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**The Demographic and Socio-economic Factors Influencing Alcohol Abuse  
Among Students in Selected Universities in Kampala Uganda.**

Main Author: Nwanna Uchechukwu Kevin  
Public Health Department: Victoria University Uganda  
Olubowale Victoria  
Public Health Department: Stafford University Uganda  
Ilori Oluwole  
Behavioural Science Department, Habib Medical School, IUIU Uganda  
Afolabi Kamaldeen Kolawole  
Public Health Department: Cavendish University Uganda  
Grace Komuhangi  
Nursing Department, Victoria University Uganda

\*Main Author: Nwanna Uchechukwu Kevin, Public Health and Nursing Department, Victoria University Uganda, Tel: +256778092462; +256755512527.

**Abstract**

**Introduction:** Uganda not only lacks a clear national substance abuse policy, but has weak and poorly enforced laws, thereby providing a fertile ground for an increase in the availability and accessibility of alcohol and other substance abuse (Uganda Youth Development Link, 2008).

**Objective:** The general objective of this study is to determine the demographic and socio-economic factors influencing alcohol abuse among students in selected Universities of Kampala Uganda.

**Methodology:** A descriptive cross-sectional study design, quantitative method of data collection was used which involved 100 study participants from a population of students in selected universities. Cluster and simple random sampling procedures were utilized to derive at a sample size of the respondents. Data were analyzed using SPSS, descriptive, uni-variate & bi-variate analysis was done to measure association between the outcome and independent variables.

**Results:** The study found out that, out of 85 respondents, 61(71.8%) take alcohol. Out of the 71.8% who take alcohol, 55.2% were abusing alcohol. Gender was found to be significantly associated with alcohol abuse at ( $X^2=6.626$ ,  $P\text{-value}=0.010$ ), Monthly Allowance of 250,000-500,000 Uganda Shillings was found to be significant at ( $X^2=7.528$ ,  $P\text{-value}=0.054$ ).

**Conclusion:** The prevalence of alcohol abuse among selected university students in Uganda was found to be at 55%. Gender and monthly allowance were the risk factors found to be influencing alcohol abuse among the selected University students.

**Recommendation:** Timely sensitization, orientation, development of effective policies and enforcement of these policies were the recommended ways of reducing the abuse of alcohol among University students.

**Keywords:** Alcohol; Students; University; Uganda; Policies.

### **Introduction**

Alcohol is a type of drug which acts as a depressant; it slows down the function of the central nervous system. It can impair judgment and alter a person's emotions, perceptions, movements and reactions, vision and hearing (Uganda Youth Development Link, report 2008). When consumed in small amounts, it can help a person feel relaxed and less anxious. When consumed in larger quantities, alcohol can have detrimental effects on one's health as well as social relations and financial well-being. (WHO, 2001). Alcohol abuse is a pattern of drinking that result in harm to one's health, interpersonal relationships, or ability to work. According to Gelder, Mayou & Geddes (2005) risky alcohol consumption among University students is becoming a key public health priority because of its important health and educational consequences. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) published a report in April 2002, which was updated in 2005, suggests a strong relationship between alcohol and other drug abuse and a variety of negative consequences for students. The report estimates that each year 1,700 university students die from alcohol-related unintentional injuries, including motor vehicle crashes. In addition, it further estimates that alcohol is involved in 599,000 unintentional injuries, 696,000 assaults, and 97,000 cases of sexual assault and acquaintance rape among college students. Alcohol has a significant important effect on student's academic performance and on antisocial behavior. (WHO, 2001).

