Rate of Alcohol and Substance Use Disorders among the Journalists in Erbil City
Twana Abdulrahman Rahim

Abstract:
Objectives: a number of studies have shown variations in the rate of alcohol and substance use disorders among different populations, but no study till now focused on such a variation in Iraq. The present study aimed to examine variations in the rate of alcohol and substance use disorders among journalists and some other residents in Erbil city.
Methods: 200 journalists and 486 other professionals were interviewed between the period of September to November 2008 by a structured interview (M.I.N.I.) for the detection of alcohol and substance use disorders.
Results: among the journalists, 34.5% were alcohol dependents, 7.5% were alcohol abusers, 1% were substance dependent, and another 1% were substance abusers. Among the non-journalists, 7.6% were alcohol dependents, 2.26% were alcohol abusers, 1.44% were substance dependents, and 1.02% were substance abusers. Most of the substances, other than alcohol, used by both groups were the prescription pills. 50% of journalists and 75% of non-journalists, who were either substance dependents or abusers, were alcohol dependents or abusers at the same time. Male gender and those who achieve higher educational levels were more affected in both groups.
Conclusion: The present study concluded that occupation is an important determinant for alcohol and substance use disorders in Iraq. Working as a journalist, is a risk factor particularly for alcohol dependence. Gender is an important determinant within each occupation as well.

Key Words: Journalist, Alcohol, Substance, Dependence, Abuse.

Introduction:
Excessive alcohol drinking and alcohol-related problems, as well as other substance abuse are serious public health issues world-wide. Drug dependence has shown a rising trend all over the world, possibly as a result of newer and greater stresses related to rapid changes in life styles. This problem has received some attention in recent years among the general public and mental health professionals.1

Substance Use Disorders and Occupation:
Objectives: It is notable that despite the significance of substance use disorders as a valid public health issue worldwide, and despite the knowledge that substance use disorders may be outgrowing in Iraq, only scattered studies were conducted addressing such a valid concern. Moreover, till now no study
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in Iraq has focused on the link between substance use disorders and occupation. Occupation roles are a dominant force in many aspects of social life. Occupation signifies a complex of social and psychological factors that reflect intelligence, education, personality, ambition, social status, and life-style. The consumption of alcohol and the use of other substances have many correlations with the occupational roles. Many population studies have shown that blue-collar workers and laborers have the highest level of substance use disorders. This has pushed the author to conduct such a study to find out if there are any links between the Substance Use Disorders and occupation.

Although there has been much curiosity among researchers and the general public regarding the prevalence of alcohol and substance use disorders among different occupations worldwide, few of them centered precisely on any differences between journalists and other occupations; instead, most of the researchers focused more on the differences in the prevalence of alcohol and substance use disorders between blue-collar (manual) and white-collar (non-manual) occupations. The present study tried to address particularly the journalists in Erbil city in Iraq and compared them with other professions (non-journalists) in regard to substance use disorders.

**Materials and Methods:**
This study was a cross-sectional study of 200 journalists, working in Erbil city, who have been selected randomly in the period between September and November 2008, and has been assessed for the presence of alcohol and substance dependence and abuse.

This sample was compared with another 500 subjects, selected randomly during the same period, who were involved in other occupations other than Journalists. From the 500 subjects, 14 have been excluded because they worked as Journalists occasionally during the last year in addition to their main occupation.

**Sampling and Data Collection:**
**Journalists:** The term (journalist) applies to any person who practices journalism, the gathering and dissemination of information about current events, trends, issues and people. The term includes the Editors, Reporters, Columnists, photographers, graphic artists, and page designers who work in one or more media agencies like newspapers, periodical magazines, auditory, visual, and electronic Medias.

Journalists have been selected among 2025 that were officially registered to practice journalism at the Erbil’s Journalists Syndicate at the time of conducting the study. The 200 journalists were selected by adopting (Systematic Random Sampling). Whole registered journalists names were rearranged randomly by using EXEL Microsoft Office program. The interval size measured to be approximately 20. Randomly the eighth journalist was selected, then after every 20th for the rest of journalists (i.e. 28th, 48th, etc…) until the whole list of 200 journalists was completed.

