

# Levels of Awareness of Selected College Students about the Signs, Risk Factors and Consequences of Teen Substance Abuse

**Dr. Frederick Edward T. Fabella**

FEU Roosevelt, Cainta, Rizal, Philippines

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijshr.20230422>

## ABSTRACT

A recent United Nations report stated that the number of people using illegal drugs increased by 23 percent over the previous ten years. Studies have established that enhancing awareness about this issue may prevent the upsurge of substance abuse. The objective of this study was to investigate the level of awareness of college students on teen substance abuse. Using convenience sampling, 120 students from a private college in Metro Manila, Philippines volunteered to be the respondents of this study. A researcher-made, 25-item true or false test on the level of awareness with respect to signs, risk factors and consequences of teen substance abuse was administered on the respondents. For the respondents of this study, there were only 51.6% correct responses to items on signs of teen substance abuse, 55.28% correct responses were given to items on risk factors of teen substance abuse and 61.8% correct responses were given to items on consequences of teen substance abuse. These percentages suggest that there is a lack of awareness on teen substance abuse among the respondents of this study. Significant differences were found between the number of correct responses given with respect to consequences of teen substance abuse when the respondents are grouped according to sex and presence of romantic involvement. Females appeared to exhibit higher awareness on consequences of teen substance abuse, while respondents with romantic involvement seemed to show higher awareness of the consequences of teen substance abuse.

**Keywords:** *Substance abuse, teen, substance abuse signs, risk factors and consequences*

## INTRODUCTION

Drugs that are abused can be divided into three categories: depressants, stimulants, and psychoactive substances. Examples of depressants are sleeping pills (barbiturates) and heroin. Stimulants: These stimulate the brain, resulting in heightened alertness and bursts of activity. Along with behavioral changes including agitation and poor judgment, further symptoms include a quick heartbeat, dilated pupils, elevated blood pressure, nausea or vomiting, and dilated pupils. With the use of cocaine and amphetamines, delusional psychosis may arise in extreme cases. Hallucinogens: These produce hallucinations as well as a dissociative, "out of this world" feeling. Hallucinogens can lead to delusions, paranoia, sadness, and even impaired sensory experience. Ecstasy, mescaline, and LSD are some instances<sup>1</sup>.

According to the United Nations' annual drug report, the number of persons using illegal drugs climbed by 23 percent over the previous ten years, reaching 296 million users globally in 2021. One in every 17 persons globally, between the ages of 15 and 64, used drugs in 2021, according to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime's World Drug Report 2023. By 2021, there will be 296 million users, up from 240 million in 2011. 39.5 million people now have drug use disorders, a 45 percent increase in just ten years. Only one in five people were receiving treatment for drug use in 2021, therefore the need for treatment for drug-

related problems is still largely unmet. Cannabis continues to be the most popular drug, with 219 million users worldwide in 2021, according to estimates. According to recent research, the prevalence of HIV among drug injectors is 29 percent in the metropolitan Cebu area<sup>2</sup>.

Drugs of abuse are typically psychoactive substances that people take for a variety of purposes, such as: (1) Curiosity and peer pressure, particularly among young people in school and adulthood; (2) Prescription drug use that was initially intended to treat pain may have evolved into addictive behavior when used recreationally; (3) Chemicals may be utilized in rituals or practices related to religion and (4) As a source of inspiration for new ideas<sup>1</sup>.

According to data from Australia, one in twenty Australians struggle with addiction or substance abuse. The brain and other organs may undergo alterations as well as sustained harm. The three illegal substances that Australians use most frequently are cannabis, cocaine, and ecstasy. A person who is addicted to a substance is unable to regulate or stop using it, even when it is harming them. Addiction is a mental and physical reliance. A person who abuses substances may grow used to them and have cravings or withdrawal symptoms when they quit. Tolerance occurs when a substance does not have a significant impact on the user and the user feels a greater need for the substance to produce the desired result. Feelings of bodily illness when not utilizing the substance are what are termed as withdrawal symptoms<sup>3</sup>.

19.4% of Americans took illegal drugs at least once, according to data from the US National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics (NCDAS) in 2021. In 2020, out of the 280 million people who are 12 and older, 31.9 million use drugs, with 11.7 percent abusing illicit substances and 19.4 percent abusing prescription medications. If consumers of alcohol and tobacco are counted, there are 165 million substance abusers in the US<sup>4</sup>.

