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Alcohol addiction is brewed in families and served by peers. Perspectives of treatment service users at Hope and Beyond Rehabilitation Centre on causes of alcohol addiction

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Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Authors have no conflict of interest
to declare

Background: The situation of Alcohol and Use Disorder in Uganda

- About 11,000,000 people are estimated to use alcohol in Uganda of which
- About 4,000,000 are considered as high-end users and in need of treatment for Alcohol Use Disorder (WHO, 2018).
- Underage use of alcohol/substances is on the rise
- 70.1% of secondary school going children reported to have ever used alcohol and/or substances while 39.1% used substances regularly
- Alcohol is the commonest substance of regular use (Abbo, et al., (2016).

Purpose

Young people naturally experiment with alcohol but many progress to recreational use and some may get addicted.

Internal and external factors have been documented for adolescents' vulnerability to the problematic use of alcohol and substances.

The line between facilitating factors for alcohol use and addiction is thin and ambiguous (Kalema et al, 2017).

This study aims at providing health service providers and policymakers with insight for addiction prevention and treatment programming.

Objectives

- Alcohol is entrenched in the day-to-day lives of people, and considered a 'normal drink'.
- Yet, alcohol is a major cause of the global burden of disease, disability and death (Babor et al., 2010; Michie et al. (2011).
- This study explores factors responsible for initiation and continuation of alcohol use

Methodology

- Sample: 72 patients with AUD out of 126 total admissions at Hope and Beyond between 1st January 2020 and 30th April 2022.
- Quantitative: Structured interviews on 54 randomly selected AUD clients
- Qualitative: 3 Focus Group Discussions among 18
- Both surveys reasons for initiation and continuation of alcohol use in spite of the associated negative consequences.

Results (Factors responsible for alcohol use)

- **Initiation only:** Familial factors (f=7(13%), were the only factors mentioned
- **Initiation and continuation of use:** Peer Pressure (f=41(76%), familial factors (f=14(26%), affordability (f=14(26 %)) and drinking for Leisure (f=3(6%)).
- **Continuation only:** Drinking to feel better f=27(50%).
- Other important factors from FGD:, School environment and medical reasons ...

