

GLUE SNIFFING AND HEALTH HAZARDS AMONG STREET CHILDREN: AN ERITREAN FIELD STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The present work is a field study that aims at providing base information on the use of bad behavior of glue sniffing and its problems as encountered by Eritrean street children. Forty children participated in the study, 78% of whom were males and 22% were females. They were individually interviewed according to designed questionnaire and their given responses were then analyzed. The obtained findings show that more than 95% of the children having families and that about 40% of the children live with their family and 55% are living in the street. Most of the children (95%) spending their time in street despite having families. Domestic violence, seeking employment, poverty, abuse and deprivation from education were the main reasons that caused them to leave their families. These children had tried tobacco, alcohol, glue, and/or benzene. The rate of glue sniffing among the studied children was found to be one boat/day. More than 70% of them were having preference to sniff in group. Pleasure, numbness, warmth, hallucination, unconsciousness, disturbance and disappointment were the major health problems encountered by the children. About 43% of these children have got sick after glue sniffing. More than 13% of them have been admitted to hospitals. Headache, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, palpitation and loss of locomotors skills were the immediate health problems encountered during their sniffing. More than 80% of the participated children know others who sniff glue, and also know the health problems that affect their glue sniffing colleagues. The action that should be taken by children after feeling sick is differ and ranging from nothing to do to go to the hospital. More than 73% of the children have the feeling that they became addicted. Attention need to be drawn for the authorities to the glue sniffing health hazards and to the necessity of collaborative societal works for containment of this bad behavior.

Keywords: Glue sniffing, volatile solvent health hazards, street children, Eritrea.