USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

USO DE BEBIDAS ALCOÓLICAS ENTRE UNIVERSITÁRIOS

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to estimate the prevalence of alcohol among college students. **Method:** this is a quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional study with 100 university students in the last graduation period. A questionnaire was applied and statistical analysis was performed with the help of the SPSS application, version 21.0. Data were presented in table and figures and discussed in the light of the literature. **Results:** the prevalence of the young female audience (71%), which consume about five doses (57.6%) of beer, whiskey or wines in search of fun (73.5%) or is influenced by friends (20.6%) making him more confident and with initiative (71.6%). **Conclusion:** it can be stated that the use of alcohol is prevalent and abusive among university students, however, they recognize the risks caused by abusive alcohol consumption. It is also considered relevant to comment on the need for actions related to public policies that reduce or delay the onset of alcohol consumption and problems related to excessive use. **Descriptors:** Alcoholic Beverages; Students; Risk Factors; Alcoholic Intoxication; Health Vulnerability; Dependency (Psychology).

RESUMO

Objetivo: estimar a prevalência de álcool entre universitários. **Método:** trata-se de estudo quantitativo, descritivo, transversal, com 100 universitários no último período da graduação. Aplicou-se um questionário e se realizou a análise estatística com o auxílio do aplicativo SPSS, versão 21.0. Apresentaram-se os dados em tabela e figuras e discutidos à luz da literatura. **Resultados:** verificou-se a prevalência do público feminino jovem (71%), que consome cerca de cinco doses (57,6%) de cerveja, uísque ou vinhos na busca de diversão (73,5%) ou é influenciado pelos amigos (20,6%) deixando-o mais confiante e com iniciativa (71,6%). **Conclusão:** pode-se afirmar que o uso do álcool é prevalente e abusivo entre universitários, entretanto, os mesmos reconhecem os riscos ocasionados pelo consumo abusivo do álcool. Considera-se ainda relevante comentar a necessidade de ações relacionadas às políticas públicas que reduzam ou adiem o início do consumo de álcool e problemas relacionados ao uso excessivo. **Descritores:** Bebidas Alcoólicas; Estudantes; Fatores de Risco; Intoxicação Alcoólica; Vulnerabilidade em Saúde; Dependência (Psicologia).

RESUMEN

Objetivo: estimar la prevalencia de alcohol entre universitarios. **Método:** se trata de un estudio cuantitativo, descriptivo, transversal, con 100 universitarios en el último período de la graduación. Se aplicó un cuestionario y se realizó el análisis estadístico con la ayuda de la aplicación SPSS, versión 21.0. Se presentaron los datos en tabla y figuras y discutidos a la luz de la literatura. **Resultados:** se verificó la prevalencia del público femenino joven (71%), que consume cerca de cinco dosis (57,6%) de cerveza, whisky o vinos en la búsqueda de diversión (73,5%) o es influenciado por los amigos (20, 6%) dejándolo más confiado y con iniciativa (71,6%). **Conclusión:** se puede afirmar que el uso del alcohol es prevalente y abusivo entre universitarios, sin embargo, los mismos reconocen los riesgos ocasionados por el consumo abusivo del alcohol. Se considera también relevante comentar la necesidad de acciones relacionadas con las políticas públicas que reduzcan o posterguen el inicio del consumo de alcohol y problemas relacionados con el uso excesivo. **Descriptor:** Bebidas Alcoólicas; Estudiantes; Factores de Riesgo; Intoxicación Alcohólica; Vulnerabilidad en Salud; Dependencia (Psicología).

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INTRODUCTION

It is known that alcohol is the most consumed licit drug in society, especially young people who often start their experience driven by cultural and social habits as a form of fun, leisure or self-confidence. It is seen that the free commercialization entails greater difficulty of control and fiscalization, being the campaigns of prevention against the abusive use the more effective handling. Despite its legalization after 18 years, social problems and individual and public health are generated by early and continuous consumption.¹⁻²

Dependence can be caused by excessive consumption with mental, physical and behavioral reactions. According to the Health and Alcohol Information Center, overuse is one of the risk factors that cause mortality and / or disability in humans. Data from the World Health Organization attribute approximately 6% of the world's deaths to alcohol use.³ In Brazil, in 2010, youngsters over 15 years consumed an average of 8.7 liters per person, increasing in 2012 indices of 60% and 63% in cases of diseases and 5% and 18% related to alcohol-related accidents.⁴

