

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDY OF ALCOHOL ABUSE- A RURAL HEALTH CENTRE STUDY

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Abstract:

Background:

It's a known fact that alcohol leads to physical, psychological, and also economic damage not only to an individual but also at a larger community level. Alcohol misuse has been reported to cause mood disorders, depression disorders, and anxiety disorders. For prevention and early intervention activities, information on screening measures is crucial. Therefore, in this study, we have stressed alcoholism and associated social factors.

Aims and Objectives:

To study the alcoholism and associated social factors in the rural community

Materials and Methods:

The study was conducted in the Department of Community Medicine, K.S.Hegde Medical Academy, Mangalore. Out of the 3400 population residing in the rural practice area, the number of males above 15 years of age was 1830. Since the population is large, scattered, and a complete list of the population was available a sampling of eligible subjects was done by systematic random sampling technique, including every 4th male in the study.

Results:

Illiterate people were found to abuse

alcohol more than any other educated people. The problem was seen more in the unemployed and people who owned their businesses.

Conclusion:

Excessive use of alcohol can have an adverse impact not only on the individual user but also on the general community.

Keywords: Epidemiology, Alcohol, alcohol abuse, Rural Health.

Introduction:

Liquor has been consumed by humans since the dawn of time. Even before the British imperial expansion that transformed the cultural standing of alcohol practically everywhere, alcoholic drinks were produced and consumed in almost every area of the globe. Multiple improved kinds of liquor were made current, and a domestic and community-based commodity was gradually turned into an industrial product available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with omnipresence. This tendency is continuing in emerging countries as part of the current era of globalization. Alcoholic drinks have been used in India from the ancient Vedic period, and have been used for worship, Siddha and Ayurveda remedies, and as a general sedative.¹

Worldwide, alcohol abuse is a significant and increasingly attributable risk factor for illness and death. Studies of Indian tribes suggest that, while alcohol abstinence is relatively high, those who do drink are more prone to participate in hazardous, harmful, or dependent drinking behaviors, which are referred to collectively as alcohol use disorders (AUDs).²

It's a known fact that alcohol leads to physical, psychological, and also economic damage not only to an individual but also at a larger community level. Alcohol misuse has been reported to cause mood disorders, depression disorders, and anxiety disorders.³⁻⁵ Depression in alcohol has been reported before and there are a plethora of ranges that have been reported. Some studies have reported as low as twenty percent whereas others have reported as high as seventy percent. Depression is comorbid with excessive alcohol use and it's a known fact.⁶ Individuals who are lonely and have a certain social stigma attached to them tend to use more alcohol.⁷ Increased irritability especially the vestibule cochlear system, not thinking right and poor judgemental calls also are seen in heavy alcohol abusers. Schizophrenia and heavy alcohol use too have been reported to have significant attachment.⁸ Alcoholism has a

negative influence on not just the drinker, but also their family and communities, making it even more important to analyze for preventive and intervention efforts. Despite the public health crisis and the detrimental repercussions of alcoholism, alcohol consumption is not recognized as a public health concern in India.^{9, 10}

Most nations' policymakers and health experts are concerned about alcohol and drug-related behavioral and medical consequences. In recent years, the general public and mental health specialists have paid attention to this issue. Many epidemiological studies have been conducted in India over the last three decades to estimate the incidence of alcohol and drug users.¹¹ Information on screening measures is critical for prevention and early intervention efforts. Therefore, in this study, we have stressed alcoholism and associated social factors.

Materials and Methods:

The study was done in Natekal area PHC. The study was conducted in the Department of Community Medicine, K.S.Hegde Medical Academy, Mangalore. Out of the 3400 population residing in the rural practice area, the number of males above 15 years of age was 1830. Because the population was big and a complete list of eligible participants was available, a

systematic random sampling procedure was used to choose eligible individuals, which included every fourth male in the research. If a sampled individual was not available for study due to any reason e.g. absent, not willing to participate, etc., then the next individual was included for study. The desired information was collected on predesigned, interview schedules. So the questionnaire was asked to be completed by 480 individuals.

Results:

Table 1: Age Distribution

Sl. No	Age (in years)	Incidence
1	15-25	17
2	16-35	11
3	36-45	19
4	46-55	21
5	56-65	17
6	>65	16

The problem was more in the age group of 46 to 55 years. The prevalence rate was found to be 24.75%

Table 2: Family

Nuclear	68
Joint	33

The rate was found to be higher in a nuclear family.

Table 3: Socio-Economic Status

Upper	11
Upper middle	19
Lower middle	17
Upper lower	19
lower	35

The rate was higher in the lower socioeconomic status.

Table 4: Education status

Illiterate	36
Primary school	15
High School	13
Pre-university	11
Graduate	18
Postgraduate	08

Illiterate people were found to abuse alcohol more than any other education class people.

Table 5: Employment status

Unemployed	41
Salaried	12
Own business	48

The problem was seen more in the unemployed and people who owned their businesses.

Discussion:

Excessive alcohol use can have negative consequences not just for the individual user, but also for the entire community. Heavy alcohol use has been linked to an increase in violent crime. When one family member is a strong alcoholic, the entire family is affected. High alcohol uses is closely linked to family troubles such as divorce, domestic violence, and spousal abuse. Drinking and driving, as well as improper sexual activity, are all typical activities associated with alcohol consumption.

Alcohol is also considered to be a contributing factor in the majority of accidents. High-risk alcohol usage is also linked to financial difficulties and job loss.¹² Personality and bad judgments develop as a result of excessive alcohol use, which influences the workforce. According to research done in Australia, alcohol-related absenteeism cost the country \$437 million in 2001.¹³ An economic cost of alcohol-related job absenteeism in the UK was estimated to be

1.5 billion pounds per year in research done in 2001.¹⁴

A substantial percentage of male drinkers fulfill the criteria for hazardous alcohol use, which is defined as patterns of consumption that put the user or others at risk of injury.¹⁵ According to data from several Indian states, 35 % to 65 % of all current drinkers fit the threshold for hazardous alcohol consumption.¹⁶ Alcohol drinking is more prevalent among the poor and those with less education in India's southern provinces, according to studies.¹⁷

Another study which was done in the same place showed that alcohol use was not associated with income.^{18,19} In the present study the prevalence of alcohol abuse was more in lower socioeconomic status and illiterate people. Influences of occupation on substance use were also enquired and observed in this study. Bala et al in Gujarat and NE region- annual report 1999-2000 reporting high prevalence of substance abuse among self-employed followed by employed, similar to this study.²⁰ In the presented study alcohol abuse was higher in married subjects as a comparison to unmarried, similar to the finding of Deswal et al reporting alcohol users as married, followed by unmarried and remaining in a widower or separated categories.²¹

Conclusion:

Excessive alcohol use can have negative consequences not just for the individual user, but also for the entire community. Heavy alcohol use has been linked to an increase in violent crime. If one family member is a heavy drinker, it can have a big impact on the rest of the family.

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