

ABSTRACT

Alcohol abuse among women in Jamaica remains a "hushed" subject, although the effects of alcohol can have deleterious effects, not only on the woman in question, but also on the unborn child, if she is pregnant, and the rest of the family. It therefore assumes major public health significance.

This project was a case control study in which 22 cases and 22 controls were identified, based the definition of Alcohol Dependency Syndrome (Alcohol Abuse Handbook, 1990). The cases were taken from various situations between January 1996 to March 1996, where one would find alcoholic females. The controls were matched based on age and socio-economic status.

Questionnaires were used to gain data from these individuals with regards to demography, natural history of disease, physical and emotional effects of alcoholism, and the influence of a family history of alcoholism.

Significant statistical associations were found between age at which alcoholics had their first drink, having a low self-esteem, and having a family member who is an alcoholic.

Although the sample used was small, the significant findings can be useful in planning programmes and to do further research which is necessary in Jamaica.