A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW ON THE EFFECTS OF PTSD ASSOCIATED ALCOHOL ABUSE ON SOCIAL ECONOMIC STATUS AMONG YOUTH IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The issue of alcohol abuse in Kenya is deeply rooted and continues to affect the well-being of youth populations. A study conducted in 2018, estimated 45-50% alcohol-abusing youth in Kiambu County had post-traumatic stress disorder. The main purpose of this paper is to review and synthesize existing literature articles on the effects of PTSD associated Alcohol Abuse in Kenya’s context. The review shows that PTSD related to alcohol abuse, though not well studied in Kenya is a real challenge facing the youth. It affects their learning processes and their transition to colleges and other institutions of higher learning. Alcohol abuse also affects employment prospects for the youth and leads to impoverishment. It also challenges the productivity and entrepreneurial capacities of these youth, leading to further impoverishment and reduced socioeconomic prospects. On the basis of these findings, it is pertinent to come up with psychosocial support mechanisms for alcohol abusers suffering from PTSD. The government should put in place funding strategies for the rehabilitation of youth suffering from PTSD. Also, government empowerment programmes in Kenya should ensure that the youth with PTSD related alcohol abuse can access funding to enhance their socioeconomic status.

Keywords: Alcohol Abuse, PTSD, Socio-Economic Status, Youth in Kenya

I. INTRODUCTION

Research shows that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is often linked with alcohol abuse. Khoury et al. (2010) posits that exposure to traumatic experiences has positive linkages with substance use disorders (SUDs). This is more severe among the young. In the study, Khoury found out that in highly traumatized population, there were high levels of lifetime dependence on various substances. In such populations, the most abused substances were marijuana (44.8%), alcohol (39%), cocaine (34.1%) and heroin/opiates (6.2%). This leads to the impoverishment of the populations that abuse such substances.

In South Korea, Emery et al. (2016) PTSD related and non-PTSD related alcohol abuse pushed families to put in place mechanisms aimed at controlling physical intimate partner violence (IPV). Random effects regression and zero-inflated Poisson Regression models show that family members’ interventions checked the negative effects of such alcohol abuse such as wastage of family resources. In a study focused on a sample of 171 African American women, Watson-Singleton et al. (2019) show that alcohol abuse is catalysed by IPV as well as PTSD and that this mediated by other psychosocial factors.

Magidson et al. (2016) argue that PTSD experiences led to increases in alcohol and drug abuse among adolescence (16-18 years) in Johannesburg, South Africa. Indeed, exposure to violence, other traumatic experiences, and sexual activity were related to alcoholism in females and males. This went on to affect the future of teenagers as well as their well-being.

Adere et al. (2017) in South Africa posits that some of the catalysts of psychoactive substance use among students of Woldia University in Ethiopia were traumatic experiences as well as challenges related to their background such as poverty. The study shows that continuous abuse of these substances had lasting effects on the socio-economic well-being of the children studied.

In Liberia, Petruzzi (2018) posits that exposure to substance abuse has risks such as emotional instability, academic failure, and community poverty. Although the study was not directly linked to PTSD, it shows that alcohol abuse, irrespective of its causes, was closely linked to success in poverty at individual and community levels.

In Lebanon, a study by Yassin et al. (2018) based on the social ecology framework shows that alcohol use is a result of various social relations and lax policies. It was also attributable to personal challenges such as exposure to PTSD among other challenges. Maniglio (2016) shows that peer victimization and other challenges in the lives of teenagers such as PTSD and family background contributed to alcohol use and misuse.
Smith et al. (2017) show that PTSD and depression play a major role as links have positive influences on work and family outcomes as well as alcohol abuse. Ruglass et al. (2016) show that there is a positive association of cumulative trauma, PTSD, and substance use disorder (SUD) and arrest probability among the socioeconomically disadvantaged African-American and Latino mothers. This went on to affect their social-economic statuses.

A study by Karsberg and Elklit (2015) on “Victimization and PTSD in a rural Kenyan youth sample” posits that exposure of Potentially Traumatic Events (PTEs) and Post Traumatic Distress Disorder (PTSD) prevalence among adolescents leads to alcohol abuse; which may have lasting effects in their future such financial instability.

As shown in the preceding discourse there is a positive link between PTSD related alcohol abuse and socioeconomic challenges and impoverishment. This current study sets out to carry out a systematic review of the effects of PTSD associated alcohol abuse on social-economic status among youth in Kenya.

