

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

MOTIVATION FOR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTIONS BY ADULTS: TRADITIONS OR AN ATTEMPT TO SOLVE MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS (EXEMPLIFIED BY THE CITY OF LVIV AND LVIV REGION, UKRAINE)

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ABSTRACT

The aim: To clarify motivation trends of alcohol consumption by adults in the city of Lviv and Lviv region and their mental health risk factors as compared to the specificity of motivation for alcohol consumption by the representatives of other European countries.

Materials and methods: The study is based on the data of the representative survey of Lviv region residents (1,200 persons) following the methodology RARHA adjusted for Ukraine and its statistical processing.

Results: The results of the study point to the prevalence of social and recreational, traditional motives for alcohol consumption by Lviv region residents (consumption during solemn ceremonies and celebrations). Extremely important, as compared to other European countries, are social motives (the sense of belonging to an important social group). The importance of social factors for the respondents decreases a bit with age and considerably depends on the specific features of religious practices. A wide-spread motive is the striving for changing the emotional state, combined with higher abuse risk as compared to the people who drink on social occasions.

Conclusions: The results of the study characterize the specificity of the motivational structure of alcohol consumption by Ukrainians as compared to the general European trends and can be used for the development of targeted regional prevention programs.

KEY WORDS: alcohol consumption, motivation, mental health, social motives of alcohol consumption, motives of changing emotional state, prevention

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INTRODUCTION

The topicality of the problem of alcohol consumption and its motivation does not need to be proven. According to the data of the World Health Organization, some 3 million people die annually as the result of alcohol consumption, which is 5.3% of all deaths; alcohol constitutes the cause of about 200 types of diseases and traumas [1]. In Europe alcohol is the third factor among the causes of disease and mortality, and this requires logical steps towards research and prevention. One of such steps was a three-year program (2014-2017) – The Joint Action on Reducing Alcohol Related Harm (RARHA), coordinated by the Portuguese governmental agency SICAD (General Directorate for Intervention on Addictive Behaviours and Dependencies) [2]. The goals of the program include establishment of the common system of monitoring of alcohol consumption patterns and alcohol-related harm in the countries of Europe. In 2019, within the research project implemented by the Praesterno Foundation (Poland) and the Department of Social Science and Social Work of the National

University "Lvivska Politekhnik", funded by the State Agency for the Prevention of Alcohol-Related Problems (Państwowa Agencja Rozwiązywania Problemów Alkoholowych) PARPA (Poland, Warsaw), a representative survey of the residents of the city of Lviv and Lviv region was conducted, using RARHA methodology adjusted to Ukrainian reality. The survey results [3, 4] have shown that the figure of alcohol consumption among adult residents of Ukraine is high. Only 15.3% of the respondents have claimed that they have completely or almost completely rejected alcohol, 59.1% of the respondents have claimed that they have people close to them who drink alcohol in excessive amounts on a regular basis, among whom 8.9% are their family members. The scope of alcohol-related problems requires paying special attention to a detailed analysis of the key motives for alcohol consumption among the residents of the city of Lviv and Lviv region: the reasons people drink can be related both to the cultural characteristics of the society and to the mental health problems of a concrete individual. This data may become

a well-grounded basis for alcohol dependence prevention programs, with due account of the regional specificity.

Alcohol consumption is a form of conscious behaviour aimed at achieving a specific effect known to the individual. Realization of this effect, possible consequences of consumption develops in childhood while following adult behaviour and is considerably culture-stipulated. As the person grows up and gains his/her own experience of contacting alcohol, (s)he develops his/her personal vision of the effects and the causes of alcohol consumption. According to the research data [5, 6], the motivation for alcohol consumption constitutes the mediator between the expectations and the amount of alcohol consumed. Four key motivational categories are distinguished, with a different source (internal or external stimulators) and valency (positive and negative expectations): consumption for the sake of getting positive mood and good well-being, getting social approval, reducing the level of negative emotions, and avoiding social isolation. The degree of motivation for alcohol consumption is directly related to the consumption rate. The specificity of motivation considerably depends on age (domination of one generalizing motive in the teenage years is replaced with a complex motivational structure as the experience of consumption comes) and gender. Alcohol consumption for the sake of getting positive mood and reducing the level of negative emotions is directly related to alcohol abuse [6].

