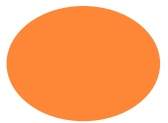


ILLICIT DRUG USE BY SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS IN Namibia: RECLAIMING A LIFE

**WFOT 17th Congress Cape Town South Africa
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INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Namibia shares part of its border with South Africa, a country with an increase in accessibility and availability of illicit drugs (Peltzer, Ramlagan, Johnson & Phaswana-Mafuya, 2010:2227)
- ❖ Namibia is one of the major cocaine trafficking routes in southern Africa.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

- ❖ Globally, 0.4% of deaths and 0.9% of Disability-Adjusted Life Years were attributed to illicit drug use in 2004 (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2009:22).
- ❖ South Africa is the world's third largest producer of cannabis and some is exported to its neighbouring countries, including Namibia (Peltzer, et al. 2010:2228).



BACKGROUND INFORMATION ctd

- ❖ Little is known about the use of illicit drugs among secondary school learners in Namibia',
- ❖ A countrywide survey conducted in Namibia has also shown that ecstasy, heroin, cocaine, dagga, mandrax, alcohol, volatile solvents such as glues, thinners and petrol, are among the drugs abused by adolescents (Strijdom & Angell, 1998:102).



PROBLEM STATEMENTS

- ❖ Upon admission, school teachers and caregivers of children using illicit drugs reported behavioural problems.
- ❖ 80% learners in one classroom at a secondary school in Windhoek, Namibia, tested positive for drugs (Shidhudhu 2013).
- ❖ Increasing reports of secondary school learners are indulging in drug abuse in Namibia and teachers put the blame on poor parenting.
- ❖ The Namibian government psychologists at the Windhoek Mental Health Centre routinely treat under-teens and teens who have turned to alcohol after running away from home or after being bullied at school (UNICEF-Namibia, 2007:2).



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ❖ The study sought to answer the following questions:
- ❖ What perceptions do secondary school learners have on illicit drug use?
- ❖ What recommendations could be proposed to caregivers and school teachers to manage illicit drugs use by secondary school learners?



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design:

- ❖ A qualitative, explorative & descriptive design
- ❖ Purposive sampling was used to collect data
- ❖ Ethical Approval
- ❖ Data collection – in-depth interviews with individuals, individual drawings and researcher's field notes.

Inclusion Criteria

- ❖ Admission period: 2014.
- ❖ Age group of 14 – 18 years

Data Analysis:

- ❖ Thematic analysis.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

THEME

CATEGORY

**Reasons for starting
illicit drug use**

Vulnerability

Physical challenges

Psychological challenges

Social challenges

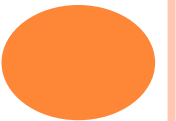


FIGURE 1: INDIVIDUAL PERCEPTIONS (P1)

