

# Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Study among Future Healthcare Professionals on Alcohol

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## Introduction

- Screening and brief intervention for drinkers with hazardous and harmful alcohol use is one of the public health interventions recommended by the World Health Organization to control alcohol related harms. In 2014, the Department of Health commissioned a survey to collect information on knowledge, attitudes and practices among current and future healthcare professionals regarding alcohol. The findings relating to undergraduate medical and nursing students are reported here.

## Method

- The study was a cross-sectional anonymous study. Different sets of self-administered questionnaires for medical students (only first and final year) and nursing students (only first and final year) were used. A total of 239 medical students and 974 nursing students from local medical and nursing schools in academic year 2014/15 responded.

## Findings

- While binge drinking (e.g. drinking five cans of beer on one occasion) itself is harmful and the effect of alcohol in protecting the heart is controversial, this survey finds that understanding of alcohol-related harm among local medical and nursing students is poor. (Fig. 1 & 2)

Fig. 1 - Drinking five cans of beer on one occasion is not harmful as long as it is not a regular habit

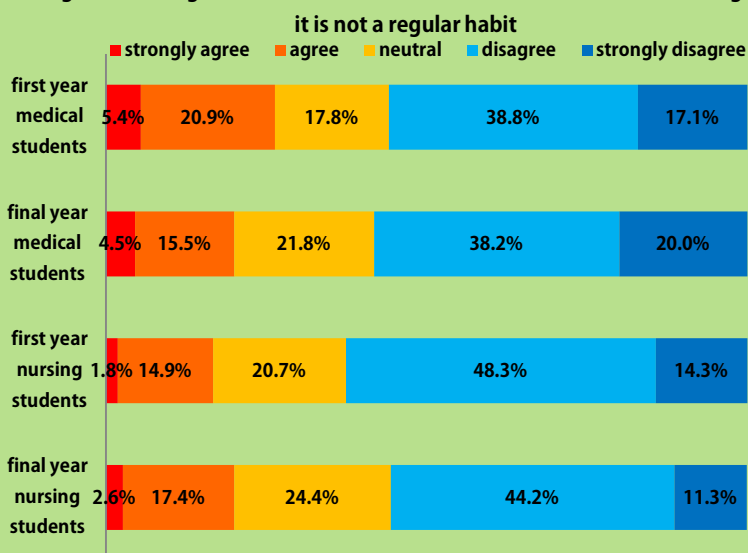
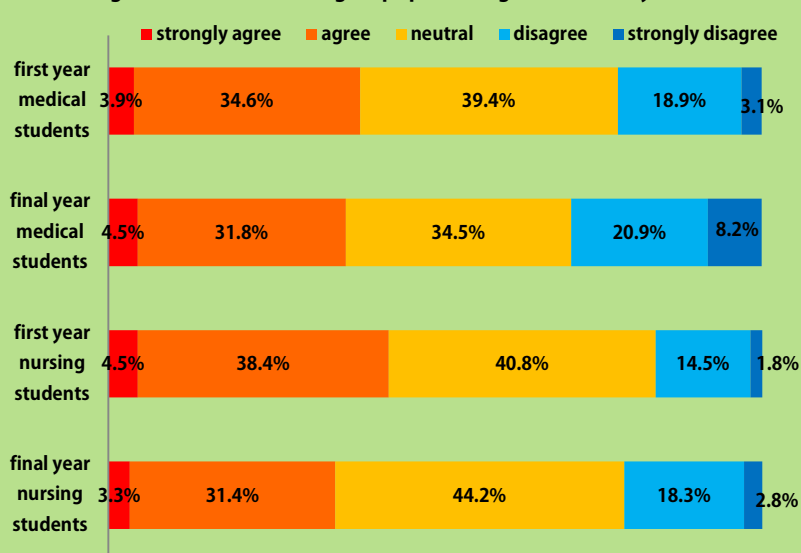


Fig. 2 - Moderate drinking helps protect against coronary heart disease



- Finally, only 49.1% of final year medical students and 21.3% of final year nursing students considered themselves having adequate skills to help their patients stop drinking.

## Conclusion

- The survey showed that knowledge and skills resident in local medical and nursing students to prevent and control alcohol related harm should be strengthened. Local medical and nursing schools should equip our future healthcare professionals to be conversant and confident in combating harmful alcohol use, which is a preventable risk factor for a number of non-communicable diseases with physical and psychosocial impact.