A study was conducted in India to determine the drugs that residents of urban

slums abuse. There were 174 people in the sample, ranging in age from 10 to 24. It was shown that male users of harmful substances were often between the ages of 22 and 24. Most of those who used drugs between the ages of 17 and 24 were exposed to them by their peers, with alcohol coming in second most frequently. The majority bought the medicine from nearby shops and used it frequently during the day and once a week. They experienced hallucinations and exhilaration from these drugs. Aside from respiratory, gastrointestinal, and dental health problems like ulcers and cancer, other side effects included difficulty focusing at work<sup>5</sup>.

According to one study, when family members abuse drugs or alcohol, it automatically becomes a family disease and develops into a top concern. Substance misuse has catastrophic consequences for everyone involved. The study further showed that even if only one family member does drugs, everyone in it suffers. Mothers and siblings are compelled to take over the home responsibilities of the drug addict. The family's financial situation, physical health, and psychological well-being are all severely impacted since they are continuously worried about the abuser and what they will do next. Even siblings begin to feel the need to protect their sibling from ruining their life<sup>6</sup>.

In the 8th, 10th, and 12th grades, it was discovered that exposure to e-cigarettes within the previous 30 days was associated with a rise in the prevalence of marijuana and prescription drug usage of at least four times each, and by at least three times, respectively. Youth who exhibited optimism were less likely to develop a drug addiction. Youth who practice mindfulness show a slower path toward injectable drug misuse. By being strongly opposed to substance use and strongly motivated to safeguard their health, people were more likely to be shielded from engaging in drug misuse. Fathers who were knowledgeable and informed were more likely to keep their adolescent kids away from drugs. A

significant protective element that can keep teenagers from abusing drugs is the presence of strong religious convictions that are interwoven throughout society. Additionally, the connection to the school and the support of adults both significantly contribute to whether drug usage will occur<sup>7</sup>.

From a biological point of view, the prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain that enables humans to analyze events, make wise decisions, and keep emotions and wants under control, is one of the brain areas that is still expanding during adolescence. Teenagers are more likely to make poor judgments like attempting drugs or abusing them since this crucial area of their brain is still developing. Drug exposure during this phase of brain development may result in substantial and long-lasting changes to the nervous system<sup>8</sup>. According to the 2022 report by the Philippine Dangerous Drugs Board, the mean age of those undergoing drug rehabilitation is 33, the male to female ratio is 10:1, 52.65% are single, 58.40% are employed, 26.99% reached high school level, their average monthly income is PhP 13,199.22, 24.53% come from the National Capital Region, the average duration of taking drugs is 6 years and the three most common substances abuse were methamphetamine hydrochloride (Shabu), cannabis (marijuana) and MDMA (Ecstasy)<sup>9</sup>.

The high prevalence of drug use among college students is due to a variety of factors, with the following being some of the most frequent: (1) College students frequently experience high levels of stress related to their academic performance, social lives, family obligations, and other factors; as a result, they may turn to various substances as a coping mechanism or to manage uncomfortable or unpleasant feelings; (2) In social circumstances, drinking or using drugs is a frequent practice. Some students use drugs or alcohol to reduce their social anxiety or to help them relax more readily; (3) Addiction risk is

higher for everyone whose family members use drugs or alcohol; (4) Some college students could believe that doing drugs is normal or acceptable since it's a part of being a student or because of peer pressure; (5) According to studies, these populations have considerably higher rates of cigarette smoking, alcohol misuse (including alcohol, cannabis, and other drugs), and binge drinking; (6) Subpar academic performance may result from substance usage as well as be one of its causes; (7) For many people, college marks the transition from childhood to adulthood and may mark the first time in their lives they are not under the supervision of their parents and (8) Drugs are easily accessible on college campuses<sup>10</sup>.

Teens who abuse drugs may exhibit the following symptoms: (1) abrupt changes in friends; (2) changes in routine and behaviors; (3) changes in appetite or sleep patterns; (4) withdrawal from friends and social activities; (5) poor academic performance (skipping class, being late, failing to turn in homework, dozing off in class); (6) irritability; (7) strained relationships with family and friends; (8) impulsive or risk-taking behavior; (9) bloodshot eyes and (10) frequent nosebleeds<sup>11</sup>.

