

Original Research

Assessment of prevalence of alcohol use among school-going adolescent students

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ABSTRACT:

Background: Alcohol abuse is a major public health problem across the globe. The present study was conducted to assess the prevalence of alcohol use among school-going adolescent students. **Materials & Methods:** The present study was conducted among 634 students of both genders. A questionnaire which comprised of habit of substance abuse, type of substance used, age at first experience of alcoholic drinks, duration and frequency of intake, peer pressure for starting alcohol, parental education, and habit, etc., were recorded. **Results:** 2 students in age of 12, 6 in 13, 10 in 14, 24 in 15 and 40 in 16 had prevalence of alcohol intake. Out of total 634 students, 82 (12.9%) had prevalence of alcohol intake. Among parents, 520 fathers, 112 mothers and 84 close friends had habit of alcohol use. The difference was significant ($P < 0.05$). 240 parents were illiterate, 114 had upto high school education and 280 had upto college level education. 164 parents were self employed, 290 were wage earner and 180 were in government job. The difference was significant ($P < 0.05$). **Conclusion:** Authors found that high prevalence of alcohol intake was observed in school children especially in the age of 15 and 16 years old.

Key words: Alcohol, College, Students.

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INTRODUCTION

Alcohol abuse is a major public health problem across the globe. Globally, about 50% of population takes alcohol and about 20% smokes tobacco. Besides alcohol and tobacco, cannabis, heroin, cocaine, sedatives, and various stimulants are used across the globe.¹ In India, various forms of addictive substances such as tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, opium, and opiates and cough syrups are abused orally and some are used parentally. Tobacco and alcohol abuse are very high in some of the states of Northeast India. Adolescence being the formative period of life, boys and girls start the habit under peer pressure, household influence, parental influence, and by dint of inquisitive mind and experimentation.²

In many parts of India, including northeast, alcoholic drinks are prepared in households taking rice as main ingredient or other available ingredients by fermentation while some people use these alcoholic drinks in religious and social functions. Further, homemade alcoholic drinks (HADs) are used in front of parents and elders in social functions without inhibition. As such, in most cases, adolescent boys and girls get the taste of alcoholic drinks in the early part of life. They continue in tolerable doses; later, some of them shift to commercially available alcoholic drinks (CADs) and gradually, they become habitual drinker or addicts.³ Risky alcohol consumption among young people is becoming a key public health priority because of its important health and educational consequences.⁴

Among those aged 15-29, alcohol accounts for more than 10% of the overall burden of disease and injury. In addition to morbidity and mortality, alcohol has a significant important effect on student academic performance and on antisocial behaviour. The case for alcohol could be weakened if adolescent drinking patterns became more mature in adulthood.⁵ The present study was conducted to assess the prevalence of alcoholic drink user among school-going adolescent students.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The present study was conducted in the department of Psychiatry. It comprised of 634 students of both genders. The approval for the study was obtained from concerned school. Consent from all parents was obtained before starting the study. Data such as name, age, gender etc. was recorded. A questionnaire which comprised of habit of substance abuse, type of substance used, age at first experience of alcoholic drinks, duration and frequency of intake, peer pressure for starting alcohol, parental education, and habit, etc., were recorded. Results were tabulated and subjected to statistical analysis. P value less than 0.05 was considered significant.

RESULTS

Table I Distribution of students

Age group	Total	Alcohol intake
12	68	2
13	84	6
14	102	10
15	150	24
16	230	40
Total	634	82

Table I, graph I shows that 2 students in age of 12, 6 in 13, 10 in 14, 24 in 15 and 40 in 16 had prevalence of alcohol intake. Out of total 634 students, 82 (12.9%) had prevalence of alcohol intake.

