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BURDEN AND IMPACT OF ALCOHOL USE IN THE NAVAL POPULATION

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OBJECTIVES

1. To estimate the impact of alcohol use on related health problems including health care, injury burden, occupational impairment and disruption of social and family life.
2. To examine the impact of alcohol in naval population.
3. To examine the psychotherapeutic interventions being carried out regarding to alcohol abuse in the military populations vis a vis the civil population in the world.
4. To improve environment for sustainable alcohol prevention programs.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional survey of a sample of naval personnel, from ships/establishments of the three commands of the Navy , Western Naval Command(WNC), Eastern Naval Command(ENC) and Southern Naval Command(SNC) was conducted from July 2010 to Dec 2011 using systematic sampling strategy. The total population (appropriate being a moving population) of WNC was taken as 25,000 that of ENC 17000 and of SNC 8,000. The sample size estimated at WNC was 319 and at SNC was 310, and estimated a total sample size of 940. A total sample of 1200 was attempted at, 400 from each Command for convenience sake.

RESULTS

A total of 1200 naval personnel were enumerated during the survey out of which completed questionnaire was received from 1095 individuals. 114 officers and 981 sailors participated in the study. In all, 37.62% individuals reported use of alcohol. Out of which, 33.33% were officers and 38.12% sailors. Alcohol users were found to be almost same in all the three Commands. Most of the officers(30.70%) and sailors(37.2%) were from the age group 18-24 years.51.8% officers and 47.2% sailors were married. The relatively greater proportion of individuals (28.39%) in the population were young in the age group of 18-24 years and is a pointer to the emerging use of alcohol at an early age amongst the population. This needs to be explored further.

CONCLUSION

The study found that prevalence of alcohol use in the population was considerably high, though comparable with the general population of India. The impact and burden of alcohol related problems were definitely higher among users than non users. These results are the first to quantify changes in the alcohol use in this population. Intervention should focus at-risk groups, including younger individuals and those with previous or existing mental health disorders.