

STUDY OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS IN WESTERN PUNJAB

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Abstract

Background: Alcohol consumption is a significant part of many cultural and social traditions. Abuse of alcohol has a detrimental effect on a person's health, relationship, and finances as well as others nearby. In the present times, many young people use alcohol in higher education institution. Studies show that excessive alcohol consumption increases the risk of heart disease, liver disease, risky sexual behaviour, mental and behavioural disorder and poor academic performance which may be career ending if unregulated. **Materials and Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted among college students in the Western Punjab. 440 students were recruited in the study. A self-administered structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the students. We included students aged 18 years and above. **Result:** 53.6% were males and 46.4% were females. Majority of students (57.3%) were aged 21-24 years. Students who consumed alcohol were introduced to alcohol by friends in 42.7% of the cases, 9.1% were self introduced. According to the frequency of drink containing alcohol 42.7% students who consumed alcohol 2-4 times a month, 2.71% students consume alcohol 2-3 time a week and 5.5% students consumed alcohol 4 or more time a week. **Conclusion:** Hopelessness is a very significant state that might influence someone to drink. College students may drink alcohol as a stress reliever due to academic stress and pressure to perform. Therefore, it is important to establish and put into place national monitoring systems that can track young people's harmful drinking habits, peer education, and effective campus-based counseling.

INTRODUCTION

Around the world, drinking alcohol is a major component of several cultural, religious, and social traditions.^[1,2] But in past years, the volume and harmful pattern of consumption represents a serious threat to the consumer's health as well as the health of their family, friends, and the wider community.^[3-5] Alcohol abuse has a negative impact on a person's health, relationships, and finances as well as those around them, both locally and globally.^[4]

In higher education institutions, alcohol is a frequently used drug among young people.^[5,6] Alcohol frequently acts as a starting point for the use of other psychoactive drugs.^[6] A transformative stage, university education is marked by autonomy or independence from parental authority, self-determination, academic expectations, the formation of social groups, sharing housing with new students from different cultural backgrounds,^[7-9] and social influences.^[9-13] Researchers have shown that the convenience of having access to and availability of

alcohol are additional characteristics that incline students to alcohol usage,^[14] Academic demands lead to psychological discomfort and alcohol usage among family members.^[12,15]

The main cause of the world's overall illness and death burden is alcohol intake.^[17,18] Given the preventive properties of regular alcohol use on the human body, the relationship between alcohol consumption and its detrimental effects on health is still complicated and ambiguous.^[19] Early-life alcohol usage is linked to adverse effects, including changes in reading comprehension, memory, and attention, as well as altered growth of key brain regions.^[19] These detrimental effects ultimately result in psychological, hormonal, social, and intellectual issues later in life.^[20] According to studies, drinking alcohol excessively increases the chance of developing heart disease, cancer, liver illness, hepatitis, hazardous sexual behaviour, STDs, mental and behavioural disorders, physical injury, domestic violence, and poor academic achievement.^[22,23]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study design

Institutional-based cross-sectional study was conducted among college students in the Western Punjab. Students from various colleges of a medical university were recruited for the study. Students enrolled in sandwich or short courses who missed the data collecting day due to illness or communication difficulties were also excluded from the research. A self-administered structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the students. We included students aged 18 years and above.

Data Analysis

Using descriptive statistical tools and methods, the results were described using SPSS 22.0, based on the type of the variable. In this context, frequency

distributions for qualitative variables and summary central trend measures were performed for the quantitative variables. After the descriptive process, the association between alcohol consumption and other variables included in the form were estimated by chi-square and Student's t-test in terms of their applicability and considering for statistically significant associations $p \leq 0.05$.

RESULTS

Socio-demographic details on university students.

Of 440 university students, 236(53.6%) were males and 204(46.4%) were females. The majority 252 (57.3%) of the student were aged 21-24 years with the mean age of 22.4 ± 3.1 years (Table-1). In the year of study, 140(31.8%) were in the 5th year or intern as shown in (Table-2).

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of age, gender, and living status

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Age group		
18-20	120	27.3%
21-24	252	57.3%
24-27	60	13.6%
Gender		
Male	236	53.6%
Female	204	46.4%
Living Status		
Outside campus	92	20.9%
Hostel	201	45.5%
Personal residence	148	33.6%

Table 2: Distribution according to academic year

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Academic year		
1st year	104	23.6%
2nd year	72	16.4%
3rd year	56	12.7%
4th year	68	15.5%
5th year or intern	140	31.8%

288 (65%) students of MBBS, 44 (10%) students of BDS, 24(5.5%) students of Pharmacy, 28 (6.4%) students of Nursing, 52 (12.2%) of students Physiotherapy and 4(0.9%) students of M.sc (Masters degree) participated in the study.

Table 3: Frequency and percentage of students according to course

Variable/Course	Frequency	Percentage
MBBS	288	65%
BDS	44	10%
Pharmacy	24	5.5%
Nursing	28	6.4%
Physiotherapy	52	12.2%
Masters(M.sc)	4	0.9%

Psychosocial factors of alcohol consumption.

