

# Substance Abuse and its Impacts on Undergraduate Student's Academic Performance (Students of Adama Science and Technology University in Focus)

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## ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of the substance abuse on Adama Science and Technology University (ASTU) undergraduate students' academic performance. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods where purposive sampling was used. Data for the study was gathered using questionnaire, interview and documents obtained from health centers and local police office. In addition, focus group discussions were also made with selected students. The data analysis was triangulated to obtain meaningful results. The analysis showed that about 62% of the students abused khat, 51.1% of the students abused cigarettes and 26.1% of them abused alcohol. The percentage of students who chew khat between 5-20 days/month was found to be 46.3, and the remaining 15.7% abused khat for more than 21-days in a month. The study also revealed that students in the first year of their study abused mainly khat but they got in to abusing other substances too as they progressed through their study in the University. It was noted that most students who chew khat did not regularly go to classes and that had an adverse impact on their academic performance. 61.9% of the khat chewing students were absent from class and 43.5% had lost interest in their daily activities because of drug abuse. On the contrary, the study also showed that the students who chew khat since their primary education stage were so much habituated that they could not perform well in studies unless they chew khat. It is recommended that the University should raise awareness of all students during the orientation week about the ill effects of drug abuse and make strict rules and host guidelines on student's code of conduct for eliminating drug abuse from the campus. University should also encourage students, admissions and registration office to monitor students' performance on a regular basis and provide one on one help to drug abusers. University may also consider starting a 'student consular cell' backed by team of professionals who may help the affected students to come out of the drug abuse.

**Keywords:** Substance Abuse, Drug Abuse, Engineering and Technology, Undergraduate Students, Khat and Alcohol

## I. INTRODUCTION

Substance abuse has been a growing problem in sub-Saharan countries, as in many developing countries. It is well known that substance use among Ethiopian adolescents is considerably rising. Of the young segment of the Ethiopian population, college and university students are at the highest risk of substance abuse (Kebede, 2002). Upon joining university, students undergo rapid mental, social, and cultural transitions and this together with new environment where there is poor protection, the need to explore life;

peer pressure, age, and absence of proactive programs make them vulnerable to use substances like alcohol, khat, cigarette and illicit drugs. While it may be argued that students consume these substances for personal pleasure, releasing tension, staying awake to finish academic tasks and/or to cope up with work pressure; sooner or later they get addicted to these substances which affect their academic performance, physical health and economic wellbeing, besides encouraging them to have unsafe sex that put them to increased risk of unintended pregnancy and/or related reproductive health infections etc. Even though substance abuse has

become a common problem among university students in Ethiopia, the effect that these substances have on their academic performance is not well explored yet (Deresse, et.al, 2011).

Adama Science and Technology University (ASTU), Ethiopia, is producing scientists and engineers to meet the growing and ever changing demand of Ethiopian industry for more than 10-years now. Currently, it is aggressively working to become a center of excellence for research, tertiary education and training to maintain a continuous supply of trained manpower, equipped with critical thinking and problem solving capabilities, for sustainable development of the country. In addition, ASTU is currently undergoing a huge institutional transformation. One of the focal areas in the transformation is the academic and institutional life of students. In light of the above, this research project was specifically designed to study the occurrence and the impact of drug use on ASTU undergraduate students' academic performance, and suggest methodologies to curb drug abuse practices, if any, to enable students to utilize their full academic potential.

## II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Substance is defined as any material, natural or artificial, other than food that by its chemical nature, when absorbed into the body of a living organism, alters normal bodily function. It changes mood, perception or consciousness, Seyoum (1995). The common substances abused in most African countries including Ethiopia are: khat, alcohol, tobacco, cannabis or marihuana, hashish, diazepam, and shisha, (Odejide, 2006). Any attempt to answer the question why people take these "materials" has been a difficult undertaking. Of the young segment of the Ethiopian population, university students are the most at risk of using these stimulants in excessive quantities (a) because they are easily available and (b) it apparently helps them stay awake for long hours of study to "improve academic performance". Entering the university, often leads to new opportunities, independence from family control, self-decision making, and peer-pressures to use or abuse the drugs, (Grant at el 1991). To further explain the cause of a phenomenon such as substance abuse, a number of theories have been propounded. However in general it is stated that there are two absolutely necessary pre-conditions for use/abuse, (1) the predisposition or

motive or susceptibility, to do so, and (2) the availability of one or more psychoactive substances. Each of these conditions is necessary but not sufficient to explain the use or abuse. For example: If a substance is not available in a locality its use or abuse is impossible, likewise without predisposition to use, use/abuse is not possible, Kebede (2013).

