

Difference in socioeconomic background and psychiatric consequences between persons with heavy episodic drinking and moderate regular drinking: Results of the Thai National Mental Health Survey 2013

Introduction

Heavy episodic drinking is prevalent in non-routinely alcohol consuming countries, as opposed to western countries where drinking is typically frequent and regular. However, only few studies have directly compared these two distinctive patterns as most studies basically based comparison on amount and frequency of drinking.

Methods

Thai National Mental Health Survey 2013 provided data of current (previous twelve months) frequency and amount of drinking which allowed categorization into heavy regular (HRD), heavy episodic (HED), moderate regular (MRD) and social/abstinent (SAD) drinking. Analyses were conducted among 4,727 national representatives to examine associated socioeconomic background, current psychiatric comorbidity and consequences of these patterns.

Results

By weighted estimation, 10% of Thai population has HRD, while 8% and 3% has HED and MRD, respectively. All of these risky patterns were more prevalent among men than women. However, most common risky pattern among women is HED while men mostly have HRD. Using SAD as the baseline, higher income, younger age and being single predict HED, whereas lower income and older age predict MRD. HED is also more likely to occur among person with intermittent explosive disorder. After controlling for potential confounders and using SAD as reference, person having MRD is significantly more likely to meet current alcohol dependence, while HED causes significantly more days of total disturbance of function.

Conclusion

Drinking patterns could reflect lifestyle of persons from different socioeconomic backgrounds and result in different consequences. These findings may suggest importance of tailoring individual intervention and goal of treatment to prevent negative outcomes.

Keywords: regular drinking, heavy episodic drinking, socioeconomic difference