

DSM-5 and ICD-11 alcohol use disorder criteria in young adult regular drinkers: Lifetime prevalence and age of onset

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Introduction / Issues: Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) is a significant contributor to global disease burden. AUD has a relatively early peak age of onset of 18-24 (Teesson et al., 2010). However, compared to AUD in adults, we have relatively little understanding of the emergence and progression of AUD in adolescents and emerging adults.

Design and Methods: The RADAR study is a prospective cohort study designed to investigate the emergence of AUD in community-dwelling adolescents and emerging adults across Australia. At 6 monthly intervals over 2.5 years, participants were interviewed regarding alcohol consumption and alcohol use disorder criteria by clinical psychologists using the SCID-IV-RV. This paper reports the baseline findings of the RADAR cohort.

Key Findings: Rates of lifetime criteria endorsement varied considerably. Tolerance was the most commonly endorsed criteria (50.3%), followed by social problems (10.4%) and Larger/Longer (9.0%). The median age of onset for all AUD criteria was 18 years of age. 18.4% of our cohort met DSM-5 AUD diagnosis in their lifetime to date, and 16.8% met ICD-11 AUD. When removing Tolerance from the AUD criteria, DSM-5 AUD lifetime prevalence reduced to 11.0%, and ICD-11 AUD lifetime prevalence fell to 7.1% in our cohort

Discussions and Conclusions: Variable rates of criteria endorsement most likely reflect both true differences in the experience of AUD criteria and methodological challenges in the assessment of AUD in an emerging adult age group. High rates of tolerance to the effects of alcohol, and relatively low rates of drinking larger/longer than intended are discussed considering methodological challenges in assessing these criteria in young adults.

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