THE AIM

The aim of the paper is to clarify motivation trends of alcohol consumption by the adults in the city of Lviv and Lviv region and their mental health risk factors as compared to the peculiarities of alcohol consumption by the representatives of other European countries.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study of motivation trends of alcohol consumption was performed using RARHA methodology [7]. All in all, 1,200 persons have participated in the study, with 400 of them being the residents of the city of Lviv and 800 – the residents of the region. The study was conducted through interviewing based on the principles of informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymousness, and confidentiality.

The individuals who have not consumed alcohol over the recent year have not been asked the question about consumption motivation. As the result, a part of respondents who probably belong to those who abstain from alcohol has been excluded. Still a part of respondents has been excluded due to missing of many answers in the motivation block. As the result, 904 respondents have been analyzed in this paper (416 men and 488 women).

Participants were asked to report how often they drank for the particular reasons in the past 12 months when they drank. Ten possible reasons were suggested to measure motives of drinking using a 5 grade scale (from 1 – Never and 5 – Always).

The data was processed using STATISTICA-12 program. Descriptive statistics method, a chi-squared test, cluster analysis of data (k-means clustering) were applied.

RESULTS

At the first stage of data processing analysis of the means and percentage of “always” (4) or “most of the time” answers was performed (5) for the sake of determining the prevailing motives for alcohol consumption and the degree of their manifestation. All in all, the level of manifestation of all motives was moderate and did not even reach 3 points (of 5 possible). The data obtained has shown that most frequently the respondents consume alcohol since it “md_3 improves parties and celebrations” ($M=2.86$, $SD=1.1$, 32.7 %) and “md_2 because it’s fun” ($M=2.51$, $SD=1.14$, 22 %). Further on by the degree of manifestation come such motives as “md_5. to fit in the group you like” ($M=2.19$, $SD=1.13$, 16.4%), “MD_6. so you won’t feel left out [with others]” ($M=1.87$, $SD=1.12$, 12.8%), “md_1. Because you like the feeling after having a drink” ($M=1.84$, $SD=1.02$, 10.1%), and “md_7. Because it helps you when you feel depressed” ($M=1.67$, $SD=0.95$, 6.7%).

The least important motives are the beliefs that “md_8. Because you think it is healthy” ($M=1.5$, $SD=0.78$, 4.0%), “md_4. Just to get drunk” ($M=1.35$, $SD=0.75$, 3.5%), “md_9. To forget about everything” ($M=1.35$, $SD=0.73$, 2.9%), and “md_10. Because it is a part of good diet” ($M=1.15$, $SD=0.53$, 1.3%).

Analysis of the motivational structure of alcohol consumption has proven a relative insignificance of some reasons for alcohol consumption. Here one may mention the ones which scored less than 4% and fewer answers “always” or “most of the time”: “md_8. Because you think it is healthy” (4.0%), “md_4. Just to get drunk” (3.5%), “md_9. To forget about everything” (2.9%), and “md_10. Because it is a part of good diet” (1.3%). Hence, the next step in result analysis was identification of groups with different motivation types as far as alcohol consumption reasons are concerned, with exclusion of the variables that are not important when decision concerning alcohol consumption is passed. Cluster analysis of cases (using k-means clustering) was performed for the sake of subgroup identification, and as the result three groups of respondents were outlined (Fig.1.). Analysis of variance has proven availability of considerable differences between clusters by all scales ($p \leq 0.001$).

The most numerous is the third cluster of persons having low manifestation of all motives (555 individuals, or 61.4%) and, respectively, characterized by lower frequency of alcohol consumption (Cluster “Low Alcohol Consumption Level”). The first and the second clusters are almost the same in size (174 persons in the first cluster and 175 persons in the second cluster, which is 19.3% from all those under study each). For the first cluster the reason for alcohol consumption most frequently is getting a nice feeling after having a drink (md_1), creating good mood (md_2) and reducing the feeling of depression (md_7) – a cluster

with the conditional name “Changes in the Emotional State”. The second cluster which has got the conditional name “Social Approval” is characterized by the prevailing motives of belonging to the group (md_5 and md_6).

