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## ALCOHOL USE AND RELATED PROBLEMS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A PREVALENCE SURVEY IN BELARUS

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**Objectives:** 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 students in Belarusian universities.

**Methods:** A total of 565 (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> courses, mean age - 19yrs); 537 (3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> courses, mean age - 21yrs); and 397 (5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> courses, mean age - 23yrs) university students in Minsk, Belarus were administered questionnaire, containing the AUDIT, CAGE. 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,  $\chi^2$  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 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>, alcohol users were 83.6%, 85.6%, 94.2% respectively and problem drinkers were 14.5%, 17.9%, 20.9% respectively. The use of strong strength alcoholic beverages was linked to a high risk of alcohol problems.

**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 the year of study.