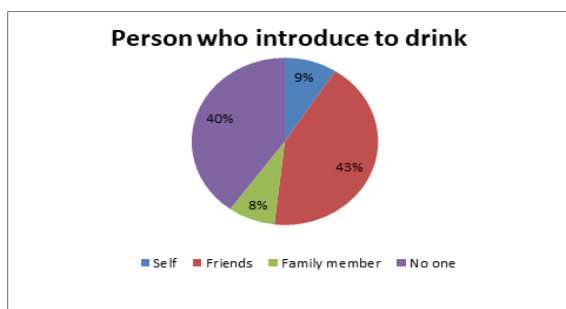


Figure 1: Introduction to drinking by friend, family member or self

Students who consumed alcohol were introduced to alcohol by friends in 42.7% of the cases, 9.1% were self introduced, 8.2% were introduced by family member and 40.0% were introduced by no-one.

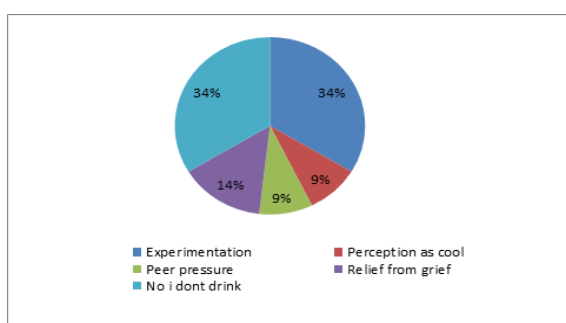


Figure 2: Reason for which drinking was started

Experimentation (34%), perception as cool (9%), and peer pressure (9%), relief from grief (14%), don't drinks (34%) were some of the key reasons for alcohol consumption among university students as presented in [Figure 2].

Out of 440 students (49.5%) having feeling sad or hopelessness and (38.3%) students don't have any feeling of sad or hopeless and some of them about (12.1%) who had ambiguous reasons.

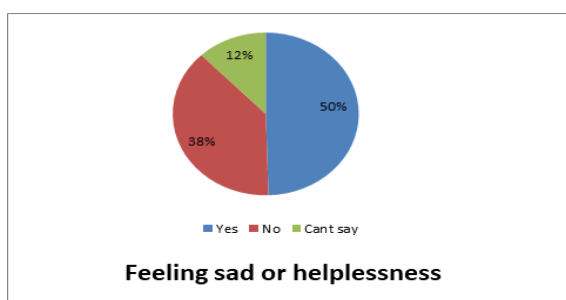


Figure 3: Percentage of feeling sadness or helplessness in the previous 12 months

Table: 4 Quality of alcohol consumed by students

Various type of drinks consumed	Frequency	Percentage
Beer	52	11.8%
Whisky	48	10.9%
Vodka	32	7.3%
Rum/Brandy	08	1.8%
Gin	04	0.9%
Any drink has alcohol with	60	13.7%
Don't drink	236	53.6%

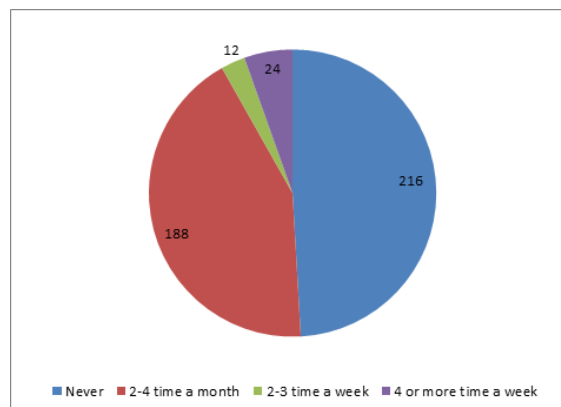


Figure 4: How often do had drink containing alcohol.

1. Subject 49.1% students had never consumed alcohol, 42.7% students consumed alcohol 2-4 time a month, 2.7% students have drink containing alcohol 2-3 time a week and about 5.5% of students consume alcohol 4 or more in a week.
2. Students, 53.6% students don't consume alcohol, 17.3% of students consume alcohol 1 or 2 drinks on a typical day, 11.9% of students contain 3 or 4 drinks on a typical day, 8.2% of students have 5 or 6 drinks on a typical day, 3.6% students take alcohol 7 or 9 drinks on a typical day and 4.5% students contain 10 or more drinks on a typical day and only 0.9% students take alcohol until bottle finishes on a typical day.
3. Were questioned about these individuals' consumption of six or more drinks at once (AUDIT Question 3), in which 67.3% students responded negatively, 20.9% students had consume less the month, 5.5% of students drink alcohol monthly basis. While 4.5% of this population consumed six or more glasses on a weekly basis and daily or almost daily consumers were 1.8%.

