

## **KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PERCEPTION AGAINST ILLCIT DRUG USE AMONG LEAD CITY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

***Peter Olaoluwa Adediji***

*Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. (Surveillance and Epidemiology  
Department)*

***Ajala Comfort Omolayo***

*School of Midwifery, Lagos University Teaching Hospital, Idi-Araba, Lagos State.*

***Ibrahim Babangida Mohammed***

*Lead city University, Ibadan Nigeria.*

***Chinwe Grace Azuka***

*University of Calabar*

***Ibrahim Doyinsola A,***

*Lead city University, Ibadan Nigeria.*

**Abstract:** Substance abuse is a critical problem among adolescents and young adults in lead-city university, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, yet empirical evidence on substance use is limited. This study explored the knowledge, attitude, and perceptions of drug abuse among undergraduate of a university in Southwest Nigeria to help develop a preventive health education program for students in tertiary institutions in Southwest Nigeria. A cross-sectional study that was designed within the Knowledge, Attitudes, and Perception (KAP) model was used to collect information from 140 students. The age ranged from 17-32 years, with a mean of 22.98 and SD  $\pm 3.14$ . The males constituted 61% of the respondents. Median age for the initiation and the regular use of drugs were 17 and 19 years. Almost all the students, 99% of them had been taught about drug abuse. However, 35% of them did not see drug abuse as a major problem in the society. Up to 37% of them believed that suffering health damage or medical problem due to drug abuse is not at all likely. The majority of the respondents (56%) believed that using drugs makes people cool, and 8% of the participants had experienced withdrawal symptoms. The majority of them knew that drug abuse could lead to mental illness (75%), violence, or aggressive outbursts under the influence of drugs (71%). The findings will help in developing a frame work for effective advocacy, policy formulation, and preventive health education program on substance abuse for students.

**Key words:** Knowledge, Attitude, Perception, Practice, Drug Abuse, Undergraduate University Students.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Illicit drugs use (such as heroin, marijuana, etc.) particularly by adolescents, globally has been a public concern.<sup>1</sup> This is due to the potential short and long-term adverse effects or consequences associated with their use on the well-being of those who use drugs and the larger society.<sup>2</sup> For instance, the use of marijuana by adolescents has been associated with an increased risk of a range

of negative health outcomes, including future depression, anxiety disorders, fatal automobile collisions, accidental injuries, chronic bronchitis, and respiratory infections.<sup>3</sup>

Recent trends indicate that the use of drugs have dramatically increased worldwide. It has been estimated that between 3.6% and 6.9% of persons aged 15 to 64 years across the globe have used an illicit drug in the year 2017. World Health Organization reported that every year, about 320, 000 young people between ages of 15 and 29 years die annually from alcohol and drug use, i.e., 9% of all the deaths in that age category and 15.3 million persons have drug use disorders.<sup>4</sup> The global disease burden attributable to illicit drugs is estimated at 5.4%.<sup>5</sup>

Globally, there have been pointers to factor that influence adolescent's involvement in drug use. Some of the factors listed as reasons for adolescents' involvement in illicit drugs use are peer pressure, sexual prowess, curiosity, boldness, to increase physical performance, social influence, pleasure due to psychological stress and, inadequate knowledge of the harmful consequences added lack of self-confidence, search for excitement, experimentation and behavioral conduct problem.<sup>6</sup>

In Nigeria, majority of persons who use illicit drugs have been reported to start at adolescence, as they tend to follow a particular pattern of involvement with drugs. This study showed that adolescents in Nigeria started using drugs as early as 10 years old. In a study by Adelekan and Ndom, the respondents were reported to be using cannabis (marijuana) and cigarettes on a daily and weekly basis.<sup>7</sup> A good number of adolescents ignorantly depend on one form of drug or the other for various daily activities—social, educational, political, moral etc. These drugs include Tobacco, Indian hemp, Cocaine, Morphine, Heroine, Ephedrine, Madras, Caffeine, Glue, Barbiturates, and Amphetamines.<sup>8</sup>