In Uganda, a country of more than 32 million people, alcohol dependence is among the main causes of psychiatric morbidity (Ministry of Health in Uganda, 2005). In 2012, about 3.3 million net deaths, or 5.9% of all global deaths, were attributable to alcohol consumption (WHO, 2001). A study by Uganda Harm Reduction Network (UHRN) in Kampala found that 22 per cent of students used and abused drugs; Alcohol, Marijuana, and Khat (Mairungi) being the most abused in that order. The report further found that no school was free of drug abuse (UHRN, 2013). It is important to know that the consequences of alcohol abuse are relentless and strongly correlate with poverty. However, alcohol not only prolongs poverty but it is also known to promote poverty. Impoverished people without hope for an economic upturn are more likely to spend their money on instant pleasures like alcohol and drugs than on investments for a future they don't think exists. One must factor in that not only the money spent on alcohol is a consequence, but also the low wages and lost employment opportunities due to missed work, school dropouts and decreased efficiency; and the high medical expenses following alcohol-inspired illness-that is, if one is lucky enough to receive legitimate treatment at all, are all potential and harmful consequence as a result of alcohol abuse. Otherwise, death is the harsh but likely consequence.

### **Methodology**

**Research design:** The study utilized a descriptive cross-sectional design of quantitative approaches. A cross-sectional study investigation makes all the measurements on a single occasion and draw sample from the population looking at the distributions of variables within that sample (Gordis, 2009). It utilized quantitative method of inquiry.

**Study population and sample size:** The study population was among the university students in Kampala, Uganda. There are various universities in Uganda, which are located all around the country but majority are in Kampala. The total study population was drawn from the population of the entire universities in Uganda 124,561 (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The sample size was calculated using Slovene's formula from a target group of 108 respondents who are they university students in the selected university, 85 respondents were sampled. The formula used for these calculations was calculated using Slovene's formula (Slovene's, 1995).

**Sampling technique:** Cluster and simple Random sampling techniques was used in this study to gather the information from the respondents. The selected universities were clustered and a simple random technique was used sampling the respondents from the selected universities.

**Data collection methods and tools:** Systematic designed questionnaires which had closed ended questions was used to extract responses from the university students in Kampala.

#### **Measurements of Variables**

**Independent variables (Demographic and socio-economic factors):** Attributes such as marital status, Income, Peer influence, employment status, age, sex, and religion were controlled by using essential questions related to each attributes.

**Dependent variable: Alcohol Abuse:** A self-question assessments method was used whereby questions about alcohol taken were asked; the respondents were as well asked if they had been abusing alcohol.

**Data analysis and interpretation:** Data analysis is the process of bringing together the collected data and organizing it into categories and basic descriptive units for result interpretation. Organizing data was input into the SPSS version 20. Descriptive and bi-variate analysis was done to analyze the data. Descriptive was used to express the percentage of categorical data such as the prevalence of alcohol abused. Bi-variate analysis was done to test the association of the variables against the dependent variable using chi square and P-value as the determinants. The variables with  $P < 0.05$  were considered to be statistically significant.

**Ethical consideration:** An approval letter to carry out the study was obtained from the Stafford University Uganda research and ethical committee. Thereafter; approvals were obtained from the selected Universities. In addition, the following guidelines was adopted and emphasized in the questionnaire; the purpose of the study was explained to participants by means of information sheet. The participants were assured of strict confidentiality of any information they would provide. The entire participants were treated with dignity and respect. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to the participant by using codes for identification instead of their

names. The participants were given the liberty to take part or not in the study and any attempts to opt out of this exercise will not stop them from receiving all services that they normally get.

**Limitations of the study:**

- The study design relative challenges rose from information bias when the respondents preferred not to supply correct information, which were overcome by diligently persuading the students to participate.
- The study design (cross-sectional study) is another limitation, this study design enabled me to collect data once without follow up, and I ensured the one time data collected; were justly collected.

**Results**

**Univariate Analysis**

**Table 1: Demographic and Socio-Economic Factors Data of the Respondents**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency n=85</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Age group in years</b>	16-20	6	7.1
	21-26	64	75.3
	27-33	10	11.8
	34-40	5	5.9
<b>Gender</b>	Male	54	63.5
	Female	31	36.5
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	14	16.5
	Single	65	76.5
	Divorced	2	2.4
	Co-habiting	4	4.7
<b>Religion</b>	Islam	29	34.1
	Protestant	27	31.8
	Catholic	13	15.3
	Born Again	13	15.3
	Others	3	3.5
<b>Education Level</b>	Diploma and Certificate	11	12.9
	Bachelor	58	68.2
	Masters	16	18.8
<b>Employment Status</b>	Employed	20	23.5
	Self-employed	21	24.7
	Un-employed	44	51.8
<b>Monthly Allowance</b>	50,000-250,000 Ugx	25	29.4
	250,000-500,000 Ugx	37	43.5
	500,000-1million Ugx	15	17.6
	1million Ugx and above	8	9.4

