

**THE EFFECTS OF CRYTSAL METH AMONG SCHOOL GOING LEARNERS, THE
CASE OF SESHEGO, ZONE 1, POLOKWANE, LIMPOPO**

By

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RESEARCH DISSERTATION

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DECLARATION

I, Moshibudi Maggie Makola, declare that this is my study title: **“The Effects of Crystal Meth among School Going Learners, the Case of Seshego, Zone 1, Polokwane, Limpopo”** is my own academic work and that all sources I have used while compiling this study have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

Moshibudi Maggie Makola

Date

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my late father Maishe William Makola, may his soul continue to rest in perfect peace.

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I am beyond grateful to the Almighty God for coming this far and reaching the final level of my study. I would like to thank the following for positively contributing to the possibility of my study becoming a success:

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to explore the effects of crystal meth among school going learners, the case of Seshego, Zone 1, Polokwane, Limpopo. The study focused on perceptions of school learners about those who smoke crystal meth, the factors leading to the use of crystal meth, preventative measures to curb the use of crystal meth and the effects that crystal meth has on school going learners. The nature of the study is qualitative.

The study data was collected in Seshego, Zone 1. The researcher interviewed high school learners in Moruleng Secondary School. An in-depth semi-structured interview was used as the data collection method. The learners were interviewed face-to-face individually. The tool used in the study to conduct the interviews was a semi-structured interview schedule. Data was analyzed thematically.

The study findings showed that peer pressure is the biggest contributing factor that leads to the use of crystal meth among school going learners. The study also found that bullying is one of the effects that school learners experience as a result of those who use crystal meth. Moreover, those who use crystal meth show physical changes and change in behaviour.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1. 1 BACKGROUND & MOTIVATION

Crystal methamphetamine became popular during the 2nd World War among soldiers who were on duty so that they could remain awake for a long time. They were given amphetamine or methamphetamine as stimulants. Following the war, crystal meth became readily accessible for treating a variety of various illnesses, such as depression, narcolepsy, obesity, substance abuse, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Furthermore, as it has impact on less appetite for food intake, it was introduced to women as medication that they could use for weight loss (European Monitoring Centre for drugs and Drug Addiction, 2014 and Verarrier et al., 2012 in Evren & Bozkurt, 2018). Thus, its therapeutic use led to its misuse.

In a study conducted by Evren and Bozkurt (2018) they found that the first crystal meth epidemics were reported in USA and in Japan between the 1940's and 1950's. Moreover, the World war was blamed for the non-medical use of crystal meth among the public in the mentioned countries. According to research made by Evren and Bozkurt (2018) crystal meth, known to be the most popular synthetic drug in the world has quickly swept across South African communities. Sedibe and Hendricks (2021) in a study that they conducted also reported that crystal meth is among substances that are abused in South African communities.

Recent research shows that crystal meth among high school learners has increased, particularly in Cape Town. This is supported by Peltzer et al. (2011) and Lane et al. (2011) in Evren and Bozkurt (2018) wherein they reported that the Western Cape Province has the highest rate of methamphetamine ("tik") consumption, and its effects may be seen there. Statistics show that the average age of juvenile methamphetamine users was 16 years old and that 91% of them were coloured males (Van Heerden et al, 2009 & Pluddemann et al., 2008 in Evren and Bozkurt, 2018). Moreover, "in the Western Cape

Province, on an average, one out of every five school-going youth is actively using crystal methamphetamine” (Serra & Warda, 2013 in Evren & Bozkurt 2018).

Wechsberg et al. (2010) in Sedibe & Hendricks (2021) reported an upsurge in crystal methamphetamine usage, which is particularly common among young people in coloured groups in South Africa. Sedibe and Hendricks (2021) mentioned in their study that young individuals who seek for new experiences, an improvement in their mental functioning, or a better understanding of themselves are more likely to consume drugs. However, teenagers may also turn to drugs to deal with their self-consciousness. Most school going learners are unaware of the negative impact that crystal meth has on their behaviour and lifestyle. In this study, the researcher’s focus will be on the effects that crystal meth has on school going learners.

1.2 DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.2.1 Adolescent

Sawyer (2018) refers to adolescent as the stage of life that spans from infancy through adulthood, and its definition has long been a source of debate. Adolescence includes phases of biological development as well as significant changes in social roles, both of which have evolved over the previous 100 years.

1.2.2 Chemsex

Fatore (2020) defines the term chemsex as is described as the use of specific drugs before or during sexual activity to facilitate, lengthen, and/or increase sexual experience. This practice is most common among groups of men who have sex with men (MSM). Methamphetamine, mephedrone, GHB/GBL, and ketamine are the four drugs most frequently linked to chemsex.

1.2.3 Crystal methamphetamine

Crystal methamphetamine short for crystal meth, is an addictive substance that has powerful effects on the central nervous system (Lee,2022). It has no legitimate use. It occurs in the form of brilliant blue-white rocks or transparent crystal pieces. It is a well-liked party drug that is also referred to as "ice", "tik" or "glass." The most common method

of consumption for crystal meth addicts is a small glass pipe, but other methods include ingestion, snorting, and vein injection.

1.2.4 Drugs

Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care (2019), refers to drugs as substances that alter one's mental or physical state. They may have an impact on how your brain functions, your emotions, your behaviour, your understanding, and your senses. They are therefore erratic and harmful, particularly for young people.

1.2.5 Effects

Effects refer to a change, response, or impression as a result of an action or other factors.

1.2.6 Learners

In this study, learners refer to school going pupils who are in high school.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Ranhus (2012) in Sedibe & Hendricks (2021), states that peer pressure is a significant element in teenage learners using drugs. The interviews for their study revealed that many adolescent learners feel pressured by their friends to take drugs. Despite their best efforts, they eventually give in to the demands and start using drugs as a result. Adolescent learners are coerced by peers by convincing them that there would be no consequences if they take drugs.

“It was discovered from the findings that adolescent learners who abuse drugs under-perform academically” (Sedibe & Hendricks, 2021). These are adolescent learners who have problems with their schoolwork. Because they cannot read and write in class, they take drugs to feel better about themselves. On the other hand, it was also discovered from the findings that not only the under-performing adolescent learners, but even high achieving adolescent learners abuse drugs due to peer pressure.”

A 30-year-old man was apprehended by police officers in Seshego on the 16th of February 2022 wherein the Police spokesperson reported that sachets of crystal meth and nyaope, as well as a blender that had drugs in it, were confiscated (Review Online, 2022). On a different article, the chairperson of a Non-Profit organisation, Seshego Community Against Crime reported that “a 25-year-old woman had allegedly committed

suicide due to drug abuse. Moreover, he also reported that they had long been raising concerns about young people who are using Crystal meth and nyaope in Seshego. He further mentioned that some people are heeding to fight drug use and reporting it to relevant authorities, but some parents are not cooperating when their children are involved and rehabilitation processes seem not to be helping” (Mamphiswana, 2021).

The researcher was concerned about how crystal meth affects both the learners and those around them, whether directly or indirectly. The use of methamphetamine is seen as a phenomenon that not only impacts the individual but also the community since it frequently leads to the breakdown of family structures, where learners frequently drop out of school and even end up dying by suicide. The researcher is of the opinion that most High school learners are not aware of the major effects that crystal meth has on their physical health and psychological well-being.

1.4 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Konho, Beste & Pilhatsch (2020), Methamphetamine use disorder (MUD) is a major public health issue that affects people all over the world. There is a serious medical shortage in many areas of Europe because of the rapid rise in methamphetamine (MA) usage, particularly among young individuals. Due to psychiatric comorbidities and the effects of MA on the neurobiological pathways that regulate higher-order cognitive skills important for adaptive behaviour and the successful completion of treatment programs, MUD is a particularly challenging addiction to treat. In the same wavelength, Rommel et al. (2016) stated that due to the absence of a social service and health insurance system, socially vulnerable persons in the United States of America, the nation where most meth mouth observations have been made, have restricted access to proper health treatments in the case of illness. Research findings and empirical data demonstrate that poor oral health emerges from these issues when there is a lack of access to health care, as well as when there is a reduction in socioeconomic level and homelessness (Dye, 2007 in Rommel et al., 2016). Furthermore, In Germany, however, due to the availability of a public health care system and a statutory health insurance, treatment measures are supplied, even in situations of socially weak position.