Youths from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds have been known to use drugs, and this includes those from both rich and poor backgrounds. A study by Ibebuike.<sup>9</sup> investigated the rate of substance used, and adverse effects amongst senior secondary school students of Eziachi, Orlu, Imo state. The study found that the majority of the students used substances due to peer pressure, while for others it is due to academic adjustment, social and psychological factors. The most common reasons given for substance use was to have a feeling of belonging, followed by “to increase morale” and to have pleasure, to be awake because it is cheap and is always available. Other systems currently available to gauge drug use levels and trends, such as the national household survey of drug use estimating the drug use in the total population have not been performed in Imo State till date.<sup>10</sup>

Recently, researchers have started paying attention to the issue of illicit drug use in Nigeria. However, most of these studies ignored the public perception of illicit drug use among youths. It should be considered that the public has an important role to play in an attempt to reduce the rate of illicit drug use, how they perceive illicit drug use among youths must be ascertained.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, how the public perceives an issue may reveal the level of attention it gets and the best strategies of addressing it. Because perception is shaped by things such as past experience, cultural expectations, motivations, moods, needs and attitudes,<sup>12</sup> ignoring it on issues that require modifying public policy or public behaviour, may result in the failure of technically good innovations.

### **Statement of the problem**

The use of illicit drugs is associated with a wide range of short and long term health effects.<sup>13</sup> They can vary depending on the type of drug, how much and how often it's taken and the person general health. Illicit drug can impact the functioning of the kidneys; if the kidneys aren't functioning

properly, the effect of drug use can be amplified and this can lead to further issues with the kidney and eventually lead to death.<sup>14</sup>

However, is it important to evaluate the level of knowledge, as well as attitude and perception of lead city university students towards the usage of illicit drugs. This research will go a long way in decreasing the population of young adults with kidney related abnormalities and other health challenges.

## **Objectives**

### **General Objectives**

The general objective of this study is to assess knowledge, attitude and perception against illicit drug use among Lead City University Students.

### **Specific Objectives of the Study**

1. To assess the knowledge of Lead City University Students about illicit drug use
2. To determine attitude of Lead City University Students towards illicit drug use
3. To determine the perception of Lead City University Students about illicit drug use

### **Research Questions**

This study provide answers to the following questions:

1. Do Lead City University Students have knowledge of illicit drug use?
2. Do Students of Lead City University have positive attitude against illicit drug use?
3. Do Lead City University Students have proper perspective against illicit drug use?

### **Hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no of significant difference between the level of knowledge, attitude and perspective against illicit drug use among Lead City University students, Ibadan

### **Significance of the Study**

Illicit drug use among university students has been recognized as a global public health issue in recent years, it may lead to poor academic performance which in turns leads to poor productivity in their later lives and poor health status. Therefore, effective drug education is important because young people are faced with many influences to use both licit and illicit drugs. Education can play a counterbalancing role in shaping a normative culture of safety, moderation, and informed decision making.

The abuse of drugs and other substances and associated crime have driven the considerable rise in the number of youths imprisoned in recent years. A report by the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime in Nigeria indicates that 14.4% (14.3 million) of people aged between 15- and 64-years abuse drugs. The statistical analysis of the findings of a 2015 nationwide survey of 10,609 respondents showed that alcohol is the drug with the highest prevalence rate, whereas cannabis is the most abused illicit drug. Drug abuse in Nigeria is prevalent across educational levels and reaches down to the secondary school level.