For the table above, the variable of **Age**, students between the ages of 21-26 recorded the majority of the respondents with a percentage of 75.3%. **Male** respondents recorded the majority with a percentage of 63.5%. Students that were **Single** recorded the majority of the respondents with a percentage of 76.5%. Considering **Religion**, respondents who indicated Islam were the majority with a percentage of 34.1%. **Students in the Bachelor’s Level of Education** recorded the majority with a percentage of 68.2%. **Un-employed students** were the majority of the respondents and they recorded a percentage of 51.8%. Students whose monthly income is within the range of 250,000 – **500,000 UGX** per month where the majority of the respondents with a percentage of 43.5%.

**Table 2: Alcohol Abuse Data of the Respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency (N=85)	Percentage (%)
<b>Do you take alcohol?</b>	Yes	61	71.8
	No	24	28.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>85</b>	
<b>On a daily basis how many bottles do you drink?</b>	1-3	14	16.5
	3-6	24	28.2
	6-8	16	18.8
	10 and above	7	8.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>61</b>	<b>71.7</b>
<b>With your current income do you think alcohol is affordable?</b>	Yes	73	85.9
	No	12	14.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>85</b>	

From the above, the study found out that out of 85 students sampled, students who take alcohol were the majority with a percentage of 71.7%, while students who don’t drink alcohol were the minority with a percentage of 16.5%. Students who drink 3-6 bottles of alcohol were the majority of the respondent at a percentage of 28.2% while students who drink between 10 and above bottles where the minorities among the respondent with a percentage of 8.2%. This research found out that the prevalence of alcohol abuse among selected university students in Uganda as at the year 2017 was at 55 %.

**Table 3: Displaying Alcohol Abusers vs Non-Abusers**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Abuser</b>	47	55.2

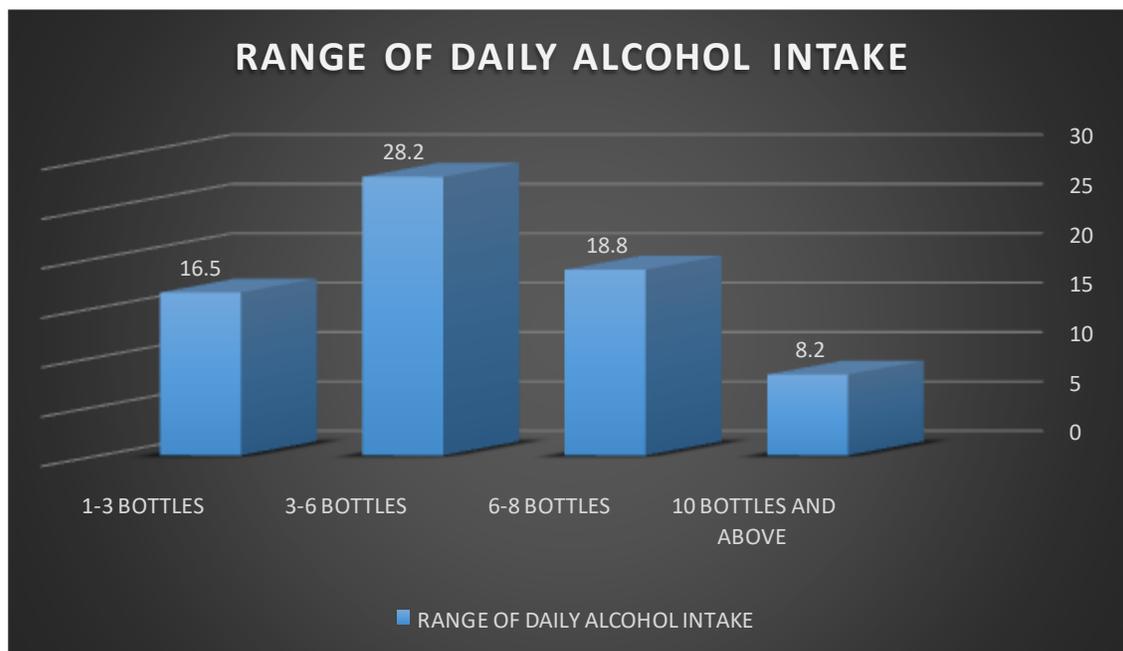
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<b>Non Abuser</b>	14	16.5
<b>Total</b>	61	71.7

