

# Alcohol Dependence – Pathological Preconditions and Educational Opportunities

Kristīna Jablonska<sup>1</sup>, Pāvels Jurs<sup>2</sup>, Santa Melķe<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Liepaja Academy of Riga Technical University, Latvia

**Abstract.** Alcohol dependence is a complex and pressing public health and social issue worldwide, driven by a range of interrelated biological, psychological, and social factors. The aim of this case study is to provide insight into the impact of alcohol dependence by identifying its key contributing factors and preventive educational measures. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining a theoretical literature review with empirical data obtained from an online survey of 63 Latvian residents. The findings reveal a concerning trend and underscore, among other things, the need for further research into excessive alcohol consumption. They also highlight the importance of stricter alcohol control policies, enhanced rehabilitation services, and increased public awareness, particularly through the education of schoolchildren. The study emphasises the necessity of a comprehensive national strategy that encompasses policy reform, public education, and the establishment of a stable support system for individuals and families affected by alcohol addiction. During the study, the authors also offer recommendations to policymakers at the national level.

**Keywords:** addiction, alcohol dependence, education, prevention, social risks

## Introduction

Excessive alcohol consumption constitutes a significant public health concern. Globally, it is responsible for approximately 3 million deaths annually and contributes to around 5.1% of the global burden of disease. Harmful alcohol use is associated with a wide range of health and social consequences, including injuries, various forms of cancer, chronic liver disease, cardiovascular conditions, alcohol dependence, and domestic violence (Pan American Health Organization, 2019). In Latvia, alcoholism represents a systemic social issue that affects all dimensions of human life. The challenges associated with alcohol dependence and potential solutions are examined by professionals across multiple disciplines, including healthcare providers, social workers, psychologists, and social educators. According to data from the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, between 2017 and 2022, the average per capita alcohol consumption among Latvian residents aged 15 and older ranged between 12 and 13 litres of pure alcohol annually (Slimību profilakses un kontroles centrs, 2023). For comparison, in 2022, the corresponding figures were 8 litres in Finland and the Netherlands, 10 litres in the United Kingdom, approximately 10.5 litres in France and Germany, 11.1 litres in Estonia, and 12.1 litres in Lithuania (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2022). It

Corresponding author Pāvels Jurs E-mail: [pavels.jurs@rtu.lv](mailto:pavels.jurs@rtu.lv)

ORCID

Pāvels Jurs <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1120-8021>

Santa Melķe <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5685-4222>

Copyright © 2025 The Author(s). Published by RTU Press

Under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International ([CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)) license, the author(s) and users are free to share this work (copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format giving appropriate credit, providing a link to the license).

is important to emphasise that alcohol consumption is not solely a health issue but also a significant social problem that endangers individual and collective well-being. It adversely affects not only the individual but also their family members, social environment, and society at large. Among the most pressing social issues in Latvia are unemployment, alcoholism, and violence. These problems are often interrelated: as unemployment increases, so too do rates of alcohol abuse and violence. Clients of social services frequently include individuals who are chronically unemployed and regularly seek assistance with a sense of entitlement. This group often lacks motivation to overcome alcohol dependence or to seek employment, finding it easier to rely on social support. At present, there is no effective mechanism in place to encourage these individuals to pursue employment or to support them in overcoming addiction (Nodarbinātības valsts aģentūra, 2023).

Recognising the multifaceted nature of alcohol addiction and its consequences for both individuals and society, the scope of this study is defined by its object – alcohol dependence as a social problem in Latvia. One of the most important aspects in addressing this issue is educating the public, both in the context of lifelong learning and in the education of children, in order to reduce the consequences of alcohol addiction and promote quality of life. Insufficient awareness of the risks of alcohol consumption, the mechanisms of addiction development, and its consequences contributes to stereotypes, misunderstanding, and often ignorance of the problem. It is therefore particularly important to develop broad educational initiatives that target both young people and adults, providing knowledge about responsible attitudes towards alcohol, early signs of addiction, and available support options. In this context, education serves as an essential preventive tool that helps to build a healthier and more socially responsible society. The case-study addresses the following research questions: (1) What are the pathological preconditions for alcohol dependence? (2) What is resident's attitude towards alcohol addiction as a social problem? The aim of this study is to provide insight into the impact of alcohol addiction on society by identifying key factors and preventive educational measures. The research employs both theoretical and empirical methods, including: analysis of academic literature; collection and examination of statistical data; a survey of Latvian residents based on random sampling; content analysis of qualitative data; and triangulation with quantitative findings. Limitations of the study – methodology and study process (Adu & Miles, 2023): the number of respondents who participated in the survey limits the diversity, representativeness, and validity of the data. Thus, the random sample indicates a possible trend that requires further in-depth research.

