

Awareness of Alcohol among Adolescents and Young Adults of Mangalore

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Abstract

Introduction: Alcohol consumption is a major public health problem in most parts of the world responsible for 3.2 per cent of deaths (1.8 million). Prevalence of alcohol use in India is reported to be 21.4%. The concern, is that there has been a rapid change in patterns and trends of alcohol use in India, chief among them is people are beginning to drink at ever-younger ages. Alcohol consumption of the students under the age of 18 years is markedly high which needs to be addressed.

Aims and Objectives: To assess the awareness of risk factors in alcohol consumption among adolescents and young adults.

Materials and Method : Materials used are -Questionnaire pertaining to the awareness of alcohol consumption.

Methodology : Assessment of awareness and knowledge of alcohol consumption was done by means of answering a pretested validated questionnaire with anonymity.

Results : According to the study done, 67.18% of students knew who consumed alcohol under the age of 18. It was found, 28.03% of the subjects perceived that alcohol consumption started because of the urge to try something new.

Conclusion : A high majority of the students are aware of the underage drinking and risk factors associated with it.

Keywords: alcohol, awareness, adolescents

Introduction

Awareness of alcohol use and misuse on college campuses is not new. Alcohol consumption is a major public health problem in most parts of the world¹, responsible for 3.2 per cent of deaths (1.8 million). WHO has estimated that there are about 2 billion people worldwide who consume alcoholic beverages and 76.3 million with disorders arising out of harmful use of alcohol². Prevalence of alcohol use in India is reported to be 21.4%. Alcohol consumption has been steadily increasing in developing countries like India and decreasing in developed countries since the 1980s.¹ Now-a-days there is increasing social acceptance of alcohol intake in various strata of society. The concern, say

experts, is that there has been a rapid change in patterns and trends of alcohol use in India; chief among them being people beginning to drink at ever-younger ages.

Available research indicates that approximately 80% of college students drink and that half of student engage in heavy episodic drinking. Alcohol being high in calories can have ill effects on the body. Regular drinking over the permissible amounts can lead to serious health problems, from liver damage to an increased risk of cancer or heart attacks. Students who engage in excessive drinking impact not just themselves but also the people around them. Fellow students experience second hand consequences ranging from disrupted study and sleep to physical and sexual assault. To address these serious consequences of alcohol consumption by college students, the National Advisory Council to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) established the Task Force on

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College Drinking in 1998³. With reference with that we tried to identify awareness level in students and their perception of risk factors.

Objectives

To assess the awareness of risk factors and among adolescents and young adults.

Material Methods

Community based cross-sectional study was conducted in different schools and colleges of Mangalore. Taking 20% awareness as baseline the sample size was calculated with 80% power of the study and 95% confidence interval, the sample size was calculated to be 400 with relative precision being 20% (power of study 80%). Considering 20% non response, we considered to interview 480 students. Universal sampling in the colleges which were randomly selected from the college list was done for students. Our total sample was 487. A questionnaire consisting of questions that were based on the perception, knowledge of alcohol consumption and its consequences was prepared. Reliability and face validity of the questionnaire was done and linguistic validation was done. The questionnaire was to be filled anonymously. Sufficient time was given to the students to complete the questionnaire. Only students willing to participate with consent given were included. The data obtained were compiled in Microsoft excel and the results were tabulated in proportions and cross tables.