**Non-Journalists:** For the non-journalists, the participants have to allocate themselves to one of the following
occupations: governmental employee, non-governmental employee (free worker), unemployed, or student. The selection of the non-journalists was carried out by dividing Erbil city into ten geographical zones, and within each zone 50 dwellings were selected randomly (Systematic Random Sampling), and finally for each dwelling one person was selected randomly for the purpose of interview. The educational level of the participants was divided into: illiterate, primary school education, secondary school education, college or institute, and high diploma, master degree, or doctorate degree. Those who were illiterate, primary school achievers, or secondary school achievers were allocated to participants with (low educational level), and the remainder were allocated to participants with (high educational level).

**Assessment of the Participants:** For both groups (Journalists and Non-Journalists), a face to face interview was performed using the M.I.N.I. (Mini international Neuropsychiatric Interview) screen 5.0.0, followed by using chapter J and K of M.I.N.I. 5.0.0, English version. The interviews were carried out by three members of staff well trained on the use of (M.I.N.I. 5.0.0)

The purpose of the interview and the study was explained to each interviewee before starting the interview. The issue of confidentiality was emphasized and a written consent was obtained followed by recording the demographic data. **M.I.N.I. 5.0.0:** M.I.N.I. is a structured standardized international interview, which uses the fourth edition of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual criteria (DSM-IV) for the diagnosis of the psychiatric disorders. Chapter J of the M.I.N.I. 5.0.0 deals with the detection of Alcohol Dependence and Abuse during the last 12 months, if the subject answers (yes) to 3 or more out of 8 questions in section J2, then the subject would be Alcohol Dependent for the last 12 months. And if the subject answers (yes) to 1 or more out of 4 question(s) in section J3, then the subject would be Alcohol Abuser for the last 12 months, and if any subject has been diagnosed to be dependent on Alcohol, then no diagnosis of Alcohol Abuse would be given, because by definition, alcohol abusers, should not meet the criteria of Alcohol Dependence at the same time.

Chapter k of the M.I.N.I. 5.0.0 deals with the detection of (Non-Alcohol) Substance Dependence and Abuse during the last 12 months. A list of more than 51 substances included in the chapter K, including Stimulants, Cocaine, Narcotics, Hallucinogens, Phencyclidine, Inhalants, Cannabis, Tranquilizers, and other Miscellaneous Substances apart from Caffeine and Tobacco which are not included in the interview.

If the subject answers (yes) to 3 or more out of 8 questions in section K2, then the subject would be Substance(s) Dependent for the last 12 months. And if the subject answers (yes) to 1 or more out of 4 question(s) in section K3, then the subject would be Substance(s) Abuser for the last 12 months, and if any subject has been diagnosed to be Dependent on any Substance(s), then no diagnosis of
Substance(s) Abuse would be given (see above).  

**Statistical Analysis:** Associations between variables were measured by using Chi-Square Test. However, Fisher Exact Test was applied whenever any cell value in any given table was less than 5. For calculating the odd ratios of alcohol-use disorders, logistic regression analysis model has been applied.  

P-value of equal to or less than 0.05 was considered as the level of significance.

**Result:**

**Journalists:** The study sample consists of (200) journalists of different age groups {((Age Range = 18-50 years); (Age Mean = 30.33 year); and (SD = 6.278)), and of both genders (154 were males and 46 were females), and of different educational levels (117 achieved higher educational level and 83 only achieved lower educational level). The majority of the sample was Muslims (190), 4 were Christians, 2 of them were Kakais, one was Yazidi, and 3 of them recorded themselves to be Atheists (did not believe in any religion and did not regard themselves to be within any religious group).

**Non-Journalists:** Consists of 486 subjects of different occupations other than journalists, and of different age groups {((Age Range = 14-55 years); (Age Mean = 27.06 year); and (SD = 6.488)), and of both genders (469 male and 17 female), and of different educational levels (115 of higher educational level and 371 of lower educational level). 81 subjects were students, 44 were unemployed at the time of the study, 119 were non-governmental employees (free workers), and 242 were governmental employees. The majority of the sample was Muslims (478), 7 were Christians, and one was Yazidi.

