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Dept of Clinical Sciences
Collage of Health Sciences
University of Kentucky
Lexington USA

Weiping Zhang
Department of Oral Biology
Indiana University School of Dentistry
1121 West Michigan Street, DS 271
Indianapolis, IN 46202
USA

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**Effects of *Phoenix dactylifera* on the prostate and seminal vesicle of Wistar rats**

N. I. Dibal*, J. O. Hambolu² and A. A. Buraimoh³

¹Department of Human Anatomy, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria.
²Department of Veterinary Anatomy, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria.
³Department of Human Anatomy, Kaduna State University, Kaduna, Nigeria.

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*Phoenix dactylifera*, a member of the family *Arecaceae*, is a highly nutritious fruit that is rich in vitamins, simple sugars, flavonoids, saponins, tannins, carotenoids and steroids. The study is aimed at evaluating the possible effects of *P. dactylifera* on the prostate and seminal vesicle of Wistar rats so that it can be suggested for use in the treatment of infertility or as a natural male contraceptive. Twenty male Wistar rats were used for the study; they were divided into four groups of five rats each, group 1 served as the control and were given distilled water while groups 2 to 4 (experimental groups) received the extract at 250, 500 and 1000 mg/kg body weight orogastrically for 35 days. On the 36th day, all the rats were sacrificed using cervical dislocation method and the prostate gland and seminal vesicles were dissected, weighed and processed for light microscopic study. The results showed degeneration of prostate connective tissue and distorted glands in rats treated with the extract compared to that of the control. The seminal vesicles of rats treated with the extract showed no difference as compared to that of the control. In conclusion, the extract might affect sperm function by reducing sperm quality and viability as secretions from prostate helps in creating an alkaline pH that resist the acidity of the vaginal fluids. Therefore, *P. dactylifera* fruits might be used as a natural male contraceptive if the effects are found to be reversible in Human prostate.

**Key words:** Prostate, seminal vesicle, Wistar rats, *P. dactylifera*, sperm quality, semen.

**INTRODUCTION**

*Phoenix dactylifera* (Date palm), a member of the family *Arecaceae*, is a plant with highly nutritious fruit and is a staple food for the people of North Africa and Middle East, where hundreds of varieties are grown for domestic and commercial purposes (Forbes, 1971). Although its place of origin is unknown because of long cultivation, the plant probably originate from lands around Iraq (Mesopotamia) and its cultivation spread to the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, and the Middle Eastern Countries, possibly as early as 4000 BCE (Janick, 2005;
Preparation of extract

The fruit was purchased from a local salesman in Samaru market Zaria. The extraction was done in the Department of Pharmacognosy, Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria, Kaduna State. The fruit was opened and the fleshy part was oven dried and grounded to powder. It was soaked in maceration apparatus with distilled water for 24 h, filtered and allowed to settle down, it was then decanted and oven dried at 50°C.

Experimental design

Twenty Wistar rats were purchased from the Animal House, Department of Human Anatomy, ABU Zaria and were kept and treated according to standard laboratory conditions. The Rats were randomized into four groups of five rats each and were kept under standard laboratory condition (12 h light/12 h dark cycle), fed with standard feed pellets (Grower’s marsh, Vital Feed, Grand Cereal, Nigeria) and water ad libitum. The rats in group I (control) were given distilled water while Group II-IV received the extract at (250, 500 and 1000mg/kg, respectively) oro-gastrically by intubation once daily for 35 days (Mehraban et al., 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Animals treated with the extract did not show any significant change in body/organ weight compared to that of the control (Table 1). This shows that the extract has no significant effect on metabolism. This is similar to a study conducted by Bahmanpour et al. (2006, 2013) indicating no significant change in the prostate and seminal vesicular weight following the administration of date palm gemules/pollen to Rats. There were no changes in the structure of the seminal vesicle of rats treated with P. dactylifera extract (Figures 2, 3 and 4) compared to that of the control (Figure 1) signifying that the extract has no negative effect on the seminal vesicles and will not affect their functions. The prostate glands of the rats treated with the extract showed destruction of connective tissues (Figure 6) and distorted glands (Figures 7 and 8) compared to that of the control (Figure 5). This is an indication that the extract could affect prostate function by reducing sperm quality/viability as secretions from the prostate constitute bulk of the semen, helps in the nourishment of sperm cells and create an alkaline pH that resist the acidity of the vaginal fluids (Guyton and Hall, 2006; Mann, 1974). Therefore, any impairment damage to the prostate will affect fertility by reducing sperm quality/viability.