Analysis of the composition of clusters by the peculiarities of alcohol consumption has helped identify considerable divergences ($\chi^2=107.038$, $p\leq 0.001$) Fig.2.

The share of persons consuming alcohol on a weekly basis is three times higher among those who consume alcohol for changing their emotional state (36.21%) and twice higher among those who consume alcohol for social approval (26.29%) as compared to the cluster with low level of alcohol consumption (11.53%), which proves the appearance of the risk of alcohol abuse in the background of its use as a means of changing the mood.

Analysis of the composition of each cluster testifies to the availability of divergences between clusters by gender ($\chi^2=35.89$, $p\leq 0.001$). The cluster with low alcohol consumption level includes more women (61.8%) than men (38.2%), while the first and the second clusters, respectively, include more men (60.34% men and 39.66% women in the cluster “Changes in the Emotional State”; 56.57% men and 43.43% women in the cluster “Social Approval”). Of interest are the results characterizing changes in the cluster composition depending on the age of respondents ($\chi^2=20.96$, $p\leq 0.01$). Thus, the cluster with low alcohol consumption level consists only of some 20.54% of people aged 18-30, while among those who consume alcohol for the sake of experiencing positive emotions there are 32.76% of such people, and the percentage of senior people (61+) is definitely insignificant in this cluster (only 10.92%), while in the cluster with low alcohol consumption level is 23.6% (Fig.3.).

The results obtained testify to a considerable decrease in the importance of the motive for alcohol consumption for the sake of changing one’s emotional state in the older age. Instead, for other age groups emotional motivation is more important. Consumption for the sake of social approval in the senior age group is also lower, but the difference is not that clearly expressed.

It would also be expedient to compare the composition of clusters depending on the peculiarities of the respondent’s attitude to religion since religious beliefs constitute an integral part of the world outlook for the residents of Western Ukraine (only 6.8% of all the respondents have indicated that they are atheists, 32.4% have said that they are believers, and 60.8% are practicing believers). It has been identified that the percentage of people who are not just believers but the ones who actively attend liturgies dominates in all clusters, but their share is larger in the cluster “Low Consumption Level” and comparatively lower in the two other ones ($\chi^2=16.44$, $p\leq 0.001$), and this proves that observance of religious values and religious practice following constitutes a factor of restraint for alcohol consumption.

DISCUSSION

The data obtained in Ukraine can be compared to the data received as the result of the similar survey held in 11 Euro-

pean countries over 2014-2016 (Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Portugal, and Sweden), with the participation of 16,223 respondents [7]. While comparing the level of expression of the motives among the representatives of different countries, it has been traced that priority motives for alcohol consumption by the residents of Lviv region “improves parties and celebrations” and “because it’s fun” are on the moderate level by their numerical figures and more or less correspond to the level of the neighbouring Poland. At the same time, as far as the indicators of social motives that are in the third and fourth places in the motivation structure for alcohol consumption are concerned, Ukrainians considerably outpace most European countries. Thus, the frequency of motive “To fit in the group you like” varies in different European countries from about 1% (Spain) to almost 17% (Bulgaria, Lithuania). As compared to other countries, the residents of Lviv region would be in the first positions on this list, with the figure of 16.4%. The situation with “So you won’t feel left out” is similar. This motive is the most frequent in the same countries as the previous one and ranges from 16.7% (Bulgaria) to 0.7% (Spain). Ukraine would take the second position in this ranking, with the figure of 12.8%.

Of importance for Ukrainians are alcohol-based solutions for mental health problems – the change in the emotional state as the result of alcohol consumption: by their figures for “Because it helps you when you feel depressed” Ukrainians (6.7%) would have to be in the second or third place in the ranking side by side with Bulgaria and Poland.