In a study conducted by Watt et al. (2016), it was found that sex was seen as a tradeable resource for acquiring crystal meth in the setting of high rates of drug addiction and unemployment. Moreover, participants acknowledged the practice of exchanging sex for crystal meth as "natural" and "happens all the time." Furthermore, five of the sample's women mentioned their personal involvement in sex trading, which led to the conclusion that women are most likely to engage in sex trading for crystal meth. When one of the women was asked how she obtains crystal meth, the woman said, "sometimes I will have sex with someone to obtain crystal meth." The use of methamphetamine has also been linked to HIV sexual risk behaviours, such as commercializing sex and engaging in unprotected sex with several sexual partners (Meade et al., 2012 and Watt et al., 2016 in Asante et al., 2017). The purposeful and concurrent mixing of sex and drugs, sometimes referred to as "chemsex," is a topic of growing concern throughout the world that must be addressed with reference to psychoactive substance usage among gay & bisexual men Drysdale (2020). Thus, in this context, crystal meth has been identified as a chemsex drug as it enhances sexual activity. One of the elements that was identified on chemsex in the study was the "hook-up" culture which is specifically for gay male sex-based social life. With the improvement of technology overtime, hook-ups have increased the likelihood of casual and group sexual encounters, thus increasing the risk of contracting HIV among sexually active men.

1.5 ROLE OF THEORY IN THE STUDY

This study adopted the social learning theory which was founded by Albert Bandura in the 1970's. The social learning theory of Bandura emphasizes the importance of peer influences and the environment in defining behaviours. Most learners from Moruleng Secondary School who were interviewed said that peer pressure is the biggest contributing factor that leads to school learners using crystal meth. Research by Kelly, Vuolo, and Marin (2017) supports Bandura's learning theory by emphasizing the connection between peer deviance and individual behaviour and the way in which such behaviour is sparked. In this study the respondents, emphasized that there is change in behaviour of learners who start smoking crystal meth. Prior to utilizing the drug, they would be well behaved learners, however when they start smoking crystal meth, they display different behaviour such as being disrespectful to teachers in class.

According to the social learning hypothesis, people pick up behaviours through watching and copying other people in their surrounding environment. Therefore, this theory assisted the researcher to be able to understand how school going learners are influenced to use the crystal meth drug. For instance, the study found that there are learners who start smoking because they also want to know what it feels to be powerful after smoking. Moreover, such learners would be convinced that if they smoke crystal meth, they will become fearless like how those who smoke it claim to be fearless. The social learning theory stresses the importance of peer factors and the environment in defining certain behaviours. Rabotata (2019) also supports the hypothesis that with the help of others, one develops an understanding of how new behaviours are conducted, and this coded knowledge later acts as a direction for action. According to the Social Learning Theory, human behaviour is explained by interplay of environmental, behavioural, and cognitive factors. The Social Learning Theory emphasizes the learning that takes place in a social environment context. Moreover, it considers the idea that individuals may learn from one another, including ideas like imitation, modelling, and observational learning (Rabotata, 2019).

1.6 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to explore the effects of Crystal meth among school going learners in Seshego, Zone 1, Polokwane, Limpopo.

1.6.2 Objectives of this study

- To explore the perceptions of school going learners on crystal met in Seshego Zone 1.
- To investigate the factors leading to the use of crystal meth among school going learners in Seshego Zone 1.
- To determine the effects that crystal meth has on & among school going learners in Seshego Zone 1.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

“Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem” (Cr, 2020). Moreover, it can be viewed as a science that studies how scientific research is conducted. Research methodology examines the many approaches typically used by the researcher to analyse the research problem, as well as the reasoning behind them.

1.7.1 Research Approach

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), there are three clear research approaches that a researcher can utilize to conduct his/her research study. Namely, the qualitative; quantitative and the mixed methods approach. To fully understand a topic, qualitative research often explores the deeper meaning that the study subject ascribes (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Therefore, this study adopted the qualitative approach as it was relevant for the researcher to obtain in-depth information on the effects that crystal meth has on school going learners in Seshego Zone 1.

1.7.2 Research Design

Following the exploratory research, a case study design was employed to explore the effects of crystal meth on school learners in Seshego Zone 1. Case study research entails a thorough and in-depth examination of a specific incident, circumstance, or organizational unit. According to Yin (2018) multiple sources of information are used in the case study research design.

1.7.3 Population

A research population is typically a sizable group of people or things that serve as the principal subject of a scientific inquiry. Population refers to all the objects, people, or members who meet a certain set of requirements (Polit & Hungler, 1999). The population of this study was learners in Moruleng Secondary School, Seshego Zone 1. The research study included ordinary learners from Grade 9 to Grade 12, the learners were males and female between the ages of 15 and 20.

1.7.4 Sample and sample size

Sampling entails having the ability to select a smaller sample of participants from a wider population of the study's intended audience which will apply to the entire population under study (De Vos et al., 2011). This study used probability sampling technique. Each sample

in probability sampling has an equal chance of being chosen. A probability sample is one in which every component of the population has a known non-zero probability of selection (Nayeem & Huma, 2017). Probability sampling was used through the Simple random sampling technique to recruit ordinary learners. The study comprised of 10 ordinary learners. When using the single random sampling technique every member of the population has an equal probability of being chosen for the sample. The inclusion criteria of the sample included only school going learners as that met the main requirement of the study. The exclusion criteria excluded learners who were writing tests on that day.

1.7.5 Data collection

In this study, semi- structured interviews were used to collect data as they provide the participants with guidance on how to respond. A semi-structured interview is a qualitative research technique that combines a set of open questions (questions that invite a discussion) with the chance for the interviewer to go deeper into topics or responses (Barclay, 2018). Semi-structured interviews also allow the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews through direct contact with the participants. A suitable venue was set up where the interviews were conducted while maintaining privacy and confidentiality. Through semi-structured interviews, the researcher was able to obtain in depth information about the effects of crystal meth among school going learners.

1.7.6 Data analysis

When conducting data analysis, a researcher adopts a technique to distil data into a narrative and its interpretation. Substantial amounts of acquired data must be reduced to be understood (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). To further clarify this definition, Babbie and Mouton (2001) stated that data analysis encompasses all types of analysis of data acquired utilizing procedures, regardless of the paradigms applied to guide the research. The data collected was analysed using the Thematic Context analysis approach. The researcher followed O'Leary's five steps of analysing data. According to O'Leary (2017), the process of reflective qualitative data analysis requires researchers to:

- Organise their own raw data
- Enter and code that data

- Search for meanings through thematic analysis
- Interpret meaning
- Draw conclusions.

1.7.7 Quality criteria

The quality criteria for all qualitative research includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba ,1985 in Nowell et al., 2017).

1.7.7.1 Credibility

One of the most crucial aspects of establishing trustworthiness is credibility, which examines how consistent the results are with reality. Credibility helped to determine if research findings are a valid interpretation of the participants' initial perspectives and represent believable information derived from their original data. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that field notes and recordings of the data collected from the participants were indeed the opinions and ideas of the participants. “The research findings are plausible and trustworthy” (Stenfors et.al.,2020).

1.7.7.2 Transferability

Transferability calls for the researcher to provide enough information and context so that the audience may determine whether the results can be applied to different contexts and circumstances. It is the degree to which the findings of qualitative research may be applied to other contexts or settings with different respondents. The researcher ensured that the interaction between her & the participants were recorded & noted to maintain fairness. Transferability means that the results may be applied to a different setting, situation, or group.(Stenfors et.al.,2020).

1.7.7.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to having sufficient details and documentation of the methods employed so that the study can be scrutinized and replicated. Dependability is the consistency of discoveries across time. It entails individuals evaluating the study's conclusions, interpretations, and suggestions to ensure that they are all supported by the information gathered from participants. The research findings were interpreted by the researcher based on the direct information that was given by the participants. An audit of

the data was also done by the researcher through interview recordings & field notes. Dependability is described as the degree to which the research could be conducted under similar circumstances (Stenfors et.al.,2020).

1.7.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to making sure that the study's conclusions come from the informants' experiences rather than the researcher(s)' personal preferences. This can be done by creating an audit trail of the raw data, memoranda, notes, data reduction, and analysis. The researcher remained unbiased towards the information presented by participants & wrote down exactly what was said. With confirmability, the data and the conclusions are clearly related in some way (Stenfors et.al.,2020).

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Recent literature shows that research studies about Crystal meth have conducted in South Africa, but they are mostly limited to the Western Cape. Hamdulay and Mash (2011) in the research they conducted, reported that, the findings suggest that there was a considerable risk of reliance and harm on the 4000 Mitchell's Plain learners who used crystal meth in the previous year (2010). Mitchell's Plain is a high school located within the City of Cape Town in the Western Cape. Simbayi, et al (2006) as cited in Jantjies (2010), found that a review of the literature reveals that there are few studies exploring how young people in South Africa and throughout the world perceive using crystal methamphetamine.

This study was crucial to conduct as it adds more knowledge to the prevalence of crystal meth among school going learners in a local area in Limpopo. As opposed to such studies only being conducted in the Western cape. The findings of this study will be shared with the Department of Education Limpopo in order to raise awareness on the factors that lead to the use of crystal meth among school going learners, how other learners are affected, the preventative and intervention measures that may assist with dealing with this problem.

