

Miraa Use among Somali Youth Living in Eastleigh, Nairobi Kenya

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Abstract

Eastleigh is a suburb in Nairobi inhabited predominantly by Somalis and known for a number of activities that includes businesses, stopover of youth people from the western world on their way to Somalia or to learn the culture and get spouses. Miraa use has been associated with the Somali community. The area of study was chosen as Section 1 from the four Sections that approximately hold 9408 households. 270 households were selected with at least one youth aged between 18-25 years of age. We gave our own developed questionnaire that asked about demographic characteristics and patterns of miraa use to consenting participants. Descriptive analysis was done based on the demographic characteristics. We found that miraa use was high (47.9%) and was more prevalent among the males, those with lower educational level, the single (including the divorced and separated) and those born out of Eastleigh. We also found that miraa use was more prevalent among those whose parents were not married, living alone, with friends, relatives, parents and relatives, the unemployed, those running businesses, the self-employed and those whose families had lower income. Miraa onset was more likely at 18 years or below and was used with other psychoactive substances that include amphetamines, cannabis, heroin, cocaine, shisha, tobacco products and alcoholic beverages. A larger study should be done in this area that includes all the other sections as well. This study advises on targeting prevention of miraa use to youth younger than 18 years.

Keywords: Miraa, Khat, Somali Youth.

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