**Foundations of Health Promotion (PUBH102)**

**Assessment task 2**

**Addressing health determinants**

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Submitted By : Sangam Shrestha

Student Id : S00388813

Submitted on : April 28, 2024

# Responsible consumption of alcohol, in line with health guidelines

Alcohol has been an integral part of human society for more than a millennium. Its consumption causes impairment in decision making and judging abilities as well as emotional instability which leads towards alcohol dependency and addiction. This essay will highlight the importance of responsibly consuming alcohol among the population while emphasizing benefits of responsible consumption of alcohol including adherence to the health guidelines.

Responsible consumption of alcohol means the consumption of alcohol in moderate amounts guided by self-awareness and health considerations. It emphasizes self-control and awareness of proper and responsible intake of alcohol to minimize and mitigate health risks and hazards. By drinking responsibly, individuals can avoid risks of vulnerability to accidents, hypertension, health issues, lack in decision making, and many more. Through proper knowledge and self-awareness one can avoid the potential risks that come with consumption of alcohol in high doses. Moderate consumption of alcohol can lead to decrease in health risks and complications. For that reason, encouraging responsible consumption of alcohol is essential to increase good health and mitigating risks that come along side binge drinking.

In contemporary sense, it is clear that alcohol increases the risk of more than 200 diseases (WHO, 2022). According to WHO, more than 3 million deaths occur annually due to heavy consumption of alcohol (WHO, 2022) .Diseases such as high blood pressure, cancer, stroke, ulcers are very common for people consuming alcohol in high amounts. A pregnant women should not consume alcohol as it increases the risk of harming the unborn baby (Government, Alcohol - an overview, 2022). Alcohol use disorder (AUD) is a critical medical condition where an individual continuously consumes alcohol in high amount despite adverse health consequences (Davis, 2023). Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) is a condition caused by alcohol exposure during pregnancy. High dose of alcohol may lead to interference in the functioning of brain, damage of the heart, liver, and pancreas. In the USA approximately 95,000 people die annually due to high consumption of alcohol, where 68,000 were men and 27,000 were women. To avoid such diseases, adhering to health guidelines helps in minimizing such risks. Organizations such as the WHO, provides health guidelines recommending the proper and safe drinking practices. It is recommended that females have no more than one drink per day and males should not have more than two in order to practice responsible and safe alcohol use (WHO, 2022).

The Australian law have provided some guidelines and restrictions on alcohol consumptions which emphasizes the restriction on driving under influence where the Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) is more than 0.05, selling of alcohol to minors under the age of 18, and authenticity and labelling of alcoholic products (Government, Australian Government: Department of Health and Aged Care, 2022). The laws prevent the irresponsible use and consumption of alcohol. But some states may allow the sales of alcohol to minor if parent’s or guardians’ permission is granted.

Emphasizing responsible consumption of alcohol helps to improve health, reduce possible alcohol related violence, reduce the risk of serious health problems like cancer, cirrhosis, mental disturbance etc and have higher life expectancy. Responsible alcohol consumption may include drinking in limit, not drinking while having empty stomach, avoiding regular drinking habit, and so on (Ronksley, 2011). Some social and legal activities may help in considering the responsible alcohol consumption. Implementing and conducting educational programs targeting adults and adolescents for increasing the awareness of alcohol abuse, risk of high alcohol consumption and benefits of responsible alcohol consumption, performing early treatment and intervention for individuals who are struggling with alcohol addiction by counseling and rehabilitation, enforcement of law and regulations for alcohol sales, age limit, and so on can help in maintaining the responsible alcohol consumption. Emphasizing responsible alcohol consumption helps to contribute to health equity. It helps in minimizing the health risk of different population groups. Some of the key benefits of responsible alcohol for different population groups may include reduced health disparities, prevention from different diseases caused by high consumption of alcohol, improved mental health and so on.

Statistics show that in Australia, Out of the total population, one out of four adult is likely to exceed the Australian Adult Alcohol guidelines in 2022 i.e. 26.7%. Where men were more likely to exceed the guidelines in comparison to females. Whereas the young adults aged 18-25 exceed the alcohol consumption guidelines by 36.9%. (ABS, 2022). Responsible consumption of alcohol can benefit sub-population groups like young adults aged 18-25. During adult-hood an adult may be influenced by the consumption of alcohol which in some cases may also lead to alcohol dependency and addiction. To avoid such issues, approaches that promote responsible consumption of alcohol must be applied. Promoting such habits reduces the risk of alcohol related injuries, illness, and risky behaviors among young adults. In adulthood, alcohol plays a vital role in social gatherings. In the presence of responsible drinking, individuals can enjoy social interactions without its negative consequences. Overall, promoting responsible alcohol consumption habits among young adults enhances their personal and professional growth.

In conclusion, it is clear that the responsible consumption of alcohol is directly aligned with the healthcare guidelines. The essay emphasizes the moderation and risks of alcohol and its consumption. By adhering and following the guidelines, an individual can avoid the detrimental effects caused by huge intake of alcohol rather than intake in small doses. Avoiding excessive drinking helps to mitigate physical as well as mental health issues. It is evident that consumption of alcohol is not deemed healthy but moderation in its intake allows an individual to enjoy social aspects without compromising one’s health and safety. Ultimately, responsible consumption of alcohol is beneficial for individuals’ health as well as social aspects. By raising awareness, providing support, and enforcing proper law and regulations can contribute toward better and safer drinking practices.

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