With the high prevalence in use of illicit drugs or abuse of drugs among students and young adults

its necessary to carry out this study knowing fully well that students are known to be consumers of these drugs, in order to ascertain whether they are equipped with the good knowledge, positive attitude and proper perception against illicit drug use.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Description of study area

This study was carried out in Lead City University, Lead City University it is a private University located in Ibadan, which is the Oyo state capital. The university submitted its application to the National Universities Commission the year 2002. The Standing Committee on Private Universities (SCOPU) conducted the verification and the final assessment visits in August and September, 2003, respectively. At the end of the assessment visits, SCOPU reported that the profile of the Proprietor of Lead City University confirmed that it has the capacity and resources to establish a private university. Thereafter, the university was "approved for immediate take off" by the Board of NUC in December 2003 as a prelude to the ratification by the Federal Executive Council, which was effected on the 16th of February, 2005. The University is populated with close to 4000 students. This university recently added more courses to their expertise which are Pharmacy and Medicine. A descriptive cross-sectional study approach was adopted. this research project was conducted. The study's participants were 140 undergraduate Lead City University students, both male and female, who were housed in the school's dormitories. Systematic sampling was adopted. In order to evaluate the data, the statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. Frequency tables, percentages, means, and proportions were utilized for the descriptive statistics

### Ethical consideration

The Ethical committee's clearance was requested and received. Additionally, the respondents' fully informed consent was gained for the study.

## RESULTS

**Table 4.1: Demographic variables**

Variable	Response	Frequency and Percentage
<b>Sex</b>	Male	99(70.71%)
	Female	41 (29.29%)
<b>Age range</b>	Less than 20	54 (38.57%)
	21-30	81 (61.43%)
<b>Mean and Standard deviation =22 ± 24.7506</b>		
<b>Level</b>	100 level	19 (13.57%)
	200 level	12 (8.57%)
	300 level	40 (28.57%)
	400 level	66 (47.14%)
	500 level	3 (2.14%)

<b>Religion</b>	Christianity	52 (37.14%)
	Islam	87 (62.14%)
	Others	1 (0.71%)
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Yoruba	50 (35.71%)
	Igbo	37 (26.43%)
	Hausa	51 (36.43%)
	Others	2 (1.43%)
<b>Father's occupation</b>	Civil servant	64 (45.71%)
	Trading	34 (24.29%)
	Politician	41 (29.29%)
	Retired/Unemployed	1 (0.71%)
<b>Father's highest education</b>	None	2 (1.43%)
	SSCE	5 (3.57%)
	BSc/HND	84 (60%)
	Post graduate	49 (35%)
	Others	0 (0%)
<b>Mother's occupation</b>	Civil servant	56 (40%)
	Trader	41 (29.29%)
	Politician	24 (17.14%)
	Retired/Unemployed	19 (13.57%)
<b>Mother's highest education</b>	Secondary	26 (18.57%)
	First degree	106 (75.71%)
	Post graduate	4 (2.86%)
	Others	4 (2.86%)
<b>Social Economic status</b>	Low	11 (7.86%)
	Medium	103 (73.57%)
	High	26 (18.57%)

