

## Research Article

# The Influence of Peer Counseling on the Level of Alcohol Abuse among Students in Public Day Secondary Schools in Imenti South Sub-County, Kenya

Mr. Kinoti Archangel Gabriel<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Masinde Joseph Wangila<sup>2\*</sup>, Dr. Watindi Risper<sup>3</sup><sup>1</sup>School of Social Sciences, Mount Kenya University, Kenya<sup>2</sup>Associate Faculty, School of Education, Mount Kenya University, Kenya<sup>3</sup>Lecturer, School of Social Sciences, Mount Kenya University, Kenya**Article History****Received:** 03.06.2020**Accepted:** 08.06.2020**Published:** 26.06.2020**Journal homepage:**<https://www.easpublisher.com/easjpbs>**Quick Response Code**

**Abstract:** The study ascertained the influence of peer counselling intervention on the level of alcohol abuse among students in public day secondary schools in Imenti South sub-county, Kenya. The research was implemented using the descriptive survey research design. The study targeted a population of 2000 students who abused alcohol, from the 42 public day secondary schools in the research area. From this figure, 13 Guidance and Counselling teachers and 600 affected students were used as respondents. Simple random sampling technique was employed to select the participating guidance and counseling teachers while snowball sampling technique was used for the affected students. Data for the study were collected using close-ended questionnaires and oral interview schedules. Validity and reliability of these research instruments were verified prior to actual data collection, using the Rasch model and the parallel forms methods respectively. The collected data were analyzed both descriptively and quantitatively, using frequency counts, percentages and themes. Results indicated that the use of peer counselling as an intervention had a significant positive influence on lowering the level of alcohol abuse among affected students in public day secondary schools in Imenti South Sub County.

**Keywords:** Peer counseling, alcohol abuse, affected students.

**Copyright @ 2020:** This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution license which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use (NonCommercial, or CC-BY-NC) provided the original author and source are credited.

## INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), alcohol is the most widely abused drug among secondary school students across the world (WHO, 2018). Some of the reasons for its widespread abuse is the fact that it is not illegal in most countries and is therefore easily accessible in bars, supermarkets, malls and recreation centers in any urban centre. The drug is also not very expensive and therefore even school going children can easily afford it from their savings, pocket money or even money given to them by their parents for purposes of giving offering in church services (Willis, 2018).

This therefore means that alcohol will continue to be abused among students and youth in general, unless measures are put in place to prevent this situation from blowing out of proportion. In attempt to address the issue of alcohol abuse from reaching alarming levels, especially among students in secondary schools, many stakeholders and social science researchers generally agree that counseling is one of the most formidable intervention that can be used to effectively

control this worrying situation (Butler and Jenkins, 2019)

In most African countries, the prevalence of alcohol abuse among students is as a result of failure by governments to put in place policy measures and legislation to effectively manage and control widespread cases of alcohol abuse among the school going children (WHO, 2017). In Nigeria, Senegal and Mali for instance, alcohol abuse among high school students has affected the youthful generation negatively, as it has led to poor academic performance, truancy, teenage pregnancy, indiscipline and general poor health (Ndiaye, Ike and Okafor, 2018). This situation has attracted attention of several key stakeholders, given that the future of the world depends on the youthful population to provide manpower and skills required to achieve the development agenda of the underdeveloped world, which mostly comprises of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Reformed alcoholics have been used in most cases, to give real life experiences and challenges they have undergone in the course of alcohol abuse, and also the golden

opportunities that they have missed in the past because of the same predicament (Ndiaye, Ike and Okafor, 2018).

In East Africa, several counseling interventions have been put in place by several secondary schools to address the challenges facing students, among them alcohol-related indiscipline cases. In Uganda for instance, student families are the most widely used counseling intervention for addressing the problem of alcohol abuse among secondary school students. (Waswa, 2016) reveals that using student families, victims of alcohol abuse are placed in groups of other students who do not abuse alcohol. Under the stewardship of one teacher, each family is able to discuss the causes of alcohol abuse and ways of preventing it. It is from these discussions that most victims of alcohol abuse are able to open up on the reasons that led them to start abusing alcohol and at the end of the day, receive help from the school administration, through the guidance and counselling department.

