

Effects of paternal drinking, conduct disorder and childhood home environment on the development of alcohol use disorders in a Thai population

Assanangkornchai, Sawitri; Geater, Alan F.; Saunders, John B.; McNeil, Donald R.
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Abstract

Aims: To identify influences on the development of alcohol use disorders in a Thai population, particularly parental drinking and childhood environment.

Design Setting: A university hospital, a regional hospital and a community hospital in southern Thailand.

Participants: Ninety-one alcohol-dependents and 77 hazardous/harmful drinkers were recruited as cases and 144 non- or infrequent drinkers as controls.

Measurements: Data on parental drinking, family demographic characteristics, family activities, parental disciplinary practice, early religious life and conduct disorder were obtained using a structured interview questionnaire. The main outcome measure was the subject's classification as alcohol-dependent, hazardous/harmful drinker or non-/infrequent drinker.

Findings: A significant relationship was found between having a drinking father and the occurrence of hazardous/harmful drinking or alcohol dependence in the subjects. Childhood factors (conduct disorder and having been a temple boy, relative probability ratios, RPRs and 95% CI: 6.39, 2.81-14.55 and 2.21, 1.19-4.08, respectively) also significantly predicted alcohol dependence, while perceived poverty and ethnic alienation was reported less frequently by hazardous/harmful drinkers and alcohol-dependents (RPRs and 95% CIs = 0.34, 0.19-0.62 and 0.59, 0.38-0.93, respectively) than the controls.

The relative probability ratio for the effect of the father's infrequent drinking on the son's alcohol dependence was 2.92 (95% CI = 1.42-6.02) and for the father's heavy or dependent drinking 2.84 (95% CI = 1.31-6.15).

Conclusions: Being exposed to a light-drinking father increases the risk of a son's alcohol use disorders exhibited either as hazardous-harmful or dependent drinking. However, exposure to a heavy- or dependent-drinking father is associated more uniquely with an increased risk of his son being alcohol-dependent. The extent to which this is seen in other cultures is worthy of exploration.

Keywords: Alcohol-use disorders; home environment; paternal drinking