

Drinking Trends of Adolescents in One Region of Korea

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the drinking conditions of adolescents in one region of South Korea. Data were collected online, and students from the fourth grade of elementary school to the third grade of high school participated. In this study, participants' 'drinking experience rate' was found to be 22.4%, 'current drinking rate' was 4.4%, and 'risk drinking rate' was 2.1%. In particular, the 'drinking experience rate' was 8.2% for elementary schools, 16.8% for middle schools, 28.4% for general high schools, and 38.9% for specialized vocational high schools. In addition, the annual trend showed a downward trend after 2019. Active support is needed to plan and implement alcohol-free health education and alcohol-prevention programs tailored to the drinking conditions of youth in the local community.

Keywords: adolescent, drinking, trend

INTRODUCTION

Adolescent drinking can not only damage physical health, but also adversely affect mental health, such as depression and stress, and increase the possibility of various social problems [1]. The more frequent the drinking behavior in adolescence, the more likely it is to lead to high-risk drinking and alcohol dependence in adulthood [2]. Adolescents' drinking behavior is a trend of feminization and younger age. Accordingly, research on adolescent drinking as well as various policies and measures are being implemented [3-4].

However, one in five young people was still found to drink alcohol. In addition, despite the prohibition on the sale of alcoholic beverages by the Youth Protection Act, it was found that there are still no difficulties in the accessibility of alcohol and the ease of purchase of alcohol by adolescents. Youth drinking requires early education, and active intervention for dangerous drinking is crucial[5-6].

In this study, we attempted to provide basic data for establishing youth drinking prevention policies in a local area.

The specific study objectives are as follows:

1. To identify the study participants' drinking status (drinking experience rate', 'current drinking rate', and risk drinking rate).
2. To identify changes in the drinking rate by year.

METHODS

Study design

This descriptive study investigated the drinking status of adolescents in one region of Korea

Participants and data collection

This study used data from the 2021 drinking status survey conducted on adolescents in a city. A total of 329 schools participated in this survey: 13 elementary schools, 172 middle schools, 111 general high schools, and 33 specialized vocational high schools. There was a total of 28,256 participants whose ages ranged from 11 to 18 years.

Data collection was conducted using a self-reported online survey, and only students who voluntarily wanted to participate were surveyed.

In addition, to understand the change in the youth drinking rate by year, it was compared with the results of the 2016-2020 research report [7].

Study instruments

In this study, the questionnaire data of 'drinking experience rate', 'current drinking rate', and 'risk drinking rate' were analyzed.

The question about 'drinking experience rate' is 'Have you ever drank more than one drink before?'. 'Drinking experience rate' refers to the proportion of people who have drank at least one drink in their lifetime.

The question about 'current drinking rate' is 'In the past 30 days, on how many days did you drink at least 1 drink?'. 'Current drinking rate' refers to the proportion of people who have drank at least one drink in the past 30 days.

The question of 'risk drinking rate' was 'What was the average amount of alcohol you drank in the last 30 days? to be. 'Dangerous drinking rate' refers to the proportion of current drinkers who drink moderately or more at one time in the last 30 days.

RESULT

Drinking status of study participants

Table 1 shows the drinking status of the participants.

