyebanjo & Muroniku, 2017). When a spouse is using hard drugs, it can lead to several problems within the marriage, including financial difficulties, increased conflict, and a decrease in trust and intimacy. This can ultimately lead to divorce or other negative outcomes. In a nutshell, the effects of hard drug use on marital instability and outcomes can be devastating for both spouses. Hard drug use can lead to financial strain, increased conflict, and decreased trust and intimacy within the marriage. The non-drug-using spouse may feel overwhelmed and resentful, while the drug-using spouse may become isolated and depressed. In the worst-case scenario, the marriage may end in divorce, leaving both spouses emotionally and financially devastated. This is just one example of how hard drug use can negatively impact marital instability and outcomes.

In addition to the emotional and financial toll of divorce, it can also have significant implications for the children involved. Children of divorced parents may experience a range of negative effects, including behavioural problems, lower academic achievement, and poor social functioning. Additionally, they may experience feelings of sadness, loneliness, and anger. Social workers can help to mitigate these negative effects by providing support and counselling to the children and their families. They can also connect them with other resources, such as child support services and parenting education programs (Van Wormer & Davis, 2013). This is just one example of how social workers can play a critical role in helping families navigate the challenges of hard drug use. On a broader level, social workers can advocate for policy changes that would address the problem of hard drug use and its impact on marital instability and outcome. This could include advocating for increased funding for addiction treatment and prevention programs, as well as policies that address the social determinants of health, such as poverty, unemployment, and housing insecurity (Collins et al., 2018). By addressing these underlying issues, social workers can help to reduce the prevalence of hard drug use and its effects on families.

Consequences of Hard Drug Use on Marital Instability and Outcome in Nigeria

Evidence on the consequences of hard drug use on marital stability in Nigeria comes from a variety of sources, including government reports, academic studies, and news reports. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria has one of the highest divorce rates in Africa, and research has found that drug use is a major contributing factor (Khabir & Sagay, 2021). A study by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2018) found that drug use is associated with a variety of relationship problems, including infidelity, violence, and emotional detachment. A 2018 report by the Nigerian Ministry of Health (2018) found that addiction is a major cause of divorce in the country. These are just a few examples of the evidence (Onyeonoro & Folarin, 2017):

Divorce: is a major consequence of marital instability, and it can have a lasting impact on both partners and any children involved. Divorce can lead to changes in living arrangements, financial difficulties, and emotional distress. It can also affect children's academic performance and mental health. It's important to consider the long-term consequences of divorce when looking at the impact of hard drug use on marital instability. In terms of evidence from Nigeria, a study by Fapohunda and Ogundeji (2018) found that divorce rates were higher in areas with high rates of hard drug use. The authors suggested that this was due to the impact of hard drug use on marital instability. They also found that divorce was associated with lower levels of education and income for both men and women, as well as higher levels of unemployment. This suggests that divorce can have a long-term impact on economic well-being, which may in turn affect other aspects of life.

Divorce has also been linked to other health problems, such as cardiovascular disease, depression, and an increased risk of death from all causes. One study by Umberson and Williams (2005) found that divorced individuals were more likely to have a heart attack or stroke than those who were married. Another study by Matthews and Gallo (2011) found that divorced women were more likely to experience depression than married women. The researchers suggested that this may be due to the loss of social support and the increased stress of divorce.

Erectile Dysfunction (ED): Excessive intake of opiates and anti-retroviral drugs leads to erectile dysfunction. Opiates are a class of drugs that include heroin, morphine, and codeine. They are addictive substances that can have several negative effects on physical and mental health, including sexual health. Opiates can cause erectile dysfunction (ED) by affecting the brain's ability to produce and regulate hormones, which can in turn affect the body's ability to function sexually. Opiates can also cause low libido, difficulty achieving orgasm, and other sexual problems. Additionally, opiate addiction can lead to other problems, such as financial instability, which can affect a person's ability to maintain a relationship. For example, a study by Adebimpe et al. (2015) on the prevalence and predictors of erectile dysfunctions among men on antiretroviral therapy in South-Western Nigeria revealed that anti-retroviral drugs could have caused their ED

Infertility: is indeed a possible consequence of divorce. There are a few ways in which this can happen. First, as mentioned, the stress and financial instability that can come with divorce can make it difficult for women to get pregnant. Second, women who have been through a divorce may be less likely to seek medical help for infertility, due to a lack of support or stigma. Third, divorce can also lead to unhealthy behaviours, such as excessive alcohol consumption, which can affect fertility. Studies have shown that divorce can hurt women's reproductive health. For example, a study by Mbugua and Kiiru (2016) found that divorced women in Kenya were less likely to get pregnant than married women. They suggested that this was due to a combination of factors, including stress, financial instability, and a lack of social support. The study also found that divorced women were more likely to have unplanned pregnancies and to give birth to low-birth-weight babies.

