

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14991235>**Trends and Determinants of Alcohol Consumption in Turkey** **Okan İmre¹**¹Department of Psychiatry, Karamanoglu Mehmetbey University Faculty of Medicine, Karaman, Turkey**ABSTRACT**

Introduction: This study explores the trends and underlying factors influencing alcohol consumption in Turkey, using data from the Turkish Health Survey (TÜİK) for the years 2010 and 2022.

Objective: The analysis focuses on the distribution of alcohol use by gender, age group, and the reasons behind the initiation of alcohol consumption.

Method: Data for this study were sourced from the Turkish Health Survey (TÜİK), which provides detailed statistics on alcohol consumption behavior among individuals aged 15 and above. The survey includes information on the prevalence of alcohol use, categorized by sex and age group, as well as the reasons individuals report for starting alcohol use. The analysis focuses on two main time periods: 2010 and 2022, to examine the trends and changes over the last decade.

Results: Findings indicate a slight decline in overall alcohol use between 2010 and 2022, with notable differences by gender and age. Furthermore, various socio-cultural factors, including peer influence, curiosity, and the desire for fun, are highlighted as significant drivers of alcohol consumption.

Conclusion: While alcohol use has slightly decreased over the last decade, gender and age disparities persist. The shift in reasons for starting to use alcohol from curiosity and peer influence to entertainment points to changing social dynamic. Policymakers and public health professionals must continue to monitor these trends to develop effective strategies aimed at reducing harmful alcohol consumption across various demographic groups.

Keywords: Alcohol, Addiction, Dependence.

INTRODUCTION

Alcohol has many harmful effects on the individual, and family. Alcohol consumption is a widespread behavior with profound implications for both public health and social Dynamics (1). As the duration and amount of use increases, use disorder occurs. Alcohol use disorders are among the most common mental disorders worldwide. (2). It is directly or indirectly related to many chronic diseases(3,4,5). It is one of the important causes of disability and loss of employment(6). Alcohol use increases the risk of developing psychiatric disorders and also increases the tendency towards violence and crime(7). Despite its many negative biopsychological consequences, alcohol use disorders remain one of the most undertreated mental disorders. Although many studies have been conducted on alcohol use disorder, there are not enough studies on age, gender and reason for drinking(8). Alcohol use can turn into alcohol use disorder over time. Understanding the patterns of alcohol use, especially in relation to demographic factors such as gender and age, is crucial for designing effective health interventions. In Turkey, the dynamics of alcohol consumption have likely been influenced by changing social norms, economic conditions, and health awareness. This paper presents a comparative analysis of alcohol consumption in Turkey between the years 2010 and 2022, based on data from the Turkish Health Survey (TÜİK). The study examines the distribution of alcohol use by sex and age group, as well as the reasons behind the initiation of alcohol use. By analyzing these variables, we aim to identify shifts in alcohol consumption patterns and highlight potential areas for targeted public health interventions.

METHODS

Data for this study were sourced from the Turkish Health Survey (TÜİK), which provides detailed statistics on alcohol consumption behavior among individuals aged 15 and above(9). The survey

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includes information on the prevalence of alcohol use, categorized by sex and age group, as well as the reasons individuals report for starting alcohol use.

The primary variables analyzed in this study include:

1. Alcohol consumption prevalence: The proportion of individuals who consumed alcohol in 2010 and 2022, broken down by gender and age group.

2. Reasons for alcohol initiation: The distribution of reasons behind alcohol consumption initiation, including curiosity, peer influence, family issues, personal problems, and for fun, as reported in 2010 and 2022.

The analysis focuses on two main time periods: 2010 and 2022, to examine the trends and changes over the last decade.

RESULTS

Alcohol Consumption Prevalence (2010-2022)

1. Overall Alcohol Consumption: In 2010, 12.6% of the total population aged 15 and above reported using alcohol, while this figure slightly declined to 12.1% in 2022. A closer look at the data reveals gender differences, with alcohol use being significantly higher among males than females. In 2010, 21.1% of males consumed alcohol compared to only 4.4% of females. By 2022, this gap remained, with 18.4% of males and 5.9% of females reporting alcohol use.

2. Age Group Differences: The highest prevalence of alcohol use was observed in the 25-34 age group in both years, with a slight increase from 17.0% in 2010 to 17.5% in 2022. Among males, the 25-34 age group had the highest alcohol consumption, but the gap between genders was notable across all age categories. For instance, the proportion of alcohol consumers in the 35-44 age group dropped slightly from 15.6% in 2010 to 15.2% in 2022 for males, while female consumption in this group increased modestly from 5.7% to 7.2%.

3. Decline in Younger Populations: A notable decline in alcohol consumption was observed in younger age groups (15-24) between 2010 and 2022. In 2010, 8.6% of individuals aged 15-24 consumed alcohol, but this figure decreased slightly to 8.3% in 2022. While male consumption in this age group decreased from 14.7% to 11.6%, female consumption increased from 2.8% to 4.9%.

4. Older Age Groups: Alcohol consumption in older age groups (55+), though lower than in younger age groups, showed minimal changes over the 12-year period. However, in the 75+ age group, alcohol consumption remained steady at around 3.3% in 2010 and 3.6% in 2022, with the male population showing a higher prevalence compared to females.

Reasons for Starting Alcohol Consumption (2010-2022)

1. Decreasing Interest in Alcohol: The percentage of individuals reporting that they began drinking alcohol out of curiosity decreased from 30.6% in 2010 to 11.3% in 2022. Males continued to report curiosity as a common reason, but the decline was more prominent among females, falling from 30.2% in 2010 to 9.6% in 2022.

