

A STUDY ON ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AMONG YOUTH

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ABSTRACT

Background: India has seen a rapid proliferation of city bars and nightclubs in recent years, is fast shedding its inhibitions about alcohol and lifestyle choices. This situation has led to fears of an undocumented rise in alcohol abuse not only among poorer classes but others too. **Objective:** To find out the prevalence of alcohol consumption among youth. **Methods:** Survey design was adopted. Data was collected from n=99 subjects through online sampling. **Results:** Prevalence of alcohol consumption was found to be high as majority of males (74.64%) and females (85.7%) reported to consume alcohol.

Key Words: Alcohol, Youth, Male, Female

INTRODUCTION

From the days of spread of Christianity wine had a permanent place in their rituals. The priest/monks were always fascinated by wines. After the Sunday mass bread soaked in wine was an essential ritual. Even with Hindu gods and goddess, alcohol called somras has been popular as an offering for lord Shiva and goddess Kali. In spite of all available use of wine and spirits in our social and religious rituals it is condemned by sociologist, psychologist, puritans and last but not the least physicians.

India is the third largest market for alcoholic beverages in the world. The demand for spirits and beers is estimated to be around 373 million cases. Alcohol industry is the second largest source of revenue of the state exchequer- Rs 25,000 crores. India has traditionally been among the world's lowest per capita consumers for foreign spirits such as whisky, rum, brandy, vodka and gin. India has reputation of a country with a culture of abstinence. At the time of making directive principles of the state policy, a serious clause of prohibition was incorporated, which is still enriched in our republic. Most of the states, national holidays are observed as dry days while Gujarat is a completely dry state. In the recent years the metros have seen a rapid proliferation of night clubs, bars, etc and a fast shedding its inhibitions about alcohol as a life style choice. It has been found that there has been a rapid change in patterns and trends of alcohol use in India (Huselid, 1998). According to the study conducted by alcohol and drugs information center India, a non government organization (NGO) in the state of Kerala, the percentage of drinking population aged under 21 has increased from 2% to more than 14% in the past 15 years. Alarmingly the

study found that the average age of initiation had dropped from 19 years to 13 years in the past two decades (Maggs, 2002).

According to National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (1997), alcohol, the most widely used and abused drug among youth, causes serious and potentially life-threatening problems for this population. Although alcohol is sometimes referred to as a "gateway drug" for youth because its use often precedes the use of other illicit substances, this terminology is counterproductive; youth drinking requires significant attention, not because of what it leads to but because of the extensive human and economic impact of alcohol use by this vulnerable population. For some youth, alcohol use alone is the primary problem. For others, drinking may be only one of a constellation of high-risk behaviors.

Youth is understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community. Youth is a more fluid category than a fixed age group (UNESCO, 2014). United Nation for statistical purpose defines youth as those persons below the age of 15 and 24 years.

Age group of youth as per National Youth Policy (2003) is 13-30 years, it divides them into subgroup. The first subgroup of 13-18 years should cover adolescents who needs and areas of concern are substantially different from youth under the following age groups. The second subgroup of 18-25 years includes those who are in the process of completing their education and starting, getting a job of looking for a livelihood. Third subgroup of 25-30 years comprises young women and men who have completed their education.

The trend of drinking starts right from school, where in the students have parties after 10th and 12th board exams as part of celebrations. They express by this that they are in state of euphoria and they have achieved youth. Anyone not participating in it is considered outdated and reserved. This is a trend which is popular in metros. Although as per law anyone below the age of 25 years is not allowed entry in the bar, but still teenagers find way to book pubs for their parties. The owners are ready to risk for their added sales. It is high time that the health ministry needs to recognize the scale of problem and make policies to regulate illegal sales. Multi national companies have identified India with its vast unexploited market as one of the worlds most sought after places for investment.

Thus the objective of the present study was to find out the alcohol consumption among .

METHODOLOGY

Present work is a survey design wherein the prevalence of alcohol consumption among youth has been identified. Online sampling was done, where response was obtained from people residing in metro cities namely Delhi, Bangalore, Chandigarh. Sample comprised of youth, people in age range of 18-25 years. Data was collected from 99 subjects which comprised of females (n = 71) and males (n= 28).

The subjects were approached by online tools namely Gtalk, Facebook,LinkedIn. Structured questionnaire was prepared and was posted on Gtalk. Only completely filled questionnaires were accepted for data analysis.

RESULTS

The age of subjects ranged from 18- 25 years. In the present work it was found that the prevalence of alcohol consumption was high in both males (74.64%) and females (85.7%). In a study done by Naresh and Prabhu (2013) on alcohol consumption pattern of youth in Manipal it was found that it is majority (77%) of boys who preferred drinking whereas female consumers were limited (23%). As majority of sample in current study were females thus gender variation may have occurred. Delhi being a metropolitan city, the youth, both boys and girls are more exposed to restaurants, pubs and parties which are organized at school which becomes one of the possible factors for such a high response.

