

Alcohol-related Emergency Department Visits in Adolescents

Shannon Bartlett, BS & Guohua Li, MD

Purpose

To examine epidemiologic patterns of alcohol related emergency department (ED) visits in US adolescents aged 12 – 20 years old

Why Adolescent Drinking?

“Underage use of alcohol can have both immediate and long-lasting consequences.” (The New DAWN Report, Issue 1, 2006)

- According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health in 2004, 29% of adolescents 12 – 20 years old reported drinking alcohol
- Recognizing new trends of adolescent use, and analyzing these trends and their relevance to new treatment programs, is paramount in preventing short and long-term alcohol abuse

Method

- Recently available data was obtained from redesigned Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN), year 2004
- Calculated annual incidence rates of alcohol-related ED visits in adolescents by age and gender
- Examined clinical characteristics of these ED visits

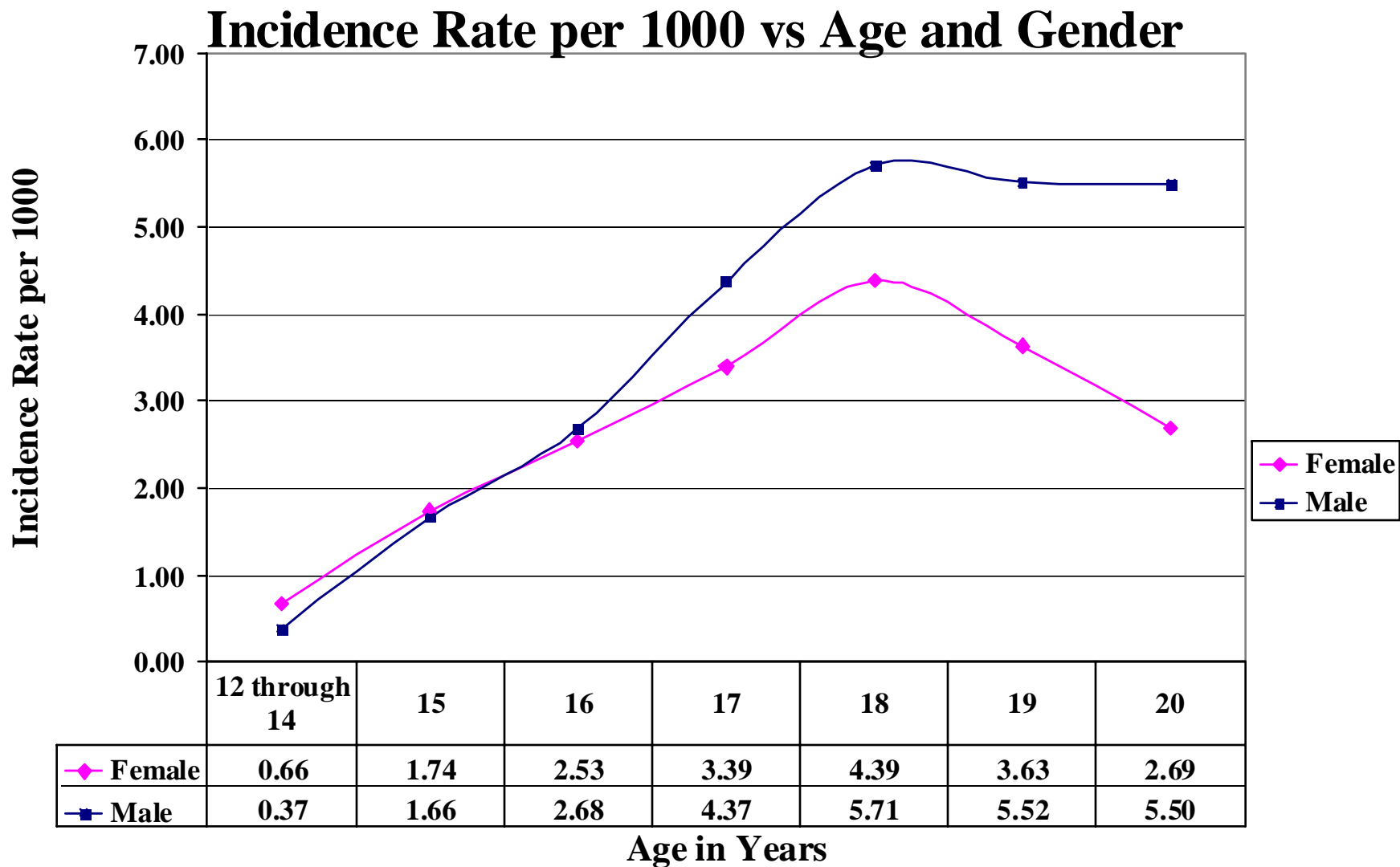
Results

- According to DAWN, an estimated total of 142,701 alcohol-related ED visits by adolescents aged 12 – 20 occurred in 2004
- This yielded an annual incidence rate of 3.87 per 1000 population

Results

- Males had a higher incidence rate than females overall: 4.2 vs 3.4 per 1000
- Annual incidence rates increased progressively between ages 12 – 18 then leveled off

Results



Results: Graph Interpretation

- Age-gender interaction:
 - Females had slightly higher incidence rates than males between 12 – 15 years but far lower rates than males after age 16
 - After age 18, incidence rates for females decreased steadily whereas male rates remained high

Results

- Of all alcohol-related ED visits:
 - 32% involved other drugs
 - 12.5% were admitted to hospitals

Conclusions

- Epidemiologic patterns of alcohol-related ED visits differed markedly between sexes
- Prevention programs should be tailored according to gender specific dynamics of drinking behavior (i.e. target girls at an earlier age than boys)

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