Student alcohol consumption – characteristics and correlations

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Abstract

Among all population groups, students consume the most alcohol and other narcotics. The present study examines these findings from the perspective of youth, culture and socialisation theory and provides a critical perspective on current developments at the university as an educational institution. Alcohol consumption is constructively understood as a developmental task of extended adolescence and the consumption of alcohol is not viewed negatively per se.

On the basis of surveys of students at two German universities, the study reveals different consumption patterns and forms of handling alcohol consumption. The study confirms the importance of family consumption of alcohol and gender differences in alcohol consumption. In addition, there are strong differences in experiences with alcohol between the universities examined and between different university departments. The study examines the importance of student orientation weeks for students' experiences with alcohol and identifies risk groups.

In contrast to universities in the Anglo-American region, German universities have not yet addressed student alcohol consumption as an area of action or prevention, although the universities themselves determine many of the details of students' daily lives and thus have a direct relation to risky consumption patterns. This study argues for more responsibility on the part of universities in shaping these conditions and identifies areas of intervention measures as potential areas of action for universities.