

## Alcohol consumption among nursing students of a university center

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**Objective:** to investigate the pattern of alcohol consumption in nursing students at a University Center. **Methods:** this is an exploratory, descriptive study with a quantitative approach, developed with 372 nursing students from a University Center. Data were collected in May 2014, using a socio-demographic questionnaire and the AUDIT scale. **Results:** it was evidenced that 90.6% of the students use or have already used alcohol. When evaluating the result by area of the AUDIT, it was evidenced that the majority of respondents 162 (44%) was classified in Zone II. **Conclusion:** it is relevant to conduct future research to uncover protection and risk factors for alcohol use.

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Descriptors: Alcoholism; Alcohol Drinking; Nursing Students; Mental Health.

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## Consumo de bebidas alcoólicas em estudantes de enfermagem de um centro universitário

**Objetivo:** investigar o padrão de consumo de álcool em estudantes de enfermagem de um Centro Universitário. **Métodos:** trata-se de um estudo exploratório, descritivo, com abordagem quantitativa, desenvolvido com 372 estudantes de enfermagem de um Centro Universitário. Os dados foram coletados no mês de maio de 2014, mediante aplicação de um questionário sociodemográfico e da escala de AUDIT. **Resultados:** evidenciou-se que 90,6% dos acadêmicos usam ou já fizeram uso de bebida alcoólica. Quando avaliado o resultado por zona do AUDIT, evidenciou-se que a maioria dos entrevistados 162 (44%) foi classificada na Zona II. **Conclusão:** torna-se relevante a condução de futuras pesquisas para desvendar fatores de proteção e de risco para o uso de álcool.

Descritores: Alcoolismo; Consumo de Bebidas Alcoólicas; Estudantes de Enfermagem; Saúde Mental.

## Consumo de bebidas alcohólicas en estudiantes de enfermería de un centro universitario

**Objetivo:** investigar el patrón de consumo de alcohol en estudiantes de enfermería de un Centro Universitario. **Métodos:** se trata de un estudio exploratorio, descriptivo, con abordaje cuantitativo, desarrollado con 372 estudiantes de enfermería de un Centro Universitario. Los datos fueron recolectados en el mes de mayo de 2014, mediante la aplicación de un cuestionario socio demográfico y de la escala de AUDIT. **Resultados:** se evidenció que el 90,6% de los académicos usan o ya han hecho uso de bebidas alcohólicas. Cuando se evaluó el resultado por zona del AUDIT, se evidenció que la mayoría de los entrevistados 162 (44%) fue clasificada en la Zona II. **Conclusión:** se hace relevante la conducción de futuras investigaciones para desvelar factores de protección y de riesgo para el uso de alcohol.

Descriptorios: Alcoholismo; Consumo de Bebidas Alcohólicas; Estudiantes de Enfermería; Salud Mental.

## Introduction

Alcohol is consumed by most people in several countries, possessing great social acceptance and its consumption is stimulated by society. Its use is increasingly frequent despite the health risks<sup>(1)</sup>.

Worldwide, approximately 38.3% of the population greater than 15 years consume alcoholic beverages. This same group, the per capita alcohol consumption reaches 17.2 liters (WHO, 2014). In addition, among people aged 15 to 49 years, the abuse of alcohol is the main risk factor for premature death and disability. In the age group 20-39 years, approximately 25% of the total deaths are attributed to the same factor<sup>(2-3)</sup>.

Data on the consumption of alcohol in the nursing students are still little known, however, factors related to the predisposition to alcoholic beverages consumption have been discussed, being the main ones: lack of orientation, expectations about the course with increased stress, environmental influences and individual and availability of alcohol related to ineffective policies<sup>(4-5)</sup>.

The negative consequences of alcohol consumption in academics are countless and are related to the biopsychosocial problems in the short and long term and accidents from external causes intentional or unintentional (accidents and violence mainly), in addition to deficits in the academic performance<sup>(6-8)</sup>. In this context, given the importance of the subject, the objective of this study was to investigate the pattern of alcohol consumption in nursing students of a University Center.

## Methods

It was a quantitative study, descriptive and exploratory. The location of this study was a university center in the northeast of Brazil, private higher education institution and accredited by the Ministry of Education.

In relation to the study population, 570 academics were duly enrolled in a nursing course of this institution. As inclusion criteria were adopted: being a student of the Nursing course at University Center and be active in the course regardless of the period. As an exclusion criterion, was elected: not to be present at the time of data collection.

