

The Prevalence of Substance Use among First-Year Students at Selected Pre University Colleges in Bangalore

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Abstract: This paper presents the overview on prevalence of substance use among first-year students at selected Pre University colleges in Bangalore

Keywords: Socio-demographic ESPAD and Department of Social Work

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to examine the prevalence of substance use among first-year students at Pre University colleges in Bangalore and to determine differences with regard to the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. The study included 100 participants from six faculties. The research is designed to determine which substances are most frequently used among first-year students and to determine whether there are differences in the frequency of alcohol consumption, smoking and drug use among students with regard to their socio-demographic characteristics. The results show that the most frequently used substance among students is alcohol; cigarettes are in second place and marijuana (as the only drug with significant frequency of consumption) in third. Some socio-demographic characteristics have proven to be significant in the frequency of substance use. In contemporary society, many countries are faced with increased alcohol, tobacco and drug use, especially among youth. The World Health Organization estimates that alcohol is the greatest risk factor for premature death or disability in later life. WHO also estimates that as a result of alcohol abuse 2.5 million people die each year, of which 320 000 are young people aged 15-29 (World Health Organization [WHO], 2013a) In addition to affecting the health of an individual, alcohol abuse is also the cause of fatal accidents, injuries, child abuse and neglect, violence, murders, suicides, etc. (WHO, 2011). Alcohol abuse is often combined with the use of other psychoactive substances, as well as cigarettes. The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs [ESPAD] (Hibell et al., 2012) is an extremely valuable source of information which was carried out in more than 40 countries in Europe. It provides information about alcohol, drugs and tobacco use among 15 and 16 year olds. According to this study, in countries where a large number of students state that they have consumed alcohol in the

past 30 days, they also practice episodic heavy drinking (drinking five or more drinks at one time, Binge drinking) more students also state that they have had experience with drugs and inhalants (Hibel et al., 2012). The same research provides information that, as many as 79% of young people have consumed alcohol in the past 30 days, however, the most disturbing data is about the consumption of five or more drinks at one time (binge drinking). The data shows that, among girls, it increased from 29 % in 1995 to 41 % in 2007, and in 2011, it slightly dropped to 38 %. The average for boys in 2011 was 43 %. This percentage is disturbing as it shows that a large number of young people experience heavy episodic drinking and often get drunk.

2. Aim and research problems

The aim of this research is to examine the prevalence of substance use among first-year students at the Pre University colleges in Bangalore, and to determine differences with regard to socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. Research problems are defined as follows:

- To determine which are the most frequently used substances among first-year students at selected Pre University colleges in Bangalore
- To determine whether there are differences in the frequency of alcohol consumption among students with regard to their socio-demographic characteristics.
- To determine whether there are differences in the frequency of smoking among students with regard to their socio-demographic characteristics.
- To determine whether there are differences in the frequency of drug use among students with regard to their socio-demographic characteristics.

3. Methodology

A. Sample

The study included 100 participants, of which 70 were boys and 30 girls. The average age of the participants was 20.088 years.

B. Measuring instrument.

The questionnaire for the needs of this study was designed according to the ESPAD study

C. Data collection and data processing

The research presented in this paper was conducted at six faculties (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Science and Education) at selected Pre University colleges in Bangalore. Before carrying out the research, the listed faculties were contacted in order to arrange dates for conducting the research. The study was carried out in June 2015 by teaching assistants at the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, selected Pre University colleges in Bangalore, in collaboration with social work students who were previously trained in conducting research. The study included 100 participants. Questionnaires were distributed during previously arranged classes. The purpose of the research and the procedure for filling out the questionnaire were explained to the students by the researchers. Filling in the questionnaires lasted, generally, thirty minutes. During data collection, it was possible for the participants of the study to address the researchers for additional clarifications. After the completion of field research, data was entered and processed using programme Statistica 7. Firstly, normal distribution of the obtained data was tested but the data was not normally distributed, therefore, we used non parametric statistical procedures. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and median test based on chi-square test.

4. Results and discussion

The most frequently used substance among first-year students at selected Pre University colleges in Bangalore is alcohol, cigarettes are in the second place and marijuana (as the only drug with significant frequency of consumption) in the third. According to the study results, 92.38 % of students have consumed alcohol at least once in their life and of that percentage, 46.2 % have consumed alcohol 40 and more times. The results also show that the largest number of participants (34.2 %) have consumed alcohol one to two times in the past 30 days. Over the last 12 months, most of the participants of our study (19%) have consumed alcohol 6-9 times. According to the students' assessment, they have not been drunk during the past 30 days although they state that they have consumed five or more alcoholic drinks in a row. In the past 12 months they have been drunk one to two times, and during the whole life 3 to 5 times. When they drink alcohol they usually consume between 2 and 4 drinks at one time. The second most frequently abused substance is cigarettes and our participants report that during their lives 75.7 % of them have tried cigarettes and, of that percentage, 35.2 % have smoked 40 and more times. A total of 42 (42.8%) of the 100 participants who answered the question on smoking admit to having smoked a cigarette at least once in their life as for drug abuse among students in Bangalore, frequency of consumption is only significant with regard to

marijuana so it is the only substance we singled out. Our study shows that 18.8% of students have tried marijuana at least once in their life, out of which 12.14 % have consumed it one to two times.

5. Conclusion

The results of the study show that, among students of the selected Pre University colleges in Bangalore, the most consumed substance is alcohol, cigarettes are in second place and, in third place, marijuana (the only drug with significant consumption). The differences in the frequency of consumption with regard to certain socio-demographic characteristics of respondents have, also, been determined. The data obtained is consistent with international research.

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