Globally, there are about 190 million substance abusers. The impact of drug abuse and dependence can be far-reaching, affecting almost every organ in the human body. Drug use can: (a) Weaken the immune system, increasing susceptibility to infections, (b) Cause cardiovascular conditions ranging from abnormal heart rate to heart attacks. Injected drugs can also lead to collapsed veins and infections of the blood vessels and heart valves, (c) Cause nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain, (d) Drugs have also been shown to alter brain chemistry, which interferes with an individual's ability to make decisions and can lead to compulsive craving, seeking and use, US Department of Health (2014). It is reported that people who live with substance dependence have a higher risk of all bad outcomes including unintentional injuries, accidents, lower efficiency in work and home, risk of domestic violence, medical problems, and death, WHO Report (2010).

Recent trends indicate that the use of substances have dramatically increased particularly in developing countries. Some of these are summarized below:

### A. Khat

The use khat has been absorbed into many cultures through ceremonial, traditional or functional usage. Its use is socially accepted in some parts of Ethiopia like Harrar where khat chewing is considered a normal day-to-day activity by all levels of social and economic categories (Kebede, 2002). It is also a normal practice for students to openly request their parents to provide them with daily allowances to purchase khat. Local studies made by Tadesse (2013) have indicated that the prevalence of khat chewing, particularly among college and university students was quite high, 28.7%, Gibrelassie (2013). In a recent survey conducted at Jimma University the prevalence of khat chewing observed was 33.1%. More khat use was seen among males (37.2%), Muslims (71.8%), Oromos (40.9%), students in the age group 25 - 30 (86.7%), medical students (58%) and final year students (61.5%), Zein (1988).

## B. Alcoholism

It is reported that alcoholic beverages are widely taken both among urban and rural dwellers in Ethiopia. Prevalence rates of 23 % and 34 % among adolescents were reported in Butajira and Addis Ababa, respectively, Alem et al (1999). Use of alcohol causes potential socio-economic problems and these abused substances make addicted individuals to commit criminal activities, Graves (1994).

Alcohol and drug use behaviors among university students have important implications for the welfare of the general population since the today's university students are the tomorrow's generation to own the country. Regarding the case of Ethiopia, no surprising that, the problem of alcohol and drug abuse is dramatically increasing, Fekadu et al (2007). Therefore, it is believed that, unless the causes, prevalence and consequences of alcohol and drug abuse is clearly identified, and corrective prevention and intervention is take place, it result in multidimensional (social, psychological, political and economical problems); attacking the country's young, productive and educated population.

## C. Tobacco Smoking

Tobacco use is one of the leading causes of preventable deaths in the world. A recent estimate revealed that, about 400 million adults worldwide will be killed by smoking alone between 2010 and 2050. Most of the deaths will occur in the age group 30–69 years, losing decades of productive life. Currently, tobacco use in Africa is increasing as the tobacco industry shifts its marketing focus from the West to “areas of strong growth” in Africa and Asia, WHO Report (2003).

Ethiopia is one of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa shares the burden of tobacco epidemics. The country is ranked at 66<sup>th</sup> in producing tobacco and contributing about 0.1 % to the world led by China, Brazil and India, Fact-Fish (2013). This study found that the national prevalence of tobacco use was 4.1 % in Ethiopia with 8.1 % for males and 0.8 % for females. Although the overall prevalence of tobacco use seems relatively low in Ethiopia, there are some regional states, namely Gambella, Harar, Dire Dawa, Afar and Somali that have higher prevalence of tobacco use, Central statistical Agency Survey (2011). Poorest

wealth quintile, older age groups, occupation type, child death experience, prevalence of Islam over other religion, male respondents, and being formerly married were statistically associated factors for tobacco use. Further smoking is viewed as a bad habit and taboo among Ethiopians. In Ethiopia, tobacco use in females is condemned by the community and results in stigma and discrimination. Females are more socially restricted than their male counterparts, Central Statistical Agency survey (2005). This logically reduces the chance of female tobacco use in Ethiopia.

It was noted that of the young segment of the Ethiopian population, college and university students are the most at risk of using alcohol and other drugs such as chewing khat and smoking tobacco/cigarette. Such habits also may be believed to be one of the factors associated with unprotected risky sexual behavior, predisposing the youth for HIV/AIDS transmission, Yaw Amoateng (2007). Furthermore, it exposes students to legal consequences, or jeopardizes their enrollment at the University.