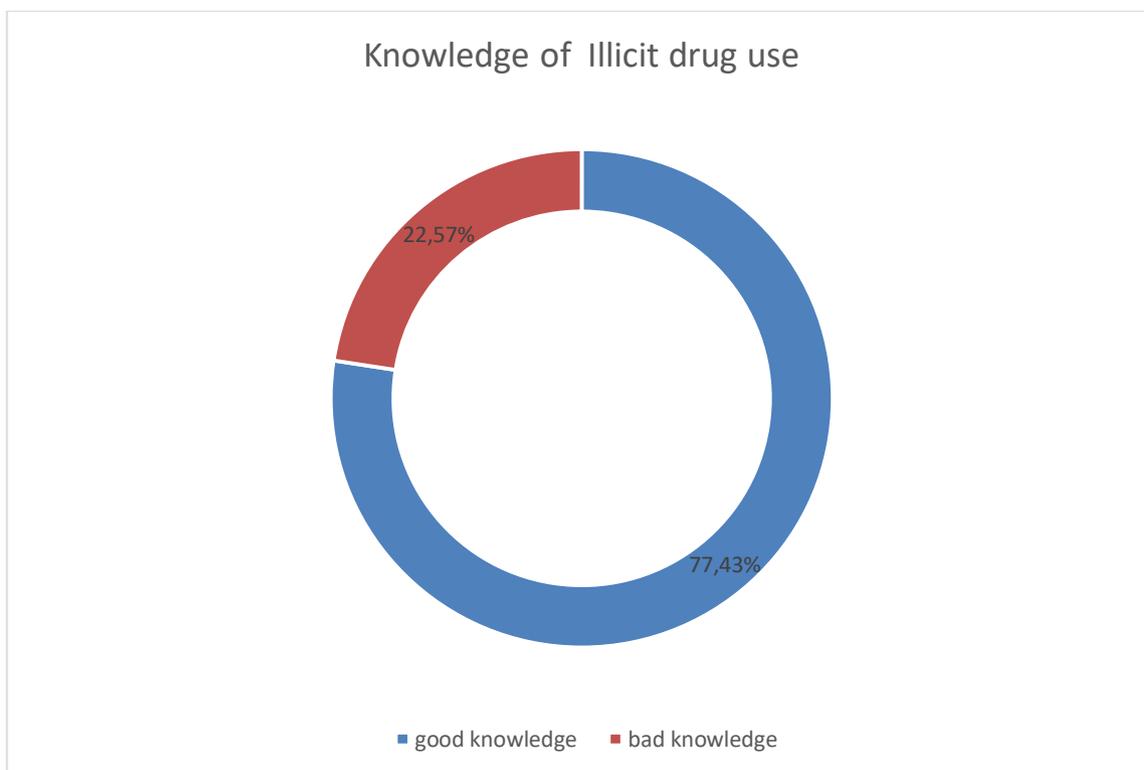
Figure 4.1 entails the demographic variables of respondents where it is observed that 70.71% of respondents are male, age range has a mean value of  $22 \pm 24.7506$  with 21-30 are 81 (61.43%) while less than 20 are 54 (38.57%). 200 level students were 12 (8.57%), and 400 level were 66 (47.14%); Islam had 87 (62.14%) while Christianity had 52 (37.14%); Yoruba were 50 (35.71%) while Igbo and Hausa were 37 (26.43%) and 51 (36.43%) respectively.

Father's occupation had the highest frequency amongst civil servant having 45.71% and lowest amongst retired/unemployed having 1 (0.71%); father's highest education had high frequency amongst BSc/HND and Post graduate having 60% and 35% respectively while mother's occupation had high frequency among civil servant and traders having 40% and 29.29% respectively. Mother's highest education was high among First degree (75.71%) and Secondary school certificate holder (18.57%); Social economic status was also observed to be highest amongst medium class having 103 (73.57%) and lowest among low class (7.86%).

**Table 4.2: Knowledge of Illicit Drug Use**

Table 4.2 gives details of questions regarding knowledge of illicit drug use where 67.14% agreed that illicit drugs are forbidden by law, 92.14% also agreed that some illicit drugs are naturally occurring such as marijuana and cocaine, 49.29% disagreed that illicit haven't caused considerable level of death and chronic ailments; 72.14% agreed that consumption of illicit drugs are detrimental to the renal health of an individual, 31.43% didn't agreed that consumption of illicit drugs causes addiction and dependence on the substance while only 5% also didn't agree that illicit drugs are useful in minor quantity but shouldn't be abused.

