

Alcohol Use by Students at an Emerging University in South Africa

Miriam Mogotsi¹, Kathryn Nel², Wilna Basson³ and Cebile Tebele⁴

¹University of Limpopo, (Turfloop Campus), Pretoria, South Africa

²University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus), Polokwane, South Africa

³University of Limpopo (Medunsa Campus), Pretoria, South Africa

⁴University of South Africa (Unisa), Muckleneuk Campus, Pretoria, South Africa

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ABSTRACT The excessive drinking of alcohol by students, enrolled in institutions of higher learning, is an issue which has been reported in literature globally. As South Africa has a very high alcohol consumption rate per capita, this problem is compounded. This study aimed to gain knowledge and understanding of alcohol use amongst first year students enrolled at an emerging university in South Africa. A quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional survey design was utilised. Open-ended questions were added to the survey protocol to add a holistic element to the research. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, the Chi square test and an independent t-test. Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) was used to analyse data gleaned from open-ended questions. Results indicated that first year students aged 18-26 years ($SD=3.37$) used alcohol with negative academic and social consequences. Male and female students reported similar drinking patterns in terms of when, how much and the types of alcohol they drink. The majority of students acknowledged that moderate and responsible alcohol consumption is necessary. However, this does not generally translate into responsible drinking behaviours.