Conclusion

Administration of aqueous extract of P. dactylifera fruit to male Wistar rats at 250, 500 and 1000 mg/kg for 35 days results in degeneration of prostate connective tissues and...
Figure 1. Photomicrograph of seminal vesicle of control rats illustrating the typical structure of the seminal vesicle showing the glands (light blue arrows) and smooth muscle (black arrows) H and E x100.

Figure 2. Photomicrograph of seminal vesicle of Rats treated with aqueous extract of *P. dactylifera* at 250 mg/kg showing the normal architecture with normal glands (light blue arrows) and smooth muscle layer (black arrows) H and E x100
Figure 3. Photomicrograph of seminal vesicle of Rats treated with aqueous extract of *P. dactylifera* at 500 mg/kg showing normal glands (light blue arrows) and smooth muscles (black arrows) H and E x100.

Figure 4. Photomicrograph of seminal vesicle of Rats treated with aqueous extract of *P. dactylifera* at 1000mg/kg showing normal glands (light blue arrows) and smooth muscles (black arrows) H and E x100
Figure 5. Photomicrograph of Prostate gland of control Rats illustrating the typical structure with normal glands (light blue arrows), connective tissues (black arrows) and smooth muscles (green arrow) H and E x100.

Figure 6. Photomicrograph of prostate gland of rats treated with aqueous extract of *P. dactylifera* at 250 mg/kg showing normal smooth muscles (green arrows), degenerated connective tissues (black arrow) and distorted glands (light blue arrows) H and E x100.
Figure 7. Photomicrograph of Prostate gland of rats treated with aqueous extract of *P. dactylifera* at 500 mg/kg showing normal smooth muscles (green arrows), normal connective tissues (black arrows) and degenerated glands (light blue arrows) H and E x100.

Figure 8. Photomicrograph of prostate gland of rats treated with aqueous extract of *P. dactylifera* at 1000 mg/kg showing normal connective tissues (black arrow) and distorted glands (light blue arrows) H and E x100.
distortion of glands, this might affect prostate function leading to poor sperm quality/viability. Therefore, *P. dactylifera* fruits might be used as a natural male contraceptive if the effects are found to be reversible in Human prostate.

**Conflict of Interests**

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

**REFERENCES**


Relationship between road traffic law violation, accident and psychoactive substance use among commercial motorcycle operators in Kano, Northwestern Nigeria

Mustapha Ibrahim Gudaji* and Faisal Saleh Dankishiya

Department of Psychiatry, College of Health Sciences, Faculty of Clinical Sciences, Bayero University Kano, Nigeria.

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Motorcycle operators who drive under the influence of psychoactive substances are at high risk for road traffic violations and accidents. Despite the high level of morbidity associated with psychoactive substance use, it is not a well-researched area in Northwestern Nigeria. The aim of the study was to determine the relationship between psychoactive substance use and road traffic violations and accidents among motorcycle operators in Kano, Northwestern Nigeria. It was a descriptive cross-sectional study. Instrument used for data collection included socio-demographic questionnaire and Schedule for Clinical Assessment in Neuropsychiatry (SCAN). Data analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 17th edition. Three hundred and ninety-four subjects participated in the study. Their age ranged between 22 to 60 years, with mean age of 32.7 years ± 6.6. Motorcycle operators who used substances were more likely to violate traffic laws (P < 0.001; O.R = 1.6 (0.8 – 3.1) and to have road traffic accidents (P = 0.004; O.R = 2.6 (1.4 – 4.7) compared to those who did not use substances. Positive correlation was found between road traffic violations, road traffic accidents and substance use status at 99% confidence interval. There was also significant relationship between specific substance use, road traffic violations and accidents. Psychoactive substance use increases the risk of road traffic violations and road traffic accidents among motorcycle operators. Public health measures should be instituted to reduce the rate of substance use among motorcycle operators and cut down its associated morbidity.

