

The Influence of Gender and Harmful Alcohol Consumption on Academic Performance in Spanish University Students

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Abstract : First year university students comprise one of the groups most likely to indulge in hazardous alcohol consumption. The transition from secondary school to university presents a range of academic, social and developmental challenges requiring new responses that will meet the demands of this highly competitive environment. The main purpose of this research was to analyze the influence of gender and hazardous alcohol consumption on academic performance of 300 university students in Spain in a three-year follow-up study. Alcohol consumption was measured using the Alcohol Use Identification Test (AUDIT), and the average university grades were provided by the Academic Management Services of the University. Analysis of variance showed that the level of alcohol consumption significantly affected academic performance. Students undertaking hazardous alcohol consumption obtained the lowest grades during the first three years at university. These effects were particularly marked in the sample of women with a hazardous pattern of alcohol consumption, although the interaction between gender and this type of consumption was not significant. The study highlights the impact of hazardous alcohol consumption on the academic trajectory of university students. The findings confirm that alcohol consumption predicts poor academic performance in first year students and that the low level of performance is maintained throughout the university career.

Keywords : academic performance, alcohol consumption, gender, university students

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