

Factors Influencing Drug Abuse among Youth in Wadajir District Mogadishu, Somalia

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Publication Date: 2025/04/19

Abstract: Drug abuse among adolescents is a critical global issue, particularly in regions like Wadajir district, Mogadishu, Somalia, where unemployment, poverty, and prolonged conflict exacerbate the problem. This study investigates the factors influencing drug abuse among youth in this area, highlighting the role of peer pressure, family dynamics, and socio-economic conditions. The increasing use of substances such as tramadol is linked to socio-economic instability and rising crime rates. Despite its urgency, comprehensive research on Somali youth and drug abuse remains limited, employing a descriptive cross-sectional design, the study targets 200 participants affected by drug abuse, selected through convenient random sampling. Data collection will utilize structured questionnaires, analyzed using SPSS, with results presented through descriptive statistics. The study emphasizes reliability and validity while acknowledging limitations such as lack of resources and transportation challenges. Ethical considerations, including participant privacy and informed consent, are prioritized, the findings aim to inform evidence-based prevention and rehabilitation programs tailored to the needs of Wadajir youth. By examining the interplay of environmental, socio-economic, and demographic factors, this research seeks to empower youth and their families, ultimately fostering healthier communities and improving the well-being of Somali adolescents.

Keywords: Drug Abuse, Adolescents, Wadajir District, Mogadishu, Somalia, Socio-Economic Factors, Peer Pressure, Rehabilitation Programs, Public Health, Youth, Substance Abuse, Poverty, Unemployment, Qualitative Research, Community Health.

How to Cite: Dr. Abdirahman Moalim Hassan Ibraim (2025). Factors Influencing Drug Abuse among Youth in Wadajir District Mogadishu, Somalia. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 10(4), 540-545. <https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25apr749>

I. INTRODUCTION

➤ *The Study Objective*

The primary objective of this study is to assess the prevalence and factors associated with drug abuse among youth in the Wadajir district of Mogadishu, Somalia. This includes identifying the types of substances commonly abused, understanding the socio-economic and psychological factors contributing to drug use, and evaluating the impact of drug abuse on the community and individual health outcomes. The study aims to provide valuable insights that can inform interventions and policies aimed at reducing drug abuse and supporting affected youth in the region.

II. METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used to achieve the study's objectives, focusing on youth affected by drug abuse in the Wadajir district of Mogadishu, Somalia. The research design employs a descriptive and cross-sectional approach, utilizing questionnaires for data collection. The target population consists of 400 youth participants, selected for their insights on drug abuse factors. Using Slovin's Formula, with a target population of 400 and a margin of error of 0.05, the sample

size is determined to be 200. Systematic sampling will be employed to ensure unbiased data collection. A questionnaire with close-ended questions will be used for quantitative data, which will be processed using SPSS, with results presented in tables and charts. The study will ensure reliability and validity through careful design and evaluation. Limitations include challenges such as limited access to data sources, transportation issues, and time constraints. Ethical considerations will be prioritized by respecting participants' privacy and obtaining informed consent. This methodology aims to provide comprehensive insights into the factors influencing drug abuse among youth in the targeted area.

This article reviews the existing literature on drug abuse among youth, particularly focusing on the Wadajir district of Mogadishu, Somalia. Drug abuse is a pressing public health issue that significantly impacts adolescents, who are particularly vulnerable to a variety of risk factors. Understanding the complexities surrounding youth drug use is essential for formulating effective prevention and intervention strategies. The interplay of sociodemographic, socioeconomic, and environmental factors contributes to the patterns of substance abuse observed in this demographic. (CDC., CDC., 2022))

Research indicates that the initiation of drug use often occurs during adolescence, a critical developmental period characterized by emotional and social vulnerabilities. Commonly abused substances among young people include alcohol, marijuana, prescription drugs, and nicotine. Early exposure to these substances can have long-lasting detrimental effects on cognitive and emotional development. Therefore, targeted prevention programs aimed at adolescents are crucial for reducing the rates of substance abuse. ((NIDA), 2023))

