

Alcohol: EFFECTS of REGULAR DRINKING vs BINGE DRINKING

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INTRODUCTION

Alcohol has long been used in human history and its **abuse** is associated with many diseases, personal and societal concerns. Also it is a major cause of mortality and morbidity globally (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, & Schulenburg, 2012). Although it is apparent that alcohol is a problem and it cannot be removed from the society, what might matter more would be its consumption **pattern**. Binge drinking has earned a lot more interest among young people over the last decade. *Binge drinking* is having six or more standard drinks in one occasion either weekly or monthly (Crego et al., 2009).

OBJECTIVE

My aim was to illustrate the wide disastrous effects of wrong *patterns* of alcohol drinking which is mainly binge/heavy drinking and highlight the benefits of switching to smaller, regular drinking which is far safer, and sometimes, advised pattern of drinking to people who cannot avoid alcohol. So I formulated this question: "Is it safer to binge drink weekly/monthly or a couple of drinks every day?"

What is a standard drink?

Standard drinks measure the amount of pure alcohol you are drinking. One standard drink equals 10 grams of pure alcohol.



CLINICAL ISSUE

Alcohol *abuse* is responsible for over 1000 deaths and 12000 years of life lost each year in New Zealand (Stewart et al., 2014). It is the third leading risk factor for poor health globally and approximately 3.3 million people die annually which is close to 6 per cent of all deaths worldwide directly associated with alcohol abuse (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2015).

EVIDENCES and FINDINGS

As per the literatures reviewed, scientific evidences repeatedly suggests that minimal to moderate alcohol consumption (one to two standard drinks daily) is connected with lower risks for diabetes, hypertension, several Cardiac diseases as explained in the review, dementia, Alzheimer's disease, stroke, and death (Connor et al., 2013). In contrast, increasingly excessive consumption and binge drinking result in proportional worsening of each of these risks, as well as can cause liver cirrhosis, pancreatitis, meningitis, cancer, sexually transmitted diseases (Rehm et al., 2010) and could cause poorer neurological and cognitive functioning (Jose et al., 2000). Excessive drinking is also linked with several health risks to individuals especially youth, including violence, severe depression, poisoning, suicide, and serious injuries- mostly unintentional such as motor vehicle crashes, hypothermia, drowning, burns etc. (Wechsler & Nelson, 2001). Several after-effects of binge drinking have high economic and social costs including homicide, domestic violence, assault, child abuse, rape, child neglect, unintended pregnancy, and lost productivity (National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2000).

Therefore this literature review underlines the importance of heavy and binge drinkers to switch more regular, but smaller alcohol consumption, being a responsible citizen.

RECOMMENDATIONS

*Screening and appropriate intervention by health professionals especially nurses have been acknowledged by the World Health Organisation (2010) as one of the most effective tools in preventing and treating binge drinking and other alcohol misuse. Additionally, to increase public awareness of the known problems/dangers of binge and heavy drinking, enhancing surveillance programs is suggested (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

*Effective censoring of the use of printed and electronic (social media, movies, television, radio etc.), marketing of wine and beer which promotes unhealthy drinking patterns. On the other hand, the strong influence of these media should be used for promoting health.

*Good role-modelling by parents/guardians would be one of the best ways to teach responsible alcohol use (Kahler et al., 2008).

*The consumption and sale of alcohol involves multiple stakeholders nationally, therefore a national strategy which includes the active participation of the hospitality industry, public health agencies, municipalities and main granting agencies and liquor manufacturers and control boards may effectively bring binge drinking down to a safe level for the community.

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For this assignment, I chose to display my information as a poster which will be presented at the Otago Poly Evidence-based Practice Forum as I believe that a poster is an informative and attractive way of supplying viewers the most important information in a summarised method. "Posters, done well, can provide a creative, eye-catching, and quite detailed means of communicating research findings" (Whitehead & Schnieder, 2013, p.385). My subject might be seen as slightly controversial one, such as advising to take alcohol on a regular basis although the rationale is clearly explained-can be interpreted as a bit risky for some people, and therefore, submission to a government body needs more write ups even though established research results are available. Please note that this review is only aiming at individuals who are already drinking, either heavy drinkers or binge drinkers. Although complete alcohol abstinence would be something that general public might believe is needed rather than changing of pattern, but I believe that complete abstinence is impractical for many in today's world. From a nursing, mental health, and medical point of view, my topic looks at ways of various curing options of an existing major problem: alcohol abuse; NOT responsible alcohol use. Throughout this poster, I was able to clearly define my research question; therefore, consumers know exactly what the poster is about. Poster presentations offer a forum where educators, practitioners and researchers all convene to appraise knowledge illustrated in many creative ways. Getting the message out as quickly as possible is an equally important consideration in disseminating information. Messages disseminated through poster presentations often represent new research findings. It argues that poster presentations are an effective method and a worthwhile endeavour for disseminating knowledge from many sources (Halligan, 2008). I believe that posters start people thinking and people who are thinking about things start conversations and these conversations could lead to a beginning of a positive change.

PECOT category	Information relating to question	Explanation
Population	15-25 years old	This age group is mostly vulnerable/affected as it the time of self-exploration and new adventures are always on the card even without understanding reasoning or consequences.
Exposure/Intervention	Binge/heavy alcohol drinkers	We would be looking in to various credible articles to identify the consequences-both immediate, and long term percussions.
Comparison/Control	Light to moderate regular drinkers, and abstainers	Identifying safest pattern of drinking based on current, proven data. Evidences and results from various researches states that light to moderate regular drinkers have health benefits even compared to abstainers.
Outcome	Evidences showed that binge/heavy drinking is extremely harmful in many ways whereas lower, regular consumption even has multiple health benefits	Harms from binge drinking does not confine to an individual's health problems-both acute and chronic but extends out to significant issues for families and the society they live in. On the other hand, if binge drinkers switch to smaller, more regular doses as early, alcohol can be beneficial in many ways. However, abstainers are not to be prescribed alcohol.
Time	Not applicable	Not applicable

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