Johnston (1995) reported that thirteen- to fifteen-year-olds are at high risk to begin drinking (3). According to results of an annual survey of University of Michigan (1996), students in 8th, 10th, and 12th grades, 26 percent of 8th graders, 40 percent of 10th graders, and 51 percent of 12th graders reported drinking alcohol within the past month. Binge drinking at least once during the 2 weeks before the survey was reported by 16 percent of 8th graders, 25 percent of 10th graders, and 30 percent of 12th graders.

Males report higher rates of daily drinking and binge drinking than females, but these differences are diminishing.

On investigating about the age at which they started drinking it was found that amongst males majority (73.23%) started drinking at the age of 15-20 years which was found to be same for majority (67.85%) of girls. Only few (2.81%) amongst males and (7.14%) amongst females started consuming alcohol before 15 years of age.

On finding the frequency of consumption of alcoholic beverages , it was found that majority (35.21%) of males didn't respond to the question followed by 21.57% who drank less than once in a month. 15.49% consumed alcohol at least once in a month whereas 19.71% consumed at least once a week. In case of females majority (42.85%) consumed less than once in a month followed by 17.85% who drank at least once a week. Naresh and Prabhu (2013) study revealed that youth at Manipal consumed alcohol only on special occasions followed by 25% who consumed only on weekends whereas only few consume alcohol on alternate days. Similar pattern was observed in present study where majority of youngsters were consuming alcohol at least once in a month.

Further on finding if subjects ever consumed 5 or more drinks at a time it was found that majority of males (43.66%) and females (37.93%) reported affirmatively for this, followed by 42.25% males and 34.48% females who doesn't and remaining didn't respond to the statement.

Binge drinking, often beginning around age 13, tends to increase during adolescence, peak in young adulthood (ages 18-22), then gradually decrease. In a 1994 national survey, binge drinking was reported by 28 percent of high school seniors, 41 percent of 21- to 22-year-olds, but only 25 percent of 31- to 32-year-olds (Johnston, 1996). Individuals who increase their binge drinking from age 18 to 24 and those

who consistently binge drink at least once a week during this period may have problems attaining the goals typical of the transition from adolescence to young adulthood (e.g., marriage, educational attainment, employment, and financial independence) (Schulenberg, 1996).

It was found that for majority of subjects both males (45.07%) and females (42.85%) parents never allowed them to consume alcohol at home, whereas for 19.71% males and 25% females parents do allow their ward to consume alcohol on special occasions. Schulenberg & Maggs (2002) reported that teens that face much of conflicts in their home tend to get inclined towards alcohol. In present work it was found that parents of 36% of the youth were aware of their ward consuming alcohol whereas for 35% of youth, parents were not aware.

Kandel (1980) reported that parents' drinking behavior and favorable attitudes about drinking have been positively associated with adolescents' initiating and continuing drinking. Early initiation of drinking has been identified as an important risk factor for later alcohol-related problems (43). Children who were warned about alcohol by their parents and children who reported being closer to their parents were less likely to start drinking (Kandel 1980; Andrews 1993; Ary 1993).

Lack of parental support, monitoring, and communication have been significantly related to frequency of drinking (Longer, 1994), heavy drinking, and drunkenness among adolescents (47). Harsh, inconsistent discipline and hostility or rejection toward children has also been found to significantly predict adolescent drinking and alcohol-related problems.

Peer drinking and peer acceptance of drinking have been associated with adolescent drinking (Hughes, 1992). While both peer influences and parental influences are important, their relative impact on adolescent drinking is unclear.

The findings on purchasing of alcohol by youth without and identity card revealed that majority of both 52.11% and 67.85% for males and females respectively never purchased alcohol without an ID though few (17.17%) reported that they have purchased alcohol without an ID. This shows that owners are ready to take risk for their added sales.

While drinking may be a singular problem behavior for some, research suggests that for others it may be an expression of general adolescent turmoil that includes other problem behaviors and that these behaviors are linked to unconventionality, impulsiveness, and sensation seeking.

CONCLUSION

Alcohol arguably is both the oldest social beverage and the substance most widely used by human beings. Its power to change behaviors positively and negatively is extraordinary, although both reasons and effects for drinking vary widely from culture to culture. Epidemiological findings on adolescent and young adult alcohol use reveal several disturbing trends. National data indicate not only that there are high rates of alcohol use among these age groups, but also that many adolescents and young adults engage in drinking practices associated with major contributors to youth mortality and with disruptions

in significant contexts that are important for healthy development. Study indicates easy access to alcohol from bars/ restaurants and from liquor stores. Peer pressure, depression came out to be one of the reasons for drinking behavior. It was also seen that for majority of youth parents were not aware of alcohol consumption pattern whereas few allowed it occasionally.

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