## D. Cannabis/ Marijuana/Hashish and Shisha

Cannabis (*Cannabis sativa*) is a generic term used to denote the common hemp plant, cannabis sativa. They include marijuana leaf, hashish (derived from the resin of the flowering heads of the plant), and hashish oil, Alebachew (2014). Cannabis smoking involves many problems such as a motivational syndrome or cannabis burn out syndrome, which is characterized by decreased drive and ambition, shortened attention span, poor judgment, high distractibility, impaired communication skills, and diminished effectiveness in interpersonal situations, Mesfin et al (1999).

Shisha is the flavored tobacco used in smoking process using hookah water pipes, which are also called by other names such as Narghile, Hubble Bubble, and Goza. Shisha smokers regard shisha as another form of smoking which they use to pass time hobby, a bonding session or a social event, Ethiopia Forum (2012).

Shisha contains high levels of toxic compounds, including carbon monoxide, heavy metals, and cancer-causing chemicals. The charcoal used to heat tobacco in the shisha pipes increases the health risks and is known to cause lung, bladder and oral cancer, clogged arteries and other heart diseases even though the smoke

has passed through water. Shisha smoking deliver almost the same amount of nicotine as cigarettes do, leading to nicotine addiction. Some effects of shisha also includes: wrinkled skin, sexual impotence, etc.

Despite the fact that alcohol consumption, chewing khat chewing, cigarette smoking and abuse of other drugs have become common practice among college and university students in Ethiopia, there is little studies that have been conducted regarding the major causes, prevalence and consequences, especially their impact on academic performance of University students.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Survey Tools And Target Groups

Commensurate with the objective of this study, which was to explore the impacts of drug abuse on undergraduate students' academic performance, descriptive survey research method, as being more relevant was adopted, to conduct this exploration. The inherent advantage of this technique is that it facilitates gathering of data, describes events and then organizes, tabulates, and translates the data in summarized form. In regard to sampling, purposive sampling was used because of the convenience and the nature of participants. The names and other details of participating students were obtained from university campus police office, hospitals, health professionals and counselors as being those who were in their list as drug abuser. Besides, physical visits to coffee houses, small shops and other recreational centers in the vicinity of ASTU and Adama town were made to gather information on potential ASTU students' substance abusers and availability of substance(s). Of the listed students, only ninety two (92) students volunteered to participate in this study. These groups of students were from different batches, i.e. pre-engineering to the graduating students.

#### B. Questionnaire

A questionnaire was designed by the researchers on the basis of theoretical and empirical grounds about the type and frequency of drug use, risk factors, drug use behavior, lifetime and first time drug abuse, etc. The questionnaire, having 33 items, was distributed to 92 respondents and all of these responses were analyzed.

#### C. Interview

Interview was made with some selected subjects who volunteered for verbal and face to face discussion. No particular format was used for the interview. Semi-structured interview consisting of several key questions that helped to define the areas to be explored, but also allowed the interviewer or interviewee to diverge the information in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail were used.

It must be underscored here that the anonymity of all participating students' identity was maintained and they were assured that the information shall not be revealed to anybody.

#### D. Document Review And Workshop

The participant students' academic results were collected from the university registrar and were analyzed. Besides, panel discussions and workshops for education and training were organized to educate the students on the ill effects of drug abuse.

#### E. Methods Of Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the following two methods of data analysis:

- (a) Descriptive statistics, basically simple percentage were employed to describe the major causes, prevalence and the major consequences of substance abuse.
- (b) Open ended questions/items (regarding the causes, prevalence and consequences of substance abuse) were qualitatively analyzed.

### IV. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

#### A. Analysis and Interpretation of Questionnaire responses

##### A.1 Peer Pressure

TABLE I: STUDENTS RESPONSES ABOUT PEER PRESSURE

Statements	5		4		3		2		1	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%

Friends drink alcohol chew khat and use other drugs	21	22.8	24	26.1	14	15.2	17	18.5	16	17.4
Pressure from friends to use drugs	21	22.8	12	13	19	20.7	24	26.1	16	17.4

5= Strongly agree 4= Agree 3= Not decided 2= disagree

1= Strongly disagree

Results in table 1 indicate that 48.9% of the respondents agreed that their friends use drugs. However, the majority of the respondents (43.5%) indicated that they disagree that there is peer pressure. This means that if a student has a friend who abuses drug then he/she may not necessarily be influenced by the drug abusing friend to use drug.