Key words: Psycho-active substance, road traffic accidents, road traffic violations, motorcycle operators, Schedule for Clinical Assessment in Neuropsychiatry (SCAN), Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Commercial motorcycle operation is widely adopted in Kano, perhaps for both logistic and socio-economic

*Corresponding author. E-mail: mgudaji@yahoo.com.

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reasons. It is possible that commercial motorcyclists who use psychoactive substances are at higher risk of road traffic accident compared to the general population. However, this is not a well-researched area. Road traffic accident (RTA) represents a major epidemic of non-communicable diseases in Nigeria. It has been recognized as an important public health problem in both developed and developing nations (Adogu et al., 2009).

Among fatal accidents, motorcycle accidents rank first globally (Ozdemir et al., 2005). A large proportion of vehicles involved in accidents are two wheelers, which when compared to cars, are unstable and provide little protection for their riders in accidents (Adogu et al., 2009). RTA and death among motorcyclists is further heightened by apparent reckless speeding, meandering in traffic and show of little regard for other road users. Studies reported that the use of psychoactive substances was found to be associated with the occurrence of road traffic accidents among motorcyclists in Northwestern Nigeria (Crilly, 1998; Marks, 1982; Alti-Muazu and Aliyu, 2008). Motorcycles have a sevenfold increase in accident rate for vehicle person per mile and a 17-fold fatality rate compared with motorcars (Sabey and Stoughton, 1980; Makanjuola et al., 2007). Previous studies have suggested a possible link between psychoactive substance use and accidents (Makanjuola et al., 2007; Lasebikan, 2010).

The relationship between cannabis use and car crash is controversial. Studies have reported increased risk of crash associated with cannabis use (Lasebikan, 2010; Mura, 2003). Some cannabis users who drive on a set course show little or no impairment under the influence of the substance, except if it is combined with alcohol (Lasebikan, 2010). Nigeria has an estimated lifetime consumption of cannabis of 10.8% of which commercial drivers and other motor park operative seem vulnerable (Makanjuola et al., 2007; UNODC, 2007; Lasebikan, 2010). It has been reported that experimentation, curiosity, alertness for study, the belief that psychoactive substance increases the strength for physical work, are the main reasons that people use drugs (Suleiman et al., 2006). Studies showed that the effects of psychoactive substances on the brain could lead to emotional instability, poor impulse control and poor intellectual functioning (SAMHSA, 2009). Berghaus et al. (1995), in a meta-analysis of 60 experimental studies, found that behavioural and cognitive skills related to driving performance were impaired in a dose dependent fashion with increased cannabinoids blood levels. The authors reported that impairment increased significantly when cannabis was combined with alcohol.

The national highway traffic safety administration in America, in a study among fatally injured drivers reported that 18% tested positive for psychoactive substances (NHTSA, 2009). A report by SAMHSA (2009) showed that 4.2% of people in America drive under the influence of psychoactive substances. Alcohol and cannabis were the most prevalent psychoactive substances detected among impaired drivers. In a responsibility study of main illicit psychoactive substance use among commercial drivers in France, Gadegbeku et al. (2011) reported that the effect of alcohol and cannabis on fatal car crashes responsibility were significant compared to amphetamine, cocaine and opiates. The authors reported a causal relationship between cannabis and road accidents.

In Australia, Drummer et al. (2003) reported a prevalence of 26.7% of psychoactive substance use among fatally injured drivers. The substances used included alcohol (18.6%), cannabis (13.5%), opiates (4.9%), stimulants (4.1%) and benzodiazepines (4.1%). In a study of motorcycle injuries in Tanzania, Chalya et al. (2010) reported that motorcycle accidents constitute 37.2% of all road traffic injuries. They found that there was high use of psychoactive substances among the respondents. Lasebikan and Baijewu (2009), in a study in Ibadan, south western Nigeria, of problems associated with psychoactive substance use among long distance commercial drivers, reported a prevalence of alcohol use as 77.5%, tobacco (60.5%), cannabis (52.5%) and inhalants (8.1%). The authors reported that road accidents were the most common problems among the respondents, with a prevalence of 26.8%, and were commonest among those respondents with alcohol use disorders.