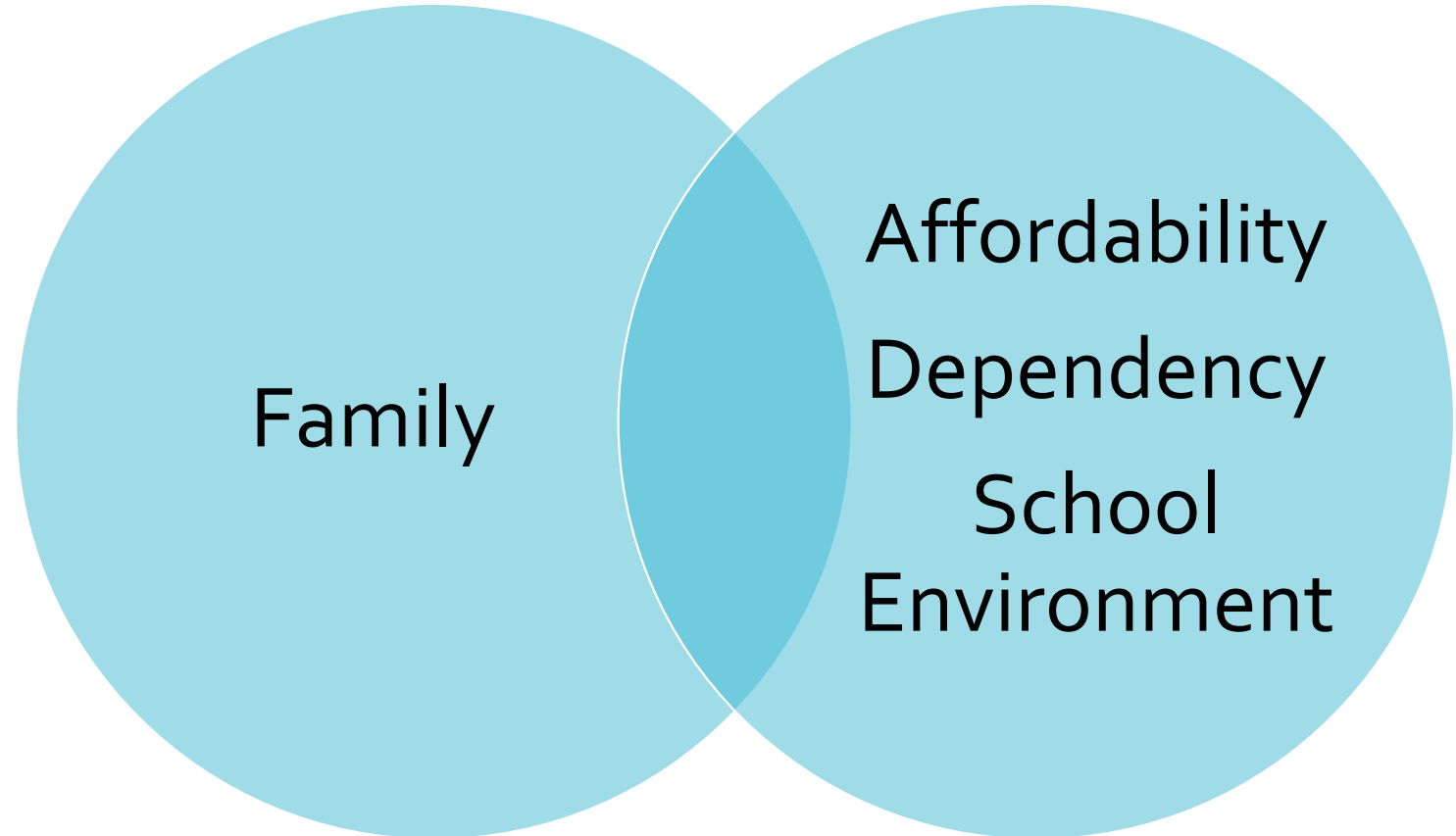
Results Cont'd (Testimonies)

- *"My mother used to like drinking a lot. She used to stock different types of alcohol and would share with me one sweet brand 'Amarula'. I was told that after drinking, I would dance for the guests and they gave me lots of money", Male 30-years*
- *"We used to sit with all sorts of people 'idle worshippers'.... they would tell me that professors are meant to drink a lot of alcohol and as a teacher, I derived a lot of pleasure in their praises" Male, 42 years.*
- *"I had a kidney problem and was told never to drink but the doctor told me that at least if you drink, do beer" female 30 years*

Results
Reasons for
initiation and
Continuation
of alcohol use

Initiation

Continuation



Intersecting: Peer, Affordability and leisure

Discussion

Parents and peers create a pro alcohol environment and facilitate initial stages of alcohol dependency

- Parents' Direct influence : Serving alcohol, modeling children
- Parents' Indirect influence: Drinking in front of children and permissiveness
- Children who learn from parents are most likely to progress faster to heavy episodic drinking (Kaynak., et a 2014)
- **Peer influence:** Experimentation and modeling hence positive expectations leading to heavy drinking.

Lessons learnt

Prevention: Early exposure to alcohol increases risks of AUD in adulthood.

- Prevention in families: Exemplariness, alcohol-specific communication; disapproval of teenage drinking; rules about alcohol; parental monitoring; parent-child relationship quality; family conflict, parental support and involvement; and general communication Gilligan, C., & Kypri, K. (2012).
- Teaching of life skills to the young ones (Awareness, relational and decision making)

Lessons learnt

- A supportive family environment or caring relationship with at least one adult is a protective factor against AUD.
- Clients in recovery should be helped to identify alternative means of leisure and enjoyment to replace the pivotal role of alcohol.

Call to Action

- The role of social interactions in initiation and continuation of alcohol use should be mitigated by alcohol regulation at various levels (From National to Household).
- Encourage alcohol free activities among young people
- Other evidence based prevention AUD prevention strategies: Volunteering and Church based engagements
- School based regulations on alcohol

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Thank you!

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