Financial Hardship: In terms of consequences, one of the most common consequences of hard drug use on marital instability and outcome in Nigeria is financial hardship. Many drug users spend large amounts of money

on drugs, which can lead to debt and poverty. This can put a strain on families, as drug users may not be able to provide for their families financially. Additionally, drug use can lead to job loss, which further compounds the financial problems. As a result, many marriages involving drug use end in divorce, often due to financial difficulties. One piece of evidence that supports this claim is a study conducted by the University of Ibadan in 2017. The study found that financial problems were the most common reason given for divorce among drug users. Specifically, 67% of drug users surveyed stated that financial problems were the main reason for the breakdown of their marriage (Ola-Oluwa et al., 2017). This study provides strong evidence that hard drug use can have serious financial consequences, which can lead to marital instability and divorce.

Child Neglect: Drug use can interfere with parents' ability to care for their children, which can lead to children being neglected or abused. A study published in the Journal of Child and Family Studies in 2017 found that children of drug users were significantly more likely to experience abuse and neglect than children of non-users. This evidence suggests that hard drug use can have a major negative impact on children and families. For example, Adeniran et al. (2020) conducted a study to examine the factors influencing the family relationships of ex-inmates of correctional facilities in Ogun State, Nigeria and the study revealed that hard drug use was associated with marital conflict, separation, and divorce among participants. It also found that families of drug users often experienced social and economic problems.

Addiction and Domestic Violence: One important thing to understand is that domestic violence and addiction often go hand in hand. Addiction can lead to marital conflict, as one partner may be unable to control their drug use and may neglect their responsibilities at home. Domestic violence on the other hand is also an important consequence of hard drug use that is relevant to marital instability and outcome. In many cases, addiction can lead to domestic violence, as addicts may become aggressive and violent when under the influence of drugs. This can create a dangerous and unstable environment for the family, and can often lead to divorce. In addition, domestic violence can have long-term negative consequences for victims, including physical and emotional trauma. It is important to recognize the link between addiction and domestic violence to address this issue and protect victims. Research has found that up to 60% of intimate partner violence cases involve substance abuse. This means that addressing domestic violence requires addressing addiction as well. In Nigeria, there are several resources available for victims of domestic violence, including counselling and shelter services. However, there is a need for more resources specifically tailored to addressing the link between domestic violence and addiction (Bonomi et al., 2016).

Job Loss: Many hard drugs are addictive and can impair a person's ability to work. This can lead to missed work days, lower productivity, and eventually job loss. Job loss can have a serious impact on marital stability, as it can lead to financial instability and stress. The connection between job loss and marital instability is complex and multi-faceted. First, financial stress can put a strain on any relationship, and job loss is a major source of financial stress. Second, unemployment can lead to feelings of shame, anxiety, and low self-esteem, which can affect a person's ability to be a supportive partner. Finally, job loss can create a power imbalance in a relationship, as the unemployed partner may feel dependent on the other partner for financial support. Together, these factors can lead to marital instability and conflict. There is ample evidence to support the link between job loss and marital instability. One study found that unemployed men were two times more likely to experience divorce than employed men. Another study found that unemployed women were 1.5 times more likely to experience marital separation than employed women. These findings suggest that job loss is a significant risk factor for marital instability (Chun et al., 2011).

Social Workers Intervention Strategies in Mitigating the Impact of Hard Drug Use on Marital Instability and Outcome in Nigeria

Social workers are professionals who work with individuals, families, and communities to improve their quality of life. They can help people access resources and services, as well as provide counselling and support. Social workers can play a vital role in supporting both spouses and helping them navigate the challenges they face. Social workers can provide counselling, connect them with resources, and advocate for their needs. Additionally, social workers can work to reduce the stigma surrounding drug use and provide education and outreach to the community. Several key steps need to be taken to address the issue of hard drug use and its impact on marital instability and outcomes in Nigeria (Igwenagu, 2019).

Increased Awareness: People need to be aware of the risks associated with hard drug use, as well as the resources and services available to help them. Social workers can play an important role in educating the public about these issues (Adebayo et al., 2017). They can also work with the media to ensure that information about the impact of hard drug use on marriages and families is widely disseminated. Additionally, social workers can work with community leaders to raise awareness and advocate for changes in policy and practice.

Individual Counseling: is another key intervention strategy that social workers can use to address the impact of hard drug use on marriages and families. This type of counseling can help individuals explore the impact of drug use on their lives and relationships, and develop coping strategies to manage stress and improve their well-being (Petersen et al., 2017). Individual counselling can also help individuals to identify and address any underlying issues that may be contributing to their drug use, such as trauma, mental health issues, or other problems.

Family Therapy: is another intervention strategy that can be used to address the impact of hard drug use on marriages and families. Family therapy involves working with the entire family to identify and address the impact of drug use on the family system (Srinivasan, 2020). This type of therapy can help to improve communication, resolve conflict, and promote healing within the family. It can also help to develop strategies for preventing relapse and addressing any co-occurring issues, such as parenting or financial difficulties.

Case Management: is also another important intervention strategy that social workers can use to address the impact of hard drug use on marriages and families. Case management involves providing support and resources to individuals and families to help them meet their goals and needs (Springer et al., 2014). This can include connecting them with appropriate treatment and services, as well as advocating for them in various systems. Case management can also involve providing support and guidance for family members and friends who are affected by the drug use of a loved one.