Drug abuse, also known as substance use disorder, refers to the harmful use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Among youth, this issue is particularly concerning due to the significant impact on their physical, mental, and social well-being, especially during the vulnerable developmental stage of adolescence. The initiation and continued use of substances during this time can lead to severe long-term consequences, underscoring the urgency of understanding the complex interplay of factors contributing to drug abuse among young people. ((NIDA), 2023))

Research highlights that sociodemographic factors—such as age, gender, and education—play a crucial role in shaping drug use patterns. Adolescents, typically between the ages of 12 and 18, are especially susceptible to peer pressure, curiosity, and emotional challenges, which can lead to experimentation with substances like alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs. Gender differences also emerge, with males generally exhibiting higher rates of substance use, though females may face more severe consequences due to their physiological and psychological vulnerabilities. (CDC), 2022))

Socioeconomic factors, including income level, family structure, and unemployment, further complicate this issue. Youth from lower-income backgrounds often encounter increased stressors and limited access to resources, which can drive them toward substance use as a coping mechanism. Dysfunctional family dynamics, characterized by neglect or parental substance abuse, also elevate the risk of drug experimentation among adolescents. Additionally, unemployment can foster feelings of hopelessness and frustration, leading young people to seek solace in drugs. (Grella, 2018)

Environmental factors, such as neighborhood characteristics and peer influence, are pivotal in shaping youth drug abuse patterns. Communities with high crime rates and limited social cohesion may normalize drug use, making it more accessible. Peer pressure can strongly influence adolescent decisions, often pushing individuals toward substance use for social acceptance. Furthermore, rising healthcare costs can deter young people from seeking help for substance abuse, exacerbating the issue. (Schuster, 2017)

Understanding these multifaceted factors is essential for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies to combat drug abuse among youth. By addressing the diverse influences that drive substance use, communities can foster healthier environments and support systems that promote resilience and well-being among young individuals. (Greenfield, 2019)

Gender differences also play a significant role in drug abuse patterns. Studies show that while men are generally more likely to engage in substance use, women may experience more severe health consequences from their drug use. Addressing these gender-specific issues through tailored treatment approaches is vital for fostering effective recovery (Harris et al., 2022).

Educational attainment is another important factor influencing substance abuse among youth. Young individuals with lower levels of education are often at an increased risk of drug use due to limited opportunities and negative coping mechanisms. Comprehensive drug education programs focusing on decision-making skills and resilience can significantly reduce the likelihood of substance experimentation (Thomas, 2007).

Drug misuse is strongly associated with socioeconomic issues, including family structure and income level. Higher stressors, such as unstable finances and restricted access to healthcare, are often experienced by people from lower-income backgrounds, making them more susceptible to drug use (World Health Organization, 2010). On the other hand, open communication and supportive family contexts can operate as barriers against substance usage (Cotto et al., 2010).

Because the stress of unemployment can cause people to turn to drugs for relief, unemployment is a major factor in drug misuse. According to the Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality (2020), this cycle of substance misuse and unemployment can make rehabilitation more difficult and limit prospects for employment in the future. Drug misuse tendencies are significantly shaped by neighborhood features as well. While communities with good social cohesion might assist decrease these hazards, areas characterized by poverty and social disarray tend to have greater rates of substance use (NIDA, 2021). Another significant influence is peer pressure, which makes teenagers feel pressured to adopt the habits of their peers, which increases substance use (Schulenberg et al., 2020).

Lastly, many people are discouraged from getting the help they require because of the significant medical expenses linked to substance use problems. Drug usage risks are increased by limited access to mental health care, especially for young people from underprivileged families (Kalin, 2020). Developing successful ways to treat drug usage among kids in the Wadajir district requires a thorough understanding of these interrelated elements.

