Artículo Original

Alcohol consumption standards in a female population of nursing students

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ABSTRACT

Youth alcohol consumption as a public health problem.

Objective: To describe the patterns of alcohol consumption among nursing students.

Methodology: descriptive, cross-sectional study, 433, university students, undergraduate nursing course, Spain; 2015-2016, application of the AUDIT questionnaire and some questions from SIVFRENT-A, SPSS analysis.

Results: 100% women, average age 21 years, 77.6% consumed alcohol in the last 12 months; 62.1% in the previous 30 days and 9.3% consumed it daily, 55.6% started drinking between 15 and 17 years.

Conclusion: it is possible to describe and understand the behavior of nursing students regarding alcohol consumption, clearly addressing the issues in the scarcity of basic education for the prevention of excessive drinking and the strengthening of responsible drinking, reflected in the early onset of drinking. alcohol, a risk factor for excessive alcohol consumption in adulthood and future professional difficulties.

KEYWORDS

College alcohol consumption; Alcoholism; Attitude; Nursing students; Women.

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INTRODUCTION

The European Region of the World Health Organization (WHO) has the highest level of alcohol consumption in the world, partly driven by high consumption in the central and eastern parts of the region, consequently, the burden of diseases attributable to alcohol consumption is also elevated and worrying[1].

Alcohol consumption among adolescents, young people and adults is a serious public health problem worldwide and, although it affects the health of the community, it is a widespread habit throughout society, being established as acceptable, and the effects associated with frequent and excessive consumption of alcohol are trivialized[2-4].

In Spain, the scenario of alcohol consumption is driven by lower taxes on alcoholic beverages compared to other European countries, which makes it more accessible to young people in certain establishments, even though the sale of alcohol is illegal to minors under 18 (5.6). One of the reflexes of this scenario is that hospitalizations for emergencies related to the consumption of psychoactive substances such as alcohol have increased, with 35.8% of these hospitalizations being cases of young women[6-8].

The Binge (BD) pattern, which is heavy alcohol consumption in a single episode, 5 or more doses for men and 4 or more doses for women[9], is also increasing in the young population. Although the pattern of consumption is more extensive in men, 24.7% of women consume alcohol in this way, in 2015, in Spain, 17.9% of women had drunk too much in the previous month, with women between 20 and 24 years old, were the ones who most consumed alcohol. In addition to the impact on health, there is the social impact of this behavior, since the total social costs of alcohol consumption can reach 1% of the Spanish gross domestic product, greater than € 10,000 million (5.10).

Studies have found only small differences between the amount of alcohol consumed or participation in Bing between genders in Spain. This suggests that intensive alcohol consumption and the BD standard increased in women and the annual self-reported prevalence of acute alcohol intoxication was higher than 30% in the population between 15 and 34 years in 2011, being higher in adolescents between 15 and 16 years[5].

Alcohol is the most consumed substance among students aged 14 to 18 and unlike adults, consumption is concentrated on weekends, almost a quarter of young people drink every weekend, with a preference for drinks with a high alcohol content and that are linked to the consumption of other drugs. The beginning of the university is considered a new phase, generating greater freedom and independence, and university students are a powerful social reference in terms of lifestyle, associating alcohol consumption with nightlife and drug use. These changes, including the high frequency of acute intoxications, have led alcohol consumption in adolescents to become one of the main public health problems[8].

In a study conducted in Brazil with nursing students, a high consumption of alcohol was observed in the BD standard, these results shed light on professional training in nursing and the need to encourage the early development of strategies aimed at self-care, with a view to preserve the health of the student, who in the future will take care of other people[11]. The aim of this study was to describe the patterns of alcohol consumption among Nursing Students in Spain, with a focus on the professional impact of alcohol abuse and with future preventive educational purposes.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This is a descriptive, cross-sectional study, with university students, from the first to the fourth year, of the nursing degree course, in Madrid, Spain, conducted during the academic year 2017-18.

Before the start, the study was explained to all participants who signed the free and informed consent form. 433 students were recruited, and male students did not want to participate, so the study focused on female students, eight questionnaires were removed due to the lack of data. The questionnaire was self-administered in the classroom, when the answers were given instantly, and the students were assisted by a trained team. The study was previously approved by the Ethics Committee of the University 36/2018.

People with risky or harmful alcohol consumption were identified using the AUDIT survey[12,13]. The questionnaire has 10 items, which ask the participant about alcohol consumption in different situations, and each item is answered according to a scale of 0 to 4. The World Health Organization (WHO) states that an AUDIT $\geq$ 8 indicates high risk of alcohol consumption, in specific items: score $\geq$ 1, for questions 2 and 3, indicates a risky level of consumption; score $\geq$ 0 for questions 4, 5 and 6 shows signs of alcohol dependence; scores given in items 7, 8, 9 and 10 indicate a real experience of damage already caused by alcohol.

