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## A Cross-Sectional Study on Consumption and Addiction of Alcohol

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### Abstract

**Objective:** This study was conducted to examine consumption and addiction of alcohol of university students.

**Methodology:** This descriptive study was conducted with 378 students who accepted to participate in this study in a university between April and July 2017. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews. In the analysis of the data, correlation, chi-square and student t-test were used.

**Results:** The average age of the students has been found as  $20.90 \pm 2.14$ . The first experience of alcohol has been found at the age of  $16.16 \pm 3.44$ . The most important reasons at the first experience have been found as curiosity (56.16 %), circle of friends (17.24 %) and alcoholic places (10.84 %). The prevalence of the alcohol consumption has been found as 34.46%. The difference between alcohol consumption and gender have been found meaningful statistically ( $p < 0.05$ ). It has been found that the alcoholic beverage drunken first time by 26.55% of the attendants is the beer. Alcohol consumption will continue to be a problem in the future as in today. The curiosity of this material should be eliminated, which started to be used particularly in the puberty period and increased in usage as entered the different environments.

**Conclusion:** We are considering that the curiosity developing in this period will decrease providing that the scientific knowledge should be reached. With the conferences and seminars to be given to the students and raising awareness, we believe that the problem can be avoided in the long run. By raising awareness through the conferences and the seminars to be given to the students, we believe that the problem can be avoided in the long term.

**Keywords:** Alcohol, Addiction, Student, University

### Introduction

Alcohol consumption is an important public health problem, which exists in all continents. World Health Organization (WHO) ranks the alcohol at the first five among the etiologies of the disease <sup>(1)</sup>. The basic reasons of this are psychological, sociologic and biologic variations which shape depending on the use of alcohol <sup>(2-3)</sup>. Beginning to be consumed at an early

age is considered as an important risk in terms of addiction or chronic diseases that are formed at older ages <sup>(4)</sup>. Alcohol is a matter in which a public awareness should be made right before beginning to be consumed. In addition to alcohol, the cigarette, which individuals meets at the similar ages, is a matter which can cause to various diseases similarly

on the following ages. Both cases are the cases that can be prevented to use by creating social awareness. In our research, it is aimed to search the alcohol consumption prevalence, the age of the first use, the first consumed alcoholic beverages and the effect of alcohol prices on alcohol abstinence.

## Method

The cross-sectional and descriptive design was used. This study was conducted in Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Burdur. The study sample consisted of 378 students. The inclusion criteria for students were a person who voluntarily accepted participation in the research, was literate in Turkish and was 18 years and older. The data was acquired by the researcher between April and July 2017 in a face-to-face interview method.

## Instruments:

**Demographic characteristics:** This form is comprised of 46 questions regarding students' sociodemographic characteristics: Age, sex, income, father's and mother's educational status, do you drink alcohol, how often do you use, who is drinking alcohol in your family?, are you drinking alcohol alone or in a friendly environment?, what happened when you first drank alcohol?, what was your reason for the alcohol trial, are you drinking alcohol at home or outside?, do you drink alcohol before or after a stressful event?, do you feel guilty or ill when you drink alcohol?, what is the effect of alcohol on the next day?, how do you feel about alcohol use?, alcohol damages which organs and etc.

**Ethical considerations:** Written permission from Mehmet Akif Ersoy University Ethical Committee (GO 2017/86) was obtained. The objective of the research was explained to the participants and written permission was received from those agreeing to participate in the research.

**Data analysis:** Analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics tests using the Statistical Package for the Social Services SPSS 17.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL). A test of hypothesis with p value of  $<0.05$  was considered significant. The statistic 'r' value of 0.00 to 0.24 was considered a weak relationship; 0.25 to 0.49 was a moderate relationship; 0.50 to 0.74 was a strong relationship; and 0.75 to 1.00 was a very strong relationship.

## Results

Students were mostly 34.2% (n = 133) male and 65.8% (n = 245) female. The average age has been found as  $20.90 \pm 2.14$ . The difference between gender and the alcohol consumption has been found

meaningful statistically ( $p < 0.05$ ). It has been calculated that the men consume the alcohol much more than the women proportionally. Alcohol consumption prevalence has been found as 34.46%. First experience of alcohol use has been found as  $16.16 \pm 0.26$ /age. It has been calculated as maximum 23 years old and minimum 3 years old. The age of the first experience is mainly concentrated in the age range of 15-20 years. The total value in this age range corresponds to 92% of the prevalence. All of the experiences under All of the experiences under 10 years old have declared that their family members used, and their experiences –those who are under 10 years old- happened as hidden from their family. In the relation assessment between the age of starting to alcohol and consumption age, it has been detected a correlation ( $r=0.33$ ) in positive way and middle level. The difference between alcohol consumption and gender variation has been found not significant ( $p=0.99$ ). Most of the time, alcohol users have to hide the alcohol they drink. In the analysis in which this situation was assessed, the difference between them has been found as significant statistically ( $p=0.000$ ). In the Spearman correlation analysis, it was found that the correlation between them was in positive way and weak ( $r = 0.062$ ). The participants have carried out their first alcohol experience with beer, vodka, raki, wine, whiskey and tequila (27,11,6,4,3,3% respectively). Among their reasons of trying the alcohol, it has been calculated as curiosity, friend and entertainment (56.17,11% respectively). It has been observed a correlation in positive direction between alcohol and smoking ( $r=0.055$ ). Smoking prevalence has been found as 30,7%. The difference alcohol and cigarette consumption has been found significant statistically ( $p=0,000$ ). In our sample, alcohol consumption was found higher compared to smoking. We consider that this reason stems from the alcohol users who are non-smokers. In the organ damages caused by alcohol, liver, brain, stomach, kidney, heart and lungs have been ranked (72,52,51,50,45,32% respectively). When we test for legal obstacles in front of alcohol consumption with the gender variation, the difference between them has been found significant statistically ( $p=0.000$ ). In Spearman correlation analysis, it has been observed that there is an inclination in negative direction ( $r=0.060$ ). When assessed in terms of the age, the difference between them has been found insignificant statistically ( $p=0.096$ ). It has been observed that there is a relation in positive direction between two case ( $p=0.096$ ). The answer of the question "Does rising in alcohol prices hinder the alcohol consumption?" has been measured as

