

**PREVALENCE OF KHAT CONSUMPTION AND ITS ASSOCIATED FACTORS
AMONG COMMERCIAL MOTORCYCLISTS IN KAMPALA CENTRAL DIVISION,
UGANDA**

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REG. NO: 2012/HD07/1929U

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**A RESEARCH DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A DEGREE OF MASTER OF PUBLIC
HEALTH OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

2016

ABSTRACT

Introduction and background:

Substance abuse is a global problem causing both social and public health havoc in many countries. Khat as a mild psycho-stimulant increases alertness and reduces the need to sleep. Recent data in Uganda suggest an increase in khat use particularly among young adults. The prevalence of khat use among commercial motorcyclists was however not known.

Objectives: This study investigated the prevalence and the factors associated with khat use among commercial motorcyclists so as to establish its link with the occurrence of road traffic crashes in Kampala Central Division

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted in Kampala Central Division. Multi stage sampling technique was applied to select commercial motorcyclists and interviewer administered questionnaires were used. KIs were purposively selected. Quantitative data was entered using Epi data and analysed using STATA 12. Binary logistic regression and multivariable logistic regression analysis was carried out to determine the prevalence, identify independent predictors of khat use among commercial motorcyclists in Kampala Central Division. Khat consumption was defined as self-reported current chewing of khat leaves.

Results: A total of 392 commercial motorcyclists were sampled. Prevalence of khat consumption is 39.8%. Almost 60% (93/156) use khat daily and 63% (99/156) said alertness/ enhancing driving performance as the most reasons for khat use. The multivariate logistic regression analysis indicated that the factors independently associated with khat use were; having a friend who chewed khat (AOR 262.9 CI 79.51-869.69), alcohol consumption (AOR 3.04 CI 1.57-5.89), tobacco smoking (AOR 2.17 CI 1.04-4.52), cannabis use (AOR 13.41 CI 5.46-

32.94) and Muslim religion (AOR 3.20 CI 1.49-6.88). Key informants also agreed that khat use was a major public health challenge.

Conclusion: Four in ten motorcyclists chew khat. The reported prevalence of khat consumption among commercial motorcyclists is unacceptably high. Having a friend chew khat, religion and concurrent use of other psychoactive substances like alcohol, tobacco and cannabis were the factors strongly associated with khat use. Interventions to strengthen and integrate community prevention programs to curb the high prevalence of khat use and other substances need to be implemented. Road traffic regulations should continue the fight against substance abuse among transporters.