In Tanzania, group counselling is the most common intervention measure for curbing alcohol abuse among students in secondary school level. Using this intervention students are educated on various contemporary issues that face modern day youth (Bakari, 2017). Using this group counselling strategy, each class in a given school, led by their class teacher is given an opportunity to select a topic of their choice, from which one member of the class volunteers or is chosen to give a brief lecture on issues that are affecting the class, among them being alcohol abuse. Serious cases that warrant attention from school authorities are thereafter picked up by the teachers in charge of guidance and counselling.

In Kenya, several disturbing incidents have been reported from schools in the form of strikes and other indiscipline cases, all as a result of alcohol abuse by students. Research by the (National Crime Research Centre, 2017) focused on the problem of the recurrence of student unrest, violence and particularly the burning of secondary schools in second term of the 2016 school calendar. The objective was to specifically establish the underlying causes of recurrence of student unrest and violence in secondary schools in second term. This was especially because in the past decade, there have been reported incidences of student unrest, particularly in second term (National Crime Research Centre, 2017). The research findings revealed that the underlying cause of recurrence of student unrest and violence is as a result of lack of proper guidance and counseling and also the convergence of many factors finding expression during the second term for various reasons.

**The report summarizes these factors thus;**

*“The multiplicity of exams in second term that has generated a ‘flight mode culture’ in the minds of*

*candidate students; school workload in second term means students are simply fatigued after a long, activity-packed, overloaded and grueling term; peer pressure factors as understood in the context of collegiality of students as a group bound together by common interests and experiences where the spread of student violence is not helped by alcohol abuse; long absence of the ‘person of authority’ that resides in school principals in second term imply lack of administrative authority with implications for decision making and this often generates suspicion and a feeling of abdication of responsibility among students and other teachers; the proliferation of indiscipline across schools means schools have to contend with the challenges of negative influence from indiscipline students who transfer between schools; lack of effective guidance and counselling.” (Page x)*

Counselling support services in public day secondary schools and perceptions on the proposed Ministry of Education’s reform measures that elicited negative reactions from the student fraternity. When these factors find convergence in second term, it presents a simmering problem and major ticking bomb in secondary schools. This means a small trigger could lead to escalation of frustration, resulting in ugly scenes of student unrest and violence, including criminal arson (National Crime Research Centre, 2017). Going by this report, the role of counselling in the management and control of alcohol abuse in Kenyan schools is crucial in alleviating the criminal activities perpetrated by victims.

In Meru County, Kenya, all schools have active guidance and counselling departments, which deal with cases of students’ indiscipline among other responsibilities. Individual counseling is the most frequently used intervention measure for addressing the issue of alcohol abuse among students. However, despite the existence of active counseling in schools, alcohol-related indiscipline cases still continue to be reported (Daily Nation, 2015). Imenti South Sub County is the most affected in this regard, because in the year 2013 alone, more than five schools from this area went on rampage, destroying school property and engaging in arson attacks on their colleagues (ADA, 2014). Police investigations later revealed that perpetrators of these heinous crimes were under the influence of alcohol, despite the fact that the schools in question were all boarding schools (The Standard, 2013).

It is apparent that alcohol abuse remains a common problem among students in secondary schools across the world. Despite the various strategies that have been put in place by governments and other stakeholders to address this worrying predicament, many worrying alcohol-related issues continue to be reported, especially in Imenti South Sub County, which has in turn led to the area performing dismally in the

national examinations. The begging question to this end is, are the counselling interventions geared towards ameliorating this situation being used effectively? The objective of this study was to ascertain the influence of peer counselling on the level of alcohol abuse among students in public day secondary schools in Imenti South Sub-county, Meru County, Kenya.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Peer counselling is the encouraging concerted effort to harness the capacity which group members sharing common interest may console, appease, befriend, mediate and reconcile those who are alienated from one another informally, without resorting to discipline or depending on professionals or those in authority within organization or intuition (Ndichu, 2005). In this study, peer counselling refers to the use of a student leader or persons similar in age, to advice his or her colleagues on any contemporary issue of widespread concern. This section highlights previous researches on how the use of peer counselling has influenced level of alcohol abuse among affected persons.

