Reduce Risky Behaviors among College Students

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**Alcohol Drinking**

Risky behavior could be described as a behavioral form that is associated with increased susceptibility to a given disease or health outcome. College students have been seen to engage in such behaviors that end up positioning them at the risk of a serious health outcome. The primary risky behavior among college students in the United States is excessive alcohol consumption. After high school education, young adults transit to college, and this leads to significant changes in socialization groups, living arrangements, and social activities. Alcohol accounts for varying fatalities, assaults, arrests, and severe injuries among the students every year. Research indicates that a majority of these students are between the ages of 15-21 years (Krieger et al., 2018). That age group accounts for the high number of heavy drinkers where most of them have been diagnosed with alcohol-use-related disorders.

In many cases, alcohol users are likely to be insulted by their peers. Girls are often confronted with unprecedented sexual advances and are prone to rape and sexual assault. Other heavy drinkers are involved in arguments and quarrels, and this results in injuries and even death. College drinking is viewed as a public health concern and has almost become a ritual activity among college students. Most of these young adults get into colleges having already established drinking habits. Therefore, the environment ends up fostering their behaviors which positions their health at high risk (White, Tapert, & Shukla, 2018). Generally, vast college students are engaged in binge drinking, which encompasses the consumption of more than five drinks on a single occasion for male students. For the females, it entails consuming four or more drinks on a similar occasion.

**The Relationship between Alcohol Drinking and Documented Health Outcomes**

One of the primary health outcomes is alcohol poisoning. Every year, vast students end up admitted to emergency rooms as a result of alcohol poisoning. The outcome happens after heavy alcohol consumption affects the CNS (the central nervous system of the individual thus slowing the heart rate and breathing. This also interferes with the health aspect referred to as the gag reflex and increases the risk of choking whenever one vomits. When a student passes out, the alcohol level could still improve, eventually leading to alcohol poisoning. The related symptoms for this disorder are vomiting, seizure, unconsciousness, slow breathing rate, and unresponsiveness.

Heavy drinking also leads to AUD (alcohol use disorder). This health outcome leads to a person engaging in dangerous drinking, subjecting him or her to risky incidences. The brain development process is also altered by this drinking since the process often takes place for individuals between the ages of 15-22 years. The effect is an impaired judgment that is unlikely for young adults.

Other health outcomes are related to heavy drinking. It may lead to high blood pressure, which is accompanied by irregular heartbeats and heart failure. Since alcohol is a diuretic, the kidneys end up producing excessive urine. Such could lead to dehydration and low levels of potassium and sodium in the human body. With gag reflex, saliva or vomit may end up entering the lungs, which causes inflammation and lung infections. In the long term, it weakens a person's immune system, often leading to anemia and decreased platelets. It could interfere with calcium absorption and bone formation.

**The Prevalence of Alcohol Drinking**

Even if alcohol drinking is present in all age groups, college students are greatly affected. These are young adults who have transitioned from high school and are between the ages of 18-25 years. The age group entering colleges attains social mobility through the administration of various rules. As a result, behaviors are built through social comparison, and a teenager is likely to model his or her actions by seeking behaviors exhibited by members of the age group. Male students are more expected to engage in alcohol drinking compared to their female counterparts. Smokers and truant students also entail a higher likelihood of alcohol consumption among college students. Alcohol drinking stands out as crucial risk behavior among college students. Research indicates that 26.55% of the world inhabitants between 15-19 years devours alcohol.

A 2017 research conducted in the U.S indicated that 29.8% of students had engaged in alcohol drinking in the previous thirty days. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that the prevalence of heavy drinking among individuals of 15-19 years stands at 47.2% for males and 16.1% for females in Myanmar. This illustrates the danger the young adults are prone to, which is likely to affect their adult lives. Developing an alcohol use disorder at an early age makes it difficult to control such a condition in adulthood; hence, the individual is open to serious health outcomes.

**The Prevalence of the Various Health Outcomes**

The consumption of alcohol accounts for about 5.9% of global death annually. A significant proportion of these deaths happen among young adults who are college-going students. Alcohol consumption opens up the risk for non-communicable diseases such as liver cirrhosis, alcohol consumption disorder, lung cancer, and vast body injuries (Xanthopoulos et al., 2019). Among college students, alcohol poisoning, pancreatitis, injuries, and heart disease are the most prevalent. Vast college students are taken to emergency rooms after an alcohol overdose. The condition occurs due to the presence of much alcohol in their bloodstream, thus affecting essential body functions such as breathing and heart rate. Also, it leads to extremely low body temperatures and skin paleness.

Other health outcomes among college students of 15-21 years entail the risk of the infection of sexually transmitted diseases. HIV/AIDS is the most common, where students are likely to engage in reckless sexual activities, subjecting them to being infected with the virus. Females are at a higher risk of such infections since their male counterparts could take advantage, leading to rape incidences. In case one is raped by multiple individuals, they are at a high risk of having infected with sexually communicated infections and diseases. This information indicates that alcohol consumption continues to subject college students to serious health outcomes, and the risk factors should bring awareness to these students leading to behavior changes.

**Background Information about Alcohol Drinking Among College Students**

College alcoholism is a significant public health problem that has affected millions of college students across the United States. After young adults report to various colleges, they are quick to exercise the freedom which is not often found in high schools. This is a time where many of them use alcohol for the first time. Research indicates that nearly 80% of these students have consumed alcohol to a certain degree. 50% of these students engage in binge drinking, which is an aspect of heavy alcohol consumption within a short time (Patrick & Azar, 2018). Since alcohol is readily available at various social activities and sporting events, it is tempting to these young adults who are keen to exercise their newfound independence and freedom.

By starting with a single drink, it ends up turning into two or more, and eventually, the individual ends up getting addicted. After consuming alcohol week after week, the body begins to build a tolerance to alcohol which means that the student would have to drink more for them to feel satisfied. Frequent heavy consumption of alcohol increases the likelihood of developing AUD (alcohol use disorder). This disorder leads to severe emotional and physical damage. Even if some of the effects are temporary, others appear in the long term (Burton & Sheron, 2018).

College learners are likely to participate in binge drinking within the first six weeks after reporting. A majority of them are drawn into this behavior through peer pressure which is evident among teenagers and young adults. Alcohol use is the college experience that most students long for the reason most of them fall into it during their freshman year. Therefore, a student wants to fit into a particular social circle thus continue drinking without thinking of the severe health outcomes.

 Instead of viewing drinking as a social event, most of the students drink until they are completely drunk. They have turned from beer to hard liquor since it entails higher alcohol percentages. With such liquor, it would only take a few drinks for one to feel the overall effects. They drink with an end goal in mind which is to get drunk as much as possible. Such outcomes are dangerous are connected to life-threatening conditions such as alcohol poisoning.

Alcohol drinking behavior is quite challenging to change, especially among college students. Being a teenager and young adults, they are in the prime years of personal development and face identification challenges. This is why most of them are quick to engage in behaviors generally condemned in society since they have a strong desire to get fulfilled. They would like to be noticed through their behaviors without analyzing the overall health and academic effects.

With the pleasure that comes with alcohol drinking, it becomes a habit for many young adults. An individual who has been brought up in an environment that upholds alcohol consumption drives his or her peers into the activity, making it difficult for them to change the behavior. Students from richer families have the required resources and might not find it a challenge drawing others into alcoholism.

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