

## **FDA SENSITIZES STUDENTS OF EKUMFI AMEYAW SHS ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

As part of its aim of prioritizing the protection of the wellbeing of the general public, the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) has organized an educational program on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019 for the students and staff of the Ekumfi Ameyaw Senior High School at Techiman in the Bono East Region. The program was to sensitize the students and staff on the dangers involved in the abuse of medicines and other substances.

In recent times, the youth in Ghana have fallen prey to the excessive use of tobacco and tobacco products including 'shisha' and other products like tramadol and codeine. Recent research shows that more young girls than boys smoke shisha for the ecstatic feeling and flavor with the erroneous thinking that shisha is less or not as harmful as the other tobacco and tobacco products.

The team therefore emphasized that there is no safe form of tobacco and warned the students against smoking 'shisha'. It was also revealed to the students that shisha also contains toxic substances that expose them to cancer, heart disease and pregnancy-related diseases.

It was further revealed that Ghana has been under a public health and social threat where persons, usually the youth, are abusing Tramadol in higher doses (120mg, 200mg, 225mg and 250mg), which a survey conducted indicated that the youth generally attribute the reason for abusing Tramadol to gain extra energy for work, get dazed for restful sleep, staying alert to study and just to get the state of euphoria.

The students were further informed that Tramadol is a man-made prescription only narcotic analgesic (pain reliever), used to treat moderate to severe pain and that the approved dosage strength of Tramadol in Ghana by the FDA is 50mg and 100mg in tablets or capsules and 50mg/ml-2ml in injections. The rapid abuse of the drug, created the necessity to restrict Tramadol as a Controlled Substance till date.

Abusing Tramadol will therefore result in headache, dizziness, drowsiness, tired feeling, constipation, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, confusion, brain damage and itching. Other symptoms of abuse are sweating, flushing (warmth, redness, or tingly feeling), noisy breathing, sighing, shallow breathing, a slow heart rate or weak pulse, a light-headed feeling (like you might pass out), seizures (convulsions), infertility, missed menstrual periods, impotence, sexual problems and loss of interest in sex.

The students were therefore advised against the use of such substances and were assured of the FDA's resolve within its mandate to ensure an eventual eradication of this menace which has a wide reaching negative effect on public health.