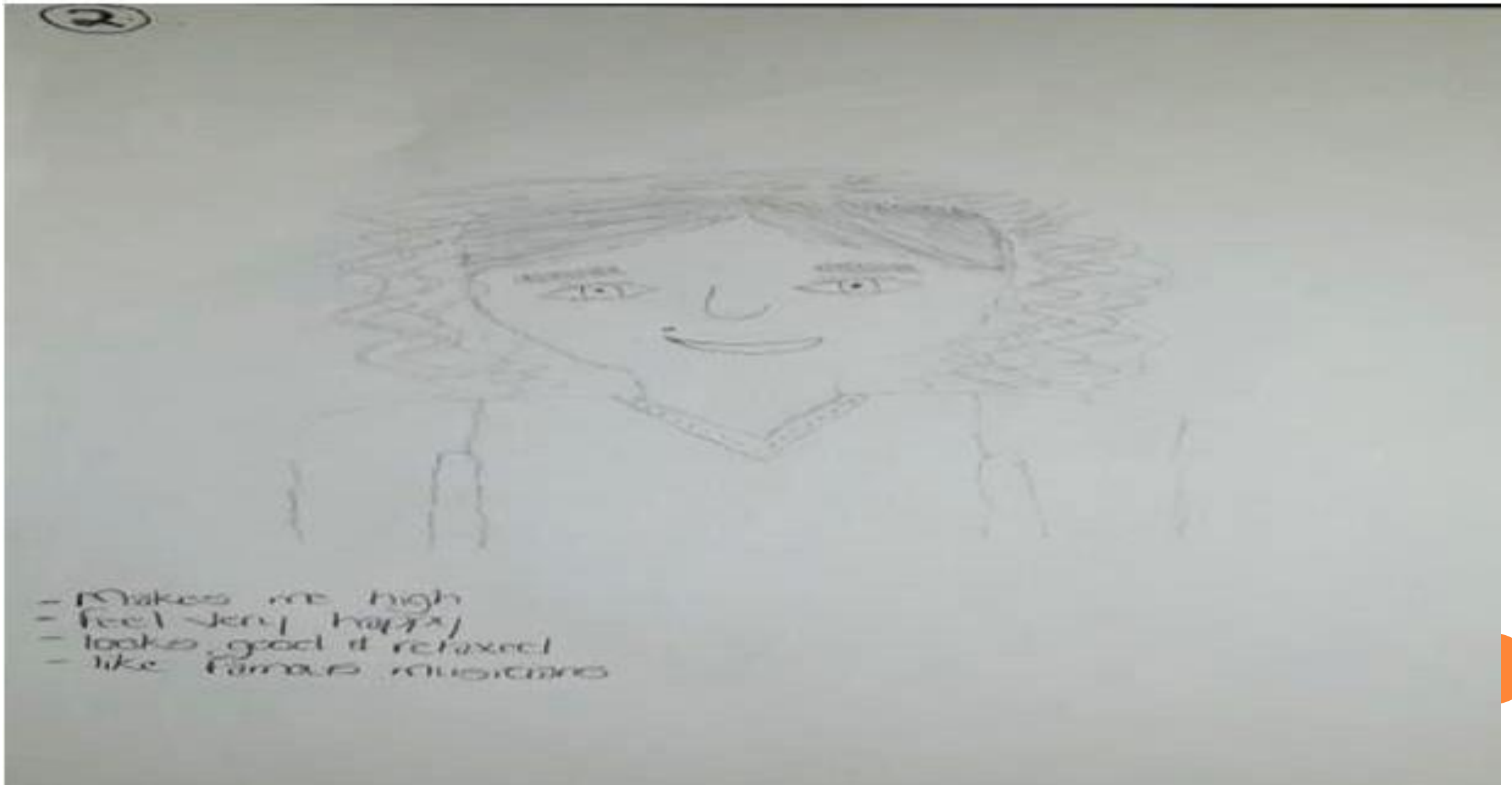


FIGURE 2: EXAMPLE OF PEER PRESSURE(P10)

Can you please draw a picture which best describes the scenario that led you to engage in illicit drug use.



THEME

CATEGORY

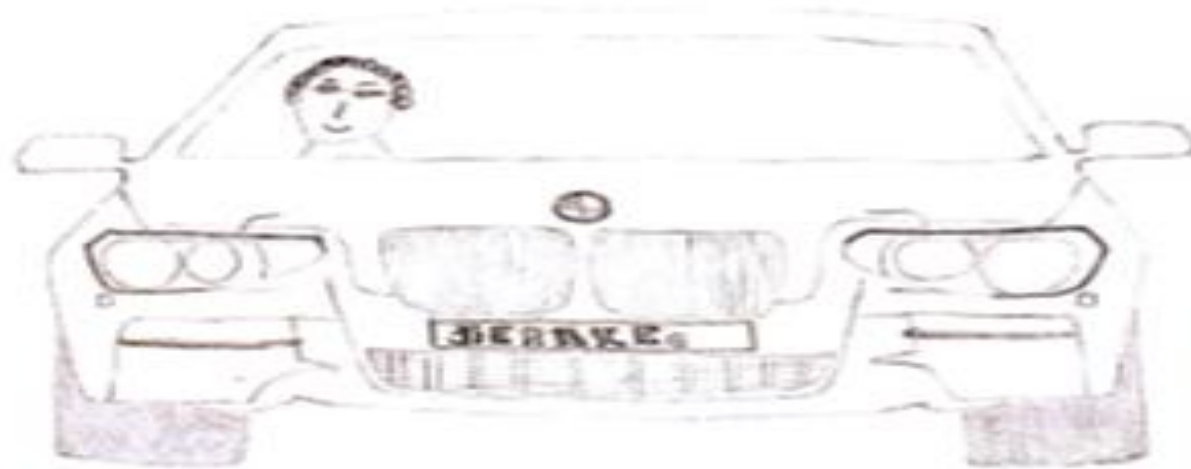
Process and dynamics
A downward spiral

- Initial enjoyment leads to using stronger drugs**
- Behavioural problems**
- Challenges in school**
- Emotional distress**
- Physical changes**
- Social challenges**
- Conflict with the law**

FIGURE 3: EXAMPLE OF BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEM (P10)

Can you please draw a picture to describe your experience with use of illicit drugs as a secondary school learner.

99



You ask money from people
you don't know to buy drugs.
You can end up sleeping with
these people. You don't do school
work.

THEME

CATEGORY

Hitting bottom

Difficulty in giving up

“Let me tell you, I thought I will control myself. I failed. It was now killing me and I knew now that my parents will get me...My greatest fear was not to be found by my parents but that I can no longer enjoy it but could not control it or stop. I was...I think I was addicted or I was mad” P6.

THEME

CATEGORY

Recapturing their lives

The role of support

“...but lack of care, tenderness and love and all that. You know when a parent is supposed to be there for you...” P7.

“I started attending to psychologist and session from rehabilitation. It was not by my choice first but later I realised that I was lost and this was the best for me” P10.

CONCLUSION

- ❖ A combination of factors lead to illicit drug use.
- ❖ The age of those initiated to drug use is diminishing with more in-school and out-of-school youth consuming drugs.
- ❖ Rehabilitation, family support, religion, social support and accessing of basic needs plays an important role in recapturing the lives of secondary school learners from illicit drug use.
- ❖ There is a substantial need to develop well-evaluated trials of the proposed recommendations made in this study.



THANK YOU

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