According to (Allen, 2008), peer counselling intervention thrives on the premise that young people are more likely to change their behavior if peers they like advocate for change on social practices, community contests, media messages and also if parents, teachers, health workers and religious leaders play an important role on the young people's lives. (Murithi, 2007) confirmed this through a mixed methods research, whose findings revealed that peer counselling intervention allows the affected students to work on the issues of their own concern with support of their peers. Peer counsellors are therefore available to help their friends at any time and their counselling sessions are mostly informal, which makes them ideal for free discussions, devoid of pressure or threats. This argument is supported by (Owaa, 2010), who posited that peers counselors have greater opportunities to influence their fellow students on matters that negatively affect their education, citing alcohol abuse as the best example.

An American study by (Scoltzn, 2002) revealed that the quality of the peer counselor relationship is important for any student to perform well in their academic endeavors. He posited that a peer counselor cares for the whole person and not just the academic or career side of the person. Victims of alcohol abuse are therefore able to drop this harmful habit if the peer counselling interventions are utilized in an effective manner. This is especially so because good peer counselors are always available, sociable, encouraging, educated in diversity issues, supportive and passionate about making positive change in the affected. This revelation is in harmony with that of (Nyagah, 2011), whose descriptive survey noted that peer counselling is an effective way of managing any

indiscipline cases among students who have been frequent consumers of alcohol. It is for this reason that the present study also focused on peer counselling versus alcohol abuse.

In Uganda, a study by (Kabasansi, Ross, Otor, Baucer and Samber, 2009), established that peer counselling significantly increases an affected students' knowledge of how to manage and effectively deal with the side effects that are always associated with alcohol abuse. They revealed that though training of peer counselors is an expensive project, it is worth investing in as most affected students are not able to manage some extreme cases of alcohol abuse-related side effects, which limits their participation in school activities. The study therefore recommended that to train one peer counselor, a school would be required to invest 260 dollars towards this course. To this end, (Alpha, 2008) reported that there was a significant improvement in discipline among students in most Ugandan schools that had trained peer counselors. It was noted that cases of indiscipline among affected students dropped by 50% in a span of one year, after training of peer counselors.

(Nyagah, 2011) in his Kenyan research stressed that personal development for a counselor is vital and that it should be an ongoing process, pointing out important reasons why a counselor would benefit from undergoing counselling during their training. He stated that it promotes self-exploration, boost self-confidence and promotes interpersonal relationships. This is in harmony with another Kenyan study by (Shikuku, 2012), which was carried out on 500 affected students in Trans Nzoia County, revealed that peer counselling intervention had a significant positive influence on the number of indiscipline cases associated with alcohol abuse, since most of the affected students confessed that they had indulged in less forbidden activities in school after holding multiple peer counselling sessions in their respective schools.

(Mugendi, 2016) also conducted a similar study in Embu County, Kenya, and revealed that the use of peer counseling is an effective way of managing the urge to consume alcohol among addicted students in academic institutions. The only difference between the Trans Nzoia study and that of Mugendi (2016) is that in the latter, the respondents were sampled from a local university, unlike this study where the affected students were selected from public day secondary schools.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The descriptive survey research design was used to implement this study, where it was assumed that various counselling methods were used to address alcohol abuse issues in Imenti south sub-county. Through the descriptive survey therefore, the researcher sought to highlight one of these counseling interventions i.e. peer counseling.

