

Abstract

Factors associated with failure to maintain abstinence during the Buddhist Lent Abstinence Campaign in Thailand

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Abstract: **Introduction:** In Thailand, a country with second largest Buddhist majority, the Buddhist Lent Abstinence Campaign is a prominent alcohol abstinence campaign. The campaign encourages Thais to refrain from drinking alcohol beverages for three months, corresponding with the Buddhist Lent period. Participation of a significant portion of drinkers provides an opportunity to examine factors related to a failure to maintain alcohol abstinence.

Methods: Data from the 2016 Buddhist Lent Abstinence Evaluation Survey were analysed. Logistic regression was employed to identify factors associated with a failure to maintain abstinence.

Results: Of total 4296 survey samples, 1486 were considered current drinkers. Among these drinkers, 48% participated in the 2016 abstinence campaign. Campaign participants were 65% males, 99% Buddhists with median age of 38 years. Almost 90% also participated in the 2015 campaign. About one-third failed to maintain alcohol abstinence; 45% of those who failed were back to drink within first two weeks. Regular drinkers had almost four times chance of failure compared with occasional drinkers. Those participated in the previous year campaign and those invited others to join the campaign were more than two times likely to succeed. Stating that alcohol has little or no harm to health increased the chance of failure by 2.7 times. Higher socioeconomic status tended to be associated with higher chance of success.

Conclusion: Regular drinkers were likely to fail, whereas positive attitude towards the campaign increased the chance of success. Educating about the harms of alcohol might increase the success rate of the campaign.

Conflict of interest: None

Topic: Drinking cultures, Inequalities, Addiction, Evaluation, Information, education and health promotion

Keywords: Abstinence campaign, Thailand, Religion

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