In a study in Benin-city, Nigeria, of morbidity and mortality among road users, Nzegwu et al. (2008) reported that commercial drivers had an average of BAC of 54.16 mg/dl among those that died in accidents. However, the study was limited to alcohol use. Iribhogbe and Odai (2009), in Benin, Nigeria, in a study of driver related risk factors in commercial motorcycle crashes, reported a prevalence of alcohol use to be 39.8%, tobacco (34.6%), cannabis (0.6%) and cocaine (0.003%).

The only study on substance use among motorcycle operators in Northern Nigeria was by Alti-Mu’azu and Aliyu (2008) in Zaria, North western Nigeria, and it reported a high prevalence (59.5%) of road traffic accidents associated with the use of psychoactive substances. However, the authors did not use standard questionnaire to assess for substance use.

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study on road traffic accidents among commercial motorcycle operators in Kano, Northwestern Nigeria. The current study aimed to determine the relationship between psychoactive substance use, road traffic violations and accidents among motorcycle operators in Kano, Northwestern Nigeria. We hypothesized that motorcyclists who used psychoactive substances would have more traffic law violations and accidents compared to those who do not use substances.

**METHODOLOGY**

This was a descriptive cross-sectional study carried out among 394
commercial motorcycle operators who are registered with the Tarauni Local Government Area branch of Amalgamated Commercial Motorcycle Owner’s and Riders Association of Nigeria (ACOMORAN). This is the only umbrella body that registers motorcyclists. However, a good number of the commercial motorcycle operators are not under any association.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethical Committee of Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital. Permission for the study was obtained from National Patron of ACOMORAN. Informed consent was also obtained from each of the participants before administering the questionnaires.

Sample size determination

The sample size was determined using the formula

\[ N = \frac{Z^2 \times p \times q}{d^2} \]

Where \( N \) = minimal sample required, \( Z \) = Standard normal deviate at 95%, Confidence interval = 1.96, \( p \) = 34.3% (prevalence of substance use obtained from a previous study in Kano city conducted by the Community Medicine Department of the AKTH), (Kabir et al., 2004), \( q \) = Complementary probability to \( p \) = 1 - \( p \) = 1 - 0.34 = 0.66, \( d \) = precision of the study = 5% = 0.05.

\[ n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times (0.34 \times 0.66)}{(0.05)^2} = 338. \]

The sample size was 338. However, it was increased to 400 which was about 20% for greater precision.

Sampling technique

The sampling technique adapted was multistage.

Stage I - Systematic probabilistic selection of 4 political wards from the 12 existing wards (Marhaba, Kasuwa, Dangi, and Bawo wards). At the time of the study there were 126 registered commercial motorcycle stands within Tarauni LGA, with 5040 registered members, and 14-66 members per stand.

Stage II – Systematic selection of 3 stands on each selected wards, bringing the total number of randomly selected stands to twelve.

Stage III – Whole population study of the commercial motorcyclists in each selected stand after being identified by their identity card of the association, until when the required sample size was achieved.

Inclusion criteria

1. Age ≥ 18 years.
2. Registered membership of ACOMORAN in Tarauni LGA.
3. Consent to participate in the study.

Exclusion criteria

1. Motorcyclists with a history of mental illness.
2. Absence from the stand during data collection after 3 return visits.

Instrument for data collection

Modules in schedules for clinical assessment in neuropsychiatry (SCAN), Alcohol and psychoactive substance use sections

The Modules in Schedules for Clinical Assessment in Neuropsychiatry (SCAN) on use of Alcohol and use of psychoactive substances other than alcohol was adapted for the study (WHO, 1999). The SCAN system is a set of instrument and manuals aimed at assessing, measuring and classifying the psychopathology and behaviour associated with major psychiatric disorders of adult life. The SCAN text has three components: the tenth edition of the Present State Examination, the Item Group Checklist and the Clinical History Schedule.

In its complete form, the SCAN text is intended for use only by clinicians with an adequate knowledge of psychopathology who have taken a course at a WHO-designated SCAN training centre. The lead author had formal trainings in SCAN.

