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The relationship between youth alcohol use and negative household events: analysis from the South African National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS) Wave 4

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Abstract

Introduction

Problematic and non-problematic alcohol use is highly prevalent among youth globally including in South Africa. Stressful life events among individuals or households (known as negative household events (NHE)), where a group of individuals residing together, may be associated with any form of alcohol use. Little is known regarding alcohol use among South African youth and whether this is related to NHEs e.g., property destruction or crop failure. This study aimed to fill the gap by examining the prevalence and associates of any form of alcohol use and binge drinking among South African youth and their relationship to NHEs.

Methods

A secondary, quantitative analysis of cross-sectional data was conducted using the fourth wave of the National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS), a panel study assembled to track health status and various predictors over time. Bivariate analysis and hierarchical models were used to estimate the prevalence of alcohol consumption and its link to various NHEs included in the fourth wave of the NIDS. Potential confounding variables were adjusted for in the analysis.

Results

Of 12 213 youth, 30.45% reported using alcohol while 50.89% of those who used alcohol reported they were binge drinkers in the fourth wave of the NIDS data (2014-2015) from a total of 12218 youth. After adjusting for non-modifiable and modifiable risk factors, having experienced any NHE was found to be associated with increased odd ratio of alcohol use among youth 2.02(1.08-3.77). However, when considered individually, property destruction, death or disease of livestock and a major crop failure were found to be negatively associated with reduced alcohol use and the variable “any other negative household events” was not significantly associated with alcohol use. No relationship was found between NHE and binge drinking.

Conclusion

The data suggest that experiencing any NHE is associated with a risk of alcohol use among youth. However, NHEs were not found to be related to binge drinking. More research is needed to investigate complex epidemiological relationships of alcohol particularly through longitudinal studies.

Key words: Alcohol use, Binge drinking, Negative household events, stressors