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Magnitude and predictors of alcohol misuse in Ethiopia: Findings from the 2015 national non-communicable disease stepwise survey

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Background & Purpose: Alcohol is a psychoactive substance with dependence-producing properties. Consumption of alcohol and the related problems vary widely around the world. The burden of disease and death associated to alcohol remains significant in most countries. Less is known and noted on alcohol misuse in Ethiopia. The main purpose of this study was to determine the magnitude and predictors of alcohol use in Ethiopia.

Method: The WHO stepwise approach to the surveillance of NCDs risk factors was used and, a community-based cross-sectional study was carried out. Mix of stratified, three-stage cluster and simple random sampling were used to the study setting or clusters and households. Kish sampling method was used to identify the study participant from the selected households. The sampling frame was based on the population and housing census conducted for Ethiopia in 2007. Data were collected using WHO NCD STEPs questionnaire; alcohol misuse was taken as a dependent variable. Five hundred thirteen EAs as PSUs (404 rural and 109 urban) were selected with probability proportionate to size, followed by selection of households as a Secondary Sampling Units (SSUs). A total of 10,260 households were selected from the 513 EAs (20 households per EA). Eligible individuals were selected from household using Kish method. Descriptive statistics including frequency table, mean, median, interquartile range and standard deviations were computed. Binary logistic regression was used to analyze the independent predictors of Alcohol misuse. An Estimator of 95% confidence interval was used both in computing frequencies and the predictors.

Result: A total of 9,800 participants were interviewed in the study. The majority, 5,823 (59.4%), of the study subjects were female and 3,959 (40.4%) were 15-29 years of age. The overall lifetime prevalence was 49.3% and among them 89.6% drinks alcohol in the 12-months preceding the survey. Among the lifetime drinkers, 92% are current alcohol user. 29% of life time alcohol user stopped drinking due to health reasons. In multivariate logistic regression, factors independently associated with alcohol misuse/binge alcohol use after adjusting for other characteristics were sex, residence type, marital status and current smoking status.

Conclusion: Half of the Ethiopian population reported drinking alcohol at some point in their lives. The findings would be helpful to initiate effective alcohol prevention and control programs focusing on rural and would also serve as a stimulator to conduct further longitudinal studies on this topic in Ethiopia.

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