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Socio-cultural determinants of alcohol use among tribes: A retrospective analysis of household survey data of Arunachal Pradesh, India

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Background: A cross sectional household survey data collected from a district of Arunachal Pradesh, were used in the present study to assess the prevalence of alcohol use among different tribes, and determine its association with socio-cultural and demographic factors.

Methods: A tribal sample of 3421 individuals (1795 men and 1626 women) aged 15 years and older was analyzed using a multivariate logistic regression model to determine factors associated with alcohol use. Socio-cultural and demographic information such as religion, ethnicity, age, education, occupation and marital status were included in the analysis.

Results: The prevalence of alcohol use was significantly higher (49.3%) among men than among women (27.9%). Differences in alcohol use were recorded according to age, educational level, occupation, marital status and religion of the respondents. In both sexes, alcohol use was significantly higher among Tangsa and other group of tribes in comparison with Singpho. Multivariate logistic regression indicated that alcohol use was significantly associated with gender, age, occupation, ethnicity, religion and marital status of the respondents. Adjusted odd ratios (AOR) for alcohol use were significantly higher (3-6 times) among different occupational groups compare with unemployed group. AOR was also significantly higher for Buddhist, Hindu and Indigenous religion of respondents with compare to Christian. However, the influence of education on alcohol use was low and not significant. Overall, alcohol use was very high among the tribal people which indicate strong social, cultural and traditional belief. The results are compared with other community based studies and discussed.

Conclusions: The socio-cultural and demographic factors, such as age, sex, ethnicity, religion and occupation, associated with alcohol use are important determinants which is useful for institution of epidemiological intervention to reduce alcohol use.

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