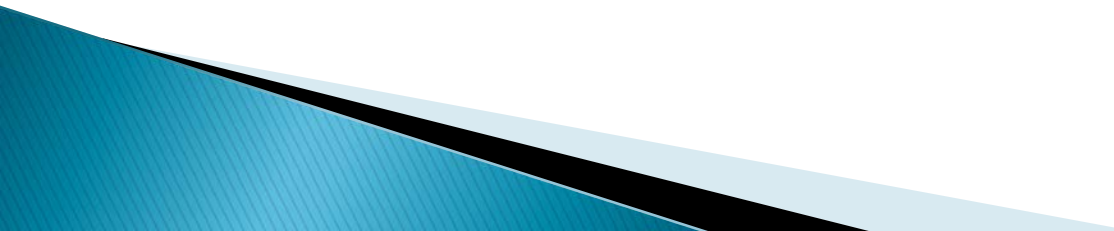


**ALCOHOL HARM TO 'INTIMATE' OTHERS: DRINKING,
VIOLENCE AND DOMESTIC PROBLEMS IN ORON,
NIGERIA**

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Introduction

- ▶ Alcohol consumption is associated with numerous negative effects which has remained a constant source of agitation for policy makers and public health professionals.
 - ▶ The focus of research and policy on alcohol harms has been on the effects on the individual drinker, particularly on personal health (Connor, You and Caswell, 2009). But there is a growing recognition that alcohol problems do not just affect the individual drinker; they also impact on other people and the wider society.
 - ▶ Alcohol is recognized as a contributory factor in a wide range of social problems including anti-social behaviour, crime, violence, domestic violence, strained relationships, family breakdown, child abuse and neglect.
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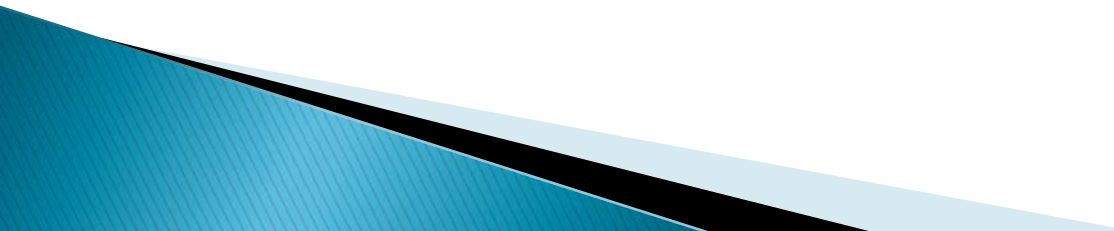
Introduction Cont'd

- ▶ The effects of drinking on others is not monolithic; it is broadly spread through different kinds of social relationships, including neighbours, friends, colleagues and family members (Laslett et. al., 2011; Fillmore, 1985; Health and Welfare Canada, 1990).
- ▶ Spouses and children of the drinker bear the brunt of these effects (Hurcom, Copello and Orford, 2000), which include violence, isolation, shame and financial difficulties (Laslett et. al., 2011).
- ▶ This study investigates the negative effects of drinking on 'intimate others', focusing on alcohol-induced intimate partner abuse.

Methods

- ▶ The study is a qualitative survey carried out in Oron Local Government Area in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria.
 - ▶ The study population consisted of men and women between the age of 25 – 45 years who were natives of Oron.
 - ▶ Sampling was multi-staged, involving purposive sampling of 6 districts in the community, clustering of households in the selected districts and the identification and enumeration of specific compounds for survey through fishbowling.
 - ▶ Data were collected through in-depth personal interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs).
 - ▶ A thematic approach to qualitative data analysis was used to analyze the data.
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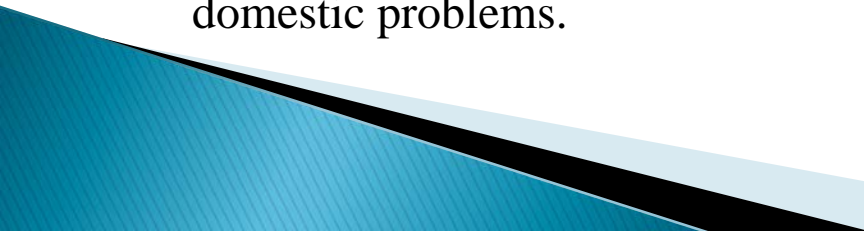
Findings

- ▶ Participants were between the ages of 31 and 45 years. They had an average of 9 years of formal education. Majority were married and employed in white collar jobs. All were Christians.
 - ▶ Alcohol consumption is common in the community, and the dominant pattern of drinking is heavy and episodic.
 - ▶ Different types of alcoholic beverages are consumed, including wine, local gin, liquor and beers.
 - ▶ The local drinking culture is shaped by socio-cultural and environmental realities.
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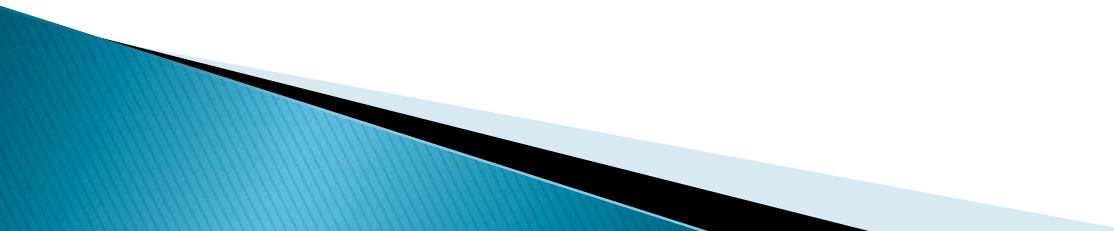
Findings Cont'd

- ▶ A significant percentage (32.7%) of the study participants reported abusing their female partner under the influence of alcohol.
- ▶ The common types of abuses reported were verbal and physical, the latter manifesting in the forms of slapping, beating and kicking.
- ▶ Participants acknowledged that although they were infuriated by their spouse's conducts, their aggressive responses were triggered by alcohol.
- ▶ Alcohol –induced intimate partner abuse has many negative consequences, including complications of pregnancy and child birth, mental and emotional health problems, loss of income to treatment, decline in family welfare, divorce and family instability.

Discussion

- ▶ There is a link between male alcohol consumption and intimate partner violence.
 - ▶ Alcohol consumption is an important catalyst for intimate partner physical violence due to 'alcohol myopia', a 'drunken excess' that predisposes individuals towards social cues that favour the use of violence, which they would not when they are sober because 'remoter cues and thoughts would pressure (them) to inhibit' (Steele and Joseph, 1990).
 - ▶ Drinking-induced intimate partner violence generalizes the consequences of an individual's problem behaviour, engenders and aggravates health and economic problems and jeopardizes the livelihood of the family.
 - ▶ It also compromises the capacity of the family to provide treatment for the drinker, thereby contributing to the perpetuation of the cycle of drinking, violence and domestic problems.
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Conclusion

- ▶ Alcohol consumption by men is associated with grave negative consequences for their spouses and families. Men are aware of the effects of their drinking on ‘intimate others’. This justifies the need for policy to reflect the views of male drinkers on how to effectively address the problem. Policy should focus on building their capacity and bolstering their commitment to reduce alcohol harm using their shared value of family well-being and stability as a moral justification. There is also need to provide psychosocial support and treatment for the members of the family who are negatively affected by others drinking, especially the drinkers’ spouses.
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