

## Abstract

## NMA/AGSM/2022/PUBH/001- Comparison of Alcohol Use before and at the Peak of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Anambra State, South-East Nigeria

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## Abstract

**Background:** Heavy alcohol use is associated with an increased risk of weakening the immune system which can make individuals more susceptible to contracting infectious diseases, including COVID-19. This study examines the prevalence of alcohol use before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Methodology:** Purposive sampling technique, which targeted only individuals who consume alcohol, was utilized to select participants from three cities in Anambra State, South-Eastern Nigeria. Participants were asked to complete a standardized questionnaire, evaluating the alcohol drinking behavior before (2019) and during the pandemic (2020).

**Results:** Respondents comprise 318 (75.7%) males and 102 (24.3%) females; the ages range from 26 to 55 years (mean age = 38.7 years, SD = 7.3). The majority of the respondents (41.8%,) reported high alcohol use in 2019 before the COVID- 19 compared to 28.4% who reported increased use during the pandemic. However, 29.8% reported no change in their drinking rate.

**Conclusion:** Although some studies have shown that low intake of alcohol might have a protective effect on specific conditions such as ischemic heart disease and diabetes mellitus, nevertheless, harmful consumption of alcohol is associated with a wide range of health problems which include acute respiratory syndrome, chronic liver disease, and other gastrointestinal diseases, several cancers, cardiovascular diseases, neurological disorders, injuries, and alcohol dependence. Harmful use of alcohol is a public health problem and full-scale sensitization of the populace on the dangers associated with alcohol overuse is necessary as we transition to post-COVID- 19 era.

**Keywords:** COVID-19; Pandemic; Alcohol Use; Health Consequences; Drinking Behavior.

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