

FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS AND ADOLESCENTS ALCOHOL DRINKING

Irena Jelonkiewicz, Katarzyna Kosińska-Dec

Zakład Psychologii Klinicznej
Instytutu Psychiatrii i Neurologii w Warszawie

ABSTRACT – The aim of the study was to determine relationships between specific types of family functioning and the amount of alcohol consumed by adolescent children. Alcohol drinking in adolescence may be considered as one of many behaviors associated with psychosocial development, but it is sometimes regarded also as a source of problem behaviors. Thus it seems important to find out predictors, or at least correlates of drinking in adolescence. Participants in the study were 180 families living in Warsaw who filled out our questionnaires. Cluster analysis was based on the following three variables describing family relations: strong points of the family, intimacy in the marital couple, and power distribution in the family. Two types of families were distinguished in the analysis: satisfied and dissatisfied. Family characteristics (i.e. level of emotional support provided to the child and degree of controlling the child) were related to the amount of alcohol consumed by adolescents. Those consuming small amounts of alcohol come from families more proud of belonging in the family, with more marked emotional closeness between parents, and with more power available to the children in family matters.

Key words: alcohol consumption, adolescents, family relations.