This research was carried out in public day secondary schools in Imenti South sub county, Meru County, Kenya. This region was preferred because it is one of the regions in the country with the highest rate of alcohol abuse among secondary school students (The Standard, 2015). This is also evidenced by a research carried out by NACADA, which indicated that about 81% of students were abusing alcohol in Nkubu high school (ADA, 2013). As a consequence, most schools in this area record dismal results in national examinations and therefore the region was most appropriate for conducting research on the interventions for curbing the spread of alcohol, abuse menace. Imenti- South Sub County lies in central Kenya, on latitude 37.6<sup>0</sup> E and longitude of 0.05<sup>0</sup> N. It is about 10 miles south of the equator and an altitude of approximately 4500 feet.

On the educational front, the region has 72 public secondary schools, of which 42 are day schools, while 30 are boarding schools. The secondary school students' population stands at 8,016 in day schools and 14,010 for boarding schools, which makes a total of 22,026 students. The rate of alcohol abuse in this area is highest in public day secondary schools, standing at 24.95% while in boarding schools, it stands at 10.3% (Source: KNBS, 2016; The Standard, 2017).

The study targeted the 2,000 students who abuse alcohol, in the 42 public day secondary schools within Imenti South Sub County. This figure was calculated from existing statistics, which show that 24.95% of students in public day secondary schools in Imenti South Sub County have abused alcohol at least once in their student life at secondary school (The Standard, 2017). All the 42 teachers heading guidance and counselling departments in the 42 public day secondary schools from the research area also formed part of the target population. Guidance and Counselling (G&C) teachers were targeted because they are the ones who put in place counselling intervention measures to address issues of alcohol abuse in their respective schools. Affected students i.e. students who abuse alcohol were also targeted because they are the ones who know on the type of alcoholic drinks that they consume and the reasons why they abuse alcohol, all of which were important issues under investigation in this study. Sample size of this study comprised of 13 guidance and counselling teachers and 600 affected students (victims of alcohol abuse), making a total of 613 respondents. These, as illustrated in Table 1, formed 30% of the target population, and were therefore deemed by the researcher to be sufficient in representing the targeted respondents, going by the recommendations of (Kerlinger, 2002).

**Table 1: Determination of Sample Size from Target Population**

Respondents	Population	Sample	Percentage
G and C Teachers	42	13	30
Affected Students	2,000	600	30
Total	2,042	613	30

Simple random sampling technique was used to select the participating guidance and counselling teachers. This was implemented by randomly assigning numerals 1 to 42 to all the 42 public day secondary schools in the research area. The numbers were then written on separate small pieces of paper, which were later folded to conceal the numbers and placed in a raffle basket. The basket was thoroughly shaken to shuffle the papers and then a blind-folded person asked to select 13 pieces of paper from the basket one at a time, without replacement. The heads of guidance and counselling department from each of the selected 13 schools were the ones used for the study.

Snow ball technique was used to select the affected students. This technique was preferred because it was not possible to pinpoint students who abuse alcohol in a school setting and therefore snow ball sampling was the most appropriate way of getting the affected students, going by the saying "birds of the same feathers flock together". The first case was however identified from past records in the deputy principals' "black book" or from teachers in charge of counselling in the participating schools.

Data were collected using a close-ended questionnaire, which was administered to secondary school students from the research area, who were as at the time of the study, abusing or have abused alcohol in the past two months. The questionnaire had 10 statements on a 5-point likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, seeking information about the influence of peer counselling intervention on the level of alcohol abuse among secondary school students. Scores ranged from a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 50. Some of the statements therein were positively worded while others were negatively worded. Negatively worded statements were reverse scored. Scores ranging between 10 and 25 were interpreted as adequate peer counselling intervention while those within 26 and 50 presented inadequate counselling intervention.

