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CHARACTERISTICS OF ALCOHOL USE IN A MEDICAL STUDENTS SAMPLE

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Objective: The relationship between sociodemographic data and characteristics of alcohol use has been analyzed in a sample of medical students from Romania.

Method: A questionnaire containing sociodemographic data and aspects of alcohol use was completed by students from different universities of medicine from Romania.

Results: A number of 156 subjects were questioned, with ages between 18 and 30 years. Of them 44.5% were female and 54.5% were male, and the majority were in their first university year of study. The number of alcohol units drunk one time was less than 3 units for 70.5% of subjects and more than 3 units for 28.8% of subjects. Age and year of study were not significantly associated with the use of higher amount of alcohol units. Male subjects tend to have a significantly higher use of alcohol than female subjects. We found that the higher number of alcohol units used is associated with more somatic effects (nausea, vomiting, drowsiness) and with more risk behaviors with serious consequences (missing classes, driving, fighting, law problems). 73.7% of all subjects experienced at least one somatic effect and 43.6% of subjects had at least one risk behavior related problem. 15.38% of questioned subjects admitted that the alcohol use was a problem.

Conclusions: The use of more than 3 alcohol units was significantly associated with male gender, somatic effects and risk behaviors in our sample. Alcohol use is a major health problem worldwide with important social implications and apparently medical students also experience its unfavorable consequences.