

# Alcohol Use and Related Problems among Students of Social Work at Selected Universities in the Czech Republic and Slovakia – a Pilot Study of Risky Periods



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**BACKGROUND:** Social work students deal with the topic of alcohol both as part of their studies and later in practice as helping professionals. **OBJECTIVES:** The article focuses on experience with alcohol use and on experience with alcohol-related problems in bachelor's students of social work. **METHODS:** The research was designed as a sample survey using questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of questions developed specifically for the purposes of this research, selected questions from the ESPAD questionnaire, and the CAGE screening test. **SAMPLE:** The study group was made up of 302 bachelor's social work students at universities in Ústí nad Labem, Bratislava, and Banská Bystrica. The structure of sample in terms of gender corresponds to the assumed structure. **RESULTS:** Using Pearson's chi-squared test, there were no statistically significant differences in the

CAGE scores between individual countries, universities, or gender. The 5.1% of the students who scored 3 or 4 were found to be a thigh risk of alcohol addiction. The most common alcohol-related problems faced by students included disputes, damage to an object or item of clothing, and reduced efficiency at school or at work. In addition, 20–30% of all the students have experienced problematic sexual behaviours – sexual experiences they regretted the next day and/or unprotected sex. **CONCLUSION:** The results show that social work students do not generally engage in problematic drinking behaviour. In comparison with students of other fields, however, social work poses some specific challenges to these students. Sexual experiences that respondents regretted the next day and unsafe sex may have a major impact on their relationships and mental health in their future life.

**KEY WORDS:** ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION – SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS – PATTERNS OF DRINKING – CZECH REPUBLIC – SLOVAKIA

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