It is pointed out that alcohol consumption mainly includes the most vulnerable sectors of society, including young people and students, who are at a stage that makes it possible to initiate alcohol consumption⁵. that there is an increasing increase in the use of alcoholic beverages by these young people during the university period, especially in the last year of academic life, being a frequent habit and this socio-demographic cut is related to a greater prevalence of involvement with traffic accidents.^{6,4,7}

It is noticed that males are the most prevalent in alcohol consumption and, notably, young people consume more.^{8,7,9} However, significant frequencies among young women have been gaining ground in discussions of relevant literature. Some studies already point to the absence of significance between genders; others already indicate a prevalence of female gender.¹⁻¹⁰

It generates more autonomy for students, in general, by entering the university, allowing new experiences and greater vulnerability to the use of chemical substances and leaving them exposed to transits, violence and unprotected sex. These risks are still related to consumption patterns and quantity consumed.¹¹

In this sense, the responsibilities of health professionals, families, educators and the

government are to provide support, follow-up and information on the damages caused by the early and chronic use of alcohol.⁴ It is understood that the theme is makes it relevant, since the consumption of alcoholic beverages among university students has become a real problem because of the way in which the frequency of alcohol use by this public is diffused. In view of these facts, this research sought to answer the following questions: What is the prevalence of alcohol use among college students from a city in the interior of Paraíba? What is the relationship between alcohol consumption and gender?

OBJECTIVE

- Estimating the prevalence of alcohol among college students.

METHOD

This is a quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional study conducted at Santa Maria College (SMC). The SMC is a private and pioneering institution of higher education in the health courses in the municipality of Cajazeiras-PB, Brazil. It currently has 12 undergraduate, postgraduate and medical residency programs.

The population is constituted by university students who are in the last period of the graduation, since there is a greater tendency of consumption in the last year of course. The sample consisted of 100 students enrolled in the Nursing, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Social Work and Administration courses, who agreed to participate in the study, agreed and signed the Free and Informed Consent Term (FICT) and were over 18 years of age.

The data was collected in April and May 2015 after the favorable opinion of the SMC ethics committee. The questionnaire was constructed based on the work related to alcohol consumption among university students and alcohol consumption patterns among high school students in the city of Jaraguá do Sul / SC.¹⁰⁻² The statistical analysis was performed with the help of the SPSS application, version 21.0 presented in table and figures and discussed in light of the literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the sociodemographic data that characterize the sample.

Table 1. Description of demographics. Cajazeiras (PB), Brazil, 2015.

Variables		N	%
Sex			
	Male	29	29.0
	Female	71	71.0
Respondent's age group			
	Up to 20 years	2	2.0
	From 21 to 24 years	34	34.0
	From 25 to 29 years	42	42.0
	From 30 to 34 years	13	13.0
	From 35 to 39 years	8	8.0
	Over 40 years	1	1.0
In which undergraduate course are you studying??			
	Nursing	43	43.0
	Pharmacy	1	1.0
	Physiotherapy	13	13.0
	Social service	22	22.0
	Administration	21	21.0
Who do you live with?			
	Parents	49	49.0
	Friends	12	12.0
	Companion	27	27.0
	Others	12	12.0
In addition to the undergraduate course, which of the following situations also describes your professional occupation?			
	Works	50	50.0
	Does only internships	8	8.0
	Only studies	42	42.0

The prevalence of alcohol use in the life of university students is also reported by several authors.^{10,12-5} All corroborate when mentioning that friends are the ones who exert the greatest influence on young people, especially in their transition to early life in addition to the beginning of financial independence, is also marked by parties and social gatherings that aim at the integration among friends contributing to the influences between them.

