THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ALCOHOL ABUSE AND ALCOHOLISM

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INTRODUCTION

- Kenyan authorities and social non governmental organizations have expressed concern over the rising cases of alcohol abuse.

- Plans are under way to formulate a comprehensive alcohol policy in the country.
Alcohol has become an important public health problem in Kenya arising from over consumption, intoxication and dangerous behavior upon consumption.

It has contributed immensely to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Kenya (Mwenesi, 1995)
Although the alcoholic beverage industry contributes KSH 12 billion to the economy, most of it is spent to treat people with alcohol abuse related ailment.

A lot more is lost due to alcohol – related reductions in productivity.
Alcoholism is inevitably embedded in a network of family interactions.

Children of alcoholics are more likely than the general population to develop alcohol problems.

Spouses of alcoholics are much more likely to abuse alcohol and other drugs.
This study was aimed at assessing selected social factors that are associated with alcohol use, abuse and alcoholism.

The study focused on
- social acceptance of alcohol use,
- parental and peer influence,
- availability of alcohol and
- stressful lifestyles
as the key variables
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- In Kenya, there are an estimated two million addicts, ninety percent of who are addicted to alcohol (KEMRI), 1999).

- According to KEMRI, alcohol abuse affects 70% of families in Kenya
Research has revealed that experimenting with alcohol and other drugs starts at primary school level (Ndegwa, 1980, & Gichuge, 1993).

Similar studies from other parts of the world reveal that drug and alcohol use start as early as ten years (Jardine & Martin, 1984).
A favorite explanation of young people’s alcohol and drug taking behavior is that it is a result of social pressure from their friends that is the peer group (Kembo, 1999).

Peer groups teach new skills and attitudes that are sometimes different form those learnt form the family (UNESCO, 1982, & Ingerso, 1989).
The manner in which alcohol is acquired is an important factor that contributes to this abuse and consequently addiction.

Research has revealed that drugs such as tobacco and alcohol are widely and easily available.

The availability of these substances highly correlates with adolescent alcohol use.
Social acceptance of the use of alcohol has led to uncensored use and abuse.
Individuals learn from an early age that alcohol can be a source of pleasure and relieve, both privately and socially.
Advertising equates alcohol with pleasure and relief, fun, fashion, friendship, and happiness. This makes alcohol use seem like an adult initiation rite.
Use of alcohol, as anesthesia to combat stressful lifestyles is another dangerous trend that is drawing many to the alcoholic lifestyle.

Economic stress, unemployment, poor access to health are among the major factors (Becky, 2003).
This study was conducted within the city of Nairobi. This location was purposefully chosen because the country’s drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers are concentrated around the city.

The study targeted all alcoholics in alcohol and drug rehabilitation centers in Nairobi city.
The study revealed that most of the alcoholics seeking treatment in drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers are male between the ages of 30 and 49 years.

Society inculcates a certain drinking culture in individuals. Many cultures sanction their males to drink heavily, while a moderate drinker or an abstainer is held suspect.
The family is also a transmitter of cultural attitudes. Drinking may be engraved into the social life of the family because of the circle of friends that they relate with and their patterns of entertaining.

The study reveals that majority of the fathers of the alcoholics (66%) use alcohol occasionally, moderately or frequently. Only about 26% of the mothers use alcohol.
In the choice of an alcoholic beverage peers influenced 37.1% of the alcoholics.

Advertisements influenced only 11.45% of the alcoholics when making the choice of what beverage to use.
PEERS INFLUENCE

- 91.4% said that their peers abuse alcohol.

- Peer group values and norms are submitted to an individual through consistent rewarding of conforming behavior.
AVAILABILITY OF ALCOHOL

- Availability of alcohol is typically associated with the impact of control policies on the purchase and consumption of alcohol.

- In Kenya age at first drinking is set at 18 years.

- The impact of price control on reduced alcohol intake in Kenya needs further research.
AGE AT FIRST DRINK

- majority of the alcoholics (54%) started using alcohol when they were between 11 and 17 years.

- Although age at first drinking in Kenya is set at 18 years, the results show that children as young as ten years had access to alcohol.
DRINKING SITES

- 77.4% of the alcoholics bought their alcoholic beverages from bars.

- About 11.4% bought their alcoholic beverages from the wine shops.

- while about 8.6% said they bought from the local brew sites.
most of the Kenyan alcoholics reported that they often bought and drunk their alcoholic beverages in the bars, an indication that they prefer drinking in a social setting.

The bar is seen as a leisure place, where any man is likely to be found outside of working hours.
CONCLUSIONS

- Parental models are instrumental in shaping early attitude and behaviors with regard to teenage alcohol abuse.

- Peer relations provide a context in which alcohol and other drug use is either supported or discouraged.

- Most of the alcoholics have peers who use abuse alcohol, whereby sanctioning its use.
Kenyans have access to alcoholic beverages at a very young age, although age at first drinking is set at 18 years.

The drinking habits of the peers play a major role in initiating individuals into alcohol use or abuse.

The peers largely influence the choice of the alcoholic drink used by the individuals.
Anyone coming from an alcoholic finally is more at risk of becoming an alcoholic.

People with history of alcohol abuse and alcoholism, who have a higher risk for becoming dependent on alcohol, should approach moderate drinking carefully.
THANK YOU!!!