

Prevalence and Pattern of Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Substances Abuse among Male Manual Labourers in Colombo District, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Tobacco and alcohol use, and substance abuse are common problems among manual labourers in many areas of the world. Increased consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and other substances in Sri Lanka has severely impacted the country's economy. Descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted using simple random sampling among 411 male manual labourers in five randomly selected peri-urban MOH divisions in the Colombo district, Sri Lanka. Out of 411 participants, a significant proportion (n=215) smoked and drank alcohol (n=215). Majority had good knowledge and awareness of health problems (94%), socioeconomic issues (95%), and the adverse effects of drug use (86%). There were 303 smokers, 322 alcohol users, and 71 other substance abusers. Most used tobacco types were cigarettes (86.8%), alcohol types were beer and local arrack (44.7%), and other substances types were ice and heroin (28.2%). Currently, a higher percentage of participants, 82.8% smoked cigarettes more than once per day, 51.9% consumed alcohol weekly and 63.4% used other substances once a day. Majority of participants were influenced by friends to start smoking (35.5%), consume alcohol (41%) and use other substances (78.9%) and had received advice to quit smoking (n=122), alcohol (n=134) and other substances (n=16) from their family members. There were significant associations between monthly income ($p = 0.036$) and level of education ($p = 0.000$) with knowledge and awareness of health problems. This study has shown that the prevalence of alcohol and tobacco use is higher among male manual labourers, and current alcohol consumption among the labourers has decreased significantly due to price increases. It is important to maintain higher alcohol and tobacco pricing, implement rehabilitation and assessment programmes to prevent the rise in prevalence among manual labourers.

Keywords: *Tobacco, Alcohol, Substances*