The residents of Lviv region, as compared to the representatives of other countries, rarely drink for the sake of just getting drunk and almost do not consider it to be a part of a good diet. This can be accounted for by the absence of the tradition to drink wine in Ukraine (unlike other European countries). Here people normally drink stronger beverages which traditionally are not included into the daily diet.

The results of the survey show prevalence of social and recreational motives in alcohol consumption by the residents of Lviv region. The importance of those social factors decreases with the age of respondents and depends on the peculiarities of their attitude to religion. An important motive of drinking – changing one’s emotional state. Individuals consuming alcohol mainly for this purpose in order to solve their mental health problems run a higher risk of abuse as compared to those who drink for social purposes. This motivation is particularly manifested at a young age.

Comparison of the results obtained with the figures from other countries proves the impossibility of associating the motivation structure of alcohol consumption by Ukrainians with the representatives of a specific country. Alcohol has the same, or similar effect on individuals, while motivation for consumption is different for different people, as well as identifies specific peculiarities within specific cultures. However, the problem of alcohol abuse is, in fact, available in all countries, and this causes topicality of comparative

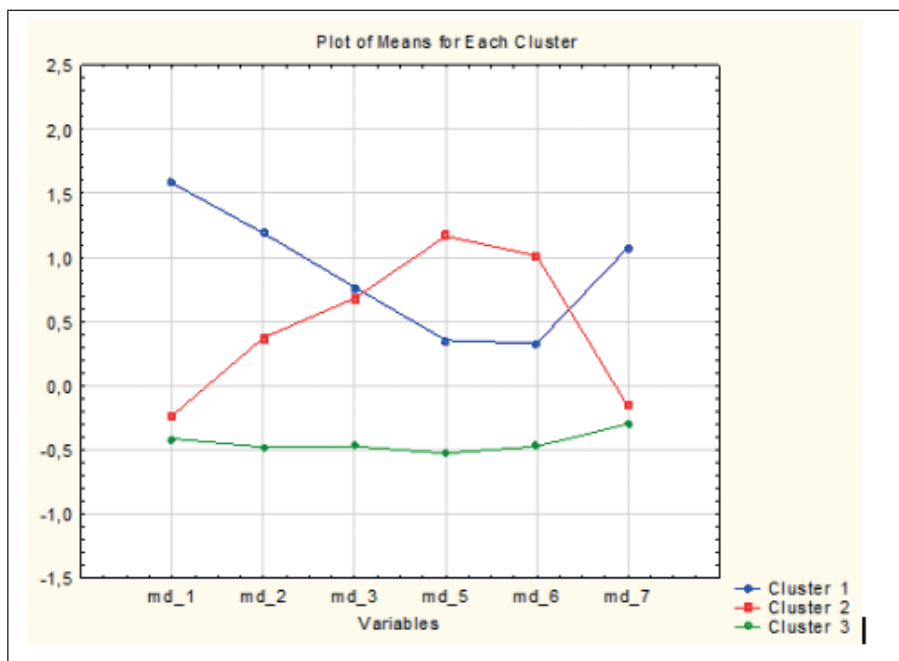


Fig.1. The results of cluster analysis of alcohol consumption motivation (“md_1. Because you like the feeling after having a drink, “md_2. Because it’s fun” “md_3. Improves parties and celebrations”, “md_5. To fit in the group you like”, “md_6. So you won’t feel left out [with others]”, “md_7. Because it helps you when you feel depressed”)

