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Health promotion intervention for schooling adolescents on harm of alcohol and industry strategies improved awareness and generates collective actions against alcohol use in the community: Example from rural Sri Lanka

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Statement of the Problem: Alcohol is the single most important cause of preventable illness and premature deaths worldwide. Behavior change and pharmacotherapy are the two key interventions to reduce alcohol consumption. Alcohol industry use diverse strategies to attract teenagers who are vulnerable and adventurous. Hence counter strategies such as improving knowledge on industry agenda and real harm of alcohol are needed to reduce alcohol use among teenage groups. This study reveals effectiveness of an intervention designed to generate collective actions through improving knowledge among schooling adolescents on real harm of alcohol and industry strategies. The study was conducted in a rural area where educational facilities are low and 140 schooling adolescents from the same area were recruited.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: A self-administrated questionnaire which focused on knowledge and attitudes on real harm and alcohol industry strategies were used to assess participants' knowledge and as a part of intervention. Focus group discussions were also conducted for the same purpose. An interactive workshop was conducted by expert to discuss industry strategies used to attract them, myths spread through advertisements and promotions and privileges given to drunkards in the society. Changes of knowledge and attitude of participants were assessed using qualitative methods and structured observations during focus group discussions following the intervention.

Finding: Students showed improvements in knowledge on physical, economic and social harms of alcohol. They also have improved view on strategies used by alcohol industry. Number of participants took actions to reduce alcohol consumption of their fathers and started showing disagreement with alcohol use in public by criticizing behavior of alcohol users. Students can be inspired to initiate and take part in collective actions and make supportive environment to quit alcohol and substance use.

Conclusion & Significance: Similar health promotion intervention targeting alcohol can be used in similar setting targeting teenage groups or student groups as change makers.

Biography

Madubashini B A N is currently pursuing BSc in Health Promotion at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. She works with the community for health promotional works for more than three years. She has studied about human resource management, informational technology and psychology. She has interests to work on control substance use and control non-communicable diseases of the rural community.

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