## **Literature review – theoretical insight into pathological preconditions for alcohol dependence**

According to the Social Work Dictionary, “alcoholism is a type of substance dependence characterised by features such as increased tolerance or dependence, an irresistible urge to consume alcohol, and uncontrollable alcohol consumption despite awareness of its negative biopsychosocial consequences. Prolonged alcoholism leads to psychological, mental, and physical degradation and negatively affects all areas of social functioning. Alcoholism is one of the most widespread social problems, and an interdisciplinary approach is used to address it, including practical methods at the micro, meso, and macro levels” (Sociālā darba vārdnīca, 2023, pp. 24–25). The World Health Organization defines alcoholism as an addiction to alcohol. Repeated use of psychoactive substances, to the extent that the user (addict) is periodically or chronically intoxicated, demonstrates a compulsion to use the desired substance(s), great difficulty in voluntarily stopping or changing substance use, and a strong desire to obtain psychoactive substances by almost any means (World Health Organization, 2025). The term alcoholism was originally coined in 1849 by Swedish physician and educator Magnus Huss

(Poludasu, Godi, & Gurram, 2015). Alcoholism is not included as a diagnostic entity in ICD-10 (International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems). Despite its ambiguous definition, the term continues to be widely used both diagnostically and descriptively. To better understand the nature of alcohol dependence, it is important to define the concept of dependence. Addiction is a compulsive desire for certain substances and/or behaviours that temporarily reduce negative emotions or produce desired sensations. While addictions may vary, all types share four core characteristics: loss of control, denial, irresistible urge, and biopsychosocial problems (Vītola, 2022).

Biological factors, as demonstrated by studies of twins and families with alcohol-dependent individuals across generations, indicate that at least 50% of the risk of harmful alcohol use is genetically determined (Khadse, Dhillon, & Sasidharan, 2024). Genome-wide association studies have revealed that individual genetic risk can be roughly estimated using polygenic risk scores — the sum of an individual's genetic risk variants weighted by their effect (Facal et al., 2021). With the rapid advancement of technologies for discovering and analysing gene functions, researchers are increasingly able to understand the biological roots of complex disorders such as substance use and addiction (Nurnberger & Bierut, 2007). There is a causal link between harmful alcohol consumption and various mental health and behavioural disorders. Observing patients with addiction, Hungarian psychoanalyst Rado concluded that they suffer from psychological pain and discomfort, which he termed tense depression — individuals escape into alcohol addiction to protect themselves from aggression and self-destruction (Tomme, Lazdiņa, Kajandere, Vanaga, & Sudraba, 2021). According to data from the National Institute of Mental Health, mental health conditions that commonly co-occur with substance use disorders include anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and personality disorders (Psychology Today, 2021). Long-term alcohol users may experience persistently elevated baseline stress levels, which contribute to the motivation to drink (Koob, 2021). Individuals with low stress resilience are unable to employ avoidance strategies, including excessive alcohol use (Khadse, Dhillon, & Sasidharan, 2024). People with addiction often have an unconscious desire to be the centre of attention, to receive care, love, and a sense of security (Albrekte, Zvejniece, Sudraba, & Vanaga, 2021).

Several social factors contribute to the onset of alcohol dependence, including boredom, emotional emptiness, loneliness, and curiosity. A person's risk of developing alcohol use disorders depends on how much, how often, and how quickly alcohol is consumed. This risk is increased by various factors, such as early-age drinking, genetic predisposition and family history of alcohol-related problems, mental health conditions, and a history of trauma (Maksima, Zaļizko, Hansone, & Sūna, 2024). Family conflicts, poor relationship skills, and insufficient supervision and control of children can create or exacerbate the risk of alcohol use. Family-related risk factors can be categorised into four groups: the family's social situation, family relationships, individual characteristics or traits of parents, and family structure (Koroļeva, Mieriņa, & Sņķere, 2008). Early onset of alcohol use and early onset of regular alcohol consumption are significant risk factors for alcohol dependence (Hussong, Bauer, & Chassin Hussong, 2008; Jackson, 2010; Sartor et al., 2016). Individuals with low aesthetic and ethical standards and who are easily influenced are more prone to alcoholism. Interestingly, an increase in material well-being can sometimes contribute to a predisposition to alcohol dependence. In some cases, the development of alcoholism may be facilitated by the systematic consumption of alcoholic beverages due to external circumstances — for example, among professionals in fields where alcohol is easily accessible (Apīnis, 2006).

