

A review of factor associated with alcohol abuse among youths.

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Abstract

Alcohol is an intoxicating ingredient found in beer, wine and liquor. Alcohol is produced by fermentation of yeast, sugar and starches. Alcohol abuse is a maladaptive pattern of use of a psychoactive substance, indicated by continued use despite of knowledge of having persistent or recurrent social, occupational, physiological or physical problems that are caused or exacerbated by the use. The major factors that contribute to alcohol abuse among youth are environmental factors which include availability, presence of local breweries and persuasive advertisements followed by socio-economic factors like unemployment, peer pressure, social norms, stress, boredom, family neglect among others. The effects of alcohol abuse are poverty, gastric ulcers, death.

Keywords: Fermentation, Environmental factors, Socio-economic factors, Peer pressure, Alcohol abuse.

Introduction

Alcohol is an intoxicating ingredient found in beer, wine and liquor. Alcohol is produced by fermentation of yeast, sugar and starches. It is a central nervous system depressant that is rapidly absorbed from the stomach and small intestine into the blood stream. A standard drink equals to 0.6 ounces of pure ethanol or 12 ounces of beer, 8 ounces of malt liquor, 5 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits or liquor [1-4]

Alcohol abuse is a maladaptive pattern of use of a psychoactive substance, indicated by continued use despite of knowledge of having persistent or recurrent social, occupational, physiological or physical problems that are caused or exacerbated by the use. It is the residual category, with dependence taking precedence when applicable. The term abuse is sometimes used inappropriately to refer to any use at all, particularly of illicit drugs [5].

Alcohol abuse is known to be a major problem in causing domestic violence, accidents, and other causes of deaths in homes [6-7].

Factors associated with alcohol abuse among youth aged 15-25 years

Environmental factors: Uncontrolled availability of alcoholic beverages: Although availability of alcoholic beverages is determined by law and public norms, this condition is analyzed as separate factor stimulating alcohol use. Alcohol is easily available and drinking is accepted as a norm in functions and social gatherings [8].

Persuasive advertisements: Studies found out that the exposure to alcohol advertisements was associated with the onset of adolescent alcohol consumption among baseline non-drinkers, as well as with greater consumption of alcohol by adolescent drinkers. While exposure to television and other broadcast media was linked to the initiation of alcohol consumption. And it was found that the impact of advertising was potentially strongest in younger age groups, and on 15 to 17-year-old girls [9].

Prices/taxation: The greater price elasticity of alcohol consumption by youth can be expected because of their smaller budget and a counterargument is that as considerable proportion of youth's alcohol budget is spent on beer, the price elasticity may be lower than expected [10]. A recent study concluded that price elasticity of consumption by youths is greater than by the populations at large [10].

Presence of breweries and other local manufacturers of alcoholic beverages: It's also noted that the presence of breweries and local manufacturers increases outlet density which is an important determinant of alcohol consumption among the youths and adolescents as it also determines the general availability of alcohol. The Scandinavian review summarized evidence from several natural experiments, concluding that greater alcohol outlet density was associated with increases in alcohol consumption and alcohol-related morbidity and mortality [9].

Socio-economic Factors

Income status: One study has found a significant link between greater pocket money and increased alcohol consumption

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among 14 year old in Finland [10]. Study found that UK children aged 15-16 years who had greater expendable income were more likely to exceed guidance on amount consumed.

Family attitudes and practices: One potentially important family-level determinant of adolescents and youths alcohol initiation and intensity of use is parental provision of alcohol. Studies also found out that provision of alcohol in the 7th grade significantly increased the odds for heavy alcohol drinking in girls after two years. It has been suggested that learning process may contribute in a more specific way to development of alcohol dependence through the repeated experience of withdrawal syndromes. On this view, relief of withdrawal symptoms by alcohol may act as reinforcement for further drinking.

Peers pressure: A large body of research has revealed that peers have strong influence on the development of adolescents substance use; adolescents who have substance-using friends are more likely to use substances. Pressure within the group may result in the individual member acquiring habits that may be maladaptive such as alcohol or substance use as to have sense of belonging or acceptance.

Poor coping strategies: The person unable to face the stress often resorts to alcoholism. The defense mechanism involved in alcoholism includes denial, rationalization and projection [8]. Other factors include relive of stress, boredom, family neglect, loss of job and social norms.

Conclusion

The major factors that contribute to alcohol abuse among youth are environmental factors which include availability, presence of local breweries and persuasive advertisements followed by socio-economic factors like unemployment, peer pressure, social norms, stress, boredom, family neglect among others. The effects of alcohol abuse are poverty, gastric ulcers, death etc.

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