To calculate the sample size, it was decided by the calculation of finite populations, considering a confidence interval of 95% and tolerable sampling error of 3%, came to a quantity of 372 participants.

The two instruments were applied in the proper place of research in pre-established so that would not interfere with academic activities. In order to preserve the anonymity of the participants, a box was placed into

pre-established sites to which the questionnaires could be deposited after filling.

The data collection was performed by means of two questionnaires fulfillment: a sociodemographic - taking into consideration the variables of the study, and the other instrument was the test for identification of problems related to the use of Alcohol-AUDIT, which assesses the pattern of use and behavior in the last 12 months.

From the obtained data a database was created in Microsoft Excel 2010, and subsequently exported to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 20.0 for Windows, with this processed and analyzed statistically. The dependent variable of the study was the use of alcohol, classified as dichotomous (yes/no).

The quantitative variables measured by means of averages and standard deviations were: age of onset of use, time of use and frequency used. The qualitative variables were: education, marital status, family income, occupation, religion, origin, site of the first consumption, supply of consumption, higher frequency, type of drink more used and interference in everyday life. The results were presented in tables and charts.

Participating in the study was voluntary, by reading and signing the Informed Consent Form, based on Chapter IV of Resolution 466/2012 of the National Health Council, these participants may withdraw from the study at any time, without damage or any burden. So it was guaranteed to each participant, the confidentiality of information obtained individually, emphasizing on the anonymity of the questionnaire applied in the classroom.

The project was approved by the Committee for Ethics in Research of the University Center UNINOVAFAP, under a certificate of presentation for consideration Ethics (CAAE in Portuguese) – 30353214.6.0000.5210. All ethical and legal procedures were respected, in accordance with the Resolution 466/2012 of the National Health Council (CNS in Portuguese).

## Results

The results analysis allowed to categorize the information in accordance with the social and demographic characteristics, profile of consumption, frequency and distribution of the consumption of alcoholic beverages among nursing students.

The majority of individuals participating in this study was studying the 6th period of the course (20.7%) were single (73.1%), with family income between 1-3 SM (54.8%), without occupation (91.7%), Catholic (62.6%), and resident in Teresina (53.8%) (Table 1).

Table 1 – Sociodemographic characterization of nursing students from a University Center. Teresina, Piauí, Brazil, 2014 (n = 372)

	N	%
<b>Course Period</b>		
1º period	45	12,1
2º period	48	12,9
3º period	37	9,9
4º period	40	10,8
5º period	33	8,9
6º period	77	20,7
7º period	40	10,8
8ª period	52	14,0
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	272	73,1
Married	35	9,4
Widow (er)	03	0,8
Others	62	16,7
<b>Family Income</b>		
Up to 1 MW	62	16,7
1-3 MW	204	54,8
4-6 MW	58	15,6
>6 MW	48	12,9
<b>Occupation</b>		
Yes	31	8,3
No	341	91,7
<b>Religion</b>		
Catholic	233	62,6
Spiritist	46	12,4
Evangelic	76	20,4
None	15	4,0
Other	02	0,5
<b>Precedence</b>		
Teresina	200	53,8
State interior	125	33,6
Others	47	12,6

Considering the dependent variable "use of alcohol," classified as (yes/no), it was found that 90.6% (n = 337) of the academics use or have already made use of alcoholic drink, while only 9.4% (n = 35) never consumed alcoholic beverage.

The mean age of participants was 17.5 years old (SD = 2.0). Regarding time of use and the frequency of alcohol consumption, results were varied, with the majority of the students (58.9%) making sporadic use of alcoholic beverages (Figure 1).

The majority consumed alcohol for the first time at friends' home (49.7%), with supply of friends (53.8%), in bars or clubs (49.7%), whichever is the use of beer (54.8%), and no interference in daily life (61.8%) (Table 2).

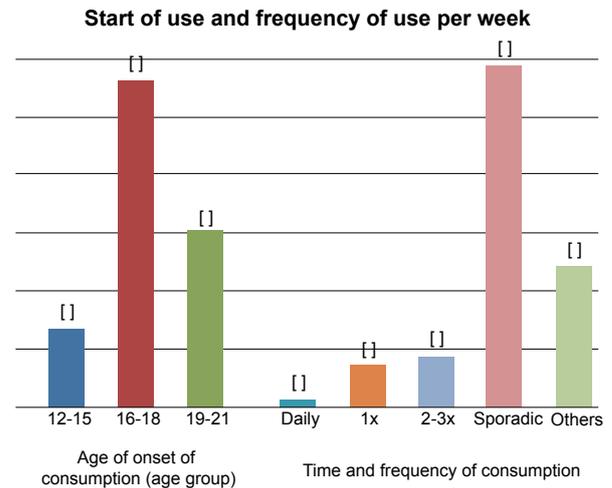


Figure 1 – Alcohol consumption pattern (quantity and frequency) performed by University Center nursing students regarding frequency, using onset age. Teresina, Piauí, Brazil, 2014. (n = 372)