The findings of this study will also assist the schools and the Department with information that they were not aware of, and recommendations made by the learners (participants). New policies may be formulated and policies that were already in place may be improved

as a result of this study. Furthermore, through the findings of this study, schools will also be able to raise awareness to their learners on the negative impact that crystal meth has. Moreover, these findings will also be to assist schools & the Department of Education to collaborate with other departments and organizations in order to fight the prevalence of crystal meth among school going learners in Seshego, Zone 1, Polokwane, Limpopo.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations in research are known as a set of rules that direct your study designs and procedures (Bhandari, 2021). Furthermore, when gathering data from people, scientists and researchers must always abide by a set of ethical principles. According to Strydom (2011), ethics are a collection of moral principles put forth by an individual or organization that provide guidelines and expectations for how one should behave with test subjects and respondents. Ethics refers to a system of principles that can significantly alter prior judgments concerning decisions and acts (Fouka and Mantzorou, 2011 in Gillin, 2015). The following ethics were considered in this study:

1.9.1 Permission to conduct study

A permission letter from an organization allows the researcher to conduct a research study and establishes communication and cooperation between the researcher and a particular organization. Ethical approval to conduct the study was obtained from the University of Limpopo Research Ethics Committee before data collection commenced. The researcher requested and obtained permission to conduct the study from the Department of Education Limpopo before collecting data. Moreover, permission was also requested from the principal of Moruleng Secondary School in Seshego Zone 1, and it was approved.

1.9.2 Avoidance of harm to participants

The researcher explained to all the participants about the potential harm may occur, before data collection. The researcher also made the participants aware of service providers that they would be referred to, should there be any harm. Lastly, the researcher ensured that all participants were not physical or emotionally harmed when the study was being conducted.

1.9.3 Informed consent & Voluntary participation

Informed consent was sought from learners, teachers, and the principal of the selected school. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty being imposed on them. Every participant is free to stop participating in the study at any time without feeling obligated to do so (Bhandari, 2021). Moreover, there was no requirement that participants should give a justification for abandoning the research. Lutabingwa and Nethozhe (2006) prescribes that participants have the right to withdraw from the research study at any given time.

- Informed consent

All potential participants must be given and ensured to grasp all the information necessary for them to make an informed decision about whether or not to participate (Bhandari, 2021). This includes details about the advantages, dangers, funding, and institutional endorsement of the study. All the information on the consent form “Annexure B” was explained to participants before data collection and they were also given time to sign the informed consent form.

1.9.4 Confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity

Before the study commenced, participants were made aware that they would be anonymous in the study and privacy would be maintained. They were also made aware of the limits of the confidentiality of their information. “Anonymity means that you don’t know who the participants are, and you can’t link any individual participant to their data” (Bhandari, 2021).

According to Bhandari (2021), confidentiality means knowing the participants while omitting all identifying information from the researcher’s report demonstrates confidentiality. Moreover, everyone who participates has a right to privacy, the researcher should safeguard their personal information for as long as you have it or use it. Even when the researcher is unable to obtain data in an anonymous manner, confidentiality should always be maintained (Bhandari, 2021).

1.9.5 Beneficance

Beneficance is the act of doing good for others while preventing harm & exploitation. Participants understood the purpose of the research, the expected duration & the procedure that was to be followed. The aim of the study was to benefit both the researcher and the respondents in a way that will help raise awareness on the effects of crystal meth among school going learners. This study will help in creating prevention strategies & awareness campaigns to ensure that learners are aware of how harmful Crystal meth is. The Department of education, teachers & principals will be able to bring about changes through awareness campaigns and policies that can help.

1.10 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

1.10.1 Chapter 1: General orientation of the study

1.10.2 Chapter 2: Literature review

1.10.3 Chapter 3: Data presentation, analysis & interpretation

1.10.4 Chapter 4: Summary of major findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to provide findings on the use and effects of crystal meth based on available research that has been done. This chapter will provide an overview of the literature that is available. However, most of the literature is composed of research from other countries. According to Simbayi, et al. (2006) as cited in Jantjies (2010), a review of the literature reveals that there are few studies exploring how young people in South Africa and throughout the world perceive the use of crystal methamphetamine. This chapter will however pay particular attention to the prevalence of crystal meth, the effects it has on its users, as well as freshly discovered influencing variables and repercussions of crystal methamphetamine usage.

2.2 THE PREVALANCE OF CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE GLOBALLY

Stoneberg, Shukla & Magness (2018), state that in many parts of the world, the crystal meth problem is worsening. It is the second-most extensively used illegal substance in the world and the most widely produced stimulant of the amphetamine class. The United States Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration, Diversion Control Division (2016) in National Institute on Drug Abuse (2021), also reported that methamphetamine abuse is still a very severe issue in the United States since it is a strong and highly addictive stimulant. Furthermore, it is the substance that most significantly leads to violent crime, posing an even bigger hazard in some regions of the nation than opioids. In addition to crystal meth still being a severe issue globally, National Institute on Drug Abuse (2021) reported that crystal meth usage has been rising in North America and other countries, with methamphetamines showing up more frequently in deaths from illicit drug poisoning in British Columbia (BC), Canada, among other places.

Research studies outside of official sources have looked into global meth patterns and trends (Stoneberg, Shukla & Magness, 2018). Moreover, to assess current changes taking place worldwide, an investigation of secondary sources, including official media

publications, was conducted. Thus, crystal meth is an example of a worldwide problem that has changed and evolved through time. In the same wavelength, Papamihali et al. (2021) reported that it is crucial to comprehend changing patterns of drug use in order to customize harm reduction and substance use interventions for crystal meth users. Recent evidence, such as seizure data, suggests that the issue has become more complicated and widespread. New hubs for manufacturing and trafficking are emerging, and global drug-related activities are changing both inside and across nations (Stoneberg, Shukla & Magness, 2018). The Delphi Behavioural Health Group (2019) reported that “About 2 percent of high school students report having used methamphetamine in Europe”. Furthermore, the patterns suggested that most European countries have produced stable trends in drug abuse since 2014. Only a few countries have records of people using methamphetamine meaning Europe typically has low levels. Whereas in Africa although it was difficult to produce the statistics for the whole continent, statistics showed that South Africa particularly Cape Town has a potential to be quite common among methamphetamine addicts. Crystal meth usage was estimated to be 2% of all adult population in 2019 in Cape Town (Delphi Behavioural Health Group, 2019).

2.3 THE PREVALENCE OF CRYSTAL METH IN SOUTH AFRICA

In a study conducted by, Hamdulay and Mash (2011), they reported that the local media found that crystal methamphetamine has a significant association with usage in the Mitchells Plain neighbourhood of Cape Town. It is believed to be common among young adult and teenage users. Compared to national and worldwide averages, Mitchells Plain, Cape Town's high schools have a high frequency of drug use among teenage students (Hamdulay and Mash, 2011). Moreover, the need for more extensive interventions to prevent and treat substance misuse in this community and others like it is brought to the attention of policymakers, educators, and healthcare professionals.

According to Kapp (2008) in Asante (2017), the development of methamphetamine during the past ten years has sparked a fresh moral crisis. Moreover, in and around Cape Town, there are over 200,000 crystal meth users, and half of those in treatment list crystal meth as a primary or secondary drug of addiction, significantly outpacing alcohol. Gasa (2018) also found that crystal meth in South Africa is prevalent in Cape Town. Methamphetamine

usage in Cape Town contributes to poor mental and physical health, broken relationships, increased rates of crime and violence, and unemployment in the neighbourhood (Van Heerden et al, 2009 in Gasa, 2018).

A study conducted by Gasa (2018) revealed that crystal meth use is primarily prevalent among young men of coloured race, which refers to persons with mixed racial origin who are part of a separate cultural group in South Africa. However, certain research revealed that Black Africans used methamphetamine at significant rates in their communities, female members in particular (Weybright et al., 2016). Asante and Lentoor (2017), similarly to Gasa (2018), reported that statistics show that the average age of school going learners who used crystal meth in 2008 was 16 years and 91% of them were young men of the coloured race in the Western Cape. In addition to that, in 2013 it was revealed that one out of every five school going youth learners in the Western Cape Province uses crystal methamphetamine regularly.

2.4 FACTORS LEADING TO THE USE OF CRYSTAL METH

2.4.1 Curiosity

Crystal meth use is thought to occur for a variety of reasons (Jan, Alam & Khan,2021). However, the perception of its consumers is the main factor contributing to its utilization about its beneficial benefits. In addition to that, Litman and Jimerson (2004) in Gasa (2018) state that “an individual may start to misuse a particular substance if he or she perceives that the substance will have a pleasurable effect”. Jan, Alam & Khan (2021) believe that curiosity is on the factors that lead to the use of crystal meth especially during the adolescent phase as it is the time whereby the human is discovering him/herself and how he will present himself to others. Moreover, due to the lack of coping mechanisms and abilities and because humans are naturally curious, teenagers are more susceptible to being persuaded by outside forces and are inclined to act in high-risk ways (Greydauns & Patel, 2005 in Jan, Alam & Khan, 2021).