Graph I Distribution of students

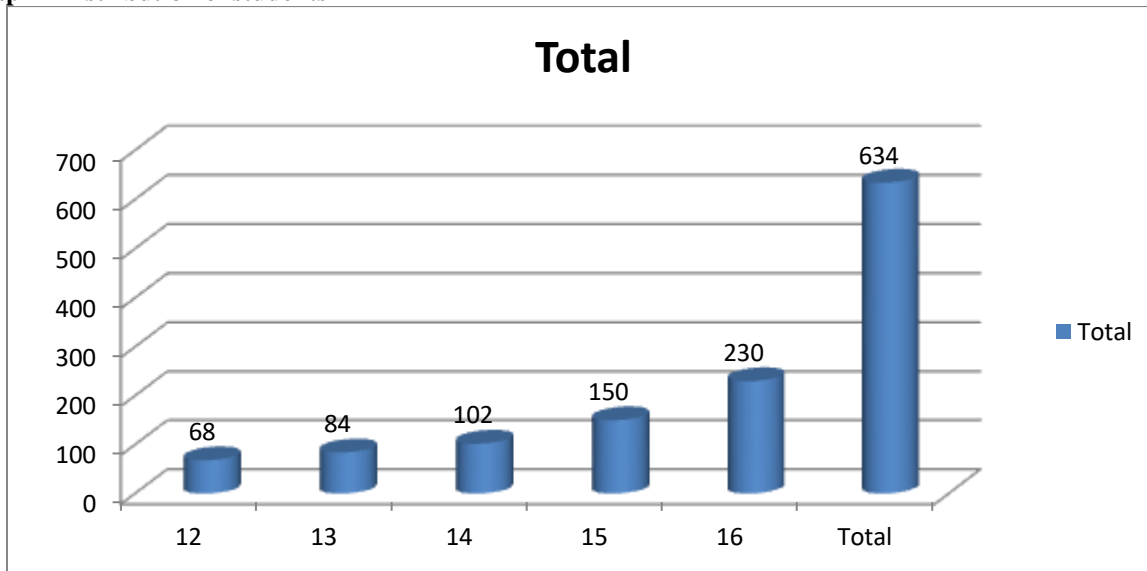


Table II Parents and peer influence on alcohol use habit of children

Age group	Number	P value
Father habit	520	0.01
Mother habit	112	
Close friend use	84	

Table II shows that among parents, 520 fathers, 112 mothers and 84 close friends had habit of alcohol use. The difference was significant (P< 0.05).

Table III Parents education and employment status

Parameters	Number	P value
Parents education		0.01
Illiterate	240	
High school	114	
College	280	
Occupation		0.04
Self employed	164	
Wage earner	290	
Government job	180	

Table III shows that 240 parents were illiterate, 114 had upto high school education and 280 had upto college level education. 164 parents were self employed, 290 were wage earner and 180 were in government job. The difference was significant ($P < 0.05$).

DISCUSSION

Homemade alcoholic drinks (HADs) are used in front of parents and elders in social functions without inhibition. As such, in most cases, adolescent boys and girls get the taste of alcoholic drinks in the early part of life. They continue in tolerable doses; later, some of them shift to commercially available alcoholic drinks (CADs), and gradually, they become habitual drinker or addicts.⁶ Substance abuse is reported to be more in industrial towns. Especially, easy access to illicit substances, available pocket money, and other factors make youth and adolescent boys and girls vulnerable to these habits. Most of the employees of the industry along with their family stay within the township. Alcoholic drinks are available with many commercial outlets as well as HADs prepared from rice are also available in and around the township.⁷

Risky alcohol consumption has first been approached from an individual perspective, with a strong emphasis on individual risk factors, such as gender, age, and psychological factors, and on drinking motives. Adolescents often report drinking for motives such as social enhancement, enjoyment, image enhancement, or coping motives; thus, they may drink because of positive consequences that outweigh, at least in the short term, negative consequences.⁸ Alcohol use among school and college students occurs in specific social environments characterized by independent living, reduced parental control, increased social homogeneity, wide availability of alcohol-related social activities such as pre-partying and student folklore (traditional, extra-curricular, and generally recreational activities managed by student organisations). The transition to the college environment brings about changes in adolescents' adjustment to their social environment, which in turns influence alcohol use.⁹ The present study was conducted to assess the prevalence of alcoholic drink user among school-going adolescent students.

In present study, we found that 2 students in age of 12, 6 in 13, 10 in 14, 24 in 15 and 40 in 16 had prevalence of alcohol intake. Out of total 634 students, 82 (12.9%)

had prevalence of alcohol intake. Mahanta et al¹⁰ found that about 36% out of 1285 students have tasted/used homemade alcoholic drinks (HADs) and 12.3% used commercially available alcoholic drinks (CADs). Significantly higher numbers of adolescent students (≥ 15 years) used CAD in comparison to children.

We found that among parents, 520 fathers, 112 mothers and 84 close friends had habit of alcohol use. 240 parents were illiterate, 114 had upto high school education and 280 had upto college level education. 164 parents were self employed, 290 were wage earner and 180 were in government job. Varma et al¹¹ in their study found that peer pressure was reported to be responsible for about 45.6% of substance user (including alcohol) among Indian college students. Parents' indifference about the habit of their children influences the substance use habit of their offspring. It was reported that parents of 12% of students were aware of their drinking habit. Pocket money was shown as a significant factor contributing for increased alcohol intake.

Lorant et al¹² determined how college environmental factors shape college students' drinking behaviour. A web questionnaire was sent to all bachelor and master students and 7,015 students participated (participation = 39%). The survey looked at drinking behaviour, social involvement, college environmental factors, drinking norms, and positive drinking consequences. On average each student had 1.7 drinks a day and 2.8 episodes of abusive drinking a month. We found that the more a student was exposed to college environmental factors, the greater the risk of heavy, frequent, and abusive drinking. Alcohol consumption increased for students living on campus, living in a dormitory with a higher number of room-mates, and having been in the University for a long spell. Most such environmental factors were explained by social involvement, such as participation to the student folklore, pre-partying, and normative expectations.

The limitation of the study is small sample size.

CONCLUSION

Authors found that high prevalence of alcohol intake was observed in school children especially in the age of 15 and 16 years old.

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