

LETTER TO EDITOR

Community Alcoholic - A Ticking Bomb**Kajal Srivastava, Swati Ghonge, Ajaykumar Sahu, Hetal K Rathod**

Department of Community Medicine, Dr. D.Y. Patil Medical College, Hospital and Research Centre, Dr. D. Y. Patil Vidyapeeth, Pune, Maharashtra, India;

Abstract	Introduction	Methodology	Results	Conclusion	References	Citation	Tables / Figures
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Corresponding AuthorDr.Hetal Rathod (Waghela), C-14, Surobhi Enclave, Nagras Road, Aundh, Pune 411007 Maharashtra
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Sir,

Definition of Alcohol is ethanol specially when considered intoxicating agent in fermented and distilled liquor, a drink having ethanol and a mixture of ethanol and water that is usually 95% ethanol (1). Alcohol is having varying impact on health of people. Short-term effects include motor vehicle accidents, violence, injuries, and risky sexual behavior while long-term effects include carcinoma, liver cirrhosis, gastric ulcer, pancreatitis etc (2). Alcohol consumption is a major Public health Challenge. In India 18.8% males and 1.3% females above age of 15 years were consuming alcohol according to NFHS-5 Survey (3).

In India different states are having different age limits for alcohol purchase and consumption. Although legal age for alcohol consumption in India varies from 18-25 years of age. States like Gujarat, Bihar, Nagaland and union territory of Lakshadweep and Manipur has complete ban on sale & purchase of same (4). Although some rules and regulations are there but still many people who are below this age limit they consume it. Alcohol is also one of the habit-forming substances so when control is not there people land up in chronic alcoholism. Reasons for increase in consumption of alcohol is rapid industrialization, nuclear family, staying away from warm family environment, peer pressure, pressure of job and performing well in life, i.e. target setting is there, increase social gatherings and alcohol consumption is considered as symbol of modernization.

Study in Pondicherry found that half of the people consume alcohol to get away from pain, strain, tiredness while other half consume it as they have strained relationship with family members & neighbors both. Most

of the people had alcohol dependence problems while some were suffering from chronic health issues like diabetes mellitus & hypertension (5). A person who become alcoholic is determined by number of factors or determinants like Policy level decisions i.e. advertisements and marketing of alcohol, community norms, attitude regarding alcohol use, cultural norms, gender norms. At microsystem level family environment, schools, peers, work peer network, parental monitoring, parental alcohol use etc. influence alcohol-taking behavior of individual (6). Alcoholic in community becomes so by choice. Stigma faced by family members of alcoholic person is also there. It is also observed that if parents are alcoholic than chances of children becoming same is also high (7). It was also observed that people who are alcoholic are more involved in domestic violence. Study in Bangalore revealed that emotional violence is 2.5 times higher in alcoholic spouse and 23.3% users were more involved in physically abusing their spouse (8). It's very important to give immediate attention for this big social issue. The strategy, which can be utilized, is like taking help of primary health care physicians (9). Counseling by primary care physicians at primary care level can help in curing people of bad effects of alcohol and can help them in adopting healthy way of life (10).

Community alcoholic term is used here is to label a person who is residing in community and drinking alcohol to the extent that its causing addiction in them but that person is not ready to take treatment for same but his or her family members are suffering from consequences of his /her drinking problem. Alcohol consumption causes burden on already stretched economy of a country specially low and middle income like India, economic

catastrophe in terms of out of pocket expenditure, cost on health system and loss of productivity accounts for US\$ 1867 billion. A common reason given by financial experts is that alcohol sale helps in growing economy but ultimately if we weigh cost and benefit of alcohol; it leads to loss of about 1.45% of the gross domestic product (GDP) per year to Indian economy (11).

Recommendation

So it's time to come together for those people who are addicted to alcohol and people who are not but since they have that person in their family which is causing stigma for them. Policy level decisions should be made, rules and regulations should be more stringent, advertising about harmful impact should come on social medial frequently. Role models of society should come up and ask people to stop drinking. Schools and college should be sensitized for this social evil.

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