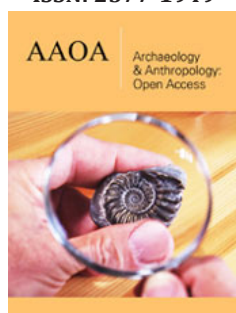


Excessive Alcohol Consumption and Female Youth Victimization

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Opinion

Alcohol intake has also been connected to contributing to mental health concerns, which could exacerbate their addiction on it. Alcohol abuse has two effects on mental health. Firstly, addiction to addictive substances can progress to dependence, which is a mental health problem in and of itself. The drug has a direct effect on the body; for instance, alcohol is a depressant of the central nervous system, which may lead to the development of depression. Second, alcohol abuse has a variety of physical, legal, and societal consequences, including contributing to interpersonal aggression, death, and injury in motor vehicle accidents, increased hazardous sexual behaviour, and relationship issues, all of which can have a detrimental impact on mental health [1].

Young people are regularly at the vanguard of social change. With escalation behaviour of alcohol consumption which adversely has consequences for their wellbeing. Although there is an increase in alcohol consumption, we cannot shy away from the fact that there is a current tendency to drink less to a small youth population due to increasing awareness of the health effects of alcohol and greater general health consciousness [2]. Caluzzi et al. have suggested that social contexts turn people towards having fun over worrying about health. This is leading to the prevalent of females engaging in excessive drinking which in turn harms their wellbeing. Though exceeding drinking is evident in both young males and females, females are more at risk of victimization than males. Notable more expose to sexual victimization, such as rape, harassment, inappropriate touching without their consent.

There are a variety of reasons as to why females end up being exposed to victimization after drinking. Young females tend to prefer to go out at night to drink alone in clubs. And when they are through, they decide to walk alone back to their places of residence which exposes them to the risk of being victimized. Norris [3] argues that when a woman is drunk, she might not experience the anxiety or fear of walking alone, the fear that would motivate her to look for a company that she can walk back home with as a result end up leaving alone wherever she is.

Another contributing factor is that females in clubs accept free alcohol from strangers that they meet in clubs without knowing the expectations of those who are buying alcohol for them. When a female is drunk, the male who bought alcohol expects sexual favours as they believe the women consent to these favours by accepting the alcohol. Women who are victimized in this manner may be less willing to disclose the attack to others as they feel somewhat responsible for a sexual assault because they were drinking and accepting free drinks [3]. Lack of disclosure has its consequences as they are less likely to receive the needed help to recover from victimization. Non-disclosure is a result of various reasons such as the tedious task of having to relive and reiterate the events of the assault, fear of secondary victimization and the stigma of being identified as a victim.

According to research into women's safety behaviours in public places, they are intensely aware of their vulnerability and employ a variety of "safe-keeping" methods in response to their fear of sexual assault, physical attack, and sexual harassment [4]. These safe keeping strategies include keeping tabs on each other when speaking with strangers, guarding each other's beverages, and making sure they have their own safe transportation home. Intoxication, on the other hand, can negate the effects of these safe-keeping procedures. This is because once intoxicated, they are once again exposed to harm. Women will sometimes leave with males they do not know. When doing so, they may disappear without indication to their friends.

What also exposes young females to victimization is betrayal from their peers. It happens that certain female are requested by their boyfriends and sometimes men they are generally acquainted with to bring their friends into a gathering. It happens those female friends are not informed of what is expected of them in the gathering, meanwhile, males are under the impression that females have agreed to join the gathering for the same reason, which is to have sexual partners. In some instances, the context is two-fold as, some women have used the notion of their victimization to extort money from males. Females who enjoy club culture may accuse guys of rape following a night out. They threaten to open a case of rape if males do not pay them a substantial sum of money. These situations are handled privately because males are afraid of reporting the extortion. Since they believe the legal system would not be fair to them.

Female victimization is unpleasant because women are often held responsible for their own safety. Over the years, society has given them the undeserved responsibility of always ensuring their own safety through the scrutiny of how they dress and behave around men. However, the assertion has been questioned in terms of how males handle matters involving female victimization. Many have gone on to suggest that male bystanders should interfere when they witness victimization. Others have stated that males often do not hold each other to account for such transgressions which protects the perpetrator and places liability on the victim alone.

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