In Brazil, 18 years is considered the minimum age allowed for the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Despite this legal basis, it is observed that most began drinking early, at an age considered illegal.^{12,18}

The early use of alcoholic beverage in adolescence is stimulated by the vulnerability of the phase: by the constant absence of the parents, by the teenager's need for self-esteem, and by identifying and / or creating his / her own way of acting. In such a period of life, such young people undergo any kind of conduct to show an independence, often influenced to drink as a way of maintaining in their circles of friendships.²

It can be seen, in figure 1, that most of the students are motivated to consume drinks in search of fun or relaxation (73.5%) followed by social influence, especially of friends (20.6%); 2.9% drink because they like the taste of the drink and 1.5% because they have emotional problems, among other factors. Other studies agree with these findings; for others, the main reason for young people to initiate and maintain their ingestion of alcoholic beverages is associated with the fact that they like the taste of the drinks (41.3%), with 19.8% drinking because they want to accompany your group of friends.¹²⁻⁴

It is emphasized that the use of substances containing alcohol is encouraged through commercial advertisements, movies, music lyrics and other media. This mediatic propulsion, because it is desirable and related to pleasure, beauty, financial and sexual success, power and others, explicitly or implicitly, constitutes an important form of development for the individual.¹⁰

Figure 1. Reason for beginning the consumption of beverages. Cajazeiras (PB), Brazil, 2015.

It is evidenced, as regards the quantity of doses taken, that the majority (57.6%) answered that it takes up to five doses; 24 (2%) take between three or four doses and 18.2%, only one or two doses. Abusive alcohol consumption is defined as the ingestion of five or more doses of alcoholic beverage for men and four or more doses for women, on a single occasion, in the last 30 days.^{8,17} However, in order to consider abusive consumption of alcoholic beverages, particularities that depend on the biological, psychological and social factors of the adolescent.¹³

It has been shown in other studies that more than half (57.6%) of the interviewed students use high doses of alcoholic beverages at one time. Almost half (48.4%) usually take ten or more doses on average when drinking. Results such as these indicate a vulnerability of these individuals to behaviors with health risks due to alcohol use, especially related to violence and accidents.^{10,12,19-20}

It is inferred, because the sample of this study is predominantly female, in which the majority mentioned consuming five or more doses, that there is abusive consumption by the female gender. But this relationship must be observed with caution since the sample studied is young and a portion may still not have had contact with alcohol. In addition, a stratification bias may have occurred in the sampling process since the majority is of the Nursing course and, in the SFC, there is a predominance of women in this course. Yet there is already evidence that women are more vulnerable to alcohol-related harm. This vulnerability is an important concern for public health policies, since alcohol use is increasing among women and also because alcohol consumption during pregnancy can cause fetal alcohol syndrome.²⁰⁻¹

It can be observed that the most consumed beverages are beer (44.7%), whiskey (26.3%)

and wine (10.5%). Fewer than 10% of students claim to drink other types of alcoholic beverages such as: champagne and cocktails (3.5%); spirits (7.0%); brandy and vermouth (9.0%). Some authors reaffirm the power of advertising, which, as a consequence, ends up influencing society for its consumption.^{10,14} It is also stressed by the relationship that alcoholic beverage has with the target audience. So, for example, beers are related to younger audience; already the whiskey, with older men and the wines, as drinks for romantic couples.²³

It was found, when they answered about the adverse effects of alcohol on their health, that 19.4% had some; 14.9% had many times; 11.9% had only once and another 11.9% always presented problems in their health as a consequence of the consumption of alcoholic beverages of which they stand out: headache, heartburn, bad mood, vomiting, among others. Still on the problems secondary to alcohol abuse, at least once, the majority (53.7%) already had one or more episodes of intoxication and at least once, forgot about events that occurred on the day who consumed the drink.

It is reported that the use of alcoholic beverages may interfere with social behavior and interpersonal relationships, as well as the performance of daily activities and is also responsible for most car accidents, family conflicts and fights.²⁴ Chronic consumption can be considered a serious public health problem. In this case, alcoholism becomes a disease that has a triple character, that is, a disease that affects the individual's mind, body and social.¹²

Figure 2 shows information related to alcohol consumption and the frequency of these students in classes, observing that more than half (65.7%) were never harmed in this; 20.9% affirm that, sometimes, the use of the

alcoholic beverage influenced their attendance to the class; 11.9% comment that this fact occurred only once and 1.5% say that

they missed classes many times because of alcohol use.

Figure 2. Frequency of absences due to drinking. Cajazeiras (PB), Brazil, 2015.