Increasing awareness is one strategy for stopping substance usage. Involving young people in prevention initiatives helped to clarify public health advice regarding cannabis use and sparked fruitful discussions about the dangers among young people. According to a systematic study of adolescent participation in substance use prevention initiatives, these approaches helped teenagers learn more about substance use and promoted the creation of prevention programs that were especially suited to local requirements. Participants among young people also emphasized the advantages of hearing about peers' experiences and pushed for additional occasions for peers to speak in classrooms<sup>12</sup>.

In view of the foregoing, this study attempted to explore the level of awareness of selected college students on the signs,

risk factors and consequences of teen substance abuse.

Specifically, this study sought to address the following research questions:

1. What is the level of the respondents' awareness on teen substance abuse with respect to
  - 1.1 signs of substance abuse;
  - 1.2 risk factors of substance abuse; and
  - 1.3 consequences of substance abuse?
2. Is there a significant difference between the level's awareness on teen substance abuse when the respondents are grouped according to sex with respect to
  - 2.1 signs of substance abuse;
  - 2.2 risk factors of substance abuse; and
  - 2.3 consequences of substance abuse?
3. Is there a significant difference between the level's awareness on teen substance abuse when the respondents are grouped according to presence of romantic involvement with respect to
  - 3.1 signs of substance abuse;
  - 3.2 risk factors of substance abuse; and
  - 3.3 consequences of substance abuse?

## METHODOLOGY

Using convenience sampling, 120 students taking BSIT, BSTM, BECEd, BSBA in MM, BSBA in FM, BSBA in HRM and BSBA in OM from a private college in Metro Manila, Philippines volunteered to be the respondents of this study. Their mean age was 18.89 years. There were 64 males and 56 females. 51 had romantic involvement (girlfriend or boyfriend or spouse) while 69 had no romantic involvement. A researcher-made, 25-item true or false test on the level of awareness with respect to signs, risk factors and consequences of teen substance abuse based on "What do teens need to know about substance abuse"<sup>11</sup>, which underwent content validation, was administered on the respondents.

## RESULTS

The following tables present the data gathered and the statistical treatments applied.

**Table 1. Correct responses on signs of teen substance abuse when respondents are grouped according to sex**

True or False Statement	Male N=64 Correct Responses/ Percentage	Female N=56 Correct Responses/ Percentage
1. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is deterioration of physical appearance. [TRUE]	48 (75%)	48 (85.71%)
2. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is frequent nosebleeds. [TRUE]	10 (15.63%)	11 (19.64%)
3. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is reddish eyes. [TRUE]	41 (64.06%)	50 (89.29%)
4. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is impulsive or risk-taking behavior. [TRUE]	44 (68.75%)	42 (75%)
5. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is strained relationships with family and friends. [TRUE]	42 (65.63%)	45 (80.36%)
6. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is that he/she is always happy. [FALSE]	37 (57.81%)	28 (50%)
7. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is irritability. [TRUE]	24 (37.5%)	36 (64.29%)
8. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is poor performance at school (skipping class, tardiness, not completing homework, sleeping during class, grades declining). [TRUE]	33 (51.56%)	27 (48.21%)
9. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is isolating from friends and social activities. [TRUE]	20 (31.25%)	16 (28.57%)
10. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is changes in appetite or sleep patterns. [TRUE]	37 (57.81%)	38 (67.86%)
11. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is engaging in self-mutilation. [FALSE]	6 (9.38%)	10 (17.86%)
12. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is a sudden change of friends. [TRUE]	26 (40.63%)	24 (42.86%)

**Table 2. Difference in the correct scores of male and female respondents regarding signs of teen substance abuse**

Welch's T-test computation		
Group	Male	Female
Mean	5.75	6.70
SD	2.80	2.45
SEM	0.35	0.33
N	64	56
Intermediate values used in calculations: t = 1.9751 df = 117 standard error of difference = 0.479		
P value and statistical significance: The two-tailed P value equals 0.0506 By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not quite statistically significant.		

