

Risk factors for problematic alcohol use among male waste pickers and caddies in Johannesburg, South Africa: A cross-sectional study

Simbulele Mdleleni^{1,2,*}, Nisha Naicker¹, Felix Made¹, Vusi Ntlebi¹, Tahira Kootbodien¹, Nonhlanhla Tlotleng¹, Matimba Makhubele¹, Kerry Wilson¹

¹ National Institute of Occupational Health, Epidemiology and Surveillance, National Health Laboratory Service, Braamfontein, Johannesburg 2001, South Africa,

² School of Public Health, University of Witwatersrand, Parktown 2000, South Africa

*Correspondence: simbulele.mdleleni@gmail.com; Tel: (+27) 073-793-2586

Abstract

Background

Informal workers may be prone to problematic substance use due to many factors, including adverse working conditions and low income.

Aim

To describe problematic alcohol use and risk factors among male golf caddies and waste pickers in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Methods

Golf caddies and waste pickers were included as informal workers with low socio-economic status. Alcohol use was measured using the World Health Organization (WHO) Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (AUDIT) tool. The WHO self-reporting questionnaire (SRQ) for common mental health disorders (CMD) was used to assess mental health. Data analysis included demographic analysis of the participants, assessment of substance use, and the ascertainment of drinking problem risk factors.

Results

Of the 514 participants, 48.4% were golf caddies and 51.6%, waste pickers. Most (54.7%) were alcohol consumers and 74.1% were smokers. Over 60% of alcohol consumers had a probable drinking problem. Unstratified regression results showed that informal workers positive for mental distress were more likely to have a probable drinking problem (aOR=1.06; 95%CI: 1.01 – 1.11). Informal workers aged 30 – 40 years (aOR=2.06; 95%CI: 1.13 – 3.75), and those who were smokers (aOR=2.25; 95%CI: 1.33 – 3.80) were also more likely to have a probable drinking problem.

Conclusion

Problematic alcohol use was associated with caddying, mental distress, age, and smoking. Providing counselling services to informal workers and improvement of working conditions may help change the behaviours of these vulnerable groups.