

RISK FACTORS AND CONSEQUENCES OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract :

Introduction : Alcoholism is the recent trend among college students. Peer pressure, stress, depression are some factors that drive these students to practice this social evil. Under intoxication, consequences are grave. Drunk and driving, road traffic accidents, legal issues, antisocial activities are some of them, that has proved alcoholism a public menace.

Objective : To assess the risk factors and consequences of alcohol consumption among adolescents.

Materials and Methods : A survey was carried out in the colleges under NITTE University. Students present at the day and time of visit were covered. A questionnaire was prepared comprising of a set of 14 questions covering the main objective of the survey. The students were asked to fill the questionnaire irrespective of their gender or whether they consume alcohol or not.

Results : From the survey, we found that social gatherings and lifestyle adaptation are major factors that prompt students to consume alcohol. Peer pressure, stress and parents influence are other factors.

The consequences observed are legal issues and family problems. But majority didn't seem to face any grave problems due to alcohol intoxication.

Conclusions : According to our study, more than 55% of the subjects that consume alcohol do so due to peer pressure, academic stress and emotional stress. Also, more than quarter of those consuming alcohol are involved in road traffic accidents and other legal issues, as well as having familial problems.

Keywords : alcohol consumption, risk for alcohol, parental influence in alcohol, peer group pressure.

Introduction :

Alcohol consumption is the trend among college students. To some it's a lifestyle adaptation while some are just victims to peer pressure. According to a study, youth strive for acceptance by their peers. They want to fit in and often choose peer groups whose values and behaviors are similar to their own. If drinking is a typical activity for these groups,

they are much more likely to drink.¹

Academic stress, emotional turmoil is other factors that force a college student to consume alcohol. There are some who are social

drinkers. Studies have shown that those who had taken alcohol showed higher positive response to sociability.¹

Parent's alcoholism also plays a greater role. Studies have shown that youth are more likely to drink alcohol when at least one of their parents has a history of alcoholism and alcohol use.¹

But the consequences are grave especially in long-term alcohol users. Despite legal litigations there has been a high prevalence of drunk and driving (DAD) among college students. According to a study done by KMC in Mangalore, 25% of the medical students have met with road traffic accidents under the influence of alcohol.²

And there's a rising trend of college students being

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involved in legal issues, fights with family & friends, antisocial activities etc under the influence of alcohol.

This survey covers the factors that drive a college student to consume alcohol and the consequences they face.

Objectives:

To assess the risk factors and consequences of alcohol consumption among adolescents.

Materials and methods:

A survey was performed in colleges under NITTE University. Students present at the day and time of visit were covered. A questionnaire was prepared comprising of a set of 14 questions covering the main objective of the survey. The students were asked to fill the questionnaire irrespective of their gender or whether they consume alcohol or not.

The sample size was 1150 students and the sampling method used was universal sampling. The responses were calculated & tabulated. Also statistical analysis was done using proportions to know the prevalence, gender comparison, effects & attitude with regard to alcohol consumption

Operational Definitions:

1. Abuse: It is called abuse when the consumer fails to fulfill role obligations at work, school or home. Physically hazardous situations to the consumers. They might have legal problems. Continued use alcohol despite serious social and interpersonal problems.
2. Dependence: Consumers have tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, persistent desire to cut down drinking. Great amount of time of consumers is spent with activity related to alcohol. Social, occupational or recreational activities are given up by dependents. Continued use despite of knowledge of serious social, psychological and physical problems.
3. Social Drinkers: This type of consumers drink slowly, know when to stop, does not drink to get drunk, never drives after drinking, they respect non-drinkers also knows and obeys laws related to drinking.
4. Binge drinking: Consumption of five or more drinks at a

single sitting for a man and four drinks at a single sitting for a woman.

5. Ever user: The respondent, who accepts having taken one or more mentioned substances ever in life.
6. Regular user: The respondent, who accepts having used one or more mentioned substances during past one year and has been taking it at least once a week or several times in the previous month.

Results:

Out of 1,150 subjects, it was found that 26.4% (304 subjects) do consume alcohol and out of those 304 subjects, 29.91% of the subject's parents consume alcohol. 1.3% did not attempt the question. Also, it was found that 4.17% had friends that consume alcohol and 54% did not attempt the question. Of all the factors that prompted subjects to drink alcohol, the factors in order were: social gatherings (61.5%), lifestyle adaptation (25.9%), academic

Figure - 1 Problems faced due to alcohol

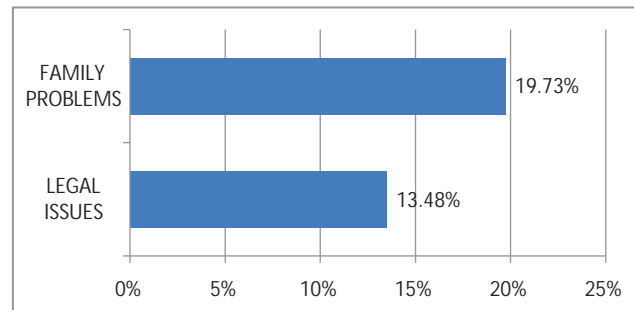


Table-1 showing the components affecting alcohol consumption

Components	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE
Parents who consume alcohol	344 (29.41%)	790 (68.69%)	16 (1.39%)
Friends who consume alcohol	48 (4.175%)	480 (48.73%)	622 (54.08%)
Factors for alcohol consumption			
Social gathering	187 (61.51%)		
Lifestyle adaptations	79 (25.9%)		
Academic stress	61 (20.6%)		
Peer pressure	55 (18.09%)		
Emotional stress	54 (17.7%)		

stress (20.6%), peer pressure (18.09%) and emotional stress/ depression (17.7%).(Table-1)

It was found that 13.48% had been involved in legal issues and 19.73% have had family problems as a consequence of alcohol consumption. (fig-1)

Out of 26.97% who drink and drive, 32% had met with road traffic accidents.

Discussion:

Lifestyle adaptations and social gatherings were stated to be the major factors prompting intake of alcohol. The other factors for intake of alcohol were found to be academic stress (20.6%) and emotional stress (17.7%). 68.69% of those who consume alcohol report that their parents do not consume alcohol. This finding is contrary to the popular belief that parents with drinking habits are the major predisposing factor for alcoholism among youngsters. Studies from US also oppose this finding. According to American Academy of Pediatrics familial negligence is the major risk factor for alcoholism as well as drug abuse among adolescents³. Peer pressure is also a major factor in

youngsters turning to alcoholism (18.09%). More than quarter of those consuming alcohol admit that they drive after drinking and most of them are involved in RTAs or other legal issues. Studies conducted by V Kulkarni et.al. provides similar results of drunken driving among undergraduate students². A significant number of people complain of familial problems due to alcoholism.

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Conclusion :

According to our study, more than 55% of the subjects that consume alcohol do so due to peer pressure, academic stress and emotional stress. Also, more than quarter of those consuming alcohol are involved in road traffic accidents and other legal issues, as well as having familial problems.

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