

Drunkorexia and Alcholemlia among College Students: Current Trends Revisited

Rosanne Keathley Sam Houston State University

Judy and Michael Sandlin Texas A&M University

Introduction

Drunkorexia is classified as restricting daily caloric intake in order to consume more alcohol. Alcholemlia is characterized as purposefully purging after consuming food or alcohol in order to consume more alcoholic beverages. These behaviors often stem from the fear of weight gain from alcohol and are more prevalent in college-aged women, although men also experience them. In extreme cases, the behaviors may be related to eating disorders. The purpose of this study was to revisit the knowledge of and participation in drunkorexia and alcholemlia of college students.



Method

Participants / Instrument

Subjects were 891 college students attending a community college or large four-year state university. Subjects responded to a 12-item

survey associated with the purpose of the study. The sample was almost equally divided between males (46%) and females (54%) and the average age of the participants was 20.80 years ($SD= 2.13$).

Analysis/Results

Just under half of the subjects (43.4%) had ever heard of drunkorexia while 13.2% ($n = 118$) admitted to drunkorexia themselves. Of those, the average number of times of drunkorexia was 11.94 ($SD= 2.29$). Thirty-two participants disclosed that they had participated in drunkorexia 10 or more times in their lifetime. Interestingly, a number of participants who are under the legal age limit had participated in drunkorexia – age 18=4 participates, age 19=13 participants, and age 20=27 participants.

Again, just under half of the participants (40.5%) had ever heard of alcholemlia and 6.1% ($n= 54$) admitted to alcholemlia. The average rate of participation in alcholemlia was 7.61 ($SD= 3.60$). Ten subjects admitted that they had



vomited 10 or more times in order to consume more alcohol. A number of participants who are under the legal age limit had also participated in alcholemlia – age 18=0 participates, age 19=6 participants, and age 20=15 participants.

A significant difference in drunkorexia based on membership in a sorority/fraternity was observed, $\chi^2(1, N=891) = 42.10, p = .000$. Not surprisingly, members of a sorority/fraternity were more likely to participate in drunkorexia. A significant difference in alcholemlia based on membership in a sorority/fraternity was observed, $\chi^2(1, N=891) = 19.47, p= .000$. Members of a sorority/fraternity were also more likely to participate in alcholemlia.



Conclusions

While participation in drunkorexia or alcholemlia may be low, those who do participate do so at a high rate. Programs should be initiated to educate college students, particularly sorority/fraternity members, about the dangers of these behaviors.