Gasa (2018), also found curiosity to be one of the factors leading to crystal meth use. One of man's great traits is his curiosity (Seggie, 2012 in Gasa, 2018). Furthermore, it appears frequently in daily life and encourages further investigation. It is not surprising that many young individuals will want to try a variety of drugs in order to judge the effects

for themselves (WHO, 2012 in Gasa 2018). Thus, teenagers become curious to want to experience what it feels like to take drugs. Initially, curiosity or recreation served as the driving force behind using, but with time, sterile views about addiction get ingrained in the person, which encourages compulsion, voracity, and a variety of abuse (Sahami & Khezri 2014 in Shahbazi Sighaldehy et.al, 2020). Another investigation indicated that one of the causes of crystal usage is curiosity (Boostani & Karamizadeh, 2017 in Shahbazi Sighaldehy et.al., 2020).

2.4.2 Peer pressure

Research studies show that peer pressure is a significant contributor to drug usage among young people (Jan, Alam & Khan, 2021). Moreover, young people may occasionally experience pressure or persuaded to emulate the drug-use standards (Yen et.al., 2006 in Jan, Alam & Khan, 2021). Additionally, Russell et al. (2008) in Jan, Alam & Khan (2021) found that peer influence is the dominating component responsible for the use of crystal meth. The studies further found that those who are friends with crystal meth smokers, are likely to also start smoking crystal meth as well. Masese (2012) in Gasa (2018), state that very few people begin taking drugs on their own, meaning most people are influenced by those around them.

Gasa (2018) also made emphasis that one of the factors that lead to substance use, especially among young people is peer pressure. The common source of information for drug users, researchers, and governments is often peer group pressure. Thus, when a person sees a group of people that engage in substance abuse, they can feel enticed to partake in the use and eventually misuse of drugs. However, Santoor, Messervey and Kusumakar (2000) in Rabotata (2019) argue that peer groups allow young people to explore their particular interests and anxieties while restoring a sense of belonging and continuity within a group of peers, which helps to promote teenage socialization and identity. They serve as a development tool.

Rabotata (2019) reported that he had seen while conducting his study with the youth in various communities and while practising as a social worker that peer pressure does play a significant part in motivating young people to use substances. However, Ryan (2000) in Rabotata (2019) also argues that peer groups might occasionally give young people a

chance to consider their future and how they want it to be moulded, and that the responses of peers would help to support, confirm or change such decisions. Furthermore, it is argued that peer relationships exist to help peers better influence one another in order to succeed academically and generally in life (Ryan, 2000 in Rabotata, 2019).

2.4.3 Social Environment

Social environment is a critical crucial factor triggering the use of crystal meth, (Marshall et al.,2011 in Jan, Alam & Khan, 2021). Moreover, this specifically relates to the person's social environment, which includes their family and community's social conventions. The ecological theory shows demonstrated that various environmental levels have an effect on how people develop in their environment. Gasa (2018) also identified social environment as a factor that leads to the use of crystal meth.

According to Gasa (2018), traditions pertaining to various civilizations or social orders determine the tone and attitude of how to use some specific substances, which typically have an impact on substance use and misuse. It is obvious that exposure to chemicals is a need for using them. Furthermore, traditions pertaining to certain communities or social orders determine the attitude and tone of a place, understanding of how to use some particular drugs, which often has an impact on substance use and abuse. Clearly Utilizing chemicals requires exposure to such substances as a prerequisite.

In a review made by Shanmugam (2017), the environment and associative learning both contribute to the knowledge of substance misuse and addiction. Moreover, the classical conditioning hypothesis states that stimuli and the environment may function as cues to cause drug usage (Peele, 1985 in Shanmugam, 2017). The review by Shanmugam (2017) also found that conditioned desire may readily be used to elicit cravings in addicts who are exposed to environments and circumstances where they previously used drugs and became dependent, thus causing a relapse.

When developing an understanding of drug addiction based on the environmental model, Miller and Carroll (West, 2001 in Shanmugam, 2017) propose two cautionary elements to consider: (1) Early environmental effects may not predict eventual misuse or dependent behaviour of drugs unless the results are reinforced by the environmental changes; (2)

The environment and conditions that affect a specific result shouldn't as a cause, be accepted. Although this connection may not be causative, it allows for the comprehension of the factors that bring about change. Thus, with this new understanding, avoids the stimuli that elicits negative behaviour. Therefore, Miller & Carroll argue that the immediate social environment is an influencing factor.

2.4.4 Family influences

A study conducted by Jantjies (2010) found that family members influence children through teaching them "skills and values in order to make a decision about issues such as substance use and abuse". In a review done by Shanmugam (2017), he found that families and societal variables change with time, and this has an impact on the decision that people make to begin using, continue using, or stop using drugs. Moreover, family ties are powerful and may even greater than the influence of the community and the school in making decisions. However, families can on the one hand offer protective measures that lower the likelihood that children will continue to use drugs, alcohol, and other narcotics. Family dynamics might also increase the risk factors that lead to family members at risk for using illegal substances (Jan, Ali & Ali, 2016 in Jan, Alam & Khan, 2021).

Shanmugam (2017) noted that the influence of the family can occasionally function as a protective factor against social stigma, shame, and the face phenomenon preventing the family members from getting treatment such as mental health treatment. Moreover, families typically naturally guard and feel compelled to keep the "secret," thus promoting behaviour. However, Gasa (2018) argues that the family structure is a support system for growth. Therefore, if the family structure serves as a strong emotional support system, a person may experience ongoing wellbeing and the encouragement of a stable family situation.

Moreover, the study conducted by Gasa (2018) indicated that parents and other adult guardians play a crucial part in the lives of adolescents and young adults. Results show that the quality of the parent-teenager connection, as well as parental monitoring and support, are parenting approaches that deter adolescent substance abuse behaviour. There are two recognized types of parenting, one of which promotes growth and

development and the other of which discourages it. These parenting philosophies are authoritative and authoritarian. Authoritative guardians and parents provide while maintaining directionality, it also allows for some restriction of the adolescent's freedom. Moreover, teenagers are seen to appropriate behaviour, promote collaboration, and explain the reasons behind actions made. Children who are raised in an authoritative manner were less likely than other children to question their parents' authority. To those who raised their children in a strict manner (Makoloi, 2012 in Gasa, 2018).

2.4.5 Availability of drugs

According to Craig (2004 in Gasa, 2018), "People take illicit substances because they are readily available, and those who profit financially from drug sales enable their availability." Moreover, Rabotata (2019) also identified availability as one of the risk factors contributing to substance abuse by youth.

2.5 EFFECTS OF CRYSTAL METH

Hamdulay and Mash (2011) reported that there has not been much research done regarding the experiences & effects of crystal meth among South African pupils, however recent research shows the effects of crystal meth among adolescent users.

2.5.1 Academic performance

The effects of teenage substance abuse include declining grades, absences from school, college, and its activities, and increased likelihood of dropping out of schools and universities (Gasa, 2018). Moreover, research has demonstrated that a low level of education and greater rates of truancy give off the image of being associated with juvenile drug abuse. These could impede their academic success (Sahu & Sahu, 2016 in Gasa 2018). "Substance abuse is a problem for the school-going adolescent, because it makes it extremely difficult for that adolescent to reach his or her full potential in terms of academic ability" (Dreyer, 2012). Sedibe & Hendricks (2021) state that results indicated that teenage learners' academic performance suffers when they take drugs. They lack focus, they do not pay attention in class, and are unable to read and write down the work assigned on the board, which prevents them from mastering the material.

Moreover, teenagers who use crystal methamphetamine and marijuana face learning difficulties, short-term memory loss, and a lack of attention as a result of these substances' dampening effects on their learning ability. The findings showed that school going learners who abuse drugs do not perform well academically. These are adolescent learners who struggle with their academic assignments as well. Furthermore, some learners use drugs to feel better about themselves since they are unable to read and write in class. On the other hand, it was also learned from the studies that adolescents who are academically successful also engage in drug usage as a result of peer pressure (Sedibe & Hendricks, 2021) .

2.5.2 Delinquency

According to Gasa (2018), there is a link between substance abuse and bad behaviour. Moreover, although it cannot be said that abusing drugs or alcohol leads to bad behaviour or wrongdoing, addiction is linked to both violent and money-making crimes committed by young people. Thus, among the social and criminal justice issues typically associated with juvenile substance misuse are gangs, drug trafficking, prostitution, and an increase in the frequency of young killings (Sahu & Sahu, 2016 in Gasa, 2018). According to Prinsloo, who was referenced by Landsberg et al. (2005) in Dreyer (2012), certain forms of difficult or disruptive behaviour occur through combination. Aggressive behaviour, for instance, is linked to substance misuse and "juvenile delinquency". The 5-year research by Lee and Hinshaw (2006) studied girls with ADHD between the ages of 11 and 18 years (Briggs-Vaughn, 2016). Moreover, prescription medications developed from methamphetamine, which is formed of common home cleaners like acetone and some fuels that caused substance abuse, were given to girls with ADHD. According to this study, teenage girls with ADHD had a greater likelihood of abusing drugs that resulted in delinquent behaviour such as crystal meth.