Advocacy: is an essential part of the social work response to hard drug use and its impact on marriages and families. Social workers can advocate for individuals and families at the individual, community, and policy levels. At the individual level, they can advocate for their client's rights and needs, such as access to treatment or other services (Meyer, 2009). At the community level, they can work to raise awareness about the impact of drug use and to promote positive social change. At the policy level, they can work to influence legislation and policies that affect individuals and families affected by hard drug use.

Rehabilitation Services: are an important part of the response to hard drug use and its impact on marriages and families. Rehabilitation services can provide individuals with the skills and resources they need to achieve and maintain sobriety (Tiware et al., 2021). This can include individual and group therapy, medication-assisted treatment, and support groups. Rehabilitation services can also help individuals to address any co-occurring mental health or physical health issues. For example, the number of those struggling with drug addiction needs to be increased, there is a need to expand community-based treatment options, as well as increase access to medication-assisted treatment

Bottleneck to Effective Social Work in Mitigating Hard Drug Use Effect on Marital Instability and Outcome

Social work interventions have been effective in helping to reduce the harm caused by drug use and improve marital outcomes. However, it is important to note that these interventions are not always successful and can be difficult to implement in countries like Nigeria. According to Ogbodo (2016) and Nwora et al. (2021), they include:

Lack of Adequate Funding for Social Services: refers to the limited financial resources available to support programs and services that address the impact of hard drug use on marriages and families. In many cases, there is not enough funding to provide the full range of services that are needed, such as access to treatment, housing, and transportation. This can result in long waiting lists for services, and individuals and families may not be able to get the help they need promptly. Additionally, limited funding can mean that services are not high quality or effective.

Stigma and Discrimination: refers to the negative attitudes and behaviors that individuals and families affected by hard drug use may face from others in their communities. This can include discrimination from healthcare providers, employers, and landlords. It can also include social isolation and rejection from friends and family. Stigma and discrimination can make it difficult for individuals and families to seek help, and it can prevent them from accessing the resources and support they need. In some cases, it can even lead to violence and other forms of harm.

Limited Availability of Culturally Appropriate Services for Diverse Communities: refers to the lack of social services that are tailored to the specific needs of diverse communities, including ethnic, racial, and religious minorities, as well as LGBTQ+ individuals. In some cases, existing services may not be tailored to the unique needs of these groups, and they may not feel comfortable or safe accessing them. This can be particularly true for marginalized groups that face discrimination and stigma.

Poor government policies:s are another key bottleneck in effectively addressing the impact of hard drug use on marriages and families. In many cases, there are not enough policies in place to support individuals and families who are affected by drug use. For example, there may be limited funding for prevention and treatment programs, or laws that criminalize drug use rather than treat it as a public health issue. Additionally, there may be policies that perpetuate stigma and discrimination against individuals and families affected by drug use.

Traditional Leadership and Institutions: can also be a major bottleneck in addressing the impact of hard drug use on marriages and families. In some communities, traditional leaders and institutions may not have the capacity or resources to effectively address the issue. More so, some traditional leaders may have views and beliefs that perpetuate stigma and discrimination against individuals and families affected by drug use. This can make it difficult for social workers to work with these leaders and institutions to address the issue.

Social Media: can complicate the work of social workers who are trying to provide counselling and support to individuals and families affected by hard drug use. The public nature of social media can make it difficult to maintain confidentiality and privacy. Additionally, it can be challenging for social workers to counter the misinformation and harmful stereotypes that are often shared on social media. On the other hand, social media can also be a source of misinformation and harmful stereotypes about drug use and addiction. It can also perpetuate stigma and discrimination against individuals and families affected by drug use.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, hard drug use can have a serious impact on marital instability and outcome which has led to financial difficulties, physical and mental health problems and social isolation. All of these factors can contribute to marital instability and poor outcomes. However, social workers can provide support and counselling to help

individuals and families address the underlying causes of marital instability, work with the community to raise awareness about the risks of hard drug use and provide resources to help individuals and families cope with its effects and also advocate for policy changes that will better support individuals and families affected by hard drug use. However, with the right interventions from social workers, many of these issues can be addressed and overcome. Nevertheless, several bottlenecks can complicate the work of social workers, including limited resources, stigma and discrimination, and the challenges posed by social media. Despite these challenges, social work interventions can still be effective in helping individuals and families affected by hard drug use to improve their health and well-being. While the challenges facing social workers in addressing this issue are significant, there are also opportunities for innovation and improvement. For example, there is a growing body of research on effective social work interventions for addressing drug use and its impact on marriages and families. Additionally, new technologies and approaches, such as telehealth and online support groups, are being developed to meet better the needs of individuals and families affected by drug use.

Call to Action

It is imperative for Nigerian authorities and communities to take immediate action to combat the rising impact of hard drug use on marital instability and outcomes in Nigeria. This can include implementing stricter drug control policies, increasing awareness and education about the dangers of substance abuse, providing accessible rehabilitation services, and promoting counselling and support for affected couples. By addressing the root cause of drug addiction and supporting struggling families, we can strive towards preserving marriages and building a healthier society.

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