Educational campaigns and health promotion programmes are being implemented to mitigate the negative effects of alcohol consumption. Early prevention, particularly among young people, plays a crucial role in fostering a responsible attitude towards alcohol. However,

the level of public awareness and the effectiveness of preventive measures remain a challenge, requiring continuous improvement and the introduction of new initiatives. In the long term, a successful prevention strategy can reduce the prevalence of alcohol dependence and contribute to overall improvements in public health.

## **Methodology**

The case-study was conducted in accordance with fundamental ethical principles, including participant autonomy, confidentiality, and beneficence. All participants were informed about the purpose, procedures, and nature of their involvement in the study, and their informed consent was obtained. Data collection and processing were carried out in line with data protection regulations and good practice guidelines, ensuring the security and anonymity of personal data. The study employed an online survey as the data collection method. Upon completion of the questionnaire, responses were immediately accessible to the survey administrator and automatically added to a shared database. The approach combined elements of both qualitative and quantitative research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). As part of the study, an 18-question survey was developed to explore Latvian residents' attitudes towards alcohol dependence as a social problem in Latvia, and to assess its impact on individuals, families, and society as a whole. The survey was conducted between 9 February and 21 March 2025, with 63 respondents participating. It was administered electronically via the online platform *visidati.lv*, which ensured convenient access and anonymity for all participants, while adhering to the online data collection methodology commonly used in contemporary social research (Bryman, 2016). Participation in the survey was voluntary and open to anyone interested in expressing their opinion on the topic. Respondents were invited via social media, including the Facebook app. The sample was self-selected, meaning that respondents were not restricted by specific demographic or professional criteria. While this approach allowed for a broad range of opinions, it should be noted that it may affect the representativeness of the results in relation to specific target groups (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

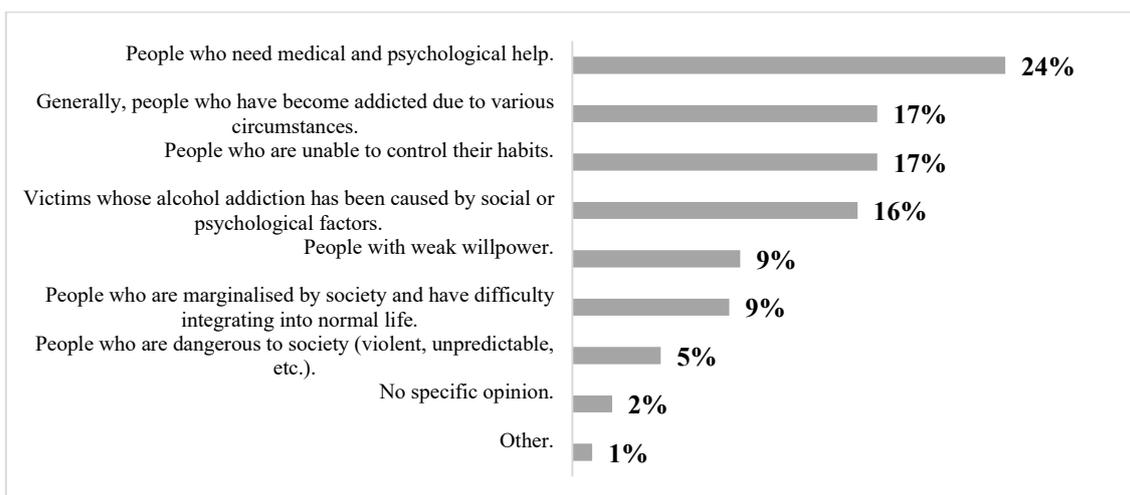
## **Study results – resident survey**

A total of 63 respondents participated in the survey, of whom 11 (17.5%) were male and 52 (82.5%) were female. The average age of respondents was 41.5 years. The majority (76%) held higher education degrees, while 11% had incomplete higher education. Five respondents (8%) reported having completed secondary or vocational secondary education, and three respondents (5%) had attained only primary education. Although alcohol abuse is a widespread and social issue in Latvia, only 63 respondents participated in this survey. It should be noted that this number is insufficient to draw generalised categorical conclusions; however, the results do indicate a trend in public attitudes. The limited number of respondents can be attributed to several factors: (1) the survey was conducted within a restricted time frame and without extensive financial or organisational resources, which affected the ability to reach a larger audience; (2) alcohol consumption remains a sensitive and sometimes stigmatised topic, which may discourage individuals from participating, especially when personal experiences are involved; (3) the survey was anonymous and based on voluntary participation, meaning that only those motivated and willing to share their opinions completed it.