1.2 Problem Statement

There is a plethora of literature on PTSD related alcohol abuse and its negative effect on the socioeconomic well-being among the youth. Most extant literature focuses on various parts of the world but not Kenya. Although studies have been undertaken in Kenya, most studies do not relate PTSD and alcohol abuse and by extension, socioeconomic status. This leaves a key knowledge lacuna about the effect of PTSD related alcohol abuse on the socioeconomic status of alcohol-abusing youth in Kenya. Without studies such as this current one, it may remain untenable to bridge this gap. Consequently, the government and psychosocial support professional would remain at a loss on how to best mitigate the negative influences of alcohol abuse on the socioeconomic status of youth with PTSD. This would challenge the economic development of the country since the input of every person is necessary. This study set out to bridge this knowledge gap.

1.3 Research Objective

Find out the effect of PTSD related alcohol abuse on the socioeconomic status of alcohol-abusing youth in Kenya.

1.4 Review Themes

- PTSD Related Alcohol Abuse
- Socioeconomic Status
- Youths in Kenya

1.5 Significance

The issue of alcohol abuse in Kenya is deeply rooted and has continued to affect the well-being of the youthful population. This study could enable psychosocial support professionals come up with tangible ways of helping youth with PTSD. The government could also learn how to put in place policy measures aimed at helping persons who suffer from PSTD. This would control their propensity to take to alcohol abuse. Other researchers and scholars could also benefit from this study through increased literature. Non-state actors could also garner valuable information that could guide their programming processes.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

This study is based on The Social-Ecological Model (SEM). The Social-Ecological Model (SEM) as expounded by Stokols (1996) is a theory-based framework that considers the multifaceted and interactive effects of personal and environmental factors that determine behaviours. It can be argued that five nested, hierarchical levels of the SEM namely: individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, and policy/enabling environment predict behaviour. Within the scope of this study, it can be claimed that individual factors related to traumatic experiences and PTSD could affect alcohol abuse behaviours of the youth. As conceptualized by this current study, the presence of traumatic experiences at community and family levels could contribute to the likelihood of the youth to abuse alcohol and drugs; which could affect their socioeconomic status.

2.2 Empirical Review

Adere et al. (2017) carried out a study titled “Determinants of psychoactive substances use among Woldia University students in North-Eastern Ethiopia”. The study sought to find out the levels and catalysts of psychoactive substances use among students.
substance use among students of Woldia University in Ethiopia. Self-administered questionnaires in a sample of 730 students in April 2015 were used to carry out an institutional based quantitative cross-sectional study. Data analysis using SPSS version 20 shows that there was a high prevalence of psychoactive substance use among students with histories of PSTD in Woldia University.

Petruzzi (2018) studied “Contributing Risk Factors for Substance Use among Youth in Post-conflict Liberia”. The study used qualitative methods to determine the risks associated with substance abuse in public school students in Liberia. Data was collected from a sample size of 72 students grouped into 9 focus group discussions. The findings show that exposure to substance abuse had risks such as emotional instability, academic failure, and community poverty. There was a positive link between substance use and PSTD.

Yassin et al. (2018) in “There Is Zero Regulation on the Selling of Alcohol”: The Voice of the Youth on the Context and Determinants of Alcohol Drinking in Lebanon sought to present an in-depth analysis of the patterns and determinants of youth alcohol drinking. Focused group discussions conducted in a sample of 100 students in Lebanon and analysed using the social ecology framework show that alcohol use is termed as a serious public health problem which is a result of various social relations and lax policies as well as PSTD among other causes.

Karsberg and Elklit (2015) carried out a study titled “Victimization and PTSD in A rural Kenyan youth sample.” This study focused on the provision of epidemiological information about the exposure of Potentially Traumatic Events (PTEs) and Post Traumatic Distress Disorder (PTSD) prevalence among adolescents through replication of six previous non-clinical studies in Denmark, Iceland, Lithuania, Faroe Islands, Israel, and India. The research methods were similar in all countries. The findings show that there is a complex interaction of variables that lead to this disorder. Irrespective of its cause PSTD was also linked to alcohol abuse as well as the socioeconomic outcomes of abusers.

Brown et al. (2016) carried out a study titled “Neuroticism and Its Associated Brain Activation in Women with PTSD”. This study focused on the examination of previously established neural correlates of neuroticism. A sample size of 61 women was used whereby 48 had interpersonal violence (IPV) and PTSD and 13 were healthy. The findings show that women who had PTSD experienced higher neuroticism levels than the healthy women. PSTD also contributed to increases in alcohol among such women.