Confidence interval:  
The mean of Male minus Female equals -0.95  
95% confidence interval of this difference: From -1.90 to 0.00

**Table 3. Correct responses on signs of teen substance abuse when respondents are grouped according to romantic involvement**

True or False Statement	Without romantic involvement N=69 Correct Responses/ Percentage	With romantic involvement N=51 Correct Responses/ Percentage
1. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is deterioration of physical appearance. [TRUE]	55 (79.71%)	41 (80.39%)
2. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is frequent nosebleeds. [TRUE]	14 (20.29%)	7 (13.73%)
3. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is reddish eyes. [TRUE]	51 (73.91%)	40 (78.43%)
4. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is impulsive or risk-taking behavior. [TRUE]	54 (78.26%)	32 (62.75%)
5. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is strained relationships with family and friends. [TRUE]	53 (76.81%)	34 (66.67%)
6. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is that he/she is always happy. [FALSE]	40 (57.97%)	25 (49.02%)
7. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is irritability. [TRUE]	38 (55.07%)	22 (43.14%)
8. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is poor performance at school (skipping class, tardiness, not completing homework, sleeping during class, grades declining). [TRUE]	36 (52.17%)	24 (47.06%)
9. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is isolating from friends and social activities. [TRUE]	24 (34.78%)	12 (23.53%)
10. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is changes in appetite or sleep patterns. [TRUE]	42 (60.87%)	33 (64.71%)
11. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is engaging in self-mutilation. [FALSE]	10 (14.49%)	6 (11.77%)
12. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is a sudden change of friends. [TRUE]	32 (46.38%)	18 (35.29%)

**Table 4. Difference in the correct scores regarding signs of teen substance abuse when respondents are grouped according to romantic involvement**

Welch's T-test computation		
Group	Without Romantic Involvement	With Romantic Involvement
Mean	6.51	5.76
SD	2.62	2.72
SEM	0.31	0.38
N	69	51
Intermediate values used in calculations: t = 1.5034 df = 105 standard error of difference = 0.494		
P value and statistical significance: The two-tailed P value equals 0.1357 By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant. Confidence interval: The mean of Without Romantic Involvement minus With Romantic Involvement equals 0.74 95% confidence interval of this difference: From -0.24 to 1.72		

**Table 5. Correct responses on signs of teen substance abuse of all respondents**

True or False Statement	All respondents N=120 Correct Responses/ Percentage
1. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is deterioration of physical appearance. [TRUE]	96 (80%)
2. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is frequent nosebleeds. [TRUE]	21 (17.5%)
3. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is reddish eyes. [TRUE]	91 (75.83%)
4. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is impulsive or risk-taking behavior. [TRUE]	86 (71.67%)
5. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is strained relationships with family and friends. [TRUE]	87 (72.5%)
6. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is that he/she is always happy. [FALSE]	65 (54.17%)
7. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is irritability. [TRUE]	60 (50%)
8. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is poor performance at school (skipping class, tardiness, not completing homework, sleeping during class, grades declining). [TRUE]	60 (50%)
9. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is isolating from friends and social activities. [TRUE]	36 (30%)
10. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is changes in appetite or sleep patterns. [TRUE]	75 (62.5%)
11. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is engaging in self-mutilation. [FALSE]	16 (13.33%)
12. A sign that a person is abusing drugs is a sudden change of friends. [TRUE]	50 (41.67%)
743 correct responses out of 1,440 (51.60%)	

**Table 6. Correct responses on risk factors of teen substance abuse when respondents are grouped according to sex**

True or False Statement	Male N=64 Correct Responses/	Female N=56 Correct Responses/
-------------------------	------------------------------------	--------------------------------------



	Percentage	Percentage
13. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is peer pressure. [TRUE]	42 (65.63%)	41 (73.21%)
14. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is low self-esteem or feelings of social rejection. [TRUE]	35 (54.69%)	33 (58.93%)
15. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is a history of traumatic events, such as experiencing a car accident or being a victim of abuse. [TRUE]	36 (56.25%)	34 (60.71%)
16. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is a broken romantic relationship. [FALSE]	8 (12.5%)	8 (14.29%)
17. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is impulsive or risk-taking behavior. [TRUE]	38 (59.38%)	40 (71.43%)
18. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is a mental or behavioral health condition, such as depression, anxiety, or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). [TRUE]	37 (57.81%)	46 (82.14%)

