

YOUTHS' APPETITE FOR DRUG ABUSE GROWING *PROF OGAJI*

By Sam Kpenu



Prof Ogaji (middle) with some participant

Centre Leader, Africa Centre of Excellence in Public Health and Toxicological Research (ACE PUTOR) Professor Daprim Ogaji says Drug Abuse has continued to pose a significant threat to individuals, families, and communities worldwide.

Professor Ogaji stated this at the opening of a one-day hybrid Seminar on Drugs and Suicide prevention held in collaboration with the Counselling and Human Development Centre on Thursday, July 20, 2023, at the 7- in-1 TETFund building at the University of Port Harcourt.

According to him, the consequences of drug abuse are far-reaching, leading to deteriorating health, broken relationships, and a loss of productivity.

Professor Ogaji said the essence of the workshop was to raise essential awareness about the devastating effects of drug abuse which according to him is on the increase.

Professor Ogaji also suggested effective ways to curb the trend which include education, research, treatment, and rehabilitation among others.

The Lead speaker, Professor Rosemary Ekechukwu who spoke on the Topic: *Life is sweet, shun drugs and suicide* disclosed that the highest abusers of drugs and substances

are teenagers and young adults aged between 15 and 29 years old.

"This must not be allowed to continue, Nigeria like many other countries must as a matter of urgency address the growing drug appetite amongst its young population if not they would not have a future", Professor Ekechukwu declared.

She charged participants who were mostly undergraduate students of the University to shun drug abuse declaring that it could have far-reaching consequences on anyone involved as well as its attendant health consequences.

Also speaking, the Dean of Students Affairs of the University, Professor Chima Nwokocho re-echoed the University's position on illicit drugs which according to him was not acceptable, and warned that anyone caught or involved in such acts would be dealt with according to the extant rules of the University.



A cross-section of students at the Conference

"As a University we don't tolerate the use of hard drugs by students, it's dangerous and could affect your future. You were sent to the university to study and become responsible citizens so that you would be useful to yourself, your family, and the nation at large", Nwokocho stated.

More than 200 students attended the seminar which featured questions and answer session.