Table (1) shows the rate of alcohol and substance use disorders among the journalists. 34.5% were alcohol dependents, 7.5% were alcohol abusers, 1% was substance dependent, and 1% was substance abuser. Alcohol dependence, alcohol abuse, and substance dependence were more prevalent among male journalists than female journalists; while substance abuse was more prevalent among female journalists. Alcohol dependence and abuse were more prevalent among those journalists who achieved higher educational levels; substance dependence and abuse were distributed equally between both educational groups of the journalists. But small numbers warrant caution in this interpretation!

Table (2) shows the rate of alcohol and substance use disorders among the non-journalists. 7.6% were alcohol dependents, 2.26% were alcohol abusers, 1.44% were substance dependents, and 1.02% were substance abusers. Alcohol dependence was more common in this group among males, while alcohol abuse was more common among female non-journalists. Substance dependence and abuse occurred only among male non-journalists. Total alcohol and substance use disorders were more prevalent among those who achieved
higher educational levels of the non-journalists. For the various occupations, alcohol dependence was more common among unemployed and non-governmental employees than among students and governmental employees. Whereas alcohol abusers were more among students than other occupational categories. Moreover, substance use disorders (dependence and abuse) were again more prevalent among students and the unemployed than others.

Table (3) compares the rates of alcohol use disorders between both journalists and non-journalists, and it reveals that alcohol use disorders (dependence and abuse) were significantly more prevalent among journalists than non-journalists ($P < 0.0000$ for alcohol dependence and $P = 0.002$ for alcohol abuse). Also, table (3) compares the rates of alcohol use disorders between both genders and both educational levels of both journalists and non-journalists, and endorses that male gender were more affected in both groups except for alcohol abuse among non-journalists, where females were more affected. In regard of the educational levels, table (3) shows that those with higher education are victims of alcohol use disorders in both groups, except for the alcohol abuse among journalists, in which the lower educational group was more affected.

Table (4) shows the logistic regression analysis of the whole sample including occupation, gender, and age. The analysis reveals that working as a journalist carries 8 fold risk than other occupations to become alcohol-use (abuse and dependence) disordered. Also the table shows that males carry 4 fold risks than females to become alcohol-use disordered. However, no significant age association has been detected.

Table - 1 Rate of Alcohol and Substance Use Disorders (Dependence and Abuse) among the Journalists According to Gender and Educational Level Profiles:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journalists N = 200</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Total N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male N (%)</td>
<td>Female N (%)</td>
<td>Higher N (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>65 (42.2) 4 (8.7) 45 (38.48) 24 (28.9) 69 (34.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>P value = 0.00002 P value = 0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuser</td>
<td>12 (7.8) 3 (6.52) 8 (6.83) 7 (8.43) 15 (7.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P value = 0.774 P value = 0.88</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance</td>
<td>2 (1.3) 0 (0.0) 1 (0.85) 1 (1.2) 2 (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>P value = 1 P value = 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuser</td>
<td>0 (0.0) 2 (4.3) 1 (0.85) 1 (1.2) 2 (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P value = 1 P value = 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Table- 2 Rate of Alcohol and Substance Use Disorders (Dependence and Abuse) among the Non-Journalists According to Gender, Educational Level, and Occupation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Journalists N = 486</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male N (%)</td>
<td>Female N (%)</td>
<td>Higher N (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALC*</td>
<td>36 (7.67)</td>
<td>1 (5.88)</td>
<td>11 (9.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P value = 1</td>
<td>P value = 0.48</td>
<td>P value &lt; 0.0000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A§</td>
<td>10 (2.13)</td>
<td>1 (5.88)</td>
<td>3 (2.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P value = 0.3</td>
<td>P value = 0.72</td>
<td>P value = 0.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SU†</td>
<td>7 (1.5)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>5 (4.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P value = 1</td>
<td>P value = 0.009</td>
<td>P value = 0.45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A§</td>
<td>5 (1.06)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>2 (1.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P value = 1</td>
<td>P value = 0.33</td>
<td>P value = 0.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(* ) Alcohol, (†) Substance, (‡) Dependent, (§) Abuser