yes:44.7 %, no:55.3 %. When this case was compared to age and gender variation, it was found insignificant statistically ( $p=0.893$ ,  $p=0.141$  respectively). On the applications of smoking cessation practices in alcohol, the 67.19% of the sample group have said that it should be implemented. When this situation was tested by gender variation, the difference between them was found significant statistically ( $p=0,005$ ). Female participants supported much more than men. When we assessed in terms of the age, it was not observed a difference among the age groups statistically ( $p=0.631$ ). The question on the legal access to alcohol has been calculated as  $24.85 \pm 0.9$  minimum.

## Discussion

Alcohol consumption is a global public health problem. It might be consumed in every culture, age, sex and economic diversity in all over the world. Together with reaching puberty, the individual's opening to the outer world, having curiosity about his environment and imitating the behaviours of a person that he designated as a role model make him vulnerable to the risk factors which he might gain from outside. One of the most important of these factors is alcohol. Today, the alcohol addicted people are known to have consumed the alcohol in their puberty-teenage period<sup>(4)</sup>. Together with the rising age, increasing of the individual's awareness of environmental and curiosity to the substances which make an addiction is motivating the person to try the alcohol. The persons who have just left from their families and entered a different environment, together with the parental or genetic risk factors, might use this staff<sup>(5)</sup>. In the studies which are made on the 20-35 age group which is the target audience of alcohol, lifelong prevalence accounts for 70 %<sup>(6)</sup>. Our study coincides with the beginnings of this period. Our measurement value has proved that it is half of the lifelong prevalence. On the studies which is like average age of our sample group and made in previous years, the prevalence has generally appeared high. For instance, the alcohol consumption prevalence is 47.9% in a study made<sup>(7)</sup>. It was measured as 52.3% in another study. On the same study, it has been found that 80,1% of the attendees began to use the alcohol before their 17 ages<sup>(8)</sup>. In a study made on different age groups, the prevalence has been measured as 45,4%<sup>(9)</sup>. On a study made on high school students, the prevalence has been measured as 18,7<sup>(10)</sup>. We are in the opinion that the reason of that the value measured in our study is lower compared to the values obtained from other studies is the result of increasing the prices of alcohol, prohibiting to sell it after 10 a.m., and age

and awareness' activities. In our study, the first trying age of the alcohol has been measured as  $16,16 \pm 0,26$ /. In a study made, the age of trying alcohol has been found as  $11,66 \pm 2,76$ <sup>(11)</sup>. In another study, the average age of the first trying alcohol has been found as  $13.4 \pm 2.3$ <sup>(12)</sup>. The reason of being high of our data can be said of carrying out the study at the age of higher education and the attendees' unable to remember the first beginning age. These study data have showed us that the alcohol consumption may be begun at lower ages as in the smoking and also prevalence and age can go up and down in accordance with the society's structure<sup>(7)</sup>. In a study, it has been reported that the alcohol was experienced the most within the friend environment. The data which we obtained from the friend factor in our study is in supportive characteristic for the study that İlhan and his friends conducted<sup>(13)</sup>. The attendees' first alcohol experiences were beer, vodka, raki, wine, whiskey and tequila. The main reason for this is that low-priced and high-volume alcoholic beverages may be experienced at an early age depending on the economy. Individuals who are still adolescents and are economically dependent on their families may prefer low priced beverages for their parents not to notice. In a compilation made, it is claimed that the consumption of alcoholic beverages can be avoided by increasing the tax<sup>(14)</sup>. But, in our study, a calculation has been made in the way of that high tax will not hinder alcohol consumption. Because in the city where this study was conducted, the people can produce these products with their own capabilities. It should not be forgotten that tax increases in alcoholic beverages as in cigarette could trigger cigarette smuggling as well as informal production. The age of access to alcohol is 18 legally in our country. In our study, it was reached a conclusion that this age limit should be  $24.85 + 0.9$ . Therefore, we can conclude that the barrier of 18 age don't protect the persons from the alcohol. One might draw a conclusion that prohibitive elements of cigarette use throughout the country must be also strictly applied in alcohol. It is still observed that various alcohol trademarks' advertisements are carried out in more important sports contests (car-motorbike races, high level football matches). The fact that these competitions are mainly watched by the younger population may make individuals more sensitive to alcohol use. In such programs that are curiously watched by the entire world, any advertisement or sponsor should never be displayed.

## Conclusion

Consequently, alcohol use is an important public health problem that usually starts at an early age and takes away the most productive times of the individual. When we look at studies done in similar age groups, the prevalence of consumption does not decrease even though many years have elapsed. This situation shows us that alcohol dependence has not been solved. It should not be forgotten that starting alcohol in times when economic freedom is not available can lead individuals to use products under the counter.

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