Title: The influence of drug abuse on domestic violence in Turkana Central District, Kenya

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Abstract: The world is faced with immense drug abuse related challenges perhaps like no other time of the past. And this explains the increase in social, psychological and economic problems in society today. According to an annual report by the World Health Organization (WHO) published in September, 2010, more than 3 per cent of the world population abuse drugs and this group of people suffer from a variety of drug abuse related problems. According to the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), Kenya is one of the countries most affected by the drug abuse menace with one of its most geographically vast districts, Turkana Central District leading as a hub for drug abusers. The Kenya Institute of Drug Abuse (KIDA), report of June 2008, attributes rampant cases of drug abuse to a combination of factors such as poverty, peer influence and illiteracy. The aim of this research was to investigate the influence of drug abuse on domestic violence in Turkana Central District. Further to that, the research aimed at establishing the category of persons most involved in abuse of drugs, the types of drugs most commonly abused and their sources. Policies to control the use and flow of drugs have as a result been suggested. The research design for this study was cross-sectional social survey which entailed collecting information from individuals about their opinions, beliefs, feelings, and perceptions. The Study was conducted in Turkana Central District and a sample size of 460 respondents was surveyed. Respondents comprised both males and females aged 18 years and above because they were considered mature enough to give rational answers. Some 20 respondents were interviewed from each of the randomly selected 20 out the total 60 sub-locations in the District. Key respondents included 20 assistant-chiefs from selected 20 sub-locations. Other key respondents included the OCS Lodwar police station, 3 medical officers, 8 community leaders, 4 religious leaders and 5 clan elders. Purposive sampling techniques were used to get the said key informants. Information was obtained from literate respondents by use of questionnaires while those who were neither able to read nor write were interviewed in English or Kiswahili language with the help of an interpreter. More male (75 per cent), than females (25 per cent), the poorer (78 per cent) than the rich (22 percent) abused drugs. Alcohol and bhang remained the most abused drugs in Turkana Central District at 41 per cent and 27 per cent respectively. Socio-economic and psychological factors such as poverty, lack of strong social and emotional attachments and peer pressure influenced the degree of abuse of drugs among people in the District. For example, middle aged persons were found to abuse drugs more because they were in their prime social age bracket that is characterized by more socio-economic and emotional challenges. About 30 per cent of drugs in the District were smuggled in through the Kenya-Uganda and Kenya-Ethiopian borders. Others, 37 per cent were locally cultivated or brewed (in the case of alcohol). Another 33 per cent of drugs in the District were transported in from up-country. The findings of the study indicate that 65 per cent of all cases of the domestic violence in Turkana Central District were influenced by drug or alcohol abuse. This essentially means that drug abuse heavily influenced domestic violence in the District. The study has recommended stringent security measures by the Ministry of Internal Security so as to curb cross-border drug smuggling, flow and use. Also, it has
recommended that the Ministry of Education and other private agencies should more
vigorously initiate public awareness forums on drug abuse and domestic violence so as to sensitize the masses on the dangers of the two vices. The judiciary through the Justice Ministry should initiate tougher laws against drug abusers and perpetrators of domestic violence. Further to that, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development should open up more guidance and counseling centers as well as children homes and rehabilitation centers to take care of victims of drug abuse and drug abuse related problems.