Alcohol Use in the Americas and Results of Alcohol and COVID-19 Regional Survey

Dr Maristela G. Monteiro
Senior Advisor on Alcohol
PAHO/WHO
monteirm@paho.org
Total alcohol per capita consumption (APC) among drinkers (all drinkers and by gender, aged 15+ years, in liters of pure alcohol), 2016.

**AMERICAS**: 15.1 L or 32.8 grams/day

Total alcohol per capita consumption (APC) in the general population (aged 15+ years, in liters of pure alcohol), 2016.

- **Global**: 6.4 L
- **WPR**: 7.3 L
- **SEAR**: 4.5 L
- **EUR**: 9.8 L
- **EMR**: 0.6 L
- **AMR**: 8.0 or 17.4 grams/day
- **AFR**: 6.3 L

Source: WHO Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health, 2018
Drinking status of adults (aged 15+) who lived in the Americas in 2016

**Adults aged 15+**
- Adults: 767,582,619
- Current drinkers: 435,311,810 (56.7%)
- Current heavy episodic drinkers: 179,423,450 (23.4%)
- Persons with an alcohol use disorder: 70,680,290 (9.2%)

**Females aged 15+**
- Females: 391,303,600
- Current female drinkers: 173,448,670 (44.3%)
- Current female heavy episodic drinkers: 36,847,280 (9.4%)
- Females with an alcohol use disorder: 23,147,420 (5.9%)

**Males aged 15+**
- Males: 376,279,020
- Current male drinkers: 262,680,710 (69.8%)
- Current male heavy episodic drinkers: 143,441,220 (38.1%)
- Males with an alcohol use disorder: 47,834,910 (12.7%)
Changes in recorded adult (15+ years; in liters of pure alcohol) alcohol per capita consumption (APC) from 2010 to 2016 in the Americas, by country and World Bank income group.
Deaths Attributable to Alcohol in 2016 in the Americas, by cause

Total DEATHS: 379,000; 5.5% of All DEATHS

% of all AA deaths

% of all deaths

3.1% of all communicable, maternal, perinatal, and nutritional condition deaths

3.6% of all NCD deaths

23.6% of all injury deaths
Alcohol use as a risk factor for seven of the eight leading causes of death among 15-49-year-olds in the Americas in 2016
Alcohol-attributable DALYs - 2016

18,901,659 DALYs; 6.7% of all DALYs
Prevalence (in %) of alcohol use disorders (AUDs), by sex, and by WHO region and the world, 2016
Regional Survey on Alcohol and COVID-19

- Standardized and anonymous online survey using Qualtrics software was developed in 4 languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese and French
- Disseminated through PAHO’s Communication platforms
  - Facebook, Twitter, the Pan American Network for Alcohol and Public Health (PANNAPH), the Healthy Caribbean Coalition, the Healthy Coalition of Latin America, as well as through advisors from the Noncommunicable and Mental Health Department, and individual contacts
- Data collection: 22 May – 30 June 2020
- 33 countries, including those over 18 years of age who consented and reported to have NOT left their country since MARCH 15th, 2020
- Non probabilistic SAMPLE
Areas Covered in the Questionnaire

- **DEMOGRAPHICS**: country and city, age, race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, education, earnings, marital status

- **COVID-19 RELATED QUESTIONS**: current living conditions, N of people in the household, N with a disability, employment status, precautionary measures taken in daily life, worries/concerns, changes in work/school situation, respondent or known individual by respondent being tested for COVID-19 (positive/negative/sick/death)

- **ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN 2019**: average quantity and frequency, drinking during weekdays and weekends, places, types of beverages, heavy episodic drinking occasions, ever sought help

- **ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION DURING THE PANDEMIC**: average quantity and frequency, drinking during weekdays and weekends, places, types of beverages, heavy episodic drinking occasions, tried to seek help

- **MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS IN THE LAST 14 DAYS**: including negative emotional symptoms and feelings during the pandemic
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>NON LATIN CARIBBEAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of valid responses</td>
<td>12,328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(from 23,058)</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Number of Respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aruba</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belize</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia, Plurinational State of</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curacao</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>1,593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Kitts and Nevis</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Lucia</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suriname</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of</td>
<td>3,799</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey Respondents

- Andean: 22.1%
- Mesoamerica: 32.6%
- Southern Cone: 42.1%
- Non-Latin Caribbean: 3.2%

- Female: 65.5%
- Male: 34.0%

- 18 – 29: 29.5%
- 30 – 39: 29.4%
- 40 – 49: 20.7%
- 50 – 59: 13.3%
- 60+: 7.1%

- White: 41.7%
- Black: 4.2%
- Indigenous: 1.5%
- Mixed/Other/Not sure: 52.6%
Prevalence of Drinking by Sex in 2019 and 2020

**REGION**

- Total*: 75.8% (2019) vs. 81.1% (2020), Men*: 63.4% (2019) vs. 67.8% (2020), Women*: 75.3% (2019) vs. 60.1% (2020)

**NON LATIN CARIBBEAN**

- Total: 67.0% (2019) vs. 71.3% (2020), Men: 55.6% (2019) vs. 63.8% (2020), Women: 67.3% (2019) vs. 51.9% (2020)

* Chi-square tests between years (2019 vs. 2020) and between genders were significant for the total sample; *P* < 0.001

