

PW01-239 - FROM FIRST TO FINAL YEAR OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION: TRAJECTORY OF ALCOHOL PROBLEMS IN BELARUSIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Objectives: The problem of alcohol use is a major public health problem in the general students' population in Belarus. We therefore screen for the prevalence and trace the order of increase in alcohol use and related problems among freshmen and seniors in Belarusian universities.

Materials and methods: A total of 565 (1st - 2nd courses, mean age - 18.9yrs), 537 (3rd - 4th courses, mean age - 20.9yrs) and 397 (5th - 6th courses, mean age - 22.8 yrs) university students in Minsk (Belarus) were administered the AUDIT questionnaire, including other alcohol related questions. The cut-off point on the AUDIT was set at 8. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS 16.0 version for Windows; the criteria of Pearson, χ^2 and Student's t tests. The probability value for significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Results: Alcohol use and related problems increased with increase in the average age and year of study. In the 1st - 2nd, 3rd - 4th, 5th - 6th courses, alcohol users were 83.56%, 85.64%, 94.22% respectively and problem drinkers were 14.51%, 17.88%, 20.91% respectively. The use of strong strength alcoholic beverages was linked with a high risk of alcohol related problems, than the use of weak alcoholic beverages in the general students' population.

Conclusion: The level of alcohol use and related problems in the general students' population in Belarus are high and show increase in order of increase both in the average age and in the year of study.