**Table 7. Difference in the correct scores of male and female respondents regarding risk factors of teen substance abuse**

Welch's T-test computation		
Group	Male	Female
Mean	3.06	3.61
SD	1.74	1.42
SEM	0.22	0.19
N	64	56
Intermediate values used in calculations: t = 1.8880 df = 117 standard error of difference = 0.288		
P value and statistical significance: The two-tailed P value equals 0.0615 By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not quite statistically significant. Confidence interval: The mean of Male minus Female equals -0.54 95% confidence interval of this difference: From -1.12 to 0.03		

**Table 8. Correct responses on risk factors of teen substance abuse when respondents are grouped according to romantic involvement**

True or False Statement	Without romantic involvement N=69 Correct Responses/ Percentage	With romantic involvement N=51 Correct Responses/ Percentage
13. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is peer pressure. [TRUE]	51 (73.91%)	32 (62.75%)
14. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is low self-esteem or feelings of social rejection. [TRUE]	42 (50.87%)	26 (50.98%)
15. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is a history of traumatic events, such as experiencing a car accident or being a victim of abuse. [TRUE]	42 (60.87%)	28 (54.9%)
16. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is a broken romantic relationship. [FALSE]	7 (10.15%)	9 (17.65%)
17. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is impulsive or risk-taking behavior. [TRUE]	47 (68.12%)	31 (60.78%)
18. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is a mental or behavioral health condition, such as depression, anxiety, or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). [TRUE]	48 (69.57%)	35 (68.63%)

**Table 9. Difference in the correct scores regarding risk factors of teen substance abuse when respondents are grouped according to romantic involvement**

Welch's T-test computation		
Group	Without Romantic Involvement	With Romantic Involvement
Mean	3.43	3.16
SD	1.57	1.68
SEM	0.19	0.23
N	69	51
Intermediate values used in calculations: t = 0.9224 df = 103 standard error of difference = 0.301		
P value and statistical significance: The two-tailed P value equals 0.3585 By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant. Confidence interval: The mean of Without Romantic Involvement minus With Romantic Involvement equals 0.28 95% confidence interval of this difference: From -0.32 to 0.88		

**Table 10. Correct responses on risk factors of teen substance abuse of all respondents**

True or False Statement	All respondents
-------------------------	-----------------

	N=120 Correct Responses/ Percentage
13. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is peer pressure. [TRUE]	83 (69.17%)
14. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is low self-esteem or feelings of social rejection. [TRUE]	68 (56.67%)
15. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is a history of traumatic events, such as experiencing a car accident or being a victim of abuse. [TRUE]	70 (58.33%)
16. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is a broken romantic relationship. [FALSE]	16 (13.33%)
17. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is impulsive or risk-taking behavior. [TRUE]	78 (65%)
18. A risk factor that may lead a teenager to drug abuse is a mental or behavioral health condition, such as depression, anxiety, or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). [TRUE]	83 (69.17%)
398 correct responses out of 720 (55.28%)	

**Table 11. Correct responses on consequences of teen substance abuse when respondents are grouped according to sex**

True or False Statement	Male N=64 Correct Responses/ Percentage	Female N=56 Correct Responses/ Percentage
19. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is poor judgment. [TRUE]	31 (48.44%)	35 (62.5%)
20. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is unsafe sex and pregnancy. [TRUE]	30 (46.88%)	36 (64.29%)
21. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is running away from home. [FALSE]	7 (10.94%)	1 (1.79%)
22. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is mental health disorders. [TRUE]	41 (64.06%)	43 (76.79%)
23. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is impaired driving. [TRUE]	26 (40.63%)	21 (37.5%)
24. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is changes in school performance. [TRUE]	32 (50%)	42 (75%)
25. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is engaging in illegal activity. [TRUE]	50 (78.13%)	50 (89.29%)

**Table 12. Difference in the correct scores of male and female respondents regarding consequences of teen substance abuse**

Welch's T-test computation		
Group	Male	Female
Mean	3.39	4.07
SD	1.95	1.65
SEM	0.24	0.22
N	64	56
Intermediate values used in calculations: t = 2.0722 df = 117 standard error of difference = 0.329		
P value and statistical significance: The two-tailed P value equals 0.0404 By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant. Confidence interval: The mean of Male minus Female equals -0.68 95% confidence interval of this difference: From -1.33 to -0.03		