#### A.2 Drug Use Behaviors and Practice

It may be seen from table 2 that of the 92 students surveyed only 83, 80 and 69 students responded to the question on using khat, cigarette and alcohol respectively. The percentage of students using khat, cigarette and alcohol was 62, 51.1 and 26.1 respectively. It implies that some students abuse more than one of

TABLE II: RESPONSES OF STUDENTS ABOUT THEIR DRUG USE BEHAVIOR AND PRACTICE

Question Items	Responses	F	%
Do you chew Khat?	Yes	57	62
	No	26	28.3

Question Items	Responses	F	%
Do you smoke Cigarette?	Yes	47	51.1
	No	33	35.9

Question Items	Responses	F	%
Do you drink Alcohol?	Yes	24	26.1
	No	45	48.9

the above substances. It can also be inferred that Khat is the most preferred substance in the University

#### A.3 Reasons for Drug Abuse

TABLE III: REASONS FOR DRUG ABUSE

Why do you chew Khat?	F	%	Why do you drink Alcohol?	F	%
To pass the time	14	15.2	To pass the time	5	5.4
To stay awake	17	18.5	To fight depression	9	9.8
To socialize	9	9.8	To forget my problem	17	18.5
I'm addicted	12	13	To socialize	14	15.2
-	-	-	I am addicted	7	7.6

Table 3 shows the data in regard to the reasons given by the respondents for abusing khat and alcohol. From the above it may be inferred that only 56.5% students responded for stating their reasons for abusing khat. The reasons for khat abuse given were (a) for staying awake (18.5%), (b) to pass time (15.2%), because of addiction (13%) and for socializing (remaining 9.8%). It would appear that the most prevalent reason for khat abuse was to 'stay awake'.

It was also noted that the same set of student respondents also abused alcohol to (a) forget their problems (18.5%), (b) socialize (15.2%), (c) fight depression (9.8%), (d) because of addiction (7.6%), and for passing time (remaining 5.4%). It may be inferred that most prevalent cause for alcohol abuse was for 'forgetting the problems'.

#### A.4 Place of First Time Drug Abuse

TABLE 4: RESPONSES OF STUDENTS ABOUT THEIR FIRST TIME DRUG USED

Places of Drug abuse	F	%
At home	19	20.6
Khat or shisha store	14	15.2
In University compound	2	2.2
Pool house	5	5.4
Party	2	2.2
On street	2	2.2
Night club	10	10.8
Bars or restaurants	12	13

Table 4 shows that of the total 92 participants in the survey only 66 students responded to this question. It would appear that the students abused drugs for the first time at home, khat/shisha store, bars/restaurants, night clubs, and pool house, in University compounds, at parties or on streets. The highest percentage for first time abuse recorded was at home, being 20.6%, and the lowest was at parties/University compound or on streets, being around 2% each. This leads us to believe that a large percentage of University students start abusing substances while at home – and this could be because of their traditions or family practices normally found in Eastern parts of Ethiopia.

A.5 Frequency of Khat Abuse in the Last 30 Days

TABLE 5: RESPONSES OF STUDENTS ABOUT THEIR PAST 30 DAYS DRUG USE

For the past 30 days for how many days did you chew khat?	F	%
5-8 days	17	18.5
9-12 days	9	9.8
13-16 days	9	9.8
17-20days	7	7.6
>21 days	19	20.6

Table 5 shows students responses on the frequency of khat abuse in the last 30 days. A total of 61 students (out of 92) responded positively to this question. It may not be out of place to underscore here that this data should be interpreted with caution since all the 92 students were believed to abusers of substances as they were caught previously by campus police in the cases of drug abuse. Nevertheless, it would appear that quite a large percentage of students (20.6%) abuse khat for more than 21 days in a month. The remaining 46.3% of

the students were abusing khat for 5-20 days/month. This leads us to believe that khat/drug abuse is a serious problem in the University.

