

Abstract

The use of khat is very common among youth in various parts of the world but the region of East Africa and North Eastern African covering countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania are prominate consumers of khat. Due to different culture and social norms among these countries, the exact prevalence of khat within these countries is not clearly known. In Uganda, urban areas such as Kisenyi have been known for high crime rate which is directly associated with the use of khat and other drugs however, the factors influencing the use of khat especially among adult males in Kisenyi have not been investigated. Therefore, this research study set out to identify the factors influencing khat use among adult males in Kisenyi parish.

A cross-sectional study was carried out involving 362 adult males from Kisenyi and data was collected about the prevalence of khat use, familial, psychological and socio-economic factors that can influence the use of khat using an interviewer administered questionnaire. The data was analyzed automatically using SPSS. The prevalence of khat use in Kisenyi parish was found to be high at 5.53% and the most pertent factors associated with khat use included; having grown up in an extended family, use of khat among parents and relatives, availability of khat at home, having been physically and sexually abused, feelings of rejection and being able to afford to purchase khat.

In conclusion, although cultural and social norms in Uganda do not support khat use, the prevalence is high among the youth hence if the prevalence of khat use is to be reduced, mitigation measures targeting the youth should be imitated. Although psychological factors such as physical and sexual assault as well as feelings of loneliness and rejection can trigger khat use, however addiction to khat use can also trigger similar psychological effects.