

S2 - A School-based Survey on Adolescent Alcohol Drinking in Hong Kong

Ho SY¹, Huang R¹, Wang MP², Lo WS¹, Lam TH¹

¹School of Public Health, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

²School of Nursing, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Introduction: The effective control of underage drinking requires a thorough understanding of its risk factors and effects, but little is known about the drinking pattern in Hong Kong adolescents.

Objectives: We investigated the drinking pattern and associated risk factors and problems in Hong Kong secondary school students.

Methods: In a territory-wide survey of 44 randomly selected schools, 21627 Secondary 1 to 6 students (mean age 14.7, SD 1.8; 51.6% boys) provided valid data using an anonymous questionnaire in 2012-13. Data on socio-demographic characteristics, alcohol drinking, peer and co-residents' drinking, exposure to pro-drinking and anti-drinking messages, parental pro-drinking practices and health outcomes were collected. Descriptive data were weighted by sex, age and grade distribution of students in Hong Kong. Risk factors and problems associated with adolescent drinking were analysed using multilevel logistic regression adjusting for covariates and school clustering.

Results: Ever drinking prevalence was 54.1% (95% CI 53.4%-54.7%) overall, 54.0% in boys and 54.1% in girls. Current drinking (past 30 days) prevalence was 21.5% (95% CI 21.0%-22.1%) overall, 22.2% in boys and 20.8% in girls. Binge drinking in the past 30 days was reported by 7.5% of adolescents, with a slightly higher prevalence in boys (8.3%) than girls (6.7%) ($p=0.002$). Hazardous drinking was identified in 3.8% of adolescents overall, 4.0% in boys and 3.7% in girls.

Generally, older age, born in Hong Kong, higher socioeconomic status, and non-intact family structure were linked to current drinking. Current drinking was also associated with increasing number of co-residing drinkers and family pro-drinking practices, drinking in good friends, perceiving over half of adolescents drank, positive expectation of drinking, smoking in the past 30 days, intended acceptance of alcohol offered by good friends, and perceived attraction of alcohol product displays. Factors that were negatively associated with alcohol drinking included perceived parental disapproval of adolescent drinking and negative expectation of alcohol drinking. Both current and binge drinking were associated with depressive symptoms, poor academic performance, and sleep problems.

Conclusions: The prevalence of current and binge drinking was 21.5% and 7.5% in Hong Kong Secondary 1-6 students. Socioeconomic, environmental and personal risk factors of current drinking were identified. Parental alcohol-related attitudes and pro-drinking practices, and adolescent expectations of alcohol drinking were modifiable risk factors that could be targeted in alcohol prevention programmes. Adolescent drinking was associated with depressive symptoms, poor academic performance, and sleep problems. Prospective studies should be conducted to confirm the identified risk factors and potential effects.