2.5.3 Psychological effects of crystal methamphetamine use

Jantjies (2010) states in his study that one of the most significant side effects of crystal methamphetamine, is its impact on the user's mental health. The majority of the crystal meth's psychological adverse effects that users have experienced as a result of methamphetamine usage included agitation, psychosis, decreased cognitive abilities,

melancholy, paranoia, stress, sleeplessness, decreased appetite, and aggressive behaviour (Degenhardt & Topp, 2003; Homer, et. al., 2008; Sommers, Baskin, Baskin-Sommers, 2006 in Jantjies, 2010).

Kumar (2021) avow that it is evident that using crystal methamphetamine and other drugs causes anatomical and functional alterations in the brain as well as irregularities in the neurotransmission process. According to National Institute on Drug Abuse (2022), long-term methamphetamine users may display symptoms such as considerable anxiety, disorientation, sleeplessness, mood swings, and aggressive conduct in addition to developing a methamphetamine addiction. Additionally, they could exhibit a variety of psychotic traits such paranoia, auditory and visual hallucinations, and delusions (for example, the sensation of insects creeping under the skin).

Moreover, National Institute on Drug Administration (2022) also found that stress has been proven to cause spontaneous return of methamphetamine psychosis in crystal meth users who have previously experienced psychosis, and psychotic symptoms can occasionally persist for months or years after a person has stopped using the drug. Furthermore, these effects of crystal meth reveal severe brain alterations brought by methamphetamine abuse. According to neuroimaging studies, the dopamine system's activity changes and these changes have been linked to slower movement and worsened language acquisition. Numerous emotional and cognitive issues seen in chronic methamphetamine users may be explained by the substantial structural and functional abnormalities in the brain's emotion and memory-related regions that have been found.

2.5.4 Risky sexual behaviour

Recent studies show that crystal meth use has been associated with risky sexual behaviour among men who have sex with men. The usage of health services by HIV-positive gay males and high-risk sexual behaviour among them are two noteworthy results concerning crystal methamphetamine consumption as a result of the extreme degrees of stigmatization encircling the medicine (Kumar, 2021). According to Pufall et al. (2018) sexualised drug use is referred to as “chemsex”, moreover “chemsex” is the purposeful use of drugs before or during sex to boost both arousal and pleasure, and is mostly engaged in by gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men. In the United

Kingdom, crystal meth was identified as one of the most common drugs used in for the facilitation/purpose of sex. The study conducted by Pufall et al. (2018) also found that the duration of chemsex sessions, which frequently entail mucosal traumatic and condomless sex, increases the likelihood of HIV, HCV, and other STIs being transmitted.

Furthermore, a recent study by Johns Hopkins Medicine researchers confirms that using crystal meth increases not only sexual desire but also, specifically and quantitatively, the likelihood of having unprotected casual intercourse. The study also found that the prevalence of HIV and other STIs is astronomically high among crystal methamphetamine users. Moreover, the findings showed that individuals were more likely to quickly switch from their stated preference for using a condom to riskier impulsive decisions to have unprotected sex the more intense the sexual excitement.

2.5.5 Financial toll

Gasa (2018), states that due to the fact that their fundamental needs were neglected in favour of substance use, many families with substance users struggle to manage their everyday routines such as activities that require basic needs. The social and financial costs incurred by young people who abuse substances are significant. As a result, those who smoke drugs such as crystal meth are always broke, which leads to loan sharks and debt. Some teenagers resort to stealing money at home or furniture so that they can be able to feed their addiction.

2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the prevalence of Crystal meth globally and in South Africa, moreover factors leading to, and the effects of crystal meth have also been discussed. On a global scale the existence and consumption of crystal meth takes second place as the most extensively used illegal substance in the world. Cape Town showed the highest frequency of crystal meth users compared to other Provinces in South Africa. Factors leading to Crystal meth show that crystal meth can be introduced to teenagers in a sense that they would begin to start using it on their own believing that it is a norm, or it is a way to prove their independence. Thus, Crystal meth has shown a negative impact on teenagers.

CHAPTER THREE

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the data collected from participants will be presented, analyzed and interpreted. School learners at Moruleng Secondary school were interviewed. The aim of the study was to explore the effects of crystal meth among the learners. During the data collection, the learners mentioned that they were aware of what crystal meth is and they also described the changes they see on learners who use crystal meth. The learners also explained the behaviour that those who use crystal meth portray in class and in the school premises. The learners made recommendations on preventative and intervention measures that can be put in place in to curve the prevalence of crystal meth in schools. Data collection was done through individual face-to-face interviews. Audio recorded interviews were transcribed. Data was analyzed thematically.

3.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

This section focuses on the demographic information of the participants. According to Vogt and Johnson (2011) in Connelly (2013), "Demography is a field of study which researchers examine the quantifiable statistics of a particular population". Therefore, in order to determine whether the participants in this study are a representative of the target population for generalization purposes, demographic information about the participants is required. Demographic data was presented using frequency distribution tables and percentages although the study is qualitative in nature. Frequency distribution percentages & tables help to provide a clear description of the study population. The population of the study was made up of high school learners from Moruleng Secondary School. This section covers three demographic aspects, namely: age, gender and educational status of the participants.

3.2.1 Age of the participants

Age in years	Number of respondents	Percentages
13-16	04	40%
17-20	06	60%
Total	10	100%

Table 1: Age of participants

The above table shows the age range of high school learners who were interviewed. The study did not have a specific age requirement for the participants. All the learners, regardless of age, were allowed to form part of the study. The total number of participants was 10. The table above indicates that four (40%) of the participants ranged from 13-16 years of age while the majority, six (60%) of the participants from ranged from 17-20 years of age. This age range enhanced the study because it captured participants old enough to comprehend and answer questions about crystal meth, as compared to younger learners. The researcher believed that younger learners may experience difficulties in comprehending and answering the questions asked. Moreover, younger learners may also not have enough knowledge about the effects of crystal meth.

3.2.2 Gender of the participants

Gender	Number of participants	Percentages
Males	05	50
Females	05	50

Table 2: Gender of the participants

The above table shows the number and gender of participants. There was no specific gender requirement for the study to be conducted. The researcher looked forward to different views from both genders without being discriminative. The table above indicates that five (50%) males and five (50%) females were interviewed in this study. The gender of

the participants was balanced thus the researcher was able to acquire views from both genders equally. The study found that crystal meth is used by both male and female school going learners.

3.2.3 Educational status (School Grade) of the participants

Educational status of the participants (School Grade)	Number of participants	Percentage
Grade 09	05	50
Grade 10	03	30
Grade 11	01	10
Grade 12	01	10
Total	10	100%

Table 3: Educational status (School Grade) of the participants

The table above indicates the educational status of the participants in the form of grades they are at in their school. Five (50%) of the participants were in grade 9, grade 10 had three (30%) participants, in Grade 11 there was one (10%) participant which was the same with grade 12 wherein there was only one (10%) participant. There was no particular grade that the researcher wanted information from. The researcher was able to acquire information from grade 9-12 learners. This helped the researcher to gather information from learners in different grades. The learners were able to mention the change in behaviour that they have seen from their classmates (in different grades) who smoke crystal meth.

3.3 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This section focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data obtained from the participants. The data was collected through individual face-to-face interviews & participants also gave consent to be recorded.

3.3.1 Theme 1: Perceptions of school learners about learners who smoke crystal meth

3.3.1.1 Subtheme: Views about school going learners who smoke crystal meth

This question focused on how the participants view school learners who smoke crystal meth. The researcher also wanted to know how the participants feel about those learners. Majority of the participants had similar views about how they perceive learners who smoke crystal meth. They were not impressed and considered crystal meth to be a bad drug that is prevalent among their peers.

Participant 1 said *“I feel bad because a lot of them do not know the bad effects that it can bring into their lives and they are also unable to meet their full potential since they are giving it more attention”*.

Participant 2 said *“Crystal meth is bad; it makes them slim and it also makes them crazy. Some smoke it because they want to lose weight, they are told by their friends that it will make them lose weight”*.

Participant 4 *“I feel disappointed because crystal meth makes them not to listen in class, they are disrespectful and they disrupt classes when educators are teaching”*.

The participants are knowledgeable about crystal meth and majority of them mentioned that those who smoke it, often explain how crystal meth makes them feel. They reported that those who those who smoke it say it makes the fearless. This finding is supported by Gasas (2018) who indicated that “an individual may start to misuse a particular substance if he or she perceives that the substance will have a pleasurable effect”. This means some learners smoke crystal meth out of curiosity. Moreover, participants felt sorry for learners who smoke crystal meth because their lives change and most of them end up dropping out of school and that threatens their future. Most of the participants were worried about the future of learners who smoke crystal meth. Below is what they have said:

Participant 9 *“I do not feel okay because these children are messing up their future and their lives. So, to me it is not something good because I want approximately everyone to succeed in their lives”*.