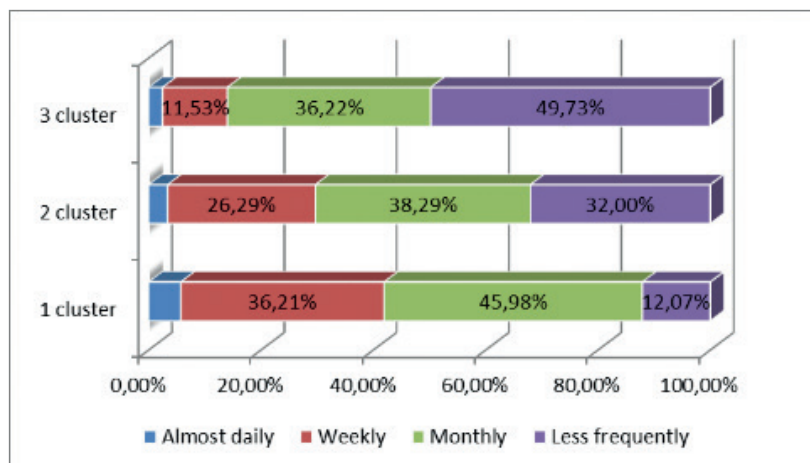


Fig.2. Peculiarities of alcohol consumption by the representatives of different clusters (cluster 1 “Changes in the Emotional State”, cluster 2 “Social Approval”, cluster 3 “Low Alcohol Consumption Level”)

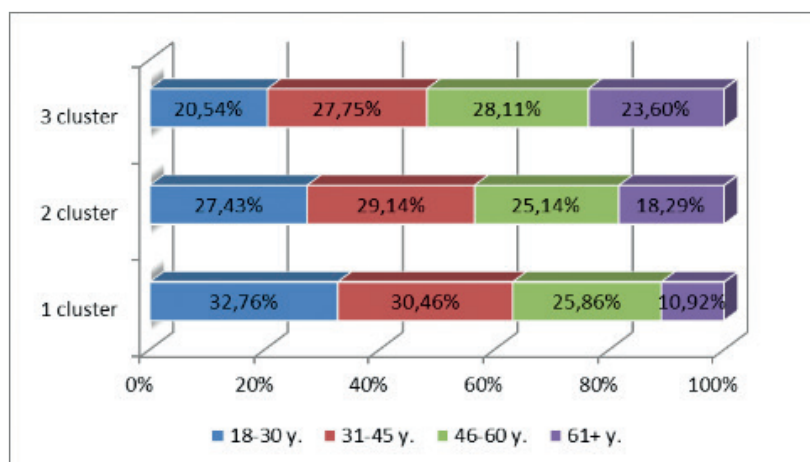


Fig.3. Age composition of clusters (cluster 1 “Changes in the Emotional State”, cluster 2 “Social Approval”, cluster 3 “Low Alcohol Consumption Level”)

analysis of both motivation for consumption in specific cultures, and of the connection between consumption motivation and alcohol abuse manifestations. As far as some indicators are concerned, the results in Lviv region coincide with the data from Poland, which is obviously

caused by geographical and cultural proximity. Thus, for Ukrainians of importance are improved celebration motives, getting nice feelings after having a drink and relieving negative emotions. At the same time, as far as social motives are concerned, Ukrainians outpace Polish

people and show higher dependence on the group. One of the limitations in the results obtained may be regional specificity. According to the data of surveys [8], the west of Ukraine is characterized by lower level of alcohol consumption as compared to the centre and the east, therefore, the results obtained should be applied to the residents of Ukraine in general with caution.

In our opinion, dominating motivations for alcohol consumption, recorded in the present study, make the situation with development and implementation of prevention programs more complicated. This is accounted for, on the one hand, by the idea many Ukrainians have that alcohol consumption has become almost an obligatory component of the culture of spending time together with friends. On the other hand, consumption of alcohol as a means of “relieving” psychological tension, and though temporary, but “distancing” from reality, proves that alcohol addiction is rooted in the complex social problems of the modern Ukrainian society, and, thus, the needs for their priority regulation. And prevalence of strong alcoholic beverages in the consumed alcohol range aggravates the problem of excessive alcohol drinking. That is why the problem of alcohol abuse is a derivative one and requires prior normalization of the current tense social situation.

CONCLUSIONS

The results obtained in the course of the research have enabled to characterize the specificity of the motivation structure of alcohol consumption by Ukrainians as compared with the general European trends. Uniform coverage of different age groups enables to plan, on the basis of this data, anti-alcohol prevention programs and communicative campaigns for different target groups using the arguments that would be suitable for those groups.

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