Smith et al. (2017) carried out a study on “The Role of PTSD, Depression, and Alcohol Misuse Symptom Severity in Linking Deployment Stressor Exposure and Post-Military Work and Family Outcomes in Male and Female Veterans.” The study focused on the relationship between deployment stressors to work and family outcomes and post-military functioning and satisfaction with a focus on PTSD, depression, and alcohol misuse. A sample of 522 veterans was assessed longitudinally by the use of structural equation models. The findings show that PTSD and depression play a major role as links between deployment stressors to work and family outcomes.

Ruglass et al. (2016) studied “Direct and Indirect Effects of Cumulative Trauma, PTSD, and Substance Use Disorder on Probability of Arrest among Lower-Income African American and Latina Women”. This study focused on the association of cumulative trauma, PTSD, and substance use disorder (SUD) and arrest probability among the socioeconomically disadvantaged African-American and Latino mothers. A sample size of 158 was used. Secondary analysis of the cross-sectional data done. The findings after logistic regression show that 34% of the respondents had arrest history and cumulative trauma was associated with probabilities of the arrest. The findings also show that PTSD and SUD influenced these traumas and the probability of arrests.

Brown et al. (2014) carried a study titled “Affective Dispositions and PTSD Symptom Clusters in Female Interpersonal Trauma Survivors.” The focus of this study is to compare self-reported trait negative affect (NA) and positive affect (PA) as a predictor of PTSD in 54 female survivors of Interpersonal Trauma (IPT) who met the Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS). The findings show that NA is a consistent cause of PTSD symptoms, unlike PA.

Pollard and McKinney carried out a study titled “Parental Physical Force and Alcohol Use in Emerging Adults: Mediation by Psychological Problems”. This study aimed at examining the effects parental physical force has on emerging adult functioning specifically alcohol and psychological problems. Data collection was through questionnaires administered to a sample of 488 young adults. The findings show that there is a direct link between parental physical force and adult emerging alcohol and psychological problems. Though directly focused on PSTD, the findings of the study show traumatic events in one’s childhood fed into the propensity to abuse alcohol.

Ferrajão and Oliveira (2015) studied “Portuguese War Veterans: Moral Injury and Factors Related to Recovery from PTSD.” The study focused on the factors attributed to recovery from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) by a sample of 60 Portuguese war veterans. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using thematic and categorical analysis. The findings show that unrecovered veterans showed a higher rate of
post-war betrayal, social stigmatization, lack of personal support, and lack of persona resources. These veterans were also likely to abuse alcohol compared to their counterparts who were not suffering from PTSD.

Arbona and Schwartz (2016) did a study titled “Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptom Clusters, Depression, Alcohol Abuse, and General Stress among Hispanic Male Fire-fighters.” This study aimed at examining the association of four posttraumatic stress disorders (PTSD) symptom clusters in the Dysphoria factor model to depression, substance abuse, and general stress. The sample size was 551 Hispanic male firefighters in a United States city. The analysis is done through bivariate correlations and regression analyses show that approximately 11% of the participants had a high rate of PTSD.

Breet, Seedat, and Kagee (2016) carried out a study titled “Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Depression in Men and Women Who Perpetrate Intimate Partner Violence.” The study aimed at examining the prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) perpetrated by men and women and the association between symptoms of depression or posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and IPV perpetration between men and women. Data were collected through self-report questionnaires administered to a sample size of 210 people from three peri-urban areas in South Africa. The findings show that gender differences were not a contributing factor to physical assault and psychological aggression.

Riber (2017) carried out a study titled “Trauma complexity and child abuse: A qualitative study of attachment narratives in adult refugees with PTSD.” The study sought to identify the types of trauma in the lives of refugees and to explore their experiences of maltreatment during childhood. Interviews using a “Trauma Coding Manual” were conducted in a sample size of 43 adults drawn from Arabic-speaking refugees with PTSD receiving treatment in Denmark. The findings show high levels of trauma and childhood maltreatment (63%) in refugees with Iraqi and Palestinian-Lebanese backgrounds.

Hollingsworth et al. (2018) carried out a study titled “Intolerance of Uncertainty Mediates Symptoms of PTSD and Depression in African American Veterans with Comorbid PTSD and Substance Use Disorders.” This study aimed at examining intolerance of uncertainty as a mediator between PTSD and depression. The study sampled 113 African American veterans being treated with PTSD and substance use disorders (SUD) at a Veterans Affairs Medical Centre. After conducting five mediation analyses, the findings show that African American Veterans displayed higher levels of PTSD which was associated with higher levels of intolerance uncertainty.

