

Prevalence of current drinkers and its association with socio-demographic characteristics in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Alcohol consumption is influenced by various socio-demographic factors, including sex, age, ethnicity, and education level. Understanding the socio-demographic characteristics of current drinkers is essential for formulating effective public health policies and interventions aimed at tackling alcohol-related concerns. This study aims to determine the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, education level, and household income) with the prevalence of current drinkers. **Materials and Methods:** Current drinkers, defined as individuals who had consumed any alcoholic beverage within the past 12 months, were identified through the questionnaire. By using stratified random sampling, the data was extracted from the 2023 National Health & Morbidity Survey, which included 10,751 sampled respondents. By using SPSS software version 29.0, chi-squared analysis was used to determine significant associations between the prevalence of current drinkers and socio-demographic characteristics. Additionally, Cramer's V was computed to assess the strength of association between two variables. **Results:** The chi-squared analysis revealed a significant association with the prevalence of current drinkers in Malaysia with p-values less than 0.01 for all socio-demographic characteristics. Furthermore, ethnicity exhibited the highest strength of association with Cramer's V value of 0.364, followed by gender (0.112), age group (0.109), household income (0.093), education level (0.058) and marital status (0.040). **Conclusion:** The association between socio-demographic characteristics and the prevalence of current drinkers support several objectives, including raising public health awareness. Public health efforts should focus on the top three socio-demographic characteristics (ethnicity, gender, and age group) due to their significant and strong association with the prevalence of current drinkers in Malaysia. Considering certain ethnic groups may have different cultural attitudes toward alcohol, public health campaigns should be culturally sensitive and tailored to address these nuances. Gender-focused strategies can also address varying alcohol use patterns between men and women, ensuring relevant, effective interventions for each group.