**Table 13. Correct responses on consequences of teen substance abuse when respondents are grouped according to romantic involvement**

True or False Statement	Without romantic involvement N=69 Correct Responses/ Percentage	With romantic involvement N=51 Correct Responses/ Percentage
19. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is poor judgment. [TRUE]	41 (59.42%)	25 (49.02%)
20. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is unsafe sex and pregnancy. [TRUE]	44 (63.77%)	22 (43.14%)
21. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is running away from home. [FALSE]	5 (7.3%)	3 (5.88%)
22. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is mental health disorders. [TRUE]	51 (73.91%)	33 (64.71%)
23. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is impaired driving. [TRUE]	33 (47.83%)	14 (27.45%)
24. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is changes in school performance.	45 (65.22%)	29 (56.86%)
25. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is engaging in illegal activity.	60 (86.96%)	40 (78.43%)

**Table 14. Difference in correct responses regarding consequences of teen substance abuse when respondents are grouped according to romantic involvement**

Welch's T-test computation		
Group	Without Romantic Involvement	With Romantic Involvement
Mean	4.04	3.25
SD	1.73	1.91
SEM	0.21	0.27
N	69	51
Intermediate values used in calculations: t = 2.3306 df = 101 standard error of difference = 0.338		
P value and statistical significance: The two-tailed P value equals 0.0218 By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant. Confidence interval: The mean of Without Romantic Involvement minus With Romantic Involvement equals 0.79 95% confidence interval of this difference: From 0.12 to 1.46		

**Table 15. Correct responses on consequences of teen substance abuse of all respondents**

True or False Statement	All respondents N=120 Correct Responses/ Percentage
19. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is poor judgment. [TRUE]	66 (55%)
20. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is unsafe sex and pregnancy. [TRUE]	66 (55%)
21. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is running away from home. [FALSE]	8 (6.67%)
22. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is mental health disorders. [TRUE]	84 (70%)
23. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is impaired driving. [TRUE]	47 (39.17%)
24. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is changes in school performance. [TRUE]	74 (61.67%)
25. A common consequence of teen drug abuse is engaging in illegal activity. [TRUE]	100 (83.33%)
445 correct responses out of 720 (61.81%)	

## DISCUSSION

It can be seen in Table 1 that except for items 6, 8 and 9, there were higher percentages of correct responses by females with respect to signs of teen substance abuse.

With respect to the signs of teen substance abuse, there was no statistically significant difference found between male and female correct responses as presented in Table 2.

It can be observed in Table 3 that except for items 1, 3 and 10, there were higher percentages of respondent with romantic involvement who gave the correct responses with respect to signs of teen substance abuse.

With respect to the signs of teen substance abuse, there was no statistically significant difference found between the correct responses of those with and without romantic involvement as shown in Table 4.

Table 5 shows that for all 120 respondents, 743 correct responses or 51.6% were given to the 12 items on signs of teen substance abuse.

It can be seen in Table 6 that in all items there were higher percentages of correct

responses by females with respect to risk factors of teen substance abuse.

With respect to the risk factors of teen substance abuse, there was no statistically significant difference found between the correct responses of male and female respondents, as presented in Table 7.

It can be observed in Table 8 that except for item 16 there were higher percentages of correct responses by respondents without romantic involvement with respect to risk factors of teen substance abuse.

With respect to the risk factors of teen substance abuse, there was no statistically significant difference found between the correct responses of respondents with and without romantic involvement as shown in Table 9.

Table 10 shows that for all 120 respondents, 398 correct responses or 55.28% were given to the 6 items on risk factors of teen substance abuse.

It can be seen in Table 11 that except for items 21 and 23, there were higher percentages of correct responses by male respondents with respect to risk factors of teen substance abuse.



With respect to the consequences of teen substance abuse, a statistically significant difference was found between the correct responses of males and females, as presented in Table 12. And because the females had a higher mean, it can be inferred that females have a higher awareness about the consequences of teen substance abuse.

It can be observed in Table 13 that in all items, there were higher percentages of correct responses by respondents without romantic involvement with respect to consequences of teen substance abuse.