Results

The socio demographic data was almost similar with no major differences in the cohort. According to the study done 67.14% of students were aware of who consume alcohol under the age of 18 years (fig no: 1). Among them 58.08% of the subjects knew where these people go to drink. 30.09% to bars, 24.50% to pubs, 20% to parties and the rest to liquor shop (table no: 1) We found out that 58.56% of people perceive that alcohol consumption was started to try something new. 31.87% due to peer pressure, 28.28% due to stress and 8.36% people were influence by movies (fig no: 2). Majority of the people perceived that alcohol consumption among these people was with their

friends (79.02%) rather than consuming it alone (8.60%)

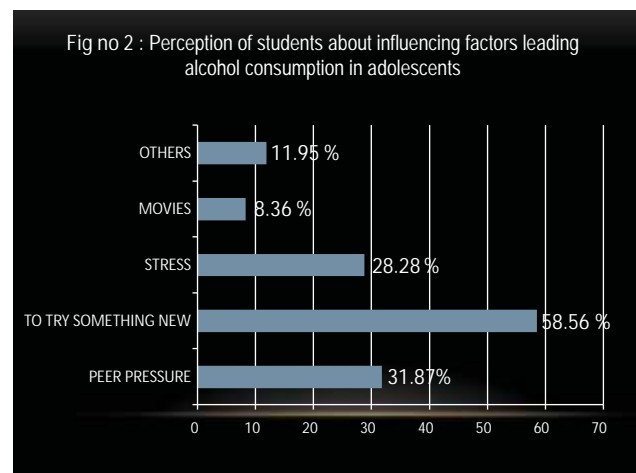
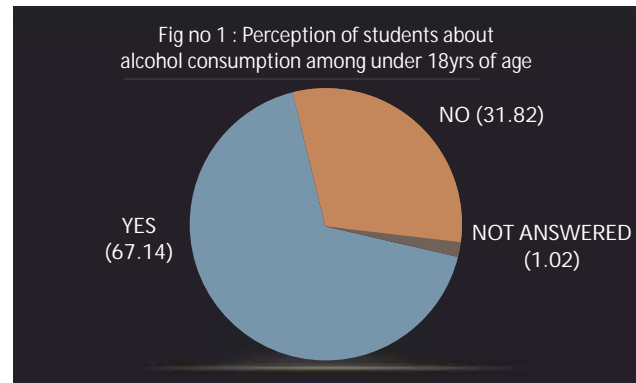


Table No.1 : Perception of Students about places were alcohol is available (n=280)
(There is multiple responses so the percentages may not add up to 100)

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
BARS	173	61.78%
PUBS	144	51.42%
PARTIES	115	41.07%
LIQUOR SHOPS	61	21.78%
OTHERS	63	22.5%

Discussion

Alcoholism is a broad term for problems with alcohol, and is generally used to mean compulsive and uncontrolled consumption of alcoholic beverages, usually to the detriment of the drinker's health, personal relationships, and social standing. It is medically considered a disease, specifically an addictive illness. The World Health Organization (WHO) says there are at least 140 million alcoholics in the world; unfortunately, the majority of them are not treated.⁴ A US study estimated that about 30% of

Americans report having an alcohol disorder at some time in their lives.⁵

Based on our study we have observed that knowledge about alcohol consumption under 18years of age was 67.14% and 31.82% had no idea about it.

We found that awareness about the availability of alcohol for students under 18years was 50.77% in our study compared to the study conducted in Australia in 2004⁵ where majority of the young people aged 12 – 17yrs i.e. 73% of them found it easy or very easy to get alcohol if they wanted some. Reported age of initiation of alcohol consumption has decreased over the last 5 decades. The age at which at least 50% of the survey responded, reported consuming a full serve of alcohol has reduced from approximately 19yrs to 15.5yrs in the Australian study⁵. In our study awareness was found to be good. Underage alcohol use remains a major public health and safety problem in India, creating serious personal, social,

and economic consequences for adolescents, their families, communities, and the Nation as a whole. An emerging body of research on the effects of underage alcohol use on human maturation adds new urgency to the decade's long effort by the public and private sectors to prevent and reduce underage drinking.

Limitations

Our study captures only few factors regarding awareness of alcohol consumption, hence it cannot explain all the reasons for a student to take up a habit of consuming alcohol. This study do not have representative sample from all colleges.

Conclusion

A high majority of the students are aware of underage drinking and probable reasons for that in which something to try new exceeds which needs to be considered in school counseling sessions.

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