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Familial Aggregation of Substance Use Disorders in South-Eastern Nigeria: A family-controlled study

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Background: The generation of a robust genetic epidemiological data in Africa to drive public mental health education on the biological basis of Substance Use Disorders (SUDs), which has been popularly misconstrued as a moral failure, has become imperative, in order to encourage access to formal care by patients and allocation of resources by policy makers. There is paucity of data on the heritability of SUDs in Africa. To the best of the authors' knowledge this will be the first report from our continent regarding the familial and morbid risks of SUDs using our methodology.

Objective: This study will aim to assess the familial and morbid risks of SUDs and other Psychiatric Disorders in the First-Degree Relatives (FDRs) of pro bands with cannabis and alcohol dependence, in comparison with the families of a sample of healthy control group.

Hypothesis: We hypothesize that the FDRs of pro bands with SUDs are significantly more likely to have elevated risk of SUDs and other mental disorders than the relatives of a healthy control group.

Methods: This study will be an extension of our previous studies on the genetic epidemiology of Schizophrenia and Mood Disorders. The study will elicit information on the familial and morbid risks of SUDs among FDRs of probands with cannabis

and alcohol dependence and relatives of a healthy control group through direct interview (in person or via telephone) of relatives using the Diagnostic Interview for Genetic Studies (DIGS). FDRs who could not be reached for direct interview will be interviewed using informant reports. Diagnosis of pro bands will be by consensus by two experts in this field. Best-estimate method will be used for the diagnosis in the relatives of the pro bands and the control. Logistic regression will be used to estimate the Odds Ratios (OR) and 95% Confidence Intervals (CI) for the differences in proportion of the affected versus unaffected FDRs, while the Weinberger shorter method will be used to estimate morbid risks.

Significance: It is hoped that the findings of this study will enrich the field of genetic epidemiology of SUDs in Africa. These data will be valuable to clinicians in public education and preventive services of genetic counselling in Africa.

Speaker Biography

Justus Uchenna Onu has completed his Fellowship at the age of 34 years from both the West African Postgraduate Medical College and National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria. He is a consultant psychiatrist at the Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Enugu, Nigeria. He is the acting academic coordinator for the residency training program of the above institution, a reviewer for reputable Journals and has published about 5 original articles in both local and International Journals.

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