With respect to the consequences of teen substance abuse, a statistically significant difference was found between the correct responses of respondents with and without romantic involvement as shown in Table 14. And because those with romantic involvement had a higher mean, it can be inferred that respondents with romantic involvement have a higher awareness about the consequences of teen substance abuse.

Table 15 shows that for all 120 respondents, 445 correct responses or 61.81% were given to the 7 items on consequences of teen substance abuse.

## CONCLUSIONS

For the 120 respondents of this study, there were only 51.6% correct responses to signs of teen substance abuse, 55.28% correct responses were given to risk factors of teen substance abuse and 61.8% correct responses were given to consequences of teen substance abuse.

Significant differences were found between the number of correct responses given with respect to consequences of teen substance abuse when the respondents are grouped according to sex and presence of romantic involvement. In addition, females appeared to exhibit higher awareness on consequences of teen substance abuse, while respondents with romantic involvement seemed to show higher awareness consequences of teen substance abuse.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the low percentages of correct responses in all three areas of signs, risk factors and consequences of teen substance abuse, it is recommended that more initiatives should be taken by the national and local governments as well the education sector and socio-civic entities to address the apparent lack of awareness.

Although this study provides an indication of the level of awareness of the respondents, this study is limited by the size of the sample and the sampling method utilized. It is also limited by the researcher-made instrument. The need for a standardized instrument for measuring substance abuse awareness is apparent.

### *Declaration by Authors*

**Ethical Approval:** The researcher declares that this study strictly adhered to the ethics of research. Informed consent was obtained, freedom to withdraw at any time from the study was made known to the participants, their identities were anonymized, the participants were not exposed to any physical, psychological or social harm and the results were used for research purposes only. The researcher further ensured steps to prevent bias in the interpretation of the data. Lastly, this study was self-funded and there was no conflict of interest in the conduct of the study.

**Acknowledgement:** The author wishes to express his deepest gratitude to the respondents of this study.

**Source of Funding:** None

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## REFERENCES

1. Mandal A. What is drug abuse? [Internet]. 2023. Available from: <https://www.news-medical.net/health/What-is-Drug-Abuse.aspx>
2. Lee-Brago P. 296 million drug users worldwide in 2021 – UN [Internet]. Philstar.com; 2023. Available from: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2023/06/27/2276814/296-million-drug-users-worldwide-2021-un>

3. Substance abuse [Internet]. Healthdirect Australia; 2023. Available from: <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/substance-abuse>
4. Times G. Report shows 12% of global drug users from US [Internet]. 2023. Available from: <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202302/1285158.shtml>
5. Kovilveetil AN. A study on substance abuse among young people (10-24 years) in urban slums of Jorhat, assam. *Medical Science and Discovery*. 2021;8(12):677–84. doi:10.36472/msd.v8i12.629
6. Dykes G, Casker R. Adolescents and substance abuse: The effects of substance abuse on parents and siblings. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*. 2021;26(1):224–37. doi:10.1080/02673843.2021.1908376
7. Nawi AM, Ismail R, Ibrahim F, Hassan MR, Manaf MR, Amit N, et al. Risk and protective factors of drug abuse among adolescents: A systematic review. *BMC Public Health*. 2021;21(1). doi:10.1186/s12889-021-11906-2
8. [Internet]. 2019. Available from: <https://safespace.org/drugs-brains-and-behavior-the-science-of-addiction/>
9. 2022 statistical analysis [Internet]. 2023. Available from: <https://ddb.gov.ph/2022-statistical-analysis/>
10. Mosel S. Substance abuse in college students: Statistics & Rehab treatment [Internet]. 2023. Available from: <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab-guide/college>
11. Parisi T. What do teens need to know about substance abuse? [Internet]. 2019. Available from: <https://www.addictioncenter.com/community/what-do-teens-need-to-know-about-substance-abuse/>
12. Turuba R, Amarasekera A, Howard AM, Brockmann V, Tallon C, Irving S, et al. A qualitative study exploring how young people perceive and experience substance use services in British Columbia, Canada. *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*. 2022 May 28;17(1). doi:10.1186/s13011-022-00456-4

How to cite this article: Frederick Edward T. Fabella. Levels of awareness of selected college students about the signs, risk factors and consequences of teen substance abuse. *International Journal of Science & Healthcare Research*. 2023; 8(4): 149-158. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijshr.20230422>

\*\*\*\*\*