

FDA EDUCATES MADINA MARKET AUDIENCE ON TOBACCO AND SUBSTANCES ABUSE

The Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) has embarked on a public education program on the negative effects of abusing Tramadol as well as using tobacco and tobacco products such as shisha and cigarette on Thursday, 10th October, 2019, at the Madina market in the La Nkwantanang Municipal Assembly.

These campaigns have become very important because many people especially the youth are abusing drugs and other substances for erroneous impression of either gaining extra energy for their work, studying for long hours or for sexual enhancement.

A team of FDA officials therefore visited the Madina market where they interacted with the market men and women, drivers and passengers as well as shoppers on the effects and dangers of smoking tobacco and other tobacco products, alcohol, the abuse of Tramadol and Codeine and the effects of mixing substances with no technical expertise or advice.

The FDA officials educated the market folks to understand that, there is no safe form of tobacco as all tobacco products contains toxic substances that expose smokers to heart diseases, cancer and other related diseases.

The team emphasized to the persons they interacted with that, some of the dangers of smoking are the increasing risk of having lung and mouth cancer, tooth decay, brain damage, the heart and other important human organs. Smoking is dangerous for pregnant women especially their unborn child as this may cause miscarriages.

The team further cautioned the market people on the risk of smoking shisha and revealed to them that, an hour session of smoking shisha is equivalent to smoking 100-200 sticks of cigarette. The market folks were also educated on the need to stay away from environment contaminated with tobacco smoke, adding that, it is not only the smoker who is at risk of health diseases but any other person found in the smoking environment. This is usually second hand smoking.

A second hand smoke is the mixture of the smoke given off by the burning end of a cigarette and the smoke exhaled from the lungs of the smoker. The market men and women were therefore informed not to encourage smoking in public places because the Public Health Act, 2012, Act 851 prohibits smoking in public places in Ghana.

Drug abuse is the misuse of medicine (drugs) to affect the body and its processes, nervous system, behavior and feeling. As a result, Officials of the FDA took time to zero-in on two of the commonly abused medicine in Ghana; Tramadol and Codeine. Tramadol is a man -made narcotic analgesic (pain reliever) for managing moderate to

severe pain and the approved dosage strength of Tramadol registered for use in Ghana by the FDA is 50mg and 100mg in tablets. Meanwhile Codeine is an opioids analgesic (pain reliever) and also used as a cough suppressant. They were told that when Tramadol and codeine is abused, they become harmful and the medicinal benefit is lost.

The team was quick to add that these abused products may be legal or might have even been prescribed by a medical practitioner. The audience were also told this happens when medicines are not taken as prescribe, taking in excesses amount, regular use or overuse which can cause side effect and may affect the brain in ways similar to illegal drug. They were informed the abuse of these drugs/substances can result in headache, dizziness, drowsiness, sweating, and stomach pain among others.

They were assured of the FDA's continuous public education to ensure the public is well informed on the dangers and effects of drug and other substances abuse as well as prioritizing the wellbeing of Ghanaians.