

Short Communication

QUANTITY AND PREVALENCE WITH GENDER COMPARISON FOR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract :

Introduction : Alcoholism is the recent trend among college students. Various studies conducted in India as well as in the West show clear indications of increasing prevalence of alcohol consumption among youngsters. Studies conducted abroad also revealed that the gap between males and females consuming alcohol is narrowing

Objective : Our study was aimed at measuring the prevalence of alcohol consumption among college students and analyzing its variation with respect to gender.

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 : We have conducted our survey in 1150 college students. 713 females and 337 males participated in the survey. Out of 1150 students, 304 (26.4%) consumes alcohol. 167 (54.9%) were males and 137 (45.1%) were females. Most of them were social drinkers. Majority of them consumed 2-3 drinks in one sitting. Tendency of binge drinking is high.

Conclusions : The prevalence of alcohol consumption comes up to a quarter of the total population surveyed most of them being social drinkers with males outnumbering females but with a visible reduction in the observed gap. A survey was conducted among students of 3 colleges to acquire the necessary data which were analyzed to form the conclusions.

Key Words : Gender, Alcohol consumption, Social drinking, Binge drinking

Introduction:

Based on studies conducted by National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism clear trends towards higher prevalence of both 30day use and having been drunk in the last 30 days among adolescent; it is significant that 19.6 % of them reported using alcohol in the previous 30 days and 6.7 % reported having been drunk that time. All of them are underage drinkers.

Furthermore, the high prevalence of drinking at an early age bodes ill for psychological development among youth because of the increased risk for both alcohol related problems

(eg: poor performance, more substance using) and other occurring problems (e.g.: delinquency, sexual activities). Consistent with national surveys conducted in previous years, geographically the north-east and north-central regions had the highest prevalence of alcohol use by young people, followed by the west and south. There were few differences between metropolitan and non metropolitan areas. Among racial and ethnic groups, white youth generally had the highest prevalence of alcohol use followed by Hispanics. African Americans had significantly lower levels of alcohol use compared with whites or Hispanics across all grade levels.

Researchers also suggested that differences in alcohol use between males and females are converging (White and Huselid 1997) but it appears that there is more

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convergence on some alcohol indicators than others.

Based on results from 2012 National survey on drug use and health, males and females aged 12-20 in 2012 had similar rates of current alcohol use (24.7% and 24.0%). however, underage males were more likely than underage females to report binge drinking(16.5 vs 14 %)or heavy alcohol use (5.2 vs. 3.4%)

Objectives :

Prevalence of alcohol consumption among college students

Materials & Methods :

A survey was performed in 3 colleges under NITTE university-K.S Hegde Medical Academy, A.B Shetty Dental College & Gulabi Shetty Memorial Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences. Students present at the time of visit were covered.

A questionnaire was prepared comprising of a set of 14 questions covering the 3 main objectives of the survey. The students were asked to fill the questionnaire irrespective of their gender or whether they consume alcohol or not.

SAMPLE SIZE: 1050

SAMPLING METHOD: universal sampling

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 :

We have conducted our survey in 1150 college students.713 females and 337 males participated in the survey.

Out of 1150 students, 304(26.4%) consumes alcohol.167 (54.9%) were males and 137 (45.1%) were females.

Among the males majority admitted of taking two(20.3%) to three(21.6) drinks in one sitting while only 8.4% consumes five drinks.20.9% of individuals confirms taking more than 5 drinks at a stretch while those taking a single drink constitutes 15%.The remaining 13.8% are those who consume 4 drinks in one session.(Table-1)

Among females a vast majority came under the category of those who take one (31.4%) to two (33.6%) drinks in a single session. Only 2.2% consumes four drinks in the same scenario while 10.2% admits taking more than five drinks. In the remaining, 15.3% were those who take 3 drinks at a stretch while 7.3% take 5 drinks. (Table-1)

Of the 304 individuals who consume alcohol, majority are social drinkers (52.9%) with females constituting 50.6% and 49.4% by males.11.8% were alcohol abusers with males making up the majority with 63.9% and females 36.1%.Binge drinkers made up 24.01% of which 67.1% were males and 32.8% females.17.4% of individuals were regular users with males (64.8%) outnumbering females (35.2%).The remaining 17.1% accounted for ever users of which 57.7% were males and 42.3% female (Fig-1)

Figure-1 Showing the proportion of genders in various categories of alcohol consumption

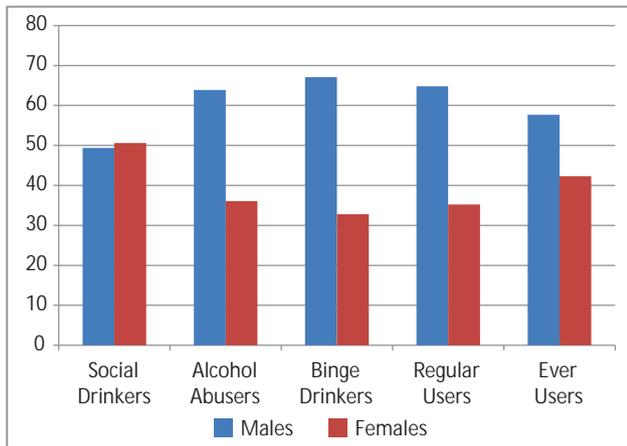


Table-1 Showing the amount of alcohol consumption in various gender

CATEGORIES	MALES	FEMALES
1- DRINK	36.7	63.2
2- DRINKS	42.5	57.4
3- DRINKS	63.1	36.8
4-DRINKS	88.4	11.5
5 DRINKS	58.3	41.6
>5 DRINKS	71.4	28.5

Discussion :

Our study on alcohol consumption among youngsters was analyzed on the basis of its prevalence, gender differences, and trends in consumption among the study group.

In our study population of 1150, 73.6% were found not to consume alcohol against 26.4% which is contrary to another study³ conducted in a similar study group wherein prevalence of alcohol consumption was found to be 69.8% to 30.2%. Various factors may contribute to the differences in the findings of the two studies. But it can be concluded that prevalence of alcoholism in various populations show considerable variations.

As per our study 38% males and 19.2% females consume alcohol. A study² conducted in 3 states: MP, UP and Manipur gives a prevalence of 23 to 74% among males and 28 to 48% among females which is similar to our findings. Among the alcohol consuming group in our study, males were the majority with 54.9% while females made up 45.1%. This trend shows that the gap between males and females who consume alcohol is decreasing (convergence)

and is contrary to the popular belief that alcohol consuming females are an insignificant minority. The more liberal outlook of modern society is a key factor in establishing such a trend. The large group of migrant students who are free from the surveillance of their native communities also contribute to the narrowing of thin gap. This finding is in agreement with the trends observed in the West (study conducted by White and Huselid – 1997)

Majority of those consuming alcohol are occasional drinkers constituting 53.2% while binge drinkers amount to 16.11%. People with alcohol dependence come up to 11.8%. Ideally the number of those showing alcohol dependence should be as low as possible. It is encouraging that in our study, those showing this trait came to just over 10%. The proportion of binge drinkers is, however, not so pleasing as it is more than 15%. This group is the one with high risk of developing alcoholic hepatitis and can even develop dependence in the future. In studies⁴ conducted in the West significantly higher percentages of binge drinking is reported.

Conclusion :

The prevalence of alcohol consumption comes up to a quarter of the total population surveyed most of them being social drinkers with males outnumbering females but with a visible reduction in the observed gap.

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