

Substance use among children and young persons appearing in the Nairobi Juvenile Court, Kenya.

Abstract:

To estimate the prevalence and pattern of substance use among children and young persons appearing in the Nairobi Juvenile Court, Kenya. DESIGN: A point prevalence survey. SETTING: The Nairobi Juvenile Court, Kenya. SUBJECTS: Ninety (sixty four males and twenty six females) children and young persons aged 8 to 18 years classified as criminal offenders, group I (60) and those for protection and discipline, group II (30), were selected. METHOD: Socio-demographic and substance use questionnaires were administered to the subject. International classification of diseases, 10th Edition (ICD-10) diagnostic criteria were used. RESULTS: Crude rate for substance use in this study was found to be 39 out of the total sample of 90(43.3%), children and young persons. Of these thirty nine, 33 (85.8%) were males and six(14.2%) were females. Twenty nine (32.2%) used nicotine, 19(21.1%) used volatile hydrocarbons, 8(8.9%) used cannabis six (6.7%) used alcohol, five (5.6%) used khat and three (3.3%) used sedatives. Multiple substance use was also evident. CONCLUSION: This study has shown a high presence of substance use in children and young persons appearing in the Nairobi Juvenile Court.