** From March to June 2020, during the pandemic.
Beverage Type Most Consumed in the Region

**2019**
- 52.3% Beer
- 17.3% Spirits
- 21.8% Wine
- 5.8% Homemade Alcohol
- 2.8% Other

**2020***
- 48.7% Beer
- 13.8% Wine
- 3.5% Homemade Alcohol
- 4.7% Other
- 29.3% Spirits

*From March to June 2020, during the pandemic.*
Beverage Type Most Consumed by Sex, NON LATIN CARIBBEAN

2019

- Wine: 35.7%
- Beer: 25.0%
- Spirits: 32.2%
- Homemade Alcohol: 2.1%
- Other: 5.0%

2020

- Wine: 37.4%
- Beer: 23.3%
- Spirits: 33.2%
- Homemade Alcohol: 1.4%
- Other: 4.7%
Informal or Illicit Alcohol Consumption in the Region

2019

- 85.8% Never
- 9.7% Few times in the year
- 2.2% Monthly
- 0.4% Daily
- 1.9% Weekly

2020*

- 91.6% Never
- 4.9% Monthly
- 3.0% Weekly
- 0.5% Daily

* From March to June 2020, during the pandemic; The category ‘Few times in the year’ is not available for the year 2020 – during the pandemic.
Prevalence of Heavy Episodic Drinking (HED) by Sex, 2019 and 2020

* Chi-square tests between years (2019 vs. 2020) and between genders were significant for the total sample; $P < 0.001$
** From March to June 2020, during the pandemic.
Change in Frequency of HED in the Region, by Sex, from 2019 to 2020*

* From March to June 2020, during the pandemic.
** Chi-square test between the change in frequency of HED and genders was significant; \( P < 0.001 \)
Prevalence of HED by Age Group in the Region

* From March to June 2020, during the pandemic.
** Chi-square test comparing age groups was significant across years; \( P < 0.001 \)
Help Seeking Behavior to Reduce Drinking, Regional Results

- **On your own**
  - 2019: 10.2%
  - 2020*: 7.4%

- **Any help sought**
  - 2019: 1.9%
  - 2020*: 1.4%

- **Did not find help**
  - 2019: 0.4%
  - 2020*: 0.3%

- **Never**
  - 2019: 87.5%
  - 2020*: 90.9%

*From March to June 2020, during the pandemic.*
Mental Health Impacts (GAD-7) + Sleep

* Over the past 14 days

- Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge
- Not being able to stop or control worrying
- Worrying too much about different things
- Trouble relaxing
- Being so restless that it’s hard to sit still
- Becoming easily annoyed or irritable
- Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen
- Having trouble falling asleep
Prevalence of Distress Symptoms/Feelings
(over half of the days or nearly every day*)

REGIONAL RESULTS

Number of Emotional Symptoms/Feelings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>1 to 4</th>
<th>5 to 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Men**</td>
<td>Women**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 4</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 8</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Over the past 14 days
** Chi-square test between genders and number of emotional symptoms/feelings; \( P < 0.001 \)
REGIONAL RESULTS

Number of Emotional Symptoms/Feelings and Drinking*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Emotional Symptoms/Feelings**</th>
<th>Prevalence of Drinking</th>
<th>Heavy Episodic Drinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 4</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 8</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chi-square test between the number of emotional symptoms/feelings and (a) prevalence of drinking in 2020; $P < 0.001$; (b) prevalence of HED in 2020; $P < 0.001$

** Over the past 14 days
REGIONAL RESULTS

Income and Drinking during the Pandemic*

* Chi-square test between the total monthly household income and (a) prevalence of drinking in 2020; \( P < 0.001 \); (b) prevalence of HED in 2020; \( P < 0.001 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Monthly Household Income</th>
<th>Prevalence of Drinking</th>
<th>Heavy Episodic Drinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower-Middle</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-Middle</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>75.2%</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REGIONAL RESULTS

Income and Number of Emotional Symptoms/Feelings during the Pandemic*

* Chi-square test between the total monthly household income and number of emotional symptoms/feelings; $P < 0.001$

** Over the past 14 days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Monthly Household Income</th>
<th>None (Frequency %)</th>
<th>1 to 4 (Frequency %)</th>
<th>5 to 8 (Frequency %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower-Middle</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-Middle</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Limitations

Small sample size for most countries did not enable for a full analysis of their sample.

Self-selected respondents and may not represent current situation thus results cannot be generalized.

Only the first 4 months of the pandemic (March to June).
• Despite low participation of Caribbean countries, results still indicate that a third of men reported HED during the pandemic and most respondents drank alcohol

• Drinking was related to higher income and reducing drinking was associated with lower income

• Lower income was associated with more distress

• Negative feelings/anxiety were associated with drinking and with an increase in frequency of HED (data not shown)

• In the Region, during the pandemic, there was a shift towards stronger beverages and increase in illicit alcohol consumption

• Help seeking behavior is very low, before and during the pandemic

• It is of great concern the high prevalence of drinking in the presence of children
Acknowledgements

• The regional survey would not have been possible without the contributions of the following individuals:

  • Maristela Monteiro, Department of Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health (NMH) of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)
  • Zila M. Sanchez, Department of Preventive Medicine of Universidade Federal de São Paulo (UNIFESP)
  • Ivneet Sohi, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)
  • Juliana Valente, Department of Preventive Medicine of Universidade Federal de São Paulo (UNIFESP)
  • Rodrigo Garcia-Cerde, Department of Preventive Medicine of Universidade Federal de São Paulo (UNIFESP)
  • Rachael Falade, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)
THANK YOU!