

"ALCOHOL DRINKING PATTERNS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN A GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES"

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Background: Adolescence is a time of transition involving multi-dimensional changes. This is therefore a critical period of capacity development and one of heightened vulnerability and risk. Drinking of alcohol among teenagers constitutes one of the most significant risk behaviours engaged in by teens (Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman, 2002). A study done by Poikolainen K. et al in 2001 revealed that there is a relationship between the age of initiation of alcohol use and the pattern of its use and abuse in adulthood emphasizing that intervention during this stage of development is crucial. Furthermore, despite the number of international researches done on alcohol use and pattern of drinking, there was no universal format followed.

Aims: This study determined drinking patterns among high risk population namely the high school students and identify factors associated with their consumption of alcohol.

Design, Setting and Participants: A cross-sectional analytical study was conducted among high school students who were currently enrolled in a government and private secondary school in Southern Philippines.

Methods: Self administered questionnaires were completed by the participants. Prevalence rates as well as prevalence ratios were computed and descriptive statistics were presented in tables and graphs.

Result and Conclusions: Among the 700 students included in the study, 347 (62.4%) never tried alcohol while 263 (32.6%) drink alcohol. Out of the 263 students who drink, 160 (60.8%) drink 1-2 occasions per month, 47 (17.9%) drink 3-5 occasions per month, 15 (5.7%)

barely drink 1 occasion per month, 10 (3.8%) drink more than 5 occasions per month while 31 (11.8%) only drank alcohol once in their lifetime. Also among those who drink alcohol, 151 (57.4%) consume at an average of 1 standard drink per occasion, 55 (20.9%) had an average of 2 drinks, 20 (7.6%) had 3 drinks, 4 (1.5%) had 4 drinks while only 2 (0.8%) consumed an average of 5 or more drinks per occasion. The following factors were also identified to be associated with alcohol use among the students: invitation by friends, perceived social acceptability, parents' permissiveness and media influence. Having these information, we could therefore monitor the patterns of alcohol use among students as well as formulate more adept programs to address the factors associated with alcohol use among high school students.