The other participant said, "I do not feel anything, but on the other side, we feel sorry for them because their future is getting ruined, some no longer come to school".

The findings indicated that the learners are aware that crystal meth is a bad drug to explore. How they view those who smoke crystal meth shows that they can see what it does to those who smoke it. When asked why they do not smoke it, they mentioned that they do not want to become crazy. There is no participant who had positive views about learners who smoke the drug.

3.3.1.2 Subtheme : Changes seen from learners who use crystal meth

Majority of the respondents mentioned physical changes, wherein learners who smoke crystal meth become slim that even the school uniform does not fit them as it used to. They also reported physical changes on the face, wherein the crystal meth user's facial appearance would change and appear indecent. The participants also reported that such learners stop bathing and at school they spend most of their time at the bathrooms without going to classes.

Participant 5 *"They do not bath, they no longer go to their homes because they chased themselves away. They no longer come to school; we see them at spaza shops robbing people".*

Participant 7 *"The change that I have seen is that some of them, as I speak, they have dropped out of school. Some have ran away from their homes, they are street kids. some have been beaten by the community and were arrested because they do things that they do not even understand".*

Participant 9 *"Many of them changed because before, they were not doing silly things like going around bullying other people's children, fighting or even taking people's money" .*

The study findings also indicated change in behaviour. Thus, when learners start smoking crystal meth, their behavior changes. Moreover, they no longer behave like how they were behaving previously in a good manner. Most of the respondents also mentioned that such learners become delusional.

3.3.1.3 Subtheme: Hope for learners who smoke crystal meth

Even though the respondents spoke about how prevalent crystal bad is among school going learners, most of them mentioned that there is still hope for them. They recommended rehabilitation as one of the intervention measures that can be used for those who are already smoking. The respondents believe that rehabilitation is helpful as some of them know learners who went to rehab and came back as changed people, although there are those who go back smoking crystal meth even after they have went to rehab. Some of the responses from the participants were:

Participant 10 *"Yes, there is still hope. It depends on the person's determination. If ever the person is intending to change and become hopeful, the person can change and get help everywhere".*

Participant 9 *"I think hope is there because if school teachers and their parents can come together and talk about this matter, they can see what they can do . They can perhaps take them to rehab or somewhere where they can get help.*

Participants 7 *"The isn't much of hope. As a parent, when a child is yours, you would not give up on him/her you would be able to take him/her to rehab. However, teachers do give up on such learners, for example by saying they no longer want the learner at school because h/she has long been problematic"*

Participant 6 *"My brother smokes crystal meth & nyaope, but I have managed to take him to rehab and as I speak, he is still at rehab".*

The findings indicate that majority of the respondents believe that rehabilitation can be very helpful to learners who have started using crystal meth. The study found that there is still hope for school going learners who are using crystal meth as there are measures that they can explore in order to receive help. In addition, one of the respondents said that his brother is at rehab. Moreover, he said that although his brother is not a school learner, he still has hope for him.

3.3.2 Theme 2: Factors leading to the use of crystal meth among school going learners in Seshego, Zone 1

3.3.2.1 Subtheme: Factors that contribute to the use of crystal meth

Most of the respondents mentioned peer pressure as the leading factor that contributes to the use of crystal meth. This has been found in a lot of research studies. According to Gasa (2018), one of the factors that lead to substance use, especially among young people is peer pressure. Another factor that was identified by the participants was “family problems.” Moreover, participants believe that those who experience challenges at home are likely to resort to the use of crystal meth. These findings are supported by Jan, Ali & Ali (2016) in Jan, Alam & Khan (2021), who agree that family dynamics may also increase the risk factors that lead to family members at risk for using illegal substances . Some of the respondents said:

Participant 1 “Family problems and peer pressure are contributing factors. I could say at home, parents are fighting so they are no longer feeling comfortable, and they have no one to talk to so they decide that crystal meth will be the solution. Moreover, their friends may pressurize them so that they can fit in.”

Participant 3 “ Some of them their parents do not take care of them, some are not treated well at home”.

Participant 7 “The first one is crystal meth, when you see your friend smoking crystal meth, he appears to have energy/strength and would sometimes be called a boss. Thus, you would want to be just like him as he would also be encouraging you that if you smoke crystal meth you will own the world.”

These findings indicate that peer pressure and family influences contribute as the biggest factors that lead to learners smoking crystal meth. This means when learners encounter family problems, they do not look for positive measures to deal with challenges. They would rather resort to the use of crystal meth as an escape from reality. With regards to peer pressure, learners learn from others, and they should be mindful of who they spend their time with. Those who are already smoking, have a tendency of persuading those who have not started smoking by also making them feel less of themselves.

3.3.2.2 Subtheme: Prevention of the use of crystal meth

Participants recommended that parents need to play a huge role in the lives of their children by taking care of their children. One of the participants said that parents should not give learners a lot of money, they should instead, buy them what they want because they use money recklessly and buy illegal substances. However, the other respondent said that even if parents can deprive learners' money, they will still smoke with their other friends who have access to crystal meth.

Participant 5 *"Parents should rather buy things for their children instead of giving them money. For example, if a learner wants a Sneaker, the parent should buy that sneaker for the learner. Children who are given a lot of money at home, tend to buy substances with it."*

Participant 8 *"What we can do is to ensure that learners make good friends and we cannot say learners should not be given money because their friends can still smoke with them. We, as the community can also ensure that we punish drug dealers who sell crystal meth".*

The findings indicate that the participants had similar views on what can be done to prevent the use of crystal meth among school going learners. The respondents reported that drug dealers in the community must be punished & arrested by police officers. Moreover, parents and teachers should offer emotional support to learners so that they do not resort to illegal substances. Furthermore, parents should not hesitate to use Social Work services when their children are experiencing challenges.

Participant 9 *"The first thing is drug dealers; I think police officers or the community should be on this case about drug dealers because they are everywhere. If they can stop drug dealers, I think anything can be possible for those children. If a parent is aware that his/her child is not okay, he/she should visit Social Workers or something. If children do not find someone older to talk to, they can resort to reckless decisions such as smoking. If parents/teachers can find emotional help for children, I think that can prevent children from using crystal meth."*

3.3.2.3 Subtheme: The role that schools can play in minimizing/preventing the use of crystal meth among school learners

This study has found that participants are aware of learners who smoke crystal meth in their school premises and those who smoke at home and still come to school. Thus, school teachers, principals and the School Governing Body need not to turn a blind eye on the issue of crystal meth use & abuse. Most of the respondents suggested that learners should be searched in the morning when they enter the school premises. Whereas the other respondent said there should be care takers around schools especially those who patrol and ensure that learners do not smoke in toilets.

Participant 1 *“I could say since the school is more connected with other departments, they could ask former crystal meth users to advice learners and go in detail about the bad effects. Moreover, teachers must search the school premises. Every morning teachers must search their bags & the toilets. There should be disciplinary measures for those who are in possession of crystal meth”.*

Participant 8 *“Firstly, when learners enter the school premises, they should be searched to ensure that they do not have drugs in their school bags. Teachers can search all over and even in classrooms. Those who are found in possession of crystal meth, their parents should be called to the school, so that further measures can be taken”.*

Participant 10 *“Schools can be in collaboration with parents, School Governing Body, police officers and the community or the councilor in Seshego Ward 13, Zone 1 Extension and rehabilitation centers. They can cooperate and become one to help those who are involved in Crystal meth”.*

The above data indicates that schools need to be in collaboration with other organizations and stakeholders for the purpose of fighting the issue of crystal meth among learners. This study found that raising awareness through also collaborating with rehabilitated crystal meth users may help prevent the use of crystal meth among learners, as the former users would explain their experiences. Moreover, learners would be aware of the impact that crystal meth would make in their lives, the effects that the former users have experienced and what eventually made them to stop smoking it. It would be very

significant for learners to hear the information from someone who has the experience of using crystal meth.

3.3.3 Theme 3: Effects of Crystal meth among school going learners

3.3.3.1 Subtheme: Learners affected by those who smoke crystal meth

There are participants who shared their stories about how they were personally affected by crystal meth users around their school. The participants said that they managed to report such learners to their school teachers and disciplinary action was taken. One of the participants said that he did not feel affected in anyway, however, another respondent reported that she felt like she was no longer concentrating in class and felt like behaving the same way as those who use crystal meth. For example, by making noise in class even when she is not supposed to.