Table 1 Demographic Information

Category	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Age Group	Under 18	40	20%
	18-24	100	50%
	25-34	40	20%
	35 and above	20	10%
	Total	200	100%
Gender	Male	120	60%
	Female	80	40%
	Total	200	100%
Level of literate	High secondary school	90	45%
	Under graduate level	80	40%
	Postgraduate level	20	10%
	Doctorate level	10	5%
	Total	200	100%
Occupation	Student	100	50%
	Academic	50	25%
	Healthcare worker	30	15%
	Other	20	10%
	Total	200	100%

The demographic information collected in the survey provides insights into the characteristics of the youth participating in the study. The majority of respondents were aged between 15 and 24 years, representing a critical age range for the onset of substance use. Gender distribution was fairly balanced, with both males and females participating in

similar numbers. Additionally, the participants came from diverse backgrounds, including various socioeconomic statuses and educational levels. This demographic diversity is significant as it allows for a comprehensive understanding of how different factors may affect perceptions and experiences related to drug abuse.

Table 2 Factors Influencing Drug Abuse

Category	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Availability of Drugs	Very high Available	30	15%
	High Available	50	25%
	Moderate Available	80	40%
	Low Available	30	15%
	Very low Available	10	5%
	Total	200	100%
Observed Drug-Related Activities	Yes	120	60%
	No	80	40%
	Total	200	100%
Economic Conditions of Youth	Very poor	50	25%
	Poor	70	35%
	Average	50	25%
	Good	20	10%
	Very good	10	5%
	Total	200	100%
Unemployment Contribution	Strongly approve	90	45%
	Approve	70	35%
	Neutral	30	15%
	Differ	5	2.5%
	Strongly differ	5	2.5%
	Total	200	100%

Several factors were identified as influential in the context of drug abuse among the youth surveyed. Peer pressure emerged as a prominent factor, with many respondents indicating that the influence of friends significantly impacted their decisions regarding substance use.

Additionally, family dynamics, including parental involvement and attitudes towards drugs, were noted as critical elements affecting youth behavior. Environmental factors, such as availability and accessibility of substances, also played a significant role in influencing drug use. Furthermore, psychological well-being problems, including strain and apprehension, were frequently cited as underlying

causes that lead to substance abuse as a coping mechanism. Overall, these factors highlight the complex interplay of

social, familial, and individual influences that contribute to drug abuse among young people.

Table 3 General Perceptions of Drug Abuse

Substance Abused	Frequency	Percentage
Alcohol	120	60%
Cannabis	80	40%
Tramadol	50	25%
Khat	60	30%
Other	20	10%
Total	200	100%

The survey on general perceptions of drug abuse among youth revealed a solid mindfulness of the risks associated with substance use, particularly regarding alcohol then cannabis, which were identified as the most commonly abused substances. Respondents recognized drug abuse as a serious issue in their communities and emphasized the importance of effective interventions and support systems,

such as educational programs and community initiatives. Additionally, many believed that increased access to mental health services could significantly help reduce drug abuse, highlighting the link between mental health and substance use. Overall, the findings reflect a mix of awareness and concern, underscoring the need for ongoing education and resources to address drug abuse among young people.

Table 4 Awareness of Risks Associated with Drug Abuse

Awareness Level	Frequency	Percentage
Very aware	60	30%
Somewhat aware	70	35%
Neutral	30	15%
Somewhat unaware	20	10%
Very unaware	20	10%
Total	200	100%

This table summarizes the responses regarding how aware youth are of the risks associated with drug abuse.

In the survey regarding the awareness of risks associated with drug abuse, responses were collected from 200 participants. The findings revealed that 30% (60 participants) reported being very aware of the risks, while 35% (70

participants) were somewhat aware. A neutral stance was taken by 15% (30 participants), and 10% (20 participants) felt somewhat unaware. Finally, 10% (20 participants) indicated that they were very unaware of the risks associated with drug abuse. Overall, these responses highlight a significant awareness among youth, but also indicate that a considerable portion remains unaware of the associated dangers.

Table 5 Interventions and Support

Effective Interventions	Frequency	Percentage
Educational programs	100	50%
Community support groups	60	30%
Access to rehabilitation services	50	25%
Employment opportunities	70	35%
Other	20	10%
Total	200	100%

The survey also assessed perceptions regarding effective interventions to reduce drug abuse among youth. A total of 200 responses were analyzed, with 50% (100 participants) identifying educational programs as a key intervention. Community support groups were deemed effective by 30% (60 participants), while access to rehabilitation services was supported by 25% (50

participants). Additionally, 35% (70 participants) recognized employment opportunities as important, and 10% (20 participants) mentioned other interventions. These results emphasize the importance of a multifaceted approach, combining education, community support, and access to services to effectively combat drug abuse.