Table 2 – Characteristics related to the consumption and type of alcoholic drink consumed by nursing students of a University Center. Teresina, Piauí, Brazil, 2014

	N	%
<b>Place of first consumption</b>		
At home	138	37,1
Bars / Nightclubs	33	8,9
Friends' house	185	49,7
Others	15	4,0
I do not remember	01	0,3
<b>Consumer offer</b>		
Friends	200	53,8
Relatives	35	9,4
Alone	20	5,4
Partner / partner	16	4,3
<b>Most frequent location</b>		
At home	55	14,8
Bars / Nightclubs	185	49,7
Friends' house	99	26,6
Others	36	9,7
<b>Type of drink</b>		
Beer	204	54,8
Sugarcane liquor	06	1,6
Whiskey	46	12,4
Rum	17	4,6
Vodka	29	7,8
Tequila	21	5,6
Wine	30	8,1
Others	07	1,9
More than one type	12	3,2
<b>Interference in everyday life</b>		
Never	230	61,8
Less than 1 time per month	95	25,5
At least once a month	04	1,1
At least once a week	04	1,1
Daily or almost daily	03	0,8

When evaluated the result by the audit showed that 162 of the interviewed (44%) were classified in the Zone II, i.e. has a consumption of alcoholic beverages that indicated as use of risk (Figure 2).

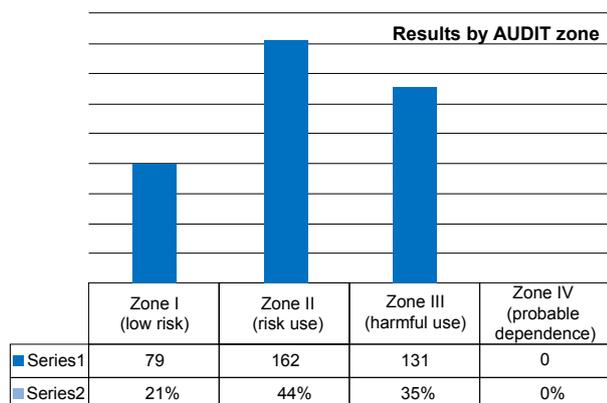


Figure 2 – Classification of participants by AUDIT zone. Teresina, Piauí, Brazil, 2014

## Discussion

The results of this study showed that more than 90% of nursing students of a university center already consumed some kind of alcoholic beverage. This percentage greatly outweighs that presented by studies carried out in other regions of the country<sup>(9-11)</sup>, a finding that deserves attention.

There are several factors related to alcohol consumption in the population. Among them are age, gender, family factors, socioeconomic status, cultural context and regulations on the use<sup>(12-13)</sup>. This explains the variation in prevalence rates in the use of alcohol among nursing students in different studies.

A survey conducted in the municipality of Rondônia-RO, identified the prevalence of alcohol consumption in 58% of 137 nursing students investigated<sup>(11)</sup>. In Minas Gerais, similar studies have observed a prevalence of 65.5% in a sample of 168 students of nursing<sup>(10)</sup>, and 81.7% in a sample of 191<sup>(9)</sup>.

The initiation of alcohol use by the majority (56.18%) of survey participants was before or immediately after he reached the age in the age range between 16 and 18 years of age. A descriptive epidemiological study of transversal type developed in a private university in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with 161 students of nursing, revealed an even more disturbing data, pointing out that in 85% of the 109 individuals interviewed, the initiation took place before 18 years<sup>(14)</sup>.

In relation to the frequency of alcohol consumption, the majority of individuals surveyed (58.87%) reported sporadic use, not drinking on a weekly basis. Even consumed moderately and sporadically, alcohol does

not cease to bring harmful effects, among which we highlight accidents (intentional or unintentional) and risk behavior, especially among the young<sup>(15)</sup>. In addition, evidence shows that the consumption of alcohol will be a motivating agent to dependence or even the consumption of other drugs<sup>(11)</sup>.