Nöthling et al. (2016) carried out a study titled “Differences in Abuse, Neglect, and Exposure to Community Violence in Adolescents with and Without PTSD and Depression.” The study aimed to assess the contribution and differences of demographic factors, trauma, community violence, and types of abuse and neglect in the prediction of PTSD levels among participants with and without this disorder. The study area was the Western Cape region in South Africa where a sample of 215 adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems was selected. After clinical assessments and regression analysis, the findings show that adolescents with a history of trauma, depression, and PTSD had a higher level of emotional abuse and community violence exposure in comparison to those who were exposed to trauma but did not have these disorders.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a systematic review approach with data being collected from existing literature articles. Employing qualitative meta-synthesis, this paper reviews various effects of alcohol use and its relationship with PTSD.

3.2 Inclusion Criterion
Be based on primary data
Between 2016-2020
Focused on youth (18-35 years) in Kenya

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Various studies were reviewed. These were drawn from over relevant 30 studies. Most of these were excluded and 5 of them analysed. PSTD related alcohol abuse was recorded by Kinyua et al. (2019) in “Socio-economic Factors Influencing Alcohol and Substance Abuse among College Students in Murang’a County, Kenya”. A sample of 417 students from 5 colleges was selected using descriptive cross-sectional research design, stratified sampling, and systematic random sampling. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used where data was collected using
structured questionnaires and analysed using SPSS version 23 and chi-square test. The findings show that there is a need to increase awareness of alcohol resulting from PSTD and its effects such as diminishing socioeconomic impacts.

Chege, Mungai, and Oresi (2017) in “An Investigation of the Factors Contributing to Drug and Substance Abuse among the Youth in Kenya: A Survey of Select Rehabilitation Centres in Mombasa County” sampled 89 students. Data was collected using questionnaires and analysed using SPSS Version 21 and descriptive and inferential statistics. Students suffering from PSTD were more prone to abuse drugs compared to those not doing so. High levels of substance abuse challenge the performance of students and could have long-lasting implications on the socioeconomic status of the students.

Jenkins et al studied “PSTD in Kenya and Its Associated Risk Factors: A Cross-Sectional Household Survey.” The findings show that 48% have experience of severe trauma and a 10.6% prevalence of PTSD which indicates a prevalence of PTSD in rural Kenya. The risk factors included being female, single, self-employed, previous life experiences, and having a common mental disorder (CMD). Those who took to alcohol as a coping mechanism ended up more impoverished than those who did not do so. This emanates from the fact that alcohol abuse reduced their abilities to work or access other socioeconomic opportunities.

Mbwayo et al. (2020) carried out a study titled “Trauma among Kenyan School Children in Urban and Rural Settings: PTSD Prevalence and Correlates”. This study focused on estimating the prevalence and correlates of PTSD during the post-election violence period among Kenyan school children. The UCLA PTSD index was used in data collection and analysis in a sample of 2482 school children aged 11-17 years both in urban and rural Kenya. The findings show that a majority of these children had experienced or witnessed a form of violence during this period translating to high levels of PTSD. They went on to be more prone to poverty and missed opportunities due to the propensity to abuse alcohol and other hard drugs.

Kiambi (2018) carried out a study titled “Factors Influencing Drugs and Substance Abuse among Public Secondary School Students in Kiambu County, Kenya.” This study used the descriptive survey study design to achieve its objective. A sample of 140 respondents drawn from form three students and teachers using simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques was used during this study. Data was collected by the use of questionnaires, analysed using SPSS software version 21.0, and presented in the form of frequencies and percentages. The findings show that there is a high prevalence of the use of drugs and substance abuse among the student population, especially in the male students, and this behaviour was influenced by PTSD and peer pressure among others. Alcohol abuse had immense negative socioeconomic ramifications on the abusers especially after school due to the likelihood to score poor grades; affecting their transition to higher levels of learning.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study shows that PSTD related to alcohol abuse, though not well studied in Kenya is a real challenge facing the youth. It affects their learning processes. This affects their transition to colleges and other institutions of higher learning. Alcohol abuse also affects employment prospects for the youth and leads to impoverishment.

5.2 Recommendations

It is pertinent to come up with psychosocial support mechanisms for alcohol abusers suffering from PSTD. The government should put in place funding strategies for the rehabilitation of youth suffering from PSTD. Also, government empowerment programs in Kenya should factor in mechanisms for ensuring that the youth with PSTD related alcohol abuse can access funding to enhance their socioeconomic status.

REFERENCES