To measure the level of alcohol abuse among the selected affected students, the Alcohol Abuse Level Questionnaire (AALQ) was used. This was a closed ended questionnaire with 16 items, placed on a 5 point likert type scale. Some of the items were negatively worded while some were positively worded. All the statements in the AALQ sought information on the

affected students' level of alcohol abuse. Data collected by this instrument was used to address the dependent variable of the study. The scores ranged from 20 to 100, whereby scores between 20 and 49 were considered to be low level of alcohol abuse while scores between 50 and 75 were considered to be moderate level of alcohol abuse. Score over 75 were considered by the researcher to be high level of alcohol abuse. The Guidance and Counseling Teachers' Interview Schedule (G&CTIS) was used to collect qualitative data, to supplement the information captured by the previously mentioned instruments. All the instruments were validated using the Rasch model, while their reliability was used using

the parallel forms method. Data were analyzed using frequencies, mean and correlations.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to ascertain the influence of peer counselling intervention on the level of alcohol abuse among students in public day secondary schools. The Research Question (RQ) was formulated from this objective as follows;

*"What is the influence of peer counselling intervention on the level of alcohol abuse among students in public day secondary schools?"*

**Table 2:** Peer counselling and alcohol abuse

			Alcohol abuse		Total
			Abstinence	Abuse	
Peer intervention	Adequate	Count	391	10	401
		% within Peer counselling	97.5%	2.5%	100.0%
	Inadequate	Count	80	116	196
		% within Peer counselling	40.8%	59.2%	100.0%
Total	Count		474	126	600
	% within Peer counselling		79%	21%	100.0%

Source: Field Data (2018)

The Table shows that 97.5% of respondents who indicated that there is adequate peer intervention had alcohol abstinence while 2.5% abused alcohol. 40.8% of respondents who said that there is inadequate peer intervention had alcohol abstinence and 59.2% abused alcohol.

The null hypothesis as stated in chapter one was,

***H<sub>0</sub>:*** *Peer counselling has no significant influence on the level of alcohol abuse among students in public day secondary schools in Imenti South Sub-county.*

This hypothesis was tested inferentially at 0.05 alpha level of statistical significance, using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, whose results were as presented in Table 3 thus;

**Table 3:** Pearson correlation

		Peer intervention	Alcohol abuse
Peer intervention	Pearson Correlation	1	.652**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	600	600
Alcohol abuse	Pearson Correlation	.652**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	600	600

Source: Field Data (2018)

The table indicates that there is a significant moderate positive correlation between peer intervention and alcohol abuse with a coefficient of 0.652. Therefore, peer counselling helps to reduce alcohol use among students. These findings contradict the assertions of the first null hypothesis, which was consequently rejected. These findings imply that peer counselling as an intervention has had a strong positive influence on lowering the level of alcohol abuse among students in Imenti South Sub County. This was because the affected students revealed that through peer counselling sessions held in their respective schools,

they have been able to lower their urge to abuse alcohol. Peers normally are positively influenced one another positively.

Allen (2008) asserts that young people are likely to change their behavior when influenced by their peers. These findings are in agreement with those of (Mugendi, 2016) who conducted a similar study in Embu County, Kenya. He found out that the use of peer counselling was an effective way of managing the urge to consume alcohol among addicted individuals. The only difference between the present study and that of

(Mugendi, 2016) is that in the latter, the respondents were sampled from a local university, unlike this study where the affected students were selected from public day secondary schools in Imenti South Sub County. It was also found out in this study that the use of peer counselling intervention has led to decreased cases of school absenteeism among majority of the affected students that were sampled in this study. However, these findings differ from those of (Mugendi, 2016) in the sense that in Embu County, the respondents, who were mostly university students, still missed some of their lectures even after peer counselling. The reason for this difference as explained by (Mugendi, 2016) was

the easy access of alcoholic drinks at the university premises, coupled with influence from their colleagues from very rich families, which made management of alcohol abuse to be a toll order. The following prove questions supported the findings.