Table – 3 Comparison of the rate of Alcohol Use Disorders (Dependence and Abuse) between the Journalists and Non-Journalists:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alcohol Dependence</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Journalists N (%)</th>
<th>Non-Journalists N (%)</th>
<th>P Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>65 (42.2)</td>
<td>36 (7.67)</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4 (8.7)</td>
<td>1 (5.88)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Level</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>45 (38.46)</td>
<td>11 (9.5)</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>24 (28.9)</td>
<td>26 (7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>69 (34.5)</td>
<td>37 (7.6)</td>
<td>&lt; 0.0000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alcohol Abuse</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Journalists N (%)</th>
<th>Non-Journalists N (%)</th>
<th>P Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12 (7.8)</td>
<td>10 (2.13)</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3 (6.52)</td>
<td>1 (5.88)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Level</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>8 (6.83)</td>
<td>3 (2.6)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>7 (8.43)</td>
<td>8 (2.15)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15 (7.5)</td>
<td>11 (2.26)</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-4 Logistic regression analysis of demographic variables associated with alcohol use disorders (abuse and dependence) among journalists and non-journalists:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>Odd Ratio</th>
<th>CI (95 %)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>8.030</td>
<td>5.159-12.500</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>4.134</td>
<td>1.895-9.015</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.018</td>
<td>.985-1.051</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion:
The present study revealed that the rates of alcohol dependence and abuse are much more among journalists (34.5% and 7.5% respectively) than non-journalists (7.6% and 2.26% respectively) with p values of (less than 0.0000 and less than 0.002 respectively) which are highly significant (Table-3). Logistic regression analysis revealed that working as a journalist carries 8 fold risk (highly significant) than other occupations to become alcohol-use disordered (Table-4).

Findings relevant to what was found in other areas.8-10 Reasons behind such a big difference might be due to one or more of the following explanations:
1- Alcohol use disorders are more prevalent among younger age groups worldwide,10, 11 keeping in mind that most of those who work as journalists in Kurdistan are also of younger age groups, and this might give reasonable explanations of why alcohol use disorders were more prevalent among journalists in the present study.
2- Mannello and Seaman12 concluded that alcohol use disorders related to the unpredictability of the working hours and geographical motility,12 which is the case in the journalist’s works.
3- Uses of alcohol and substances as a coping strategy to deal with the stresses within the occupation10, 13-16: Journalism as an occupation is characterized by instability in its nature and journalists face a lot of stresses while they practice their occupation. This is beside a lot of work demands and the lack of a clearly defined role at the workplace. Moreover, most journalists in Iraq and particularly in Kurdistan have an additional job elsewhere. Hence alcohol and substance use might be one way of coping with the frequent daily occupational stresses.
4- Many studies showed that the rate of alcohol and substance use disorders are more prevalent among those who have unsupervised or less strictly supervised career,3,8,10,14,22 which is the case in the most journalist’s career here in Kurdistan.
5- On the other hand, Plant23 found that recruits to an occupation at high risk of alcoholism were more often heavy drinkers than recruits to other occupations. Moreover, persons who dislike heavy drinking tended to leave the occupation. He also reported that the drinking behavior of workmates could increase individual drinking and encourage problem drinking.23 A finding which was consistent with that of Hemmingsson and Weitoft19. Such findings indicate that tolerance towards alcohol consumption in the workplace or by the workmates (as it might be the case among the journalists in Kurdistan) can be regarded as a risk factor in itself, especially for persons with some kind of predisposition to substance use disorders.
6- Furthermore, the possibilities of working as governmental employee or student influencing the willingness to admit Alcohol or Substance Abuse might be an additional explanation for such a big difference between both groups!

