ALCOHOL-RELATED RISK BEHAVIOR AMONG VOLUNTARY COUNSELING AND TESTING CLIENTS IN KENYA: RESULTS OF A BASELINE SURVEY

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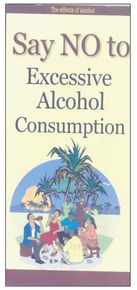
BACKGROUND

- Excessive alcohol consumption is associated with several HIV-related high-risk behaviors such as multiple partners, unprotected sex, and intimate partner violence.
- Voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) services are important venues for discussing these risk behaviors, and for helping clients formulate risk-reduction plans.
- It is not known to what extent VCT counselors encounter clients who may need advice about alcohol-related risks.
- The Horizons Program, in partnership with Liverpool VCT, Care and Treatment, SAPTA (Support for Addiction and Prevention Treatment Trust in Africa), and the Steadman Group, examined the alcohol-related risk behavior of VCT clients in Kenya, and its implications for HIV counseling and testing.

METHODS

- In 2006, a baseline survey was conducted in 20 VCT sites in three provinces in Kenya.
- These sites were purposively selected from high density areas with anecdotal evidence of high alcohol use.
- The survey was part of a larger operations research project employing a quasi-experimental design with baseline and follow-up data collection.
- Trained interviewers administered exit interviews to a random sample of 1,073 VCT clients.
- Potential respondents had been through the VCT sessions, and gave informed consent, but need not have taken the HIV test.
- Alcohol use was assessed using the World Health Organization's Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) scale.



RESULTS

- 53% of the respondents were male, 54% were single (never married), 77% had a sex partner, and their mean age was 30 years.
- Overall, 21% of the VCT clients were current alcohol drinkers (29% males and 12% females). 44% were former alcohol drinkers and 35% had never drank alcohol.
- Among the current alcohol drinkers, 68% of males and 59% of females were hazardous drinkers (AUDIT ≥ 8 points).

Sexual risk behavior

Compared to nondrinkers, current drinkers were more likely to have had sex in the previous 12 months, and were more likely to report multiple partners (see Table 1). However, current drinkers were no more likely to always use condoms with their multiple partners.

Intimate partner violence

Compared to benign drinkers, hazardous drinkers were more likely to have perpetrated violence toward their partner (AOR 5.4 males, 3.3 females).

Table 1 Adjusted odds of exhibiting the specified outcome variables by alcohol use status

	Adjusted odds ratio (95% confidence interval)		
Outcome variable	**Males**	**Females**	**All**
Had sex in past 12 months			
Nondrinkers	1.00	1.00	1.00
Former drinkers	1.96 (1.15-3.34)	2.00 (1.25-3.20)	2.00 (1.40-2.82)
Current drinkers	7.36 (3.22-16.80)	4.41 (1.68-11.56)	6.11 (3.27-11.38)
Had multiple partners in past 12 months			
Nondrinkers	1.00	1.00	1.00
Former drinkers	1.46 (0.85-2.49)	1.66 (0.95-2.89)	1.56 (1.07-2.23)
Current drinkers	3.15 (1.79-5.58)	6.16 (3.04-12.48)	3.96 (2.58-6.10)
Always used condoms with multiple partners in past 12 months			
Nondrinkers	1.00	1.00	1.00
Former drinkers	0.28 (0.09-0.86)	0.56 (0.12-2.66)	0.38 (0.15-0.95)
Current drinkers	0.55 (0.19-1.56)	0.47 (0.08-2.62)	0.63 (0.26-1.50)

Controlling for sex, age (continuous, in years), education, religion, and type of VCT (static vs. mobile)

CONCLUSIONS

- Alcohol-using VCT clients engage in multiple behaviors that elevate their risk for HIV.
- There is need for strategies to integrate alcohol-related risk reduction counseling into VCT services.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the results of this study, visit the Population Council booth (1046), visit the Population Council website at www.popcouncil.org/horizons, or contact Karusa Kiragu (kkiragu@pcnairobi.org).

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