Table 6 Access to Mental Health Services Could Reduce Drug Abuse

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly approve	80	40%
Approve	70	35%
Neutral	30	15%
Differ	15	7.5%

Strongly differ	5	2.5%
Total	200	100%

Regarding the potential impact of increased access to mental health services on reducing drug abuse, the survey gathered responses from 200 individuals. It was found that 40% (80 participants) strongly agreed that such access could be beneficial, while 35% (70 participants) agreed. A neutral position was expressed by 15% (30 participants), and 7.5% (15 participants) disagreed. Only 2.5% (5 members) powerfully disagreed with the idea. These findings suggest a strong belief in the positive role that mental health services can play in addressing drug abuse among youth, highlighting the need for enhanced access to these vital resources.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study results provide an in-depth perspective on substance abuse among young people, revealing their understanding of the associated risks and the extent of drug use.

The majority of respondents were aged between 15 and 24 years, representing 50% of the sample. Specifically, 20% were under 18, 20% were aged 25-34, and 10% were 35 and above. Gender distribution was fairly balanced, with 60% male (120 respondents) and 40% female (80 respondents). The diversity in socioeconomic backgrounds and educational levels among respondents is noteworthy, as it allows for a comprehensive understanding of how various factors may influence experiences and perceptions related to drug abuse. For example, 45% had completed high secondary school, 40% were at the undergraduate level, and 5% held doctorate degrees.

Several key factors were identified as influential in drug abuse among the surveyed youth. Peer pressure emerged as a significant factor, with many respondents acknowledging that friends greatly impacted their decisions regarding substance use. Regarding the availability of drugs, 15% reported them as very high, 25% as high, 40% as moderately available, 15% as low, and 5% as very low. Family dynamics, such as parental involvement and attitudes towards drugs, were critical elements affecting youth behavior. Psychological well-being was also highlighted, with many participants citing stress and anxiety as underlying causes that lead to substance abuse as a coping mechanism.

The survey revealed a strong awareness of the risks associated with substance use, particularly regarding alcohol and cannabis, identified as the most commonly abused substances. Specifically, 60% of respondents reported alcohol use, 40% cannabis, 25% tramadol, and 30% khat. Respondents recognized drug abuse as a serious issue within their communities and highlighted the importance of effective interventions and support systems, such as educational programs and community initiatives. Many believed that improved access to mental health services could significantly aid in reducing drug abuse, indicating a clear link between mental health and substance use.

Responses regarding awareness of the risks associated with drug abuse showed that 30% (60 participants) were very aware, 35% (70 participants) were somewhat aware, 15% (30 participants) remained neutral, 10% (20 participants) were somewhat unaware, and 10% (20 participants) indicated they were very unaware. This highlights both a commendable level of awareness among youth and a critical need for ongoing education to address the knowledge gaps that still exist.

When assessing perceptions of effective interventions to reduce drug abuse, 50% (100 participants) identified educational programs as a key strategy. Community support groups were deemed effective by 30% (60 participants), while access to rehabilitation services was supported by 25% (50 participants). Additionally, 35% (70 participants) recognized employment opportunities as important, emphasizing the necessity for a multifaceted approach that combines education, community support, and access to vital services to effectively combat drug abuse.

The survey revealed strong support for the notion that increased access to mental health services could reduce drug abuse, with 40% (80 participants) strongly agreeing and 35% (70 participants) agreeing. A neutral position was expressed by 15% (30 participants), while 7.5% (15 participants) disagreed, and only 2.5% (5 participants) strongly disagreed. These findings suggest a widespread belief in the positive impact that mental health resources can have on addressing substance use issues among youth, emphasizing the need for enhanced access to these critical services.

In conclusion, the findings underscore the importance of understanding the diverse factors influencing drug abuse among youth and highlight the necessity for comprehensive strategies that address education, community support, and mental health access. Ongoing efforts are required to enhance awareness and provide the resources needed to combat this pressing issue.

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