On the demographic profile of the sample studied, this study data coincide with that of a survey with 404 students of the nursing undergraduate course in Portugal, in which was observed a mean age of approximately 20 years<sup>(16)</sup>. It is known that the alcohol is among the most widely used drugs for young people and their use can be triggered by rebellion, curiosity and great influence of friends<sup>(17)</sup>.

Research performed in Teresina-PI, with academics from the Nursing undergraduate course at a higher education institution identified similar results for the marital status, the origin and the occupation<sup>(18)</sup>. In this way, it's noticeable that the nursing student depends on family support, especially when it comes to financial aspects, to afford their expenses in general.

Most of the participants were Catholic. A similar fact was found in a survey with 167 students of Nursing at Monte Claros State University, MG, in which 61.7% reported being Catholic<sup>(19)</sup>. The religious dimension when present in individuals' daily life, particularly among the young, may represent a factor influencer for the social and family relationships, supported by ethical presuppositions, political and cultural rights. Some religious practices are able to provide healthy aspects which imply a positive effect on physical and mental health to the extent that advise the adoption of healthy behaviors and habits. Research conducted with 6,264 Brazilian students of middle school revealed that possessing a religion is a protective factor for the use of alcohol and other drugs<sup>(20)</sup>.

Religion offers a source of personal strength for the individual, an orientation of life more optimistic and greater resilience to stress and less anxiety, favoring a positive perspective forward to dealing with the treatment of users, as well as the protection of the abusive use of alcohol<sup>(21)</sup>.

The location of alcohol consumption differs in part from a study among university students in the area of health at Rio Grande Federal University/RS, which pointed out that 70.2% consumed at parties and barbecues, 24.5% to 4.8% housing itself and bars and restaurants located near the university<sup>(22)</sup>.

Draws attention in this study alcohol consumption in the household (14.8%). The consumption of alcohol can be started in the family environment, between 12 and 13 years old. Adolescence is a phase in which belonging to groups is important, making individuals more vulnerable to the influence of others in the

acquisition of risk behaviors, however, are the values and attitudes adopted by parents orienting the conduct of children, providing protection or risk for young people, including for alcohol consumption<sup>(23)</sup>.

In the present study, deserves highlighting the offer of consumption by friends (53.8%). Related to this, there are those who say that not having friends is a protective factor for alcohol use, specifically<sup>(24)</sup>. A study with 5521 young Swiss, with around 20 years of age, has investigated the pressure of friends for the use of alcohol and identified this variable as a risk factor<sup>(25)</sup>.

The prevalence of beer consumption (54.8%) among the participants can be explained by the fact that it is considered a "drink", which initiation already presents itself within the family<sup>(22)</sup>. In Brazil, the beers advertising is free, because it is not included as an alcoholic drink by legislation, under the argument of "low alcoholic"<sup>(8)</sup>.

In the case of the pattern of alcohol use by students in this study, it is evident that the findings are going forward a study that applied the AUDIT with 404 students of courses of Biochemistry, Nursing, Pharmacy and Medicine. This study identified that 46.0% of the participants were with use of risk and 24.3% with harmful use<sup>(26)</sup>.

This type of consumption may not be present in other realities. In a study conducted with Nursing students at the University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain, the prevalence of harmful use was 43.4%<sup>(27)</sup>. The harmful use of alcohol can be the kickoff to dependence, in this process, the user can submit mental or psychomotor hyperactivity. The dependency also entails in amendment or deficit in the social functioning and family. Deleterious effects on health involving sleep pattern, sexuality and nutrition can also be found<sup>(28)</sup>.

The use of alcohol usually draws attention in young populations, especially when it comes to university students. The Academic stress, commonly imbricated to competitiveness, physical and mental exhaustion arising from university activities, can play the role of leading students to find in alcohol a form of overcoming<sup>(29)</sup>.

Although relevant, the study presents limitations for reporting a local scenario, not allowing, thus, generalizations. In this way, it becomes important to conduct further investigations with wider geographical coverage.

## Conclusion

It is expected that the clarification of the context evidenced by this research gently persuade not only students regarding the importance of the maintenance of their physical and mental balance, but also the pedagogical coordination, in order to promote the amplification of the discussion on the theme and

the elaboration of preventive interventions to the consumption of psychoactive substances, in particular the alcohol, in academia.

It also draws attention to the need of conducting research to assess the risk and protective factors for the use of alcohol and other drugs, considering that are valuable for the planning and implementation of measures that corroborate for the reduction of the prevalence found. Furthermore, it suggests a greater investment in preventive public policies directed to the university student population.

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