One statement in the ASQ therefore sought to find out from respondents whether peer counselling sessions helped them lower their urge to abuse alcohol. Their responses to this statement were analyzed descriptively by computing frequency counts then converted to percentages and the results were as presented in Table 4 thus:

**Table 4: Peer Counselling and Students' Urge to Abuse Alcohol**

Statement	Response	f	%
Peer counseling sessions have helped me to lower my urge to abuse alcohol	SA	404	67.3
	A	179	29.8
	U	0	0.0
	D	13	2.2
	SD	4	0.7
	Total	600	100

Source: Field Data (2018)

As it can be seen from the Table, a total of 404 respondents, which translates to 67.3% of the sampled affected students Strongly Agreed (SA) that peer counselling sessions held in their respective schools had helped them to lower their urge of abusing alcohol. The Table also reveals that 179 respondents which is 29.8 % of the sampled affected students Agreed (A) that indeed peer counselling sessions had helped them to lower their urge to abuse alcohol. None of the students, which translates to 0% of the sampled students, were Undecided (U) with this statement as the Table further reveals, which implies that the statement was well understood by all the respondents. It can also be seen that only 13 of the sampled students Disagreed (D) that peer counseling sessions had helped to lower their urge to abuse alcohol, which translates to 2.2% of the sampled students. Additionally, the Table informs us that only 4 students Strongly Disagreed (SD) with the statement, which is a paltry 0.7% of the sampled affected students.

It is clear from the Table that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that peer counseling had a positive influence on their level of alcohol abuse as far as their urge to abuse alcohol was concerned. This was encored by a teacher who asserted that,

*"Peer counselling has proved productive in addressing the student urge of alcohol abuse..." (Male Teacher).*

Another question of the affected students' level of alcohol abuse in this study was number of days a given affected student had stayed away from school because of alcohol abuse. To assess this indicator, the sampled students were asked in another statement of section A within the ASQ whether the use of peer counselling intervention had influenced their school absenteeism and their responses were as displayed in Table 5.

**Table 5: Peer Counselling and Affected Students' School Absenteeism**

Statement	response	f	%
The use of peer counseling has made me avoid school absenteeism despite the fact that I abuse alcohol	SA	394	65.7
	A	187	31.2
	U	0	0.0
	D	8	1.3
	SD	11	1.8
	Total	600	100

Source: Field Data (2018)

The table informs us that a total of 394 respondents, which translates to 65.7% of the sampled affected students, strongly agreed that the use of peer counselling had made them avoid school absenteeism

despite the fact that they abused alcohol. The Table also reveals that 187 respondents, which translates to 31.2 % of the sampled affected students agreed that indeed the use of peer counselling had made them avoid school

absenteeism despite the fact that they abuse alcohol. None of the students, which translates to 0% of the sampled affected students, were undecided with this statement as the Table further reveals. It can also be observed from the Table that 8 respondents disagreed with the statement, which translates to 1.3% of the sampled affected students. Furthermore, data in the Table reveals that 11 students strongly disagreed with the assertion that the use of peer counselling had led to a reduction in their absenteeism cases resulting from

alcohol abuse. This equals 1.8% of the sampled affected students. The table supports the assertion that peer counselling has a positive influence in curbing absenteeism as a result of alcoholic side effects.

To access further the influence of peer counselling on arresting alcohol abuse another question: *Peer counselling has helped me stop abusing illicit alcoholic drinks* was posed and the findings are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Peer Counselling and Types of Alcoholic Drinks Consumed**

STATEMENT	RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	%
Peer counselling has helped me stop abusing illicit alcoholic drinks	SA	301	50.2
	A	214	35.7
	U	10	1.7
	D	30	5.0
	SD	45	7.4
	Total	600	100

Source: Field data (2018)

Table 6 informs us that a total of 301 respondents, which translates to 50.2% of the selected affected students, strongly agreed that peer counselling had helped them to stop abusing illicit alcoholic drinks. The Table further reveals that 214 affected students, translating to 35.7 % of the respondents agreed that peer counselling had indeed helped them to stop abusing illicit alcoholic drinks. Only 10 (1.7% of the respondents) were undecided on this statement, which implies that majority of them clearly understood the statement. Table 6 also tells us that 30 respondents disagreed with the statement, which translates to 5% of the sampled affected students. Furthermore, the Table informs us, that 45 students (7.5%) strongly disagreed with the assertion that peer counselling had helped them to stop abusing illicit alcoholic drinks.