**Figure 4.1: Knowledge of Illicit Drug Use**



Only 22.57% of respondents have poor awareness of illicit drug use, while the rest 77.34% have good knowledge, according to Figure 4.1 above, which depicts respondents' knowledge of illicit drug us

**Table 4.3: Attitude Towards Illicit Drug Use**

S/N	QUESTIONS	True	False
1	Being familiar with illicit drugs is very enviable	66 (47.14%)	74 (52.86%)
2	Illicit drugs are not harmful in any way	98 (70%)	42 (30%)

3	Having favorites among the common illicit drugs is a necessity	51 (36.43%)	89 (63.57%)
4	Living on drugs makes someone to be appear exceptional	66 (47.14%)	74 (52.86%)
5	Taking illicit drugs severally in one day is lovely	49 (35%)	91 (65%)
6	Having a favorite mixture of these drugs is fun	21 (15%)	119 (85%)
7	Snacks blended with illicit drugs are the best	54 (38.57%)	86 (61.43%)
8	Drinks diluted with illicit drugs are the best	72 (51.43%)	68 (48.57%)
9	Making noodles with illicit drugs is the latest recipe for youth	79 (56.43%)	61 (43.57%)
10	Hallucinating and other feelings from illicit drugs are adorable	41 (29.29%)	99 (70.71%)

The opinions of the respondents about using illegal drugs are displayed in Table 4.3. Only 47.14 percent of respondents say it is admirable to be familiar with illicit drug use, while 63.5 percent deny having a favorite common illicit drug. While 51.43% of respondents believe that drinking beverages mixed with illegal substances is the best, 65% of respondents claimed that consuming illicit drugs numerous times in one day is not attractive. On the other hand, 70.71% of those surveyed disagree and say that drug-induced hallucinations and other unpleasant experiences are not cute.

**Figure 4.2: Attitude Towards Illicit Drug Use**

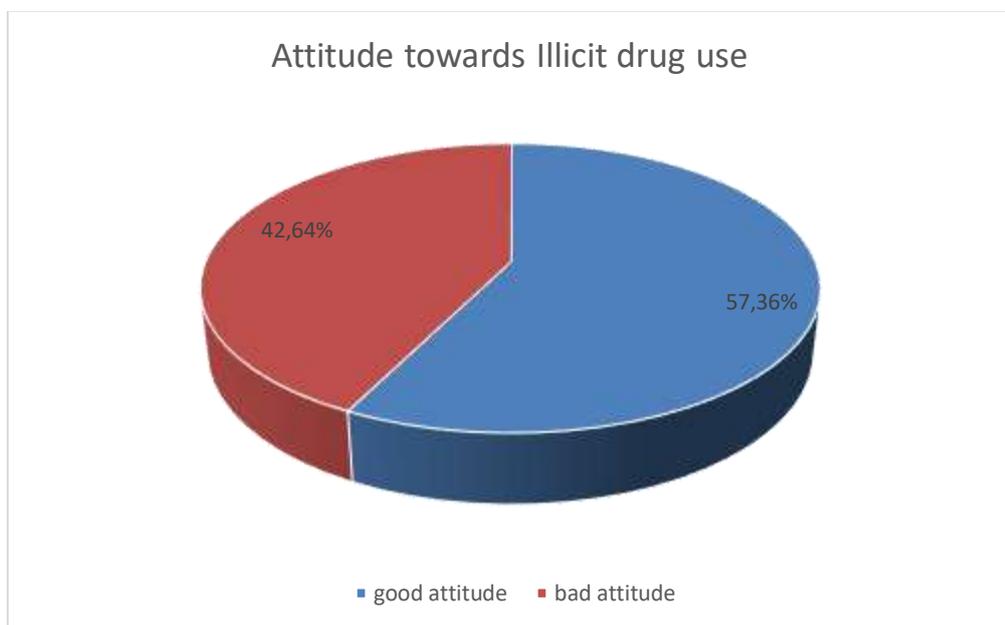


Figure 4.2 depicts respondents' attitudes regarding using illicit drugs. It was shown that only 42.64% of respondents have negative attitudes against using illicit drugs, while the rest 57.33% have positive attitudes.