2. Peer Influence and Fun: The influence of friends and the desire for fun remained significant reasons for alcohol consumption initiation. The proportion of individuals who began drinking due to peer influence decreased from 22.9% in 2010 to 13.3% in 2022. Notably, fun was a stronger motivating factor for females, with 62.1% of females in 2022 reporting it as a reason for alcohol initiation, compared to 50.4% of males.

3. Personal and Family Problems: The proportion of individuals citing personal or family problems as reasons for alcohol initiation remained relatively low and unchanged. Family issues remained a reason for 1.2% of individuals in 2010 and 1.1% in 2022, with no significant difference between genders.

4. Desire to Fit In (Admiration): The percentage of individuals who began drinking alcohol due to social pressures, such as a desire to fit in, decreased from 12% in 2010 to 6.7% in 2022. This decrease was more pronounced among females (from 6.2% to 2.9%) than among males (from 13.4% to 8%).

Table1. The percentage of individuals' status of alcohol use by Ggender and age group, 2010-2022 [15+ age] (%)

	2010			2022		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Consumers	12,6	21,1	4,4	12,1	18,4	5,9
15-24	8,6	14,7	2,8	8,3	11,6	4,9
25-34	17,0	26,4	7,5	17,5	24,2	10,8
35-44	15,6	25,5	5,7	15,2	23,1	7,2
45-54	13,7	23,6	3,8	12,2	19,2	5,1
55-64	11,6	20,9	2,8	11,0	18,6	3,6
65-74	5,0	9,8	1,5	6,7	12,2	1,8
75+	3,3	6,5	0,8	3,6	7,1	1,2
Doesn't consume	12,5	20,0	5,2	4,6	7,5	1,7
15-24	7,5	10,4	4,7	1,6	2,3	0,9
25-34	11,2	15,4	7,1	3,9	5,2	2,5
35-44	14,0	22,2	5,7	4,2	6,4	1,9
45-54	14,8	24,1	5,4	4,9	7,5	2,3
55-64	17,6	32,5	3,5	7,0	12,5	1,6
65-74	14,4	30,0	2,9	8,1	15,8	1,3
75+	16,0	32,1	2,6	7,0	16,2	0,9
Never consume	74,9	58,8	90,3	83,3	74,1	92,4
15-24	83,9	75,0	92,5	90,0	86,1	94,2
25-34	71,8	58,2	85,4	78,6	70,5	86,8
35-44	70,3	52,3	88,5	80,7	70,5	90,9
45-54	71,5	52,3	90,7	82,9	73,3	92,6
55-64	70,7	46,6	93,7	82,0	68,9	94,8
65-74	80,5	60,2	95,6	85,2	72,0	96,8
75+	80,7	61,4	96,7	89,5	76,7	97,9

Table 2. The distribution of reasons behind starting alcohol use of individuals by gender, 2010-2022 [15+ age] (%)

	2010			2022		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Interest	30,6	30,6	30,2	11,3	11,8	9,6
Admiration	12,0	13,4	6,2	6,7	8,0	2,9
Family problems	1,2	1,1	1,6	1,1	1,3	0,4
Personal problems	1,9	2,1	1,1	3,1	3,7	1,4
Impact of friend	22,9	25,9	10,5	13,3	14,9	8,5
For fun	26,4	22,9	40,5	53,3	50,4	62,1
No special reason	1,6	1,3	3,1	11,2	10,0	15,0

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal a general decline in alcohol consumption among the Turkish population from 2010 to 2022, particularly among males. However, significant gender differences remain, with men consuming alcohol at much higher rates than women. In Turkey, there is a decrease in alcohol consumption in men and an increase in women compared to previous years. In a large-scale epidemiological study conducted in the USA, it was reported that the prevalence of alcohol use increased in women compared to previous years, while it remained stable in men(10). As a result, there is a narrowing between the genders in both countries. The fact that alcohol consumption is higher in men is consistent with the literature (11,12). The increase in women can be attributed to recreational use brought about by freedom. The increase in "fun" as a reason for consumption, particularly among females, reflects a more modern approach to alcohol use, possibly associated with changing social norms. On the contrary, some studies in the literature have reported that the increase in alcohol use in women may be related to past trauma (13). Studies have shown that very few individuals with alcohol use disorders seek treatment(14). Therefore, it is important to identify individuals who are at risk. Additionally, many studies have reported that most policies regarding alcohol use disorders are geared

toward men and women are neglected (15) Considering the increase in alcohol consumption among women in recent years, it can be concluded that policies targeting women should be developed. Studies have shown that social support for women is more effective in treating alcohol use disorder (16,17). Therefore, it is important to know how society's alcohol use varies between genders in order to apply different treatment protocols for gender.

The decline in alcohol use among younger individuals could be attributed to increased awareness of the health risks associated with alcohol and a growing trend toward healthier lifestyles..On the other hand, alcohol use among older individuals remained relatively stable, which may reflect generational attitudes toward alcohol.

When looking at the reasons for starting to use alcohol, there is a significant decrease in starting to use alcohol due to curiosity and peer influence and an increase in recreational use. There is also a slight increase in alcohol use due to personal problems. This situation reflects the change in social dynamics.

CONCLUSION

This study provides valuable insights into the patterns and reasons behind alcohol consumption in Turkey. While alcohol use has slightly decreased over the last decade, gender and age disparities persist. The shift in reasons for starting to use alcohol from curiosity and peer influence to entertainment points to changing social dynamics. Policymakers and public health professionals must continue to monitor these trends to develop effective strategies aimed at reducing harmful alcohol consumption across various demographic groups.

DESCRIPTIONS

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