Among the non-journalists, the present study endorsed that the rates of alcohol dependence are much higher among those who were unemployed at the time of the
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study (22.7%) and among non-governmental employees (11.76%) than among governmental employees (4.54%) and students (2.46%) with p value of less than 0.0000 which is highly significant (Table-2). This finding might also be due to increase daily life stresses and unsupervised duties among non-governmental employees and unemployed as in the case of journalists. Moreover, being a governmental employee or student, might affect the willingness to admit the truth about alcohol or other substances abuse or dependence!

Gender effect:
Among the journalists, the present study revealed that the rate of alcohol dependence is significantly higher among male journalists than female journalists (P = 0.00002) (Table-1). Also the rate of alcohol abuse was higher, though not significantly (p value =0.774), among male journalists (Table-1). The condition was similar for non-journalists, though the differences were not statistically significant (P value = 1 for alcohol dependence and 0.3 for alcohol abuse) (Table-2). In an attempt to test any difference between both groups (journalists and non-journalists), no significant statistical difference could be detected in regard of gender differences with p values of 0.6 for both alcohol dependence and abuse (Table-3).

Overall, the present study revealed that the rate of alcohol use disorders is higher among male gender, with 4 fold increased risk to become alcohol use disordered than female (Table-4). A finding which is relevant to that of other studies elsewhere. Such difference might be due to the fact that alcohol use disorders are generally more prevalent among male gender worldwide.

Educational effect:
Present study reveals no significant differences in the rate of Alcohol and Substance use disorders in both groups (Tables 1-3). However, in comparing both journalists and non-journalists in the sense of educational level, the higher educational group of journalists was significantly more alcohol dependent than the relevant group of non-journalist, with P value of 0.001 (Table-3).

Conclusion:
The present study suggests that occupation is an important determinant for the alcohol and substance use disorders. Working as a journalist, is a risk factor particularly for alcohol dependence in Iraq. Moreover, gender is an important determinant within each occupation. However, the level of education, revealed not to be a valid determinant for alcohol and substance use disorder within any given occupation.

References

1. Chavan BS, Priti Arun, Rachna Bhargava, Gurvinder Pal Singh. Prevalence of Alcohol and drug dependence in rural and slum population of Chandigraph: A


الخلاصة:

الأهداف: أظهرت الكثير من الدراسات مدى الاختلاف في نسبة سوا الإستخدام و الاعتماد على الكحول والمعاقير لدى مختلف الوظائف. لكن لم تتم دراسة هكذا اختلاف في العراق. هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة مدى الاختلاف في نسب الإستخدام والإعتماد على الكحول والمعاقير بين الصحفيين وعدد من الوظائف الأخرى في مدينة أربيل.

طرق البحث: أجريت مقابلة 200 صحفي و 486 شخصا ضمن وظائف أخرى بين الفترة من أيلول إلى تشرين الثاني 2008 بلعتمد مقياس بدنيي مقدم. (مبنى) لتشخيص سوا الإستخدام والتعود على الكحول والمعاقير. 63
النتائج: ضمن الصحفيين، 34.5% كانوا متعودين على الكحول، و 7.5% أسرهم كانوا متعدون على العقاقير. و 1% أسرهم كانوا عبئرًا. ضمن الغير الصحفيين، 7.6% كانوا متعودين على الكحول، و 2.26% أسرهم كانوا متعودين على العقاقير. و 1.44% أسرهم كانوا متعودين على العقاقير. و 1.02% أسرهم كانوا متعودين على العقاقير. مباني العقاقير التي استخدمت من قبل المجموعة كانت عبئرة طبية. الذكور باضافة إلى الذين قد أنجزوا مستوى عالياً من التعليم كانوا من أكثر المصابين في المجموعتين.

الاستنتاجات: استنجدت الدراسة الحالية بأن وظيفة الإنسان هي محدد فعال لمدى الإصابة برسوم الإ_PATTERN أو العقاقير. العمل كصاحب هو عامل خطير للاصابة برسوم الإ_PATTERN أو العقاقير. خصوصاً الإصابة بالتعود على الكحول. ذلك أن جنس الإنسان هو محدد فعال لمدى الإصابة برسوم الإ_PATTERN أو العقاقير و نسب مباشرة ووظيفة.

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