Thus, it is recommended that students who score between 16 and 19 have a brief therapy session and find an approach to deal with continuous consumption, those with a score equal to or greater than 20 require a broader diagnostic assessment than just dependence on the alcohol. Thus, for the present study, based on the WHO recommendations[14], 4 different groups were created: nonexistent risk (score between 0 and 7), moderate risk (score between 8 and 15), high risk (scores between 16 and 19) and very high risk (scores between 20 and 40). Also, some questions from the SIVFRENT-A (Risk Factors Monitoring System Linked to non-Communicable Diseases) were used, covering: physical activity, eating habits, anthropometry, tobacco consumption, alcohol, disorders related to eating behavior and overweight / obesity[15].

A complementary pilot study was carried out with 180 students from 4 classes, who completed a recall survey on food consumption in the last 7 days, to assess energy and nutrient intake and understand the quality of their diet. Adherence to the Mediterranean diet was measured using the PREDIMED questionnaire (7.16).

Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS 22.0® for Windows software (IBM Corp. Released in 2012. IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 22.0. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp). The comparison was performed by the chi-square test using contingency tables, applying Fisher's correction. Statistically significant results were obtained when p <0.05.

RESULTS

Data were collected from 433 students, aged between 17 and 25 years old, with an average age of 21 years old. All students were women. The comparison of adherence to the Mediterranean diet (PREDIMED test) with alcohol consumption by the AUDIT test, did not present statistically significant results (p = 0.156).

Alcohol consumption and other variables (I choose when I drink alcohol; age at drinking, healthy lifestyle; hours of sleep; breakfast in the morning), had statistically significant results only for the "age to start drinking" (p <0.05). Statistical differences were observed between the results of 4 AUDIT test scores and the age at which alcohol consumption started, and in all AUDIT scores, the most dangerous age is the age between 15 and 17 years, 55.6% of students started drinking between 15 and 17 years old and 19.6% started drinking at an early age.

The results showed that 77.6% of the students had consumed alcohol in the last 12 months; 62.1% in the

previous 30 days and 9.3% consumed it daily. According to the AUDIT test, 64.7% of students need to be educated about alcohol consumption, 22.7% need advice on their own alcohol consumption, 1.8% should be referred to a specialist, while 8, 1% do not drink. Regarding the risk for alcohol consumption, 20.7% of the students had AUDIT ≥ 8.

Regarding alcoholic beverages preferences, the most consumed beverages were beer (21.4%) and alcoholic beverages with high alcohol content (35.1%). Beer being the most consumed beverage during the week and on weekends, followed by wine. In assessing the students' perception of their lifestyle, it was observed that 55.5% considered their lifestyle normal and almost a quarter considered it unhealthy or little. There were no significant differences when asked if they ate well. When we compare the high risk for alcohol consumption (20.7%,) with the normal perception of lifestyle (55.5%), we observe a great inconsistency. Only 3% of students consider themselves to have a good quality of lifestyle perception and only 12.8% eat breakfast every day

DISCUSSION

Alcohol use among university students has remained a significant public health problem in recent decades, with little or no decline in the amount or frequency of consumption, and promoting healthy alcohol consumption among young people and the student population is an ongoing challenge (3.17.18).

Alcohol remains the most consumed psychoactive substance, but it is sometimes difficult to say where the line divides responsible and moderate consumption, according to the Spanish Observatory on Drugs and Addictions (OEDA), 72.1% of women consume alcohol, 23, 4% (between 15 and 34 years old) said they had drunk in the previous year; 22.6% suffered from alcohol intoxication and 4.9% were high risk consumers. Also, we observed that excessive alcohol consumption is increasing among girls aged 14 and 15, compared to boys at the same age, approximately 20% of the students surveyed did not discriminate against the different types of alcohol they consumed and started drinking very early, and consumption tends to increase with age (6.19). In Spain, analyzing excessive alcohol consumption, 95.5% of women between 15 and 34 years of age consider their health status to be satisfactory, regardless of whether they have practiced excessive alcohol consumption[6], in our study indicated that the average age when the participants started drinking was 16 years old.

Alcohol consumption is different in the regions of the world in relation to the usual type of drink and the pattern of consumption. The most consumed alcohol in Spain is the drink with a high alcohol content, such as wine and gin[6] followed by beer, we obtained similar results, but beer occupied the first place, probably due to its lower cost and facilities for acquisition.

University nursing students in Arequipa, Peru, reported high consumption of licit and illicit drugs, 84.4% of alcoholic beverages, higher in men and 4.8% had sexual intercourse under the influence of alcohol and illicit drugs, which corroborates, as in our study, the need to promote health and prevent risky behaviors in future nursing professionals[20].

CONCLUSSIONS

Some limitations of the study included self-reported information and the difficulties of generalizing the results to other populations, since the sample is not representative of the Spanish population in general (cohort composed only of university women), care should be taken when generalizing our findings for other populations.

It was possible to describe and perceive the behavior of nursing students, in this case women, in the face of excessive alcohol consumption, with clarity for the issues in the scarcity of basic education for the prevention of excessive consumption and strengthening of responsible consumption, reflected in the results of early onset of alcohol consumption, which is a factor that generates a greater risk for excessive alcohol consumption in adulthood. It is important that nursing students receive specific education at graduation so that they can value, perceive and carry out essential interventions in this area, so based on the data obtained, a Health Education Program will be carried out, with an educational and preventive focus.

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