A.6 Possible Reasons to use Drugs for the First Time

TABLE 6: RESPONSES OF STUDENTS FOR FIRST TIME DRUG ABUSE

State ments	5		4		3		2		1	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Peer pressure	19	20.6	9	9.8	7	7.6	9	9.8	14	15.2
Ease of availability of drug	7	7.6	9	9.8	9	9.8	12	13	16	17.4
Dissatisfaction with the University Environment	9	9.8	12	13	14	15.2	12	13	9	9.8
Relatives with drug abuse	19	20.6	5	5.4	12	13	12	13	9	9.8
To cope up with life challenges	14	15.2	12	13	12	13	9	9.8	5	5.4
To experience pressure	14	15.2	5	5.4	7	7.6	19	20.6	9	9.8
To socialize	12	13	5	5.4	2	2.2	4	4.3	12	13

5= Strongly agree 4= Agree 3= Not decided 2= disagree

1= Strongly disagree

Analysis of data in the above table shows that while 30.5% of the respondents confirm that peer pressure was the cause of their first time drug abuse, 25% of the respondents disagreed. Since the number of students agreeing is more than those who disagree, it may be inferred that peer pressure could be one of the causes of first time abuse of substance. On the same lines it could be also concluded that 'having relatives that abuse drugs' and 'coping up with challenges could be yet other causes of first time abuse of substance. It may also be inferred that ease of availability, dissatisfaction at university, experiencing pleasure and to socialize were not important factors for first time abuse of drugs.

#### A.7 Behavioral Consequences of Drug Abuse on Students

TABLE 7: RESPONSE OF STUDENTS ON BEHAVIORAL CONSEQUENCE OF DRUG ABUSE

Behavioral Consequences	F	%
Absenteeism from classes	57	61.9
Violence/disciplinary problems	21	22.8
High need for money	43	46.7
Loss of interest for daily activities	40	43.5
Harsh argument with people	19	20.7
Expelled from class	7	7.6

Table 7 shows the response of 92 students who participated in this survey. It may be seen that the total number of responses are more than 92 which means that some students gave more than one answer in their response form for this question. It is understood that absenteeism from class, high need for money, loss of interest in daily activities and/or violence/disciplinary issues are major consequences of drug abuse affecting 61.9%, 46.7%, 43.5% and 22.8% of students.

#### A.8 Length of Time for Drug abuse

TABLE 8: RESPONSES OF STUDENTS ABOUT THEIR LENGTH OF TIME FOR DRUG USAGE

How long have you been chewing khat?	F	%
Shorter than 6 months	5	5.4
Between 6 months and 1 year	7	7.6
Between 1-3 years	9	9.8
longer than 3 years	36	39.1

It can be seen from the above table 8 that percentage of students abusing drugs is consistently increasing from those abusing for less than 6 months to more than 3 years. This means that as the student's progress to higher levels of study in the University, they become more and more susceptible to drug abuse. The data shows that there is high prevalence of drug abuse in the University.

#### A.9 Drug Abuse Rating

TABLE 9: RESPONSE OF STUDENTS ON PREVALENCE/RATING OF DRUG ABUSE

Rating	F	%
Very serious	36	39.1
Somewhat serious	21	22.8
Not too serious	0	0
Not at all serious	9	9.8
I do not know	2	2.2

It may be inferred that 61.9% of those surveyed rate the problem of drug abuse in the University as being a very serious/ somewhat serious. While some students also suggest that this problem is not serious at all but their numbers are small and hence discretion is being used in interpretation of this information.

#### B. Analysis of Information from Ancillary Resources

As discussed in methodology, random physical visits were made in coffee houses, small shops and recreational centers (pool game) which have come up across the streets along the East-West and West-North main boundary walls of the university. It was noted that many University students pool up there during lunch break to smoke cigarettes, drink coffee, and even sit long hours in coffee shops and consume khat, whereas others even consume liquor during evening times.

It may be mentioned here that quite a few night clubs and dance bars are located within a maximum distance of 4 km from the University. Discussions with the managers of these commercial centers revealed that many University students (both male and female) visit these places on Friday or Saturday night and engage in smoking cigarettes and consuming liquor.

Our discussions with the counselors and psychiatrists in the Adama General hospital revealed that there have been many occasions when they were called upon by the local police to offer professional advice to the the ASTU student drug abusers.

### **C. Analysis of Information from Student's Interview**

Of the total 92 students, 10 students were randomly selected to participate in the interview. The interviews were also recorded and transcribed.

During the interview many of the students denied that they were using substances. This may be because they were being video recorded. However, this could not have been true because all of these students were caught by the campus police while they were using substances in the campus. Hence this information was used judiciously during analysis.

During the interview it was also learnt that besides using khat students also use alcohol, cigarettes. Some students also indicated that they use shisha in addition to other substances.