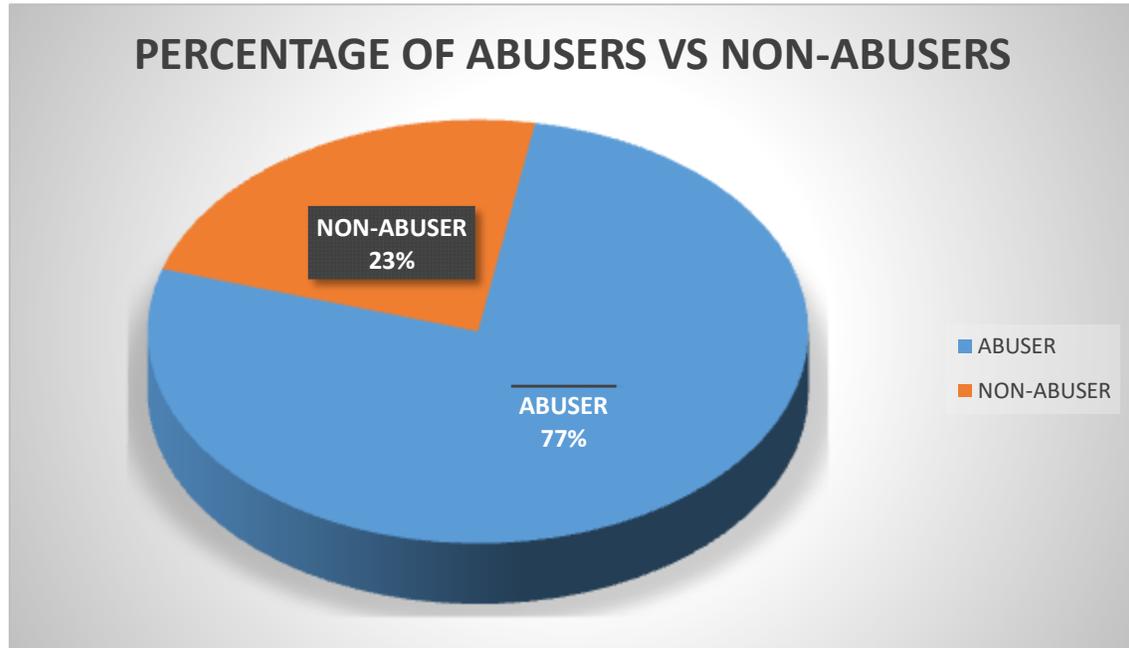
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The table 3 above indicates the number of alcohol abusers vs. non-abusers. The abusers recorded the majority with a percentage of 55.2% while the non-abusers recorded the minority with a percentage of 16.5%.

**Figure 1: Displaying Alcohol Intake by the respondents**



**Figure 2: Displaying Alcohol Abusers vs Non-Abusers**



**Bivariate Analysis**

**Table 4: Demographic and Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Alcohol Abuse among University Students.**

The study found Gender ( $X^2=6.626$ , P-value=0.010) and Monthly allowance ( $X^2=7.528$ , P-value=0.050) to have statistical significant association with alcohol abuse among University students in Uganda.