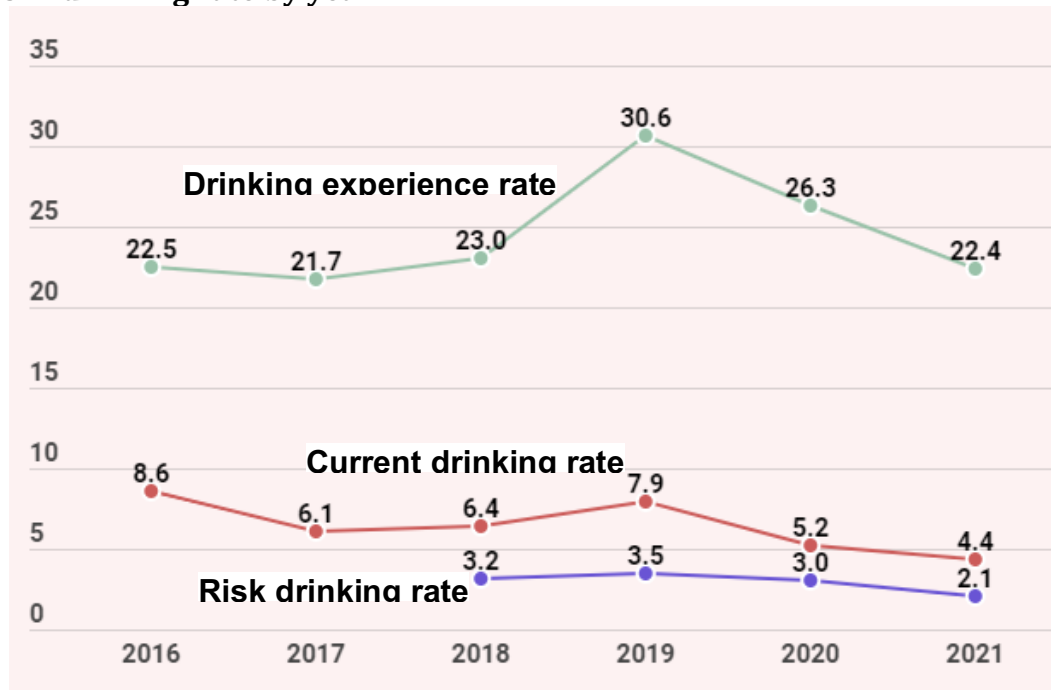
The 'drinking experience rate' was 22.4% overall, 8.2% for elementary school, 16.8% for middle school, 28.4% for general high school, and 38.9% for specialized vocational high school. The 'current drinking rate' was 4.4% in total, 0.6% in elementary school, 2.3% in middle school, 5.9% in general high school, and 11.8% in specialized vocational high school.

The 'risk drinking rate' was 2.1% overall, 0.0% for elementary school, 0.7% for middle school, 3.0% for general high school, and 7.2% for specialized vocational high school.

It also showed a decrease overall compared to 2020.

(N=28,256)								
variables/year		2021		2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Drinking experience rate	Boy students	27.8	▼	30.9	35.7	27.9	26.0	22.5
	Girls students	17.2	▼	21.0	24.4	17.3	16.5	15.7
	Total	22.4	▼	26.3	30.6	23.0	21.7	22.5
	Elementary school	8.2	▼	10.1	11.7	6.7	11.7	8.8
	Middle school	16.8	▼	22.7	26.0	15.0	13.2	12.9
	High school	28.4	▼	38.4	38.5	33.0	31.0	33.0
	Specialized vocational high school	38.9	▲	38.3	49.4	46.4	41.1	42.6
Current drinking rate	Boy students	5.6	▼	6.3	9.3	7.5	7.5	10.9
	Girls students	3.2	▼	4.0	6.2	5.0	4.5	5.8
	Total	4.4	▼	5.2	7.9	6.4	6.1	8.6
	Elementary school	0.6	▼	0.9	2.2	1.0	1.8	1.9
	Middle school	2.3	-	2.3	4.9	2.5	2.3	3.6
	High school	5.9	▼	6.9	11.4	10.1	9.6	12.6
	Specialized vocational high school	11.8	▼	14.3	20.0	19.0	16.9	23.1
Risk drinking rate	Boy students	2.6	▼	3.4	3.6	3.4	-	-
	Girls students	1.5	▼	2.6	3.4	2.9	-	-
	Total	2.1	▼	3.0	3.5	3.2	-	-
	Elementary school	0.0	▼	0.2	0.0	-	-	-
	Middle school	0.7	▼	0.9	1.3	-	-	-
	High school	3.0	▼	4.1	5.7	-	-	-
	Specialized vocational high school	7.2	▼	9.5	13.2	-	-	-
Compared to the 2020 survey, the increase in 2021 is expressed as ▲ (increase), ▼ (decrease).								

Changes in drinking rate by year



Based on this study, the changes in the drinking rate of adolescents in one region from 2016 to 2021 are shown in Figure 1. The drinking experience rate, current drinking rate', and 'risk drinking rate' showed a decreasing trend from 2016 to 2018, an upward trend in 2019, and then decreased again until 2021.

DISCUSSION

As a result of this study, the 'drinking experience rate', 'current drinking rate', and 'risk drinking rate' showed a slight decrease compared to the previous year, but the drinking rate of general high schools and specialized vocational high schools was slightly higher. In addition, when comparing the results of this study with the statistical results of the Youth Health Behavior Survey announced by the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2021, the 'current drinking rate' was lower than the results of 12.4% of male students and 8.9% of female students. In addition, the 'risk drinking rate' was lower than 5.3% for the male students and 4.4% for the female students. These results were lower than the national average youth statistics. However, in the case of specialized vocational high schools, it was similar to or higher than the national average.

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