**Table 4.4: Perception Towards Illicit Drug Use**

S/N	QUESTIONS	True	False
1	Illicit drug use is wrong	98 (70%)	42 (30%)

2	Getting addicted to them is deadly	112 (80%)	28 (20%)
3	Ambitions can be destroyed by illicit drug use	69 (49.29%)	71 (50.71%)
4	Mental health is in danger with illicit drug use	110 (78.57%)	30 (21.43%)
5	Societal crimes will always be increased due to illicit drug use	123 (87.86%)	17 (12.14%)
6	There are other fun ways for youths aside illicit drug use	137 (97.86%)	3 (2.14%)
7	Raping and other crimes are indirectly increased due to illicit drug use among students	119 (85%)	21 (15%)
8	Drug addicts have a bright future	57 (40.71%)	83 (59.29%)
9	Drug addiction is rather regrettable in the future	103 (73.57%)	37 (26.43%)
10	Drug addiction should be made punishable under the law	92 (65.71%)	48 (34.29%)

Only 30% and 50.71% of respondents disagreed with the statements that using illicit drugs is wrong and that doing so can ruin one's ambitions, respectively, while 87.86% of respondents agreed that using illicit drugs will always lead to an increase in societal crimes. Only 26.43% of respondents disagreed that drug addiction is regrettable in the long run, but 65.71% of respondents agreed that drug addiction should be criminalized. Only 15% of respondents disagreed that drug use among students indirectly increases the risk of rape and other crimes.

**Figure 4.3: Perception Towards Illicit Drug Use**

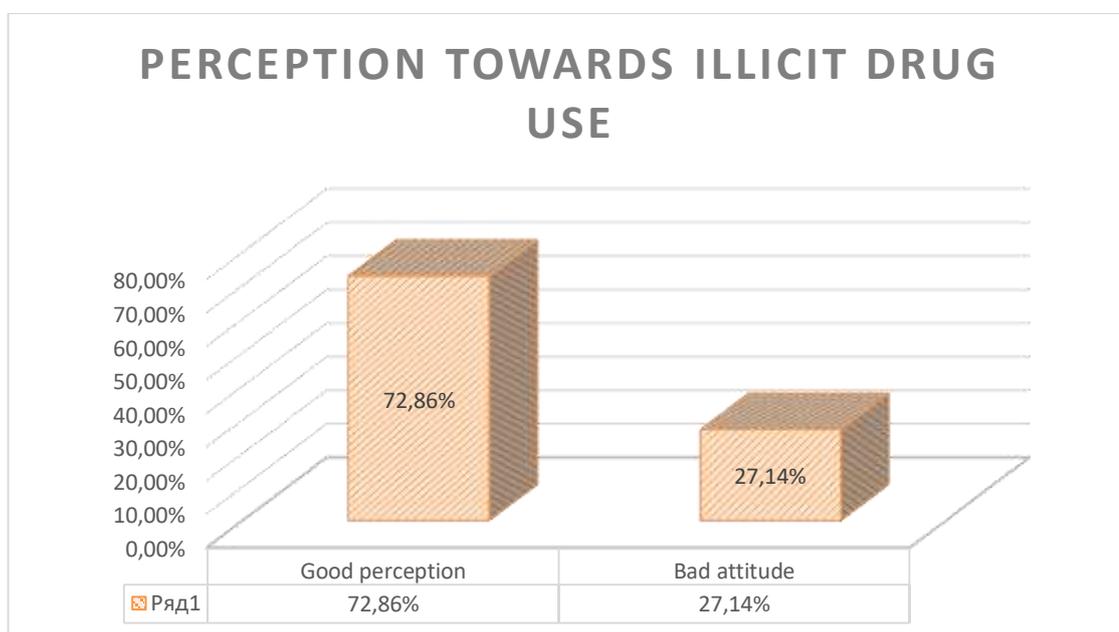


Figure 4.3 above is a representation of the perception towards illicit drug use among respondents where it was observed that only 27.14% of respondents have bad perception towards illicit drug use while the remaining 72.86% have good perception towards illicit drug use

