



“Parent’s Alcohol Consumption Behaviors and their Children’s Alcohol Abuse. Evidence from Secondary School Student’s in Nairobi”

**Policy Brief
No. 5/2011**

Introduction

Alcohol is the most commonly abused substance in Kenya. A study by NACADA in 2007 revealed that nationally, 8% of 10 to 14 year-olds have ever used alcohol while about 40% of people aged 15 to 65 years have used one type of an alcoholic drink in the past. About 14% of Kenyans aged 15-65 years are current users of alcohol.

According to a study by Roosa (1998), children of problem-drinking parents are more at risk of depression, low self-esteem, and heavy drinking than their peers in the general high school population. Parenting practices, particularly support and control, have been linked to development of adolescent drinking, delinquency, and other problem behaviors.

Parents are both role models and primary agents of socialization for their children hence their alcohol use patterns or behaviours are likely to have an impact on their children’s alcohol abuse.

Following knowledge gaps about parent-child alcohol use linkages in the Kenyan context, NACADA Authority conducted a study in 2010 on “Parent’s alcohol consumption behaviours and their children’s

alcohol abuse in secondary schools in Nairobi.”

The study sought to document the prevalence of alcohol abuse among students in secondary schools in Nairobi as well as to establish the nature of association between parents’ alcohol consumption and their children’s alcohol abuse.

Methodology

The study randomly sampled 1,281 students in 28 secondary schools. The students were distributed equally among forms 1-4 in every sampled school. A sampling frame of schools within Nairobi was obtained from the Ministry of Education. Stratification was done to categorize the schools into public and private schools, gender, boarding status and geographic location to factor socio-economic status. This was mainly a quantitative survey and hence a structured questionnaire was used.

Key Findings¹

- Out of the sampled 1,281 students, 630 (49.2%) have used (or experimented) with alcohol at least once in their lifetime.
- Experimentation with alcohol is higher among boys compared with girls in the sample that is, 487

¹ The findings are based on respondents who answered the respective questions

(55.6%) out of 875 students and 142 (35%) out of 406 students respectively.

- There is a statistically significant positive association between fathers' alcohol consumption and their children's alcohol use. 263 (66%) out of 399 students whose fathers take alcohol reported having ever consumed. In comparison, 253 (38.4%) out of 658 students whose fathers do not consume alcohol reported having ever consumed. Also, 80 (41.7%) out of 192 students who said they did not have a father reported having consumed.
- Similarly, students whose mothers currently consume alcohol are 2.6 times more likely to have consumed alcohol compared with their counterparts whose mothers are non-drinkers. More than three-quarters 129 (76.3%) out of 169 students whose mothers use alcohol have also used an alcoholic drink at least once in the past.
- With respect to religious affiliation, Muslim and Hindu students have low rates of alcohol use that is, 40 (31%) out of the 130 Muslim student and 15 (21.7%) out of 69 Hindu student population respectively. Students who profess other religions or have no religion have a prevalence rate of 38 (52.1%) out of 73 students in the category of students of other religions.

Lifetime use of Alcohol

- 59 (67%) out of 88 students in boys' only boarding and day secondary schools, had the highest rate of lifetime use of alcohol.
- 45 (34.9%) out of 129 students in mixed day secondary schools, had the lowest alcohol lifetime usage
- .

- Those whose households own a car (an indirect measure of socioeconomic status), those who think their friends take alcohol and those who reside in Nairobi are proportionately more likely than their opposites to report lifetime alcohol consumption.

Policy Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations;

- Training of parents to appreciate their role in mitigating initiation of alcohol among their children as well as more research on the role of peers is recommended.
- Efforts to curb alcohol abuse among the youth should also focus on peer networks and use them as channels for dissemination of accurate information about alcohol and other drugs.
- There is need for more information to the youth about the dangers of alcohol as a huge proportion of the students are at a risk of experiencing the many negative consequences of alcohol abuse.