Participant 9 *“I remember one day, one boy who was smoking crystal meth came to me while I was eating. He forced me to eat with him, I refused. So, at the end of the day he slapped me and he was suspended because of that.”*

Participant 10 *“I had a female friend from my school, who smokes crystal meth. We used to spend time together until this year in term 2. She started threatening me because I did not smoke what she smokes. She started threatening me by saying that if I don't give her money, she will forcefully take my spectacles. Furthermore, she said that if I do not give her money, I will no longer see as she would have taken the spectacles or if I do not give them to her, she will beat me. So, I had to be pressured to look for that money, I was also looking at my situation back home that they do not give me pocket money. I had to request money from one of my favorite teachers in the staff room. I told the teacher that I had not eaten then she gave me money and I immediately gave it to my former friend. I sacrificed my life (honesty) so that my spectacles may not be taken away from me because I would not be able to see without them. She kept on persisting on wanting more money from me time and again until I told her that I do not smoke with her. She then threatened to beat me then I said its fine and that's when I reported her. Since then, she stopped bothering me and she was also suspended.”*

One out of all the participants said that he does not know anyone from his school who uses crystal meth. However, at home his brother used to smoke it and he took it upon himself to take him to rehab.

“I would not say I felt affected by what he did, but the things he did seemed abnormal. He would leave home with plastics and go to the bush. When he comes back, he would have collected litter and would pour that in the room that he sleeps, we did not know the reasons behind that. That was before he went to rehab. He did not bother me personally or in any physically manner.”

This study found that learners who smoke crystal meth bully their fellow learners in the school premises. Moreover, they threaten to forcefully take others' belongings. The findings indicate that those who use crystal meth also become bossy as they are described to be powerful. Participants who experienced bullying were able to report such learners, thus it is important to report them as soon as possible for their bullying tendencies.

3.3.3.2 Subtheme: Behaviour (at school/in class) of learners who smoke crystal meth

Most of the participants said that learners who smoke crystal meth behave in a similar manner. They reported that they are disrespectful in class and towards their teachers. One of the respondent said that learners who smoke crystal meth disrupt their class as teachers constantly have to reprimand them. The other respondent said teachers also end up being irritated.

Participant 4 *“Crystal meth makes them not to listen in class, they disrespect teachers and they make jokes while teachers are educating us. Moreover, the learner that I know who smokes crystal meth, when sir is teaching, he makes unnecessary comments and disturbs the class”.*

Participant 7 *“The learner whom I know is smoking crystal meth, previously he was a good boy and he used to attend school normally. He used to be very passionate about his future and loved school. He got influenced by his peers then started smoking, then his behaviour changed. He started becoming a problematic learner to teachers.”*

Participant 8 *“Such a learner may appear as no longer okay in the head. He would do things that he was not doing before he started smoking crystal meth. His behaviour changes. For instance, when a teacher comes in class, the learner might make unnecessary comments even when the teacher had not said anything. The person makes jokes in class so other learners can laugh and not concentrate on what teachers present. Moreover, such a learner may spend his/her time galivanting the school premises without going to class or stay at the school toilets. Others also laugh alone in class when the teacher is speaking”.*

This study has found that school going learners who smoke crystal meth are very disrespectful in class. The findings indicate that they speak even when they are not supposed to in class. Moreover, they make fun of teachers with the aim of entertaining other learners. The findings also indicate that they adopt this behaviour when they start smoking crystal meth because they would have previously been behaving well.

3.3.3.3 Subtheme: The negative impact of crystal meth in the lives of learners who smoke it

All the participants believe that crystal meth has a negative impact in the lives of those who smoke it. They do not see any benefits of using crystal meth as those whom they know have changed to do what they regard as bad behaviour.

Participant 2 *“I have a friend from my school who used to smoke crystal meth, he had went to rehab recently. He had become delusional and was always saying he is being bewitched. He is no longer smoking. I felt sorry for him when crystal meth started changing his life”.*

Participant 9 *“Crystal meth has a negative impact because learners who smoke it feel like what they are doing is okay, whereas it’s not. They think when they are being reprimanded, they are being abused. It is not okay for their future and their lives because I think it also affects their brain. Even if one smokes it for a long time, when he/she wants to leave it, it would have already affected the brain”.*

These findings indicate that crystal meth does more damage than good. The learners forget that they should be working towards a bright future ahead of them. Most of them

do not reach their goals because they drop out of school and resort to crime to make money. They use the money to buy more crystal meth and smoke. Furthermore, the findings also indicate that crystal meth affects the brain of school going who smoke it. Kumar (2021) supported these finding by indicating that it is evident that using crystal methamphetamine and other drugs causes anatomical and functional alterations in the brain as well as irregularities in the neurotransmission process.

3.4 CONCLUSION

The data indicate that there are worrying effects of crystal meth among school going learners. Thus, it is important to employ preventative and intervention measures in order to deal with the issue of crystal meth in communities and in schools. It is recommended that schools collaborate with communities, stakeholders and other organizations to prevent the use of crystal meth. Schools should also be able to help learners who smoke crystal meth instead of only suspending them. The results also show that school going learners need emotional support from both parents and teachers whenever they experience challenges.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to provide a summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study. The major findings were drawn from semi-structured interviews that the researcher conducted with school learners from Moruleng Secondary School. The study's motivation, research problem, aims, objectives and underlying assumptions are restated in this chapter to provide a summary of the study. Moreover, this chapter summarizes the results and discusses whether the study's goals and objectives have been met.

4.2 RE-STATEMENT OF MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

Ranthus (2012) in Sedibe & Hendricks (2021), states that peer pressure is a significant element in teenage learners using drugs. The interviews for their study revealed that many adolescent learners feel pressured by their friends to take drugs. Despite their best efforts, they eventually give in to the demands and start using drugs as a result. Adolescent learners are coerced by peers by convincing them that there would be no consequences if they take drugs.

“It was discovered from the findings that adolescent learners who abuse drugs under-perform academically” (Sedibe & Hendricks, 2021). These are adolescent learners who have problems with their schoolwork. Because they cannot read and write in class, they take drugs to feel better about themselves. On the other hand, it was also discovered from the findings that not only the under-performing adolescent learners, but even high achieving adolescent learners abuse drugs due to peer pressure.”

A 30-year-old man was apprehended by police officers in Seshego on the 16th of February 2022 wherein the Police spokesperson reported that sachets of crystal meth and nyaope, as well as a blender that had drugs in it, were confiscated (Review Online, 2022). On a different article, the chairperson of a Non-Profit organisation, Seshego Community Against Crime reported that “a 25-year-old woman had allegedly committed suicide due to drug abuse. Moreover, he also reported that they had long been raising

concerns about young people who are using Crystal meth and nyaope in Seshego. He further mentioned that some people are heeding to fight drug use and reporting it to relevant authorities, but some parents are not cooperating when their children are involved and rehabilitation processes seem not to be helping” (Mamphiswana, 2021).

The researcher was concerned about how crystal meth affects both the learners and those around them, whether directly or indirectly. The use of methamphetamine is seen as a phenomenon that not only impacts the individual but also the community since it frequently leads to the breakdown of family structures, where learners frequently drop out of school and even end up dying by suicide. The researcher is of the opinion that most High school learners are not aware of the major effects that crystal meth has on their physical health and psychological well-being.

4.3 RE-INSATEMENT OF THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

4.3.1 Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to explore the effects of crystal meth among school going learners in Seshego, Zone 1, Polokwane, Limpopo.

4.3.2 Objectives of this study

The objectives of this study were:

- To explore the perceptions of school going learners on crystal met in Seshego Zone 1. This objective was achieved through section 3.3.1, which is theme one of chapter three of this study.
- To investigate the factors leading to the use of crystal meth among school going learners in Seshego Zone 1. This objective was achieved through section 3.3.2, which is theme two of chapter three in this study.
- To determine the effects that crystal meth has on & among school going learners in Seshego Zone 1. This objective was achieved through section 3.3.3, which is theme three of chapter three in this study.

4.4 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This section focuses on a summary of the findings of the effects of crystal meth among school going learners. The summary of findings illustrates how peer pressure, family problems and other factors contribute to the use of crystal meth among school going learners. The findings further illustrate how school learners who do not use crystal meth are affected by those who use crystal meth at school. Moreover, the effects that crystal meth has on school going learners who smoke crystal meth are also summarized. The findings also explain the preventative and intervention measures that can be used in order to stop learners from smoking crystal meth.

Summary of major findings of the study were as follows:

- Majority of the participants were in grade 9. The study equally had five males and five females.
- It was established that crystal meth is mostly used by male school learners and few females.
- Majority of the participants mentioned peer pressure and family problems as the major contributing factors to the use of crystal meth among school going learners.
- It was established that learners who smoke crystal meth tell those who do not smoke it that it makes them feel fearless and powerful.
- The study revealed that learners who do not smoke crystal meth are often bullied by those who smoke it. This was established in sub-section 3.3.3.1. The respondents narrated their stories about how they were bullied by learners who smoke crystal meth and how they ended up reporting those learners to teachers at school.
- It was revealed that crystal meth affects both learners who smoke it and those who do not smoke it, as well as teachers. This was established in sub-section 3.3.3.2 wherein the respondents described the behaviour displayed in class by learners who smoke crystal meth. Some of the respondents mentioned that they were no longer concentrating as classes are disturbed and teachers constantly have to reprimand those learners.