It is clear from Table 6 that majority of the sampled ASQ respondents affirmed the influence of

peer counselling on their level of alcohol abuse, using the type of alcoholic drinks abused as the indicator. To this end, we can conclude that majority of the affected students were on the affirmative that peer counselling has had a positive influence on their level of alcohol abuse, using type of alcoholic drinks abused as the indicator.

Number of alcohol abuse resultant indiscipline cases that affected students engaged themselves in was yet another indicator of the level of alcohol abuse among students in public day secondary schools within Imenti South Sub County. To measure this indicator, one of the statements in the ASQ required respondents to declare whether peer counselling has had an influence on the number of indiscipline cases they have engaged themselves in the previous two months in school. Their responses were as summarized in Table 7.

**Table 7: Peer Counselling and the Affected Students' Discipline**

Statement	response	f	%
Peer counselling has helped me reduce the number of indiscipline cases related to alcohol abuse that I have engaged in for the last two months	SA	370	61.7
	A	218	36.3
	U	2	0.3
	D	6	1.0
	SD	4	0.7
	Total	600	100

Source: Field Data (2018)

Table 7 informs us that a total of 370 respondents, which translates to 61.7% of the selected affected students strongly agreed that peer counselling had helped them reduce the number of indiscipline cases related to alcohol abuse that they engaged in. It can also be noted from Table 9 that 218 of the sampled students, translating to 36.3 % of the sampled affected students, agreed with this statement. However, 2 respondents were undecided as far as this statement is

concerned but since this number translates to only 0.3% of the sampled affected students, no particular reason could be attributed to their indecision. Table 7 also tells us that 6 respondents, which translates to 1% of the sampled affected students, disagreed with the statement. Additionally, the Table reveals to us that 4 affected students, which translates to 0.7% of the sampled affected students strongly disagreed with the proposition that peer counselling had helped reduce the

number of indiscipline cases related to alcohol abuse that they engaged in prior to the study. Going by data collected from the sampled affected students in section A of the ASQ, it can be deduced that majority of the respondents affirmed that peer counselling has had a strong positive influence on lowering the level of alcohol abuse, going by the indicators of alcohol abuse mentioned.

This conclusion was validated by the sampled Guidance and Counseling (G&C) teachers, whose sentiments as interviewed in this study using the G&CTIS lend support to data collected from the affected students in section A of the ASQ. The G&C teachers had this to say, when they were asked to comment on the influence of peer counselling intervention on their affected students' level of alcohol abuse;

*"...Most of our prefects, whom we frequently use as our peer counselors have reported to us that a vast majority of affected students in their respective classes have now refrained from taking alcohol frequently because of the advice they get from their peer counselors. Through these peer counselling sessions, which we hold in our school every Tuesday from 4pm to 5 pm, the affected students have devised a number of ways of spending their time, leaving minimum chance for any of them to think of seeking alcohol. I personally consider peer counselling as a very successful intervention in the quest to end alcohol abuse among our students..."* [Male Teacher].

*"Hmm.... Absenteeism has been a major problem among students in our school, who have previously engaged in alcohol abuse incidents. Fortunately for us, the peer counselling sessions held once every week have really come our rescue because almost all victims of alcohol abuse in this school have tried to keep themselves in school, missing almost nil learning hours. I think if we intensify our peer counselling programme, we should be able to say goodbye to this issue of alcohol abuse once and for all, as it has ultimately dragged us down as far as our academic performance in KCSE is concerned".* [Male Teacher].