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### Discussion

Around the world, there have been concerns about the use of illegal narcotics (such as heroin,

marijuana, etc.), particularly by minors. This is due to the fact that their use may have detrimental short- and long-term effects on drug users' health as well as the general well-being of society. A broad population research conducted in Nigeria found that adults aged 25 to 39 used psychoactive substances more frequently than other age groups overall.<sup>82</sup> However, due to current trends among teenagers and young adults, this study examined age groups (table 4.1) up to 30. Table 4.1's values demonstrate that men are more prone than women to abuse illegal drugs. The age range between 21 and 30 had the highest participation rate (61.43%), with a mean age and standard deviation of 22.7506. This backs with the findings of UNODC, 2018, and it implies that the students used as the case study are also impacted by these findings. Students from all levels participated, although the 3001 (28.75%) and 4001 (47.14%) levels had the largest incidence. The majority of participants were also Muslims (62.14%) and Hausa (36.43%) by ethnicity. This supports a previous study's findings, which showed that the prevalence of lifetime use of psychoactive substance was 47.4% and the prevalence of current use of multiple substances was 54.6% in Kano state, Nigeria. Youths in northern Nigeria, followed by why these students are buoyant enough to afford these illicit substances that they consume without the knowledge of their parents; especially with the fact that majority of these students belong to the medium economic class (73.57%) and high economic class (18.57%) This also justified by the response of 32.85% who signified that illicit drugs are not forbidden by law (table 4.2). Even though 50.71% accepted that illicit drugs have caused considerably high level of death and chronic ailments, 27.86% and 22.14% of them didn't agree that consumption of illicit drugs are detrimental to renal health nor mental health respectively.

However, table 4.2 still shows that 95% of respondents concur that using illicit substances in moderation is okay but that they shouldn't be overused, and that 68.57% concur that using them also leads to addiction and dependence on the drug. As a result, this can be aligned with figure 4.1, which indicates that overall, 77.43% of people have good understanding of illicit drug usage whereas the remaining 22.57% have bad knowledge. This might also be seen as praise for the administration at Lead City University, who have consistently taught students and made it clear that drug misuse is unacceptable. The fact that 47.14% of respondents in table 4.3 said that being familiar with illicit drugs is an admirable trait and that illicit drugs are not harmful in any way (70%) while also saying that having favorites among the common illicit drugs is necessary demonstrates how many young people have turned to the unthinkable for exploration and fantasy. However, the majority of respondents disagreed when they said that eating snacks laced with illegal substances was bad (61.43%) and that hallucinations and other drug-related experiences are not cute (70.71%).

Many policies have been implemented by the school to conduct arbitrary drug tests on suspected individuals at unscheduled times in an effort to curb youthful exuberance and fantasy. However, this is evident from the results of this study, where figure 4.2 states that 57.36% of respondents have a positive attitude toward illicit drug use while the remaining 42.64% have a negative understanding of illicit drug use. As more steps are implemented by the university administration, this percentage will undoubtedly slant in the right direction. This is because figure 4.3 states that 72.86% of respondents have good perception towards illicit drug use while the remaining 27.14% account for the few that the school needs to work on their attitude towards illicit drug use.

## **Conclusion**

Drug usage may have a negative effect on the ability and capacity of the kidney, liver, brains, and central nervous system. In this study, it was found that while good knowledge of illicit drug use was obtained, good attitude toward drug use was not sufficient, despite respondents' agreement that drug addiction is regrettable in the long run, which suggests a higher value was obtained for good

perception towards illicit drug use.

### **Recommendation**

It is becoming ever more desirable to develop and expand awareness and enlightenment efforts among students of higher education given the high frequency of substance addiction among university students. This will increase their understanding, modify their outlook, and intensify a favorable picture of the harmful effects of using illicit drugs. Students who commit similar crimes in the future should experience more humiliating and long-lasting reprimands, as well as involve their families and peers to encourage others to refrain from such crimes.

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