It was found that, in the State of Minas Gerais, students who participated in a survey (1.1%) commented that they did not fulfill a commitment (monthly) simply because they were drinking, while 7.5% did not remember the In previous research, a minority says that they have never lost control (27.38%) or lacked any commitment (10.12%) because of the ingestion of alcoholic beverages.²²

Data on the initiative and confidence of these students after the use of alcoholic beverages are shown in the following figure. Thus, only 14.9% say that they always feel more initiative and more confident when they drink; 26.9% have these feelings sometimes; 14.9% felt many times and another 14.9% felt this only once, that is, about 71.6% felt confident about drinking alcohol at least

once. 28.4% say they have never been more confident or with more initiatives as consequences of the use of alcoholic beverages.

An alcoholic drink is provided in the individual with a stimulating and even uninhibited or euphoric sensation. However, its consumption, uncontrolled or in high doses, generates depressive effects and aggressive behaviors, as well as the reduction of the motor coordination, besides diminishing the reflexes and causing the sleep. In such cases, its abusive or prolonged use can lead to dependence and diseases such as cirrhosis and / or liver cancer.^{4,19}

Figure 3. Frequency in which you feel with more initiative and confidence when you drink. Cajazeiras (PB), Brazil, 2015.

It is reported that, despite a more confident and intuitive behavior, the consumption of beverages containing alcohol

never influenced such students to use drugs, as stated by 92.5% of the respondents. However, less than 10% say they have already

used alcohol as a consequence of alcoholism (4.5% say they used it a few times, 1.5% used it once and another 1.5% have used drugs many times). Although these results are similar, they contrast with others who describe the strong association of alcohol as a stimulus for the use of other drugs, especially tobacco and marijuana.²³⁻¹⁷ The young man has more freedom in his personal life and a social life higher in party settings where opportunities are created to consume more alcohol and, as a consequence, other types of drugs.²⁴

It was also stated that the alcoholic beverage contributed to the student's uninhibited state, ie when they drink, they feel less sexually inhibited. 13.4% say this happened once; 28.4% say they have been uninhibited a few times; 6.0% are many times and 11.9% are always sexually uninhibited. However, 40.3% are no longer uninhibited by alcohol. It is understood that the consumption of alcoholic beverages may be associated with tobacco consumption and risky sexual behavior, factors that contribute to the health status of individuals and populations.¹⁰

It should be noted that, when questioned about fights and accidents caused by the use of alcoholic beverages, the majority of the students (74.6%) say that such events never occurred. However, 10.4% say they have already engaged in fights or accidents once; 13.4% were involved a few times and 1.5% always engaged in fights or accidents as a consequence of alcohol consumption.

It is noted that there is a clear increased risk of accidents occurring between alcoholic drivers when compared to those who do not drink alcoholic beverages when driving, and from that point of view, in a national context, it has become necessary to 2008, Law No. 11,705, known as the "Dry Law", was introduced and updated in 2013, establishing a zero tolerance for the blood alcohol level of drivers of motor vehicles and also criminalizing and penalizing the driver.^{7,16}

It should be added that violence, as well as traffic accidents among young alcoholics, should be a worrying aspect since it involves risks that extend to other individuals and cause consequences that can turn into permanent sequels.²⁵ Faced with this, the social function of the health professional is to understand the implications of alcohol use and abuse, as well as smoking and sexual behavior, and seek, in the medium term, effective health promotion actions on this population of young people who make use of alcoholic beverages.¹⁰

CONCLUSION

The prevalence of a female audience, aged between 21 and 29, was identified by the study, more than half living with the parents and some working in the study. Most academics make use of alcoholic beverages in the search for fun and relaxation, even recognizing the risks caused by alcohol abuse, especially in relation to violence and traffic accidents.

The results indicate a vulnerability of these individuals to health risk behaviors. The future social role of these young people raises different needs of university education so that they can act professionally in the area according to their specifics. Considering that college students in the health area may have greater understanding of the implications of alcohol use and abuse, smoking, and sexual behavior, addressing these issues raises different needs. The university is presented in this sense with a great diversity of opportunities that go beyond the disciplines and include other academic activities, as well as the insertion of the family in the context of education and prevention of health problems, since many university students still reside with your parents.

It is relevant to compare the results obtained in this research, which was carried out in a private college, as a suggestion of future work, with the results of a public university, in order to obtain more information that can help and contribute to a better physical, mental and social development of the academic.

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