Variable	Category	Yes	No	$X^2$	P-value
<b>Age group in years</b>	16-20	5 (5.9%)	1 (1.2%)	3.113	0.375
	21-26	45 (52.9%)	19 (22.4%)		
	27-33	6 (7.1%)	4 (4.7%)		
	34-40	5 (5.9%)	0 (0.0%)		
<b>Gender</b>	Male	43 (51.2%)	10 (11.9%)	6.26	<b>0.010**</b>
	Female	17 (20.2%)	14 (16.7%)		
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	11 (12.9%)	3 (3.5%)	3.213	0.360
	Single	44 (51.8%)	21 (24.7%)		

	Divorced	2 (2.4%)	0 (0.0%)		
	Co-habiting	4 (4.7%)	0 (0.0%)		
<b>Religion</b>	Islam	20 (23.5%)	9 (10.6%)	5.017	0.286
	Catholic	12 (14.1%)	1 (1.2%)		
	Protestant	18 (21.2%)	9 (10.6%)		
	Born Again	8 (9.4%)	5 (5.9%)		
	Others	3 (3.5%)	0 (0.0%)		
<b>Educational Level</b>	Diploma and Certificate	8 (9.4%)	3 (3.5%)	0.121	0.941
	Bachelor	41 (48.2%)	17 (20.0%)		
	Masters	12 (14.1%)	4 (4.7%)		
<b>Employment Status</b>	Employed	14 (16.5%)	6 (7.1%)	0.271	0.873
	Self-employed	16 (18.8%)	5 (5.9%)		
	Un-employed	31 (36.5%)	13 (15.3%)		
<b>Monthly Allowance</b>	50,000-250,000 Ugx	14 (16.5%)	11 (12.9%)	7.528	<b>0.050**</b>
	250,000-500,000 Ugx	26 (30.6%)	11 (12.9%)		
	500,000-1million Ugx	14 (16.5%)	1 (1.2%)		
	1million Ugx and above	7 (8.2%)	1 (1.2%)		

## Discussion

### Demographic and Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Alcohol Abuse among University Students

**Gender** was found to have an influence on alcohol abuse among university students. The findings are in line with WHO sponsored cross-sectional quantitative survey on a multinational project on Gender, Alcohol and Culture International Study (GENACIS); which was carried out in 4 districts in Uganda (Kabale, Wakiso, Tororo and Lira) to represent the western, central, eastern and northern regions of Uganda. The nearly 1500 respondents were men and women aged 18years and over, the age and sex distribution of the total sample was nearly the same as the national census. Of the total number of respondents, 47% reported that they drank alcohol

(with 55% of the drinkers being men and 40% being women). Therefore according to the study, in Uganda men are likely to be long-time, frequent, heavy and binge drinkers than women.

**Monthly Allowance** was found to have influence on alcohol abuse among university students, students who get high monthly allowance or income are more likely to indulge in alcohol and abuse alcohol because they can afford it. This is in line with the results of two Finnish studies, which found a clear relationship between adolescents' own financial resources, i.e. amount of pocket money/allowances, and drunkenness, to support this view (Lintonen, Rimpelä, Vikat & Rimpelä, 2000; Kouvonen & Lintonen, 2002). Richter, Leppin and Gabhainn (2006) concluded that family affluence appears to be more strongly related to income or spending patterns, therefore indicating a higher availability of resources to indulge in the relatively costly consumption of alcohol. Therefore, adolescents use more (often) alcohol and marijuana more frequently and in larger quantities, as they have better financial opportunities to do so.

### **Conclusion**

This study concluded that the prevalence of alcohol abuse is 55.2% among students of the selected universities students in Kampala Uganda.

**Demographic factors and Social-economic determinants:** Gender and Monthly Allowance were the demographic and socio-economic factors that have statistical significant association with the abuse of alcohol, among the students.

### **Recommendations**

Timely sensitization and orientation should be part of the school activities and should focus mainly on male students with the age group of 21-26 years.

Parents, guardians and mentors should monitor the monthly allowance, spending habits and social lifestyles of their children/wards.

School authorities and government should develop strong policies that condemn any form of substance/alcohol abuse and develop stringent measures to deal with people who involve in such acts.

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