- It was established that in subsection 3.3.1.2 and 3.3.3.3 that crystal meth has physical & psychological effects on its users. The respondents mentioned that it affects the brain & functionality of those who use it. Moreover, the findings also revealed that there are evident facial changes and weight loss on learners who smoke crystal meth.
- The findings also revealed that learners who smoke crystal meth end up dropping out of school thus abandoning their future
- Rehabilitation is very helpful in helping those who have already started smoking crystal meth and are willing to stop using it. A few respondents mentioned that they know people who have been helped by going to rehab.
- Most of the participants suggested that learners must be searched when they enter school premises, this was established in sub-section 3.3.2.3.
- Subsection 3.3.2.3 also established that schools have to collaborate with parents, the community and other stakeholders in order to be able to fight the issue of Crystal meth among school going learners.

4.5 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn

- School going learners are influenced by their friends and the challenges that they experience at home to start smoking crystal meth.
- School going learners who smoke crystal meth are disrespectful towards their teachers in school & end up dropping out of school.
- Learners who do not smoke crystal meth are often bullied as a result of those who smoke it and feel powerful.
- Lack of emotional support at home & in school lead to learners resorting to crystal meth as an escape from reality .
- Schools do not have enough measures in place to help deal with the issue of crystal meth among learners

4.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are drawn based on the findings of the study

- The Department of Education should place Social Workers in every school for learners to have support for the challenges that they are experiencing in their lives.
- When there are Social Workers in schools, schools will be able to collaborate with parents and other organizations such as Rehabilitation Centres instead of schools only suspending such learners.
- Parents together with their children need to utilize their area Social Work Services whenever they are experiencing problems at home. Therefore, it is important that parents are aware of the services.
- Preventative & intervention measures are very crucial in curbing the use of crystal meth among school going learners in schools and in communities.
- There is a need for educational programmes and awareness campaigns that need to be implemented regularly.

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ANNEXURE A: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY FROM MORULENG SCHOOL

12 Temp Mateo Street

Legae la Batho

Polokwane

0700

22 September 2022

The principal

1936 Zone 1

Seshego

0742

Dear Sir or Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY AT MORULENG SECONDARY SCHOOL

I am Moshibudi Maggie Makola, a final year Social Work from the University of Limpopo, Department of Social Work, under the supervision of Dr MR Manganyi. I, hereby, request for permission to conduct my research study at your school. The study is about “The effects of Crystal Meth among school going learners: The case of Seshego Zone 1, Polokwane, Limpopo”. This research project will help me as the researcher to complete my Social Work degree. The study findings could also be shared with the school upon request and if interested. The results could as well be used to advise the school in future approach and campaigns on substance use and abuse.

Should you have any enquiries with regards to me conducting this study, you are welcome to contact my supervisor Dr MR Manganyi on 076 827 4522 or on this email address: masenyani.manganyi@ul.ac.za. You may also contact me on 081 594 3763 or mamabolomoshibudi@gmail.com.

Thank you for your consideration in advance.

Kind regards

.....

Social Work student

Signature..... Date

ANNEXURE B: INFORMED CONSENT

**Title of research project: The effects of Crystal meth among school going learners:
The case of Seshego, Zone 1, Polokwane, Limpopo.**

I am Moshibudi Maggie Makola, a final year student at the University of Limpopo, my research is about the effects of Crystal meth among school going learners in Seshego Zone 1. My supervisor is Dr MR Manganyi. The following will guide my research study at your school.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To explore the effects of Crystal meth among school going learners in Seshego Zone 1, Polokwane, Limpopo.

2. PROCEDURE

- Participation in the research study will be voluntary, thus you are allowed to withdraw from the interview at any stage should you feel uncomfortable to continue.
- You have the right to be interviewed in a venue that ensures privacy & confidentiality.
- The interview will take 30-45 minutes considering permission provided by the respondent.
- Respondents will be clarified where they do not understand & may also respond and/or be interviewed in Sepedi for better understanding.
- The interview will be audio recorded and will remain confidential.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY

All the information acquired from the respondents, as well as the identities of the respondents will be confidential and will ONLY be used for the purpose of research. All the audio-recorded materials, documents of the interview and completed interview schedules will be kept safe by the researcher in a locker & in her laptop which is protected by password. All the information acquired from your school will then be stored in an office at the University of Limpopo, Department of Social Work, ensuring that not everyone has

access to the information for any other reasons either than research. Individual interviews will be conducted in a quiet venue provided by your school to ensure the interviews are ran successfully. The researcher will ensure that the respondents remain anonymous throughout the interview.

4. DECEPTION OF RESPONDENTS

You will not in any way as a participant, be deceived to form part of this research study. The researcher will brief you about the purpose & aim of this study then, you decide if you are willing to participate.

5. BENEFITS & RISKS

- The information obtained through this research can help your school to employ awareness campaigns to prevent the use of Crystal meth.
- The information may also help with making emphasis on the effects that it has on learners thus, raising awareness.
- Potential to harm may be one of the risks. Participants will be made aware of risks of harm such as psychological harm before the interview takes place to gain consent. The researcher will ensure that the interview is not triggering.

6. COSTS

There will not be any costs required by you to participate in this study.

7. PAYMENT

There will not be any payment made to you for participating in this research study.

8. VOLUNTEER STATEMENT

Please note you may write an “x” should you not want to fill in your name.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand the purpose of this study as explained by the researcher. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. I consent that the interview will be audio-recorded and will only be used for the purpose of research. I also consent that my identity and responses will be kept confidential.

Signature of respondent

.....

Signature of researcher

.....

Signature of supervisor

.....

9. FEEDBACK OF FINDINGS

The findings of this research will be shared with you as soon as they are available if you have interest in receiving them.

We would like to thank you for your participation in this study.

Miss M.M Makola: 4th level Social Work student

.....

Dr MR Manganyi

Supervisor

ANNEXURE C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Research topic: The Effects of Crystal Meth among school going learners, the Case of Seshego, Zone 1, Polokwane, Limpopo

INTRODUCTION

I, Moshibudi Maggie Makola, a final year Social Work student from the University of Limpopo am conducting a research on “The Effects of Crystal Meth among school going learners, the Case of Seshego, Zone 1, Polokwane, Limpopo.” Under the supervision of Dr. MR Manganyi. The purpose of this study is to help me to complete my Bachelor of Social Work degree. Kindly note that your information will be kept confidential by the researcher. I would highly appreciate your participation.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

1. Gender of respondent

Male..... Female

2. Age

3. Race

4. Grade

Discussion guide

1. Perceptions about school going learners who smoke crystal meth in Seshego Zone 1

1.1 How do you feel about school going learners who smoke crystal meth?

1.2 What changes have you seen from learners whom you are aware are using crystal meth?

1.3 Do you think there is still hope for learners who have already started smoking crystal meth & why?

2. Factors leading to the use of crystal meth among school going learners in Seshego Zone 1

2.1 What do you think leads the learners to smoke crystal meth?

2.2 What can be done to prevent the use of crystal meth among school going learners?

2.3 What role can schools play in minimizing/preventing the use of crystal meth among school going learners?

3. Effects that crystal meth has on the behaviour of school going learners in Seshego

3.1 Do you know any learner from your school who smokes crystal meth? How has their behaviour affected you?

3.2 How do learners who smoke crystal Meth behave in your school/ in class?

3.3 What impact does crystal meth make in the lives & behaviour of the learners who smoke crystal meth?

ANNEXURE D: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref: 2/2/2 Enq: Makola MC Tel No: 015 290 9448 E-mail: MakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za

Makola MM
Private bag x 11
Wits
2050

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. The above bears reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved. Topic of the research proposal: "
The effects of crystal meth among school going learners, the case of seshego, zone 1 ,polokwane ,limpopo"
3. The following conditions should be considered:
 - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.
 - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the School concerned.
 - 3.3 The conduct of research should not in anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.
 - 3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.
 - 3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to; in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).
 - 3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH : MAKOLA MM Page 1

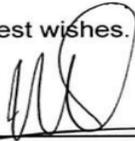
Cnr 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X 9489, Polokwane, 0700
Tel: 015 290 7600/ 7702 Fax 086 218 0560

The heartland of Southern Africa-development is about people

4 Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.

5 The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.



Mashaba KM
DDG: CORPORATE SERVICES

20/10/2022

Date

ANNEXURE E: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobe@ul.ac.za

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 23 May 2022

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/108/2022: UG

PROJECT:

Title: The Effects of Crystal Meth among School Going Learners, the Case of Seshego, Zone 1, Polokwane, Limpopo
Researcher: MM Makola
Supervisor: Dr MR Manganyi
Co-Supervisor/s: N/A
School: Social Sciences
Degree: Bachelor of Social Work

PROF D MAPOSA
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

Note:

- i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
- ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
- iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.