*"To be honest with you Mr. Kinoti, I cannot say that we have been able totally arrest the issue of alcohol*

*abuse in this school but generally, peer counselling as an intervention has been able to help us manage a significant number of indiscipline cases, especially among students who have confessed in some of their peer counselling sessions that they have been perpetrating various crimes while under the influence of alcohol. In fact, some of them have been instrumental in structuring the peer counseling sessions in a manner that can gets all victims of alcohol, abuse to benefit"* [Female Teacher].

It is apparent from the from data obtained using the G&CTIS that peer counselling has had a positive influence on the level of alcohol abuse among public day secondary school in Imenti South Sub County. This is so because the frequency of alcohol abuse, cases of absenteeism, missing lessons and alcohol-related indiscipline cases were the themes that clearly stood out, where the respondents reported that the said indicators of alcohol abuse level had drastically gone down among their affected students. Moreover, they were quick to attribute this milestone to the use of peer counselling intervention.

Findings of this study are also in agreement with those of (Shikuku, 2012), whose case study that was carried out on 500 affected students in Trans Nzoia county, revealed that peer counselling intervention had a significant positive influence on the number of indiscipline cases associated with alcohol abuse, since most of the affected students confessed that they had indulged in less forbidden activities in school after holding multiple peer counselling sessions in their respective schools. The only difference between findings of this study and those of (Shikuku, 2012) is that the latter was carried out in public boarding schools, unlike the present study, which was carried out in public day schools. Both studies however are in harmony as far as the first objective of this study is concerned. The findings are in harmony with one of the theories guiding the study, (Rogers, 1987). He says that a client (student) has ability to change is behavior only facilitation in needed, the formation of peer counselling section students can counsel one another. The qualitative data obtained from the Guidance and Counselling teachers used in this study therefore corroborates the quantitative data obtained from the affected students, which effectively answers the first research question.

## CONCLUSION

Basing on the qualitative and quantitative data that was collected by this study's instruments, it can be concluded that peer counselling is an effective intervention towards curbing alcohol abuse among

students in public day secondary school and should therefore be encouraged.

## REFERENCES

1. Butler, M., & Jenkins, A. (2019). Guidance and counseling as a remedy to alcohol addiction among students. Washington: Manwah International
2. Daily Nation, (2015). The alarming case of alcoholism in Meru schools. Nairobi: Nation media group
3. Kerlinger, F.N. (2002). Foundations of behavioral research (4<sup>th</sup> edition) London: Holt and Winston
4. Mugendi, W. (2016). Impact of drug abuse on students' performance in central Kenya. Unpublished Masters Thesis, Eldoret: Moi University, Kenya
5. National Crime Research Centre, (2017). Rapid Assessment of Arsons in Secondary Schools in Kenya - July-August, 2016. Nairobi: NCRC
6. Ndiaye, P., Ike, J. & Okafor, W. (2018). The alcohol abuse situation in West Africa. Lagos: Paramount publishers
7. Nkubu High School. (2014). First policy on Alcohol and Drug abuse. Unpublished document.
8. Nyaga, D. (1997). Customs and Traditions of Meru. *Nairobi: E.A Educational Publishers*
9. Shikuku, D. (2012). Guidance and counseling strategies used to curb indiscipline among Kenyan secondary schools. *Unpublished Masters Thesis, university of Nairobi*
10. Stainar, K. (1996). An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing. *California: Sage publications, Thousand Oaks*
11. The standard Newspaper, (2001). The state of the nation address. *Nairobi: The standard group*
12. The standard Newspaper, (2015). Drugs take over Meru schools. *Nairobi: The standard group*
13. Waswa, F. (2016). Effectiveness of using student families to prevent alcoholism among high schools in Uganda. Kampala: Makerere University
14. WHO, (2015). Drug trafficking in east Africa: Geneva: *Stratton publishers*.
15. Willis, A. (2018). The youth and drugs from a global perspective. *Toronto: mainstream publishers*
16. Wotuku, J.W. (2002). Status of Guidance and Counseling in Secondary Schools: A Case Study of Laikipia District. Master of Education In Educational Administration And Planning Thesis. Nairobi: University of Nairobi.