Data analysis

Data analysis was done with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), 17th edition. Simple descriptive data were presented with frequencies, proportions and percentages. Categorical (nominal) variables were compared with student \( \chi^2 \). Correlations between psychoactive substance use and road traffic violations and accidents were also explored using Spearman’s correlation. All tests were two tailed, with \( p \) value <0.05 taken as significant.

RESULTS

Age distribution of the participants

There were 394 participants, aged 22 to 60 years, with mean age of 32.7 years ± 6.6. The modal age group was 22 to 30 years (Figure 1).

Gender distribution of the participants

All of the participants were males. The lifetime use of psychoactive substances is presented in Table 1. Tobacco had the highest prevalence with 76 respondents (19.3%), followed by stimulants with 47 respondents (11.9%). All of the participants who used psychoactive substances used tobacco. Most of the participants were on at least two substances. Participants did not report use of alcohol, heroin, cocaine and benzodiazepines.

Table 2 shows the relationship between road traffic accidents, road traffic violation and substance use. It shows that substance users were more likely to have road traffic accidents (\( P = 0.004; \) O.R = 2.6 (1.4-4.7) and road traffic violations (\( P < 0.001; \) O.R = 1.6 (0.8-3.1) than non-users.

Table 3 shows the spearman’s correlation between substance use status, road traffic violation and accidents. Positive correlation was obtained between road traffic violations, road traffic accidents and substance use status at 99% confidence interval. Higher rates of road
Figure 1. Age distribution of the participants

Table 1. Prevalence of substance use among respondents (n = 394).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulants</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannabis</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhalant</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opiates</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Relationship between road traffic accidents, road traffic law violation and substance use (n = 394).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Drug use status</th>
<th>Statistics test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Users n (%)</td>
<td>Non users n (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road traffic accident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>69 (89.6)</td>
<td>240 (75.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8 (10.4)</td>
<td>77 (24.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road traffic violation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>66 (85.7)</td>
<td>190 (59.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11 (14.3)</td>
<td>127 (40.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = statistically significant.

Table 3. Correlation between substance use status and road traffic violations and accidents
Spearman’s correlation coefficient.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>rho (ℓ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Road traffic violation</td>
<td>0.157*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road traffic accident</td>
<td>0.197*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = p<0.01.
Table 4. Relationship between specific substance use status and road traffic violations (n = 394).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Road traffic violations</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>X²</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inhalants</td>
<td>Users</td>
<td>8 (100.0)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>4.402</td>
<td>0.031**~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-users</td>
<td>248 (64.2)</td>
<td>138 (35.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>Users</td>
<td>61 (80.3)</td>
<td>15 (19.7)</td>
<td>9.671</td>
<td>0.002*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-users</td>
<td>195 (61.3)</td>
<td>123 (38.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannabis</td>
<td>Users</td>
<td>15 (100.0)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>8.406</td>
<td>0.004*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-users</td>
<td>241 (63.6)</td>
<td>138 (36.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opiates</td>
<td>Users</td>
<td>5 (100.0)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>2.730</td>
<td>0.114~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-users</td>
<td>251 (64.5)</td>
<td>138 (35.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulants</td>
<td>Users</td>
<td>43 (91.5)</td>
<td>4 (8.5)</td>
<td>16.486</td>
<td>&lt;0.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-users</td>
<td>213 (61.4)</td>
<td>134 (38.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*= Statistically significant (p <0.05), ~ = Fisher’s p value.

Traffic violations were observed among motorcycle operators who used inhalants (X² = 4.402, p = 0.031), tobacco (X² = 9.671, p = 0.002), cannabis (X² = 8.406, p = 0.004), and stimulants (X² = 16.486, p < 0.001), compared to those who did not use them (Table 4).

Highest rate of accident was reported among tobacco users (84.2%) followed by users of inhalants, while lowest accident rate was found among users of stimulants (17.0%). The rate of accident among cannabis users was 46.7%. None of the five users of opiates had accident. Road traffic accident was commoner among participants who did not use cannabis (X² = 9.296, p = 0.006), and those who did not use opiates (X² = 18.410, p < 0.001) compared to those who use the substances (Table 5).

Figure 2. SCAN substance diagnosis of the study participants

Distribution of participants by SCAN substance diagnoses

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the participants by SCAN substance diagnoses. In all, 8% of the respondents met the criteria for SCAN substance dependence diagnosis, while 45% had a diagnosis of substance abuse using SCAN.

