

The association between alcohol consumption and alcohol dependence among different genders and age groups.

INTRODUCTION

Alcoholism is a topic that may be taboo and difficult to talk about within society. It is associated with negative outcomes and is known to be a serious disease affecting many people (Percey, 2015). Alcohol consumption is a social behavior, but when consumption is excessive it becomes associated with negative outcomes such as: driving suspensions, traffic accidents, social problems, marital problems, work problems, etc.). This is why it is important to investigate the relationship of alcohol consumption and dependence further to avoid the negative outcomes listed above. The aim of this study is to examine these relationships further and to determine if there is a higher prevalence of alcohol dependence in specific genders and age groups. There are three questions that this study aims to answer: (1) is there a relationship between alcohol consumption and alcohol dependence (2) is there a relationship between alcohol dependence and gender, and (3) is there a relationship between alcohol dependence and age.

Studies have shown that there is a relationship between alcohol consumption and alcohol dependence, but one study looked further into the cause of alcohol dependence from a young age. Drinking restraint, which is when restraint drinkers consciously set limits on consumption, has been shown to be significantly correlated with alcohol consumption and alcohol related problems in cross sectional studies within

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college students and adults. As these limits are set they introduce successful regulation of controlling alcohol consumption, however once drinking restraints are broken it introduces a negative effect and an increase in drinking (Trim, 2004). Trim looked closely at adolescent children of alcoholics and he reported higher drinking restraint on children of alcoholics to determine if those with drinking restraint had higher outcomes of drinking (2014). The results of the study suggested that drinking restraint may have different effects among high and low risk populations.

When discussing alcohol consumption there is an alcohol expectancy theory, which contain a specific subset of outcomes expectancies. The subsets are defined as "If.. then..." contingencies, an example is if alcohol is consumed then certain behavioral and effective consequences follow (Connor, 2017). These expectancies show associations with drinking behavior, but the literature does not show much current research on use of the alcohol expectancy theory and how it is related to gender and age groups. Young examines the associations on alcohol expectancy and its relationship among university student drinking in that alcohol expectancy along with drinking restraint are strongly related to university student drinking (2006). Another well established concept within alcohol consumption literature is that consumption of alcohol is higher among men compared to women (Wilsnack).

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METHODS

Sample Description

The dataset used for this study is National Epidemiological Survey on Alcohol Related Condition (NESARC-I). The NESARC survey covered topics such as alcohol,

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drug, and psychiatric disorders, risk factors, and consequences. The data was collected from 43,093 participants in 2001-2002 and was collected from civilian, non-institutionalized adult population within the United States via face-to-face interviews (Grant).

Measures

Alcohol consumption was measured by examining if individuals had at least one or more alcoholic drinks within the last 12 months. The variable is ordinal, but will be recoded into a binary (yes/no) variable. Alcohol consumption was be measured by asking how often an individual drank in the last 12 months. The variable is ordinal and will be considered pseudo-continuous. The type of alcohol consumer will be determined by examining what type of alcoholic consumer an individual is. This variable will be considered as a nominal variable. Ethanol content of the alcohol consumed by individuals who drank within the last 12 months will be examined by ethanol percentage. Sex and age will be examined as well and will be considered binary and continuous variables, respectively.

Predicted Results & Implications

When considering the original research question “is there a relationship between alcohol consumption and alcohol dependence” there is already established research on the relationship, which leads us to expect similar outcomes. A bivariate graph analysis suggests there is a relationship between the type of consumer and age groups. The suggested relationship shows that current drinkers tend to fall within the average age of

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40 years old, while ex drinkers and lifetime abstainers range above the 40 year old mark.

Citations

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