With regard to the place of substance abuse the students reported that most of the times they used substances out of the campus but sometimes in the university campus too.

The reasons for using substances varied from one student to another. For instance students who came from the Eastern parts of Ethiopia, particularly Harar, reported that chewing khat is a traditional practice in that area, and students from this particular area are so much used to taking khat that this practice has become a part of their daily life. As such they continue chewing khat even while at the university to be able to perform normally in academics. Other students used substances for staying awake for long time to concentrate during their study. But some students

reported that they were not able to concentrate in their studies or in classes though the use of khat helped them to stay awake.

Some students also indicated that though they do not use substances, they have friends who use drugs and sometimes also influence them to use.

Random field visits carried out by the researchers on-campus and outside revealed that many students abused substances during lunch hours and evening times. Students were also seen in petty shops and recreational centers across the streets along the boundary walls of the University chewing khat and smoking cigarette. Discussions with managers of other recreational centers in the town also divulged that quite a handful of University students generally visit these places for enjoyment on Friday nights and abuse substances. Discussions with health consular's, clinical psychiatrists and campus police revealed that the University students mainly abuse Khat, Alcohol, Cigarettes, Hashish, Shisha and other Inhalants. The abuse of any given substance was found to vary with students' age brackets.

### **D. Analysis of Data on the Effect of Drug Abuse on Student's Academic Performance**

The participant students' academic performance results were collected from the University Registrar. Accordingly, the results of 17 pre-engineering students, 28 students from School of Civil Engineering and Architecture, 12 students from School of Applied Natural Sciences, 19 students from School of Mechanical, Chemical and Materials Engineering and 16 students from School of Electrical engineering and Computing was analyzed.

It was noted in table 7 (behavioral consequences of drug abuse on students) above that 61.9% of the students were absent from class and 43.5% had loss of interest in their daily activities because of drug use. An analysis of the academic performance data obtained for the 92 surveyed students from the University Registrar shows that the results of 51 students (which is 55.4% students) showed continued decline in each semester. Since loss of interest in studies was stated to be an effect of the abuse of drugs by students, it would appear that the academic performance of 43.5% of the students was definitely affected by the use of substances. Deterioration of performance of the



remaining 11.9% (55.4-43.5) could be attributed to reasons other than substance abuse. The data further shows that of the 43.5% students whose performance deteriorated, 11.5 % students failed in their respective courses either once or twice, further 32% students incurred a loss of between 0.2-1.2 in their CGPA. This shows that drug abuse has serious consequences on student's academic performance in ASTU.

Information collected from Registrar office suggests drug abuse has serious consequences on student's academic performance in ASTU. Some of these effects are: (a) absenteeism from class, (b) loss of interest in their daily activities, (c) deterioration in their academic performance in the shape of failures in exam or decline in the CGPA. It was also suggested by the campus police that incidence of drug abuse increase near students' exam time or on days when they get their allowances paid.

## V. SUMMERY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The result of this study revealed that a large fraction of ASTU undergraduate students (66%) were engaged in drug abuse. Though, the students abused many substances e.g. Khat, Alcohol, Cigarettes, Hashish, Shisha and other Inhalants, khat abuse was most widespread. While most common reasons for substance abuse were peer pressure, experiencing pleasure and coping with challenges of life, the students belonging to Eastern regions of Ethiopia also cited traditional practices as the main reason. The empirical evidence and feed-back from the respondents have revealed that drug abuse and addiction have affected the academic performance of students. Some of these effects were: (a) absenteeism from class, (b) loss of interest in their daily activities, (c) deterioration in their academic performance in the shape of failures in exam or decline in the CGPA. It is worthwhile to note that consumption of khat by the students belonging to Eastern parts of Ethiopia did not affect the students' academic performance because they consumed it in dosage in conformity with their cultural practices.

The following are recommendations for effective programming to prevent and reduce drug abuse among the university students:

1. The university (ASTU) should enforce strict rules and declare its campus as being drug free and also

host guidelines of students' code of conduct on its web-site. ASTU should conduct seminars to raise the awareness of the stakeholders on drug abuse.

2. It is suggested that ASTU should encourage student admission and registration office (SARO) who is also responsible to monitor students' academic life to monitor students' academic performance and if a student is on a continued decline in respect of his/her CGPA then they should discuss it on one to one basis with the affected student and identify drug abusers.
3. ASTU need also to seriously consider establishing a 'student consular cell' backed by a team of professional psychologists who may help the affected students come out of the practices of drug abuse.

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