Factors associated with drunkenness and binge drinking in the French population

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Objective

- Alcohol use is a major public health issue but short-term and long-term alcohol-related harms are often minimized by young people. Indeed, in this population, alcohol use is generally associated to wellness, pleasure, socializing and party.

- Drunkenness occurs, in most of cases, during festive occasions where use of others psychoactive substances is common. Moreover, among some individuals, alcohol use can evolve to binge drinking, reflecting a consumption focused on the search for drunkenness,

- The aim of the study was to explore the patterns of drunkenness and binge drinking among French adolescents and young adults who use alcohol.

Methodology

POPULATION

- Data from the 2017 French Barometer, a large population-based survey.

- Only adults aged 18-40 who reported lifetime alcohol use have been selected for this study (n= 7,601).

MEASURES

- Binge drinking was defined here by an alcohol use occasion specifically aiming to get drunk according to the respondent (difference with drunkenness that reflected an unexpected event following an alcohol use occasion) .

- A retrospective cohort was reconstituted regarding two events (drunkenness and binge drinking), using reported ages at initiations,

- Covariates studied were gender, age, employment status, and previous tobacco and cannabis use as time-dependent variables.

STATISTICAL ANALYSES

- Kaplan-Meier analysis was used to observe the time-lapse between with the first drunkenness and the first binge experience.

- Cox proportional hazards models were used to explore the factors associated with drunkenness initiation and binge drinking initiation.

Results

Descriptive analysis

- Women accounted for 50.4% of the sample. Mean age of responders was 29.2.

- The prevalence for lifetime drunkenness among alcohol users was 77.0% and the prevalence for binge drinking was 17.3%.

- Tobacco current use was reported by 41.0% and cannabis lifetime use by 61.1%.

Kaplan-Meier analyses (figure)

- The average age at initiation was 17.4 years for drunkenness and 18.3 years for binge drinking.

- Cumulative event curves showed that the first binge experience occurred later than first drunkenness.

Multivariate analyses (table)

- Factors associated with drunkenness initiation in multivariate analyse were male gender, age under 30, employed and student statuses (reference: unemployed), and previous use of tobacco and cannabis.

- Similar relationships were found for binge drinking excepted regarding employment status: unemployed and student statuses were more associated with binge drinking initiation (reference: employed).

Figure : Cumulative event curves of drunkenness and binge drinking initiation
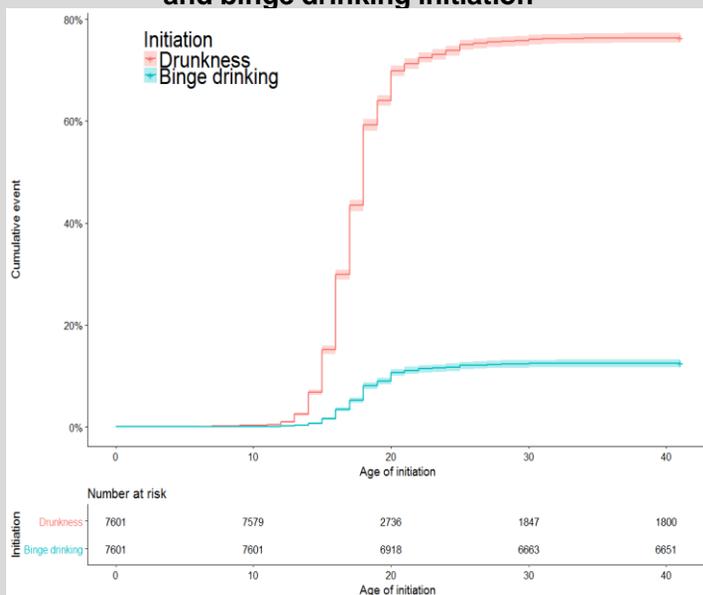

Table : Instantaneous risk of drunkenness and binge drinking initiation

	Instantaneous risk of drunkenness initiation		Instantaneous risk of binge drinking initiation	
	Hazard ratios [IC95%]	P value	Hazard ratios [IC95%]	P value
Age – (Ref. ≥ 30 years old	1.29 [1.22-1.37]	<0.001	1.19 [1.03-1.37]	0.02
Gender – (Ref. women)	1.53 [1.44-1.61]	<0.001	2.25 [1.96-2.58]	<0.001
Employed – (Ref. Unemployed)	1.22 [1.13-1.32]	<0.001	0.75 [0.63-0.89]	0.001
Student – (Ref. Unemployed)	1.17 [1.06-1.29]	<0.001	0.94 [0.76-1.17]	0.59
Previous use of tobacco	1.59 [1.47-1.73]	<0.001	1.34 [1.10-1.64]	0.003
Previous use of cannabis	2.43 [2.28-2.59]	<0.001	1.37 [1.17-1.60]	<0.001

Conclusion

- Three quarters of French alcohol users report drunkenness and near one fifth report to specifically expect it. These results suggest that alcohol use has a strong potential to lead to hazardous use, particularly if tobacco or cannabis are also used.

- Prevention programs towards alcohol must target consumers at the earliest stage and integrate other substances often used in festive context.