DISCUSSION

The psychoactive substance users had significantly more violations of road traffic regulations compared to those who did not use drugs. Similarly, users of psychoactive
Table 5. Relationship between specific substance use status and road traffic accidents (n = 394).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Road traffic accident</th>
<th></th>
<th>X²</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhalants</td>
<td>Users</td>
<td>5 (62.5)</td>
<td>3 (37.5)</td>
<td>1.224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-users</td>
<td>304 (78.8)</td>
<td>82 (21.2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>Users</td>
<td>64 (84.2)</td>
<td>12 (15.8)</td>
<td>1.862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-users</td>
<td>245 (77.0)</td>
<td>73 (23.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannabis</td>
<td>Users</td>
<td>7 (46.7)</td>
<td>8 (53.3)</td>
<td>9.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-users</td>
<td>302 (79.7)</td>
<td>77 (20.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opiates</td>
<td>Users</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>5 (100.0)</td>
<td>18.410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-users</td>
<td>309 (79.4)</td>
<td>80 (20.6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulants</td>
<td>Users</td>
<td>8 (17.0)</td>
<td>39 (83.0)</td>
<td>0.654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-users</td>
<td>77 (22.2)</td>
<td>270 (77.8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Statistically significant (p < 0.05); Fisher’s p value.

substances had significantly more road traffic accidents than the non-drug users. It has been shown that using drugs was relatively prevalent among injured motorcyclists, which served as a predisposing factor in accidents (Adogu, 2009). Our finding is in line with previous studies among motorcyclists which reported that the use of psychoactive substances was associated with the occurrence of road traffic accidents (Crilly, 1998; Marks, 1982; Alti-Muazu and Aliyu, 2008).

In this study, the rate of road traffic accidents among substance users was 89.6%. Similarly, 22.3% of road traffic accidents were found to be associated with psychoactive substance use. This was a little higher than the result from a study done in Iran to determine addiction role in motorcycle accidents which found that out of 400 motorcyclists that had accidents, 17.3% had a history of drug use (Araghi and Vahedian, 2007). On the other hand, it was much lower than what was found in a study on prevalence of psychoactive substance use among commercial motorcyclists in Zaria, north western Nigeria, which reported a prevalence of 59.5% accident rate (Alti-Muazu and Aliyu, 2008). However, the Zaria study did not use standard instrument for diagnosis and assessment of substance use.

Road traffic violations and accidents were associated with use of inhalants, tobacco, cannabis and stimulants. This agrees with previous studies that linked use of these psychoactive substances with road traffic accidents among motorcyclists (Gadegbeku et al., 2011; Drummer et al., 2003; Iribhogbe and Odai, 2009). It has been found that behavioural and cognitive skills related to driving performance were impaired in a dose dependent fashion with increased cannabinoid blood levels (Berghaus et al., 1995).

Substance dependence and substance abuse were the only SCAN diagnoses made in the respondents. Many of the subjects who met dependence diagnosis had increased desire to consume the substance, time wastage in using the substance and increased use of the substance to achieve the desired effect. The subjects did not meet the criteria for other SCAN diagnoses.

This study has some limitations. We could not establish a causal relationship between the psychoactive substances, road traffic accidents and violations due to the study design. Similarly, it is possible that some of the road traffic accidents and violations were due to other factors, like operator competence which we did not explore in this study. In addition, the study was limited to registered commercial motorcycle operators and may not be generalized to entire commercial motorcycle operators. Future studies should explore these limitations and improve on our findings.

Conclusion

This study has shown that psychoactive substance use is associated with road traffic violations and accident among commercial motorcycle operators. Clinicians attending to motorcycle operators involved in road traffic accidents should be alert to the possibility of psychoactive substance use among them, and where required interventional measures should be instituted early. There is need for more epidemiological studies, especially community based, covering wider areas, involving various medical specialties, psychologists, sociologists, so as to
have a more comprehensive picture of psychoactive substance use problems among different population groups, especially commercial motorcycle operators.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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- International Journal of Nursing and Midwifery
- Journal of Parasitology and Vector Biology
- Journal of Pharmacognosy and Phytotherapy
- Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health Sciences