Alcohol Consumption and Binge Drinking in the Philippines

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Introduction

Alcohol is a psychoactive substance with dependence-producing properties that has been widely used in many cultures for centuries. The harmful use of alcohol or binge drinking has been identified as the third leading risk factor for premature deaths and disabilities, contributing significantly to the global burden of disease.

According to the National Nutrition Surveys (NNS) conducted by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST-FNRI), the trend in the prevalence of current alcohol drinking in the Philippines was generally unpredictable. This study aimed to determine the prevalence and trends of alcohol consumption, as well as the socio-demographic determinants of binge drinking among Filipino adults, 20.0 years old and over, to provide basis for policy reformulation and enhanced healthy lifestyle programs in the Philippines.

Binge drinking or the harmful use of alcohol means excessive consumption of alcoholic beverages in a single session, specifically the intake of...

... 5 or more standard drinks in a row for men...
... 4 or more standard drinks in a row for women.

Materials and Methods

Multi-stage stage stratified sampling design was employed using the master sample from the Philippine Statistics Authority. All adults aged 20.0 years old and over in the sampled households from one replicate were included.

In 2015 survey, 21,969 respondents out of 24,866 eligible adults (88.3% response rate) were interviewed.

Figure 1. Multi-stage Stratified Sampling Design

Validated questionnaire adapted from the WHO-STEPwise approach to NCD risk factor surveillance instrument was used. STATA® version 12 was used to generate results on prevalence rates. A multivariate logistic regression analysis was also generated to determine the odds-ratio of current drinkers engaged in binge drinking (for the past 30 days) and its determinants based on socio-demographic characteristics such as sex, age group, wealth quintile, educational attainment, and work status.
RESULTS

Two in every 10 (24.3%) Filipino women were current alcohol drinkers and four in every 10 (41.9%) current drinkers were engaged in binge drinking.

Seven in every 10 (69.1%) Filipino men were current alcohol drinkers and six in every 10 (58.8%) current drinkers were engaged in binge drinking.

A multivariate analysis using logistic regression model was carried out to predict binge drinking or the odds of engaging in the harmful use of alcohol.

Among adults, 20 years old and over...

Males 20-49 years old elementary graduate, high school graduate or undergraduate, and vocational course undergraduate from middle wealth quintile ... are more likely to engage in binge drinking.

The prevalence of current alcohol drinking has been slowly decreasing at an average of 0.68-percentage point annually since 2003. Current alcohol drinking and binge drinking were highest among young to middle aged adult males. While among females, current alcohol drinking significantly declined in 2015, but binge drinking increased.

The study found significantly higher odds of binge drinking among males, young and middle-aged adults, those in the middle wealth quintile, and those with lower level of education.

Results of this study may be used as basis for policy reformulation and enhanced program implementation to regulate alcohol consumption in the country. Policies on marketing and selling alcoholic beverages, including Republic Act No. 10351 or the Sin Tax Reform Law should be strengthened. Moreover, research gaps on alcohol drinking behavior of Filipinos should also be addressed for the enhancement of public health programs and policies, which are more effective and responsive to address the social and health problems entailed with alcohol consumption.