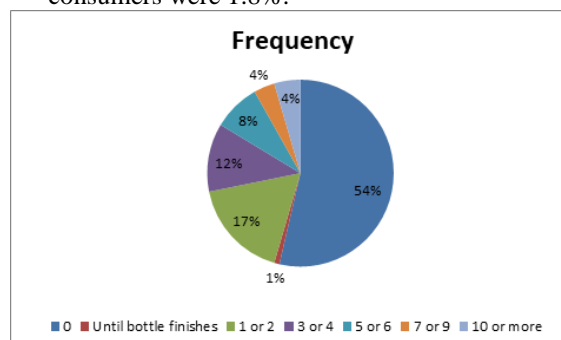


Figure 5: Show the how many drink containing alcohol consumed a typical day.

4. Analysis of drinkers' capacity to stop themselves once drinking has begun was conducted among the individual (AUDIT question 4) 85.5% consumers never experienced any issues with it. The issue was less than monthly for 7.3% drinkers. 2.7% of alcohol drinkers found it impossible to stop once they started drinking every day or almost every day.
5. The participants were questioned about their capacity to honour their regular obligations and expectations despite their drinking behaviour the previous year (AUDIT Question 5). 84.5% were able to do so, 5.5% of the participants reported weekly issues in this situation and inability to meet regular obligations and expectations. 0.9% of people were affected on most days of the last year due to their drinking habits.
6. Upon being questioned about the necessity of a drink first thing in the morning following a previous heavy drinking session the previous morning (AUDIT Question 6), 92.7% of all participants gave did not have any problem while 2.7% fewer than monthly needs.
7. Individuals were questioned on their feelings of regret or guilt following drinking (AUDIT Question 7), 79% responded negatively, 14.5% felt remorse less than monthly and 3.6% monthly. While the rest of the participants varying frequency of the times they felt remorseful 0.9% weekly, 1.8% daily.
8. When asked if the participants could recall what happened the previous night due of drinking (AUDIT Question 8), 76.4% answered never, 15.5% participants faced the situation less than monthly, while 4.5% faced monthly. 3.6% participants were so drunk daily that they couldn't recall what happened the previous evening.
9. Questioned about the harm caused by drinking (AUDIT Question 9), most of the participants 86.4% answered negatively, While the rest of the participants had an injury (9.1%) during the last year.
10. Questioned regarding a friend's, doctor's, or family member's advice to reduce alcohol use (AUDIT Question 10) the majority of participants 90% gave unfavourable responses, 3.6% of participants were advised to cut down the alcohol consumption prior to last year, and 6.4% during the last year.

DISCUSSION

In our study almost half of the students routinely consume alcohol, which they view as being essential to their higher education. Female students were equally impacted, even though male students tend to misuse alcohol more severely. Only about 10% of students consume alcohol alone, indicating the value of social interaction and time spent having fun together. In this study age group of 21-24 years are

more likely drink alcohol. Additionally, a significant prospective American study discovered that heavy drinking declined with age 24. The college is therefore a suitable setting for continuing excessive alcohol intake rather than the first conceivable place for drinking. Alcohol abuse affects students with mental health negatively. In this study, the majority of students (41.8%) experimented with alcohol use for the first time, whereas 9.1% of students consumed as a result of peer pressure. Peer pressure was a significant predictor of problematic alcohol use in college students, with the likelihood of harmful alcohol use being more than twice as high in those students who had close friends who used alcohol as in those who did not 25.42.7% of the students in our research reported having been introduced to alcohol by friends or roommates, In a Kenyan research, 75.1% of students confessed that their classmates had first introduced them to substance misuse.^[26] Peers have an impact on students' alcohol intake, according to earlier studies. An Ethiopian study found that students who have drinking companions are more inclined to drink themselves,^[27] There was evidence that engaging in risk-taking activities was significantly influenced by the direct or indirect support of close friends. Due to the social aspect of gatherings, students tend to consume more alcoholic drinks, and students who live in dorms with a lot of roommate report high levels of alcohol addiction. According to our study, more students consumed beer than any other alcoholic beverage(11.8%). A study done by Nicholls et al and Lemle et al, found beer more frequently consumed by males.^[28,29] In the current study, parental or guardian alcohol intake was found to be a major risk factor. Parents and guardians act as role models for kids and have a big impact on how much alcohol teenagers consume. According to this study, first year and last year students tend to consume more alcohol than other students (23.6% and 31.8%) and academic adjustment problems are a strong predictor of alcohol consumption among students. These results is consistent with other research that found a strong correlation between alcohol use and students difficulties with academic adjustment.^[30] In order to deal with students' views of peer alcohol usage and screen for alcohol misuse, campus-based counseling programs and harm-reduction techniques should be implemented. In order to encourage beneficial behavioral changes among university students, awareness programs that depend on peer education and the media should be devised.

CONCLUSION

Risk variables for alcohol intake were age, gender, regular costs, parental and peer drinking, truancy, and depressed or hopeless sentiments. In this research, students who felt hopeless or depressed were more inclined to drink than their optimistic and

upbeat peers, Hopelessness is a very significant state that might influence someone to drink. College students may drink alcohol as a stress reliever due to academic stress, interpersonal competitiveness, and pressure to perform. According to our study, MBBS students have a higher tendency to drink than other medical students likely because of better socio-economic factors. Therefore, it is important to establish and put into place national monitoring systems that can track young people's harmful drinking habits, peer education, and effective campus-based counseling.

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