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*Cross-cultural differences in alcohol consumption and alcohol use disorder of university students from Antwerp and KwaZulu-Natal*

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# Students and alcohol



***“College students drink. No matter how you slice it, most people would agree with some version of that statement.”***

**(Walters & Baer, 2006)**



Universiteit Antwerpen



# Background

- For many students all over the world, alcohol is an important part of their social lives.
- Differences in culture can be of great influence regarding one's alcohol use.
- Until now, however, there is a dearth of studies taking into account the possible differences in middle- and high-income countries as an influencing factor for alcohol use.



# Methods

- Head in the Clouds (HITC) is a four-yearly online survey on substance use in Flemish university and college students.
- The fourth wave in 2017: all Dutch speaking students in Flanders and Brussels were invited from March to April to an online survey.
- 2,974 University of Antwerp (UA) students were included in the analyses.



# In hogere sferen?

**Een onderzoek  
naar het  
Middelengebruik bij  
Antwerpse studenten**

**Guido Van Hal  
(red.)**

**Johan Rosiers  
Ilse Bernaert  
Sarah Hoeck**



# Methodology

- A similar questionnaire and methodology was used to collect data from 249 students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) – February/March 2018
- The questionnaire included the AUDIT-C, used to determine the presence of an alcohol use disorder
  - How often did you have a drink containing alcohol in the past year?
  - How many drinks containing alcohol did you have on a typical day when you were drinking in the past year?
  - How often did you have six or more drinks on one occasion in the past year?



- Y & Y did the following:
  - Upload the UKZN data into SPSS
  - Recode all the variables
  - A random sample of 250 students was drawn out of the Antwerp database
  - A new database was made, combining this random sample of Antwerp students and the data of the UKZN students
  - They included the following variables: gender, university, AUDIT-C, alcohol consumption and alcohol use disorder





# Methodology

- Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 24
- P-values of  $< 0.05$  were considered statistically significant
- Internal consistency of the AUDIT-C was determined using Cronbach's alpha
- Then, comparative analysis was performed with a Pearson Chi-square test



## Gender distribution respondents

|         | <b>Antwerp</b>  | <b>KwaZulu-Natal</b> | <b>Total</b>    |
|---------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Males   | 85<br>(34.0%)   | 78<br>(31.3%)        | 163<br>(32.7%)  |
| Females | 165<br>(66.0%)  | 171<br>(68.7%)       | 336<br>(67.3%)  |
| Total   | 250<br>(100.0%) | 249<br>(100.0%)      | 499<br>(100.0%) |

**Pearson Chi-square;  $p = 0.524$**



# Results

- Of the UA students, 92.1% had ever drunk alcohol, whilst this was 67.2% of the UKZN students ( $p < 0.0001$ )
- According to gender, a significant higher amount of UA male as well as of UA female students drank alcohol in the last year in comparison to the UKZN students
  - Male students: 94.2% vs. 65.8%;  $p < 0.0001$
  - Female students: 91.0% vs. 67.9%;  $p < 0.0001$



# Results

- According to gender, a (borderline) significant higher amount of UA male as well as of UA female students had an alcohol use disorder, as assessed by the AUDIT-C compared to the UKZN students
  - Male students: 59.7% vs. 42.0%;  $p=0.058$
  - Female students: 44.7% vs. 25.0%;  $p=0.002$
- The AUDIT-C questionnaire was deemed reliable with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.723



## Conclusion

- Students from the UA drink significantly more alcohol than students from the UKZN
- Of those who drink, a significant higher proportion of students with an alcohol use disorder was observed in students from Antwerp when compared to students from KwaZulu-Natal
- Qualitative research in both groups could maybe give more insight into the reasons of these differences



## Epilogue: who's fault could it be?

- **The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation UNESCO officially handed over a certificate confirming that Belgian beer culture is World heritage. The ceremony was attended by the Culture Minister of Belgium's three language communities and representatives of the Belgian brewers at Brussels Town Hall in May 2017**
- "There would be no beer culture without beer, but we shouldn't reduce it to beer alone. UNESCO wanted proof of the added value it brings to people's lives that is the "intangible": it brings people together around something they share, find important and want to see evolve further".



Thank you for your attention!



# Questions? I am all ears!