Regarding the frequency of alcohol consumption, the largest proportion of respondents (29%) indicated that they do not consume alcohol. A similar share reported consuming alcohol once a week (27%) or less than once a month (24%). A smaller proportion (14%) consumed alcohol once a month, while only 6% reported daily alcohol consumption. When asked about their perception of alcohol consumption in Latvian society, the majority (78%) believed it to be

excessively high. Slightly more than one-fifth (22%) considered it adequate, and no respondents believed it to be too low. An even larger proportion (86%) agreed that alcohol consumption constitutes a significant social problem in Latvia. Only 5% disagreed with this statement, while 10% were undecided.

In describing individuals with alcohol dependence (multiple responses allowed; 183 total responses recorded), the majority (70%) viewed alcoholism as a disease requiring treatment, emphasising the importance of medical and psychological support. This reflects a relatively high level of awareness regarding the health-related nature of alcohol dependence. Simultaneously, nearly half of the respondents (49%) described alcohol-dependent individuals as people who are unable to control their habits, while an equal proportion (49%) attributed addiction to various life circumstances. Additionally, 46% believed that alcohol dependence results from social or psychological factors, portraying those affected as victims of their environment. A stricter view was held by 27% of respondents, who considered alcoholics to be individuals with weak willpower, suggesting a belief in personal responsibility as a primary factor. Less common perceptions included viewing alcoholics as social outcasts (25%) or as dangerous to society (14%). Only 2% of respondents expressed no clear opinion, and 1% provided alternative responses. These findings reveal a complex and sometimes contradictory societal understanding of alcohol addiction, highlighting both medical and social dimensions, as well as the role of individual responsibility (see Figure 1).



*Figure 1. Respondents' views on the causes of alcohol dependence (percentage of response frequency)*

In response to a follow-up question about the causes of alcohol dependence, where multiple answers could not be selected, almost half of the respondents (49%) stated that alcohol dependence is an illness that requires treatment. The second most frequent response was that alcoholism is a social problem influenced by external factors (27%), while 24% indicated that it is the result of personal choice. These responses confirm the existence of a contradictory societal attitude towards the causes of alcoholism: although the majority considers it as a disease, a significant proportion emphasise social factors or personal responsibility as the main influences. Personal experience with alcohol dependence is widespread among respondents — 41% reported that a family member had encountered this issue, indicating the impact of alcoholism within the immediate environment. An even larger proportion (54%) stated that a friend or acquaintance had experienced alcohol dependence, confirming the prevalence of the issue across various social groups. Only 5% of respondents reported no personal experience with alcohol addiction, which may suggest either a specific social environment where alcohol addiction is less common, or that the issue is not always visible and may be hidden from those

around them. These findings emphasise that alcoholism is not only an individual issue, but also a widespread social problem that affects a significant portion of society.

When analysing respondents' answers regarding the impact of alcohol advertising and policy (see Figure 2), 51% believe that alcohol advertising encourages increased consumption. However, 27% disagreed with this statement, while 22% found it difficult to give a definite answer. These results indicate a fairly widespread belief that advertising plays an important role in promoting alcohol consumption, while also revealing the existence of alternative views within society. When assessing current restrictions on alcohol sales in Latvia (e.g., opening hours, age limits), the majority of respondents (71%) considered them insufficiently effective, indicating public dissatisfaction with existing regulations. Only 13% regarded the current restrictions as adequate, while 16% had no specific opinion on the matter. In addition, more than half of respondents (56%) supported stricter restrictions on alcohol sales, while 27% believed that additional restrictions were unnecessary. A relatively large proportion (18%) were unable to give a clear opinion on this issue. Overall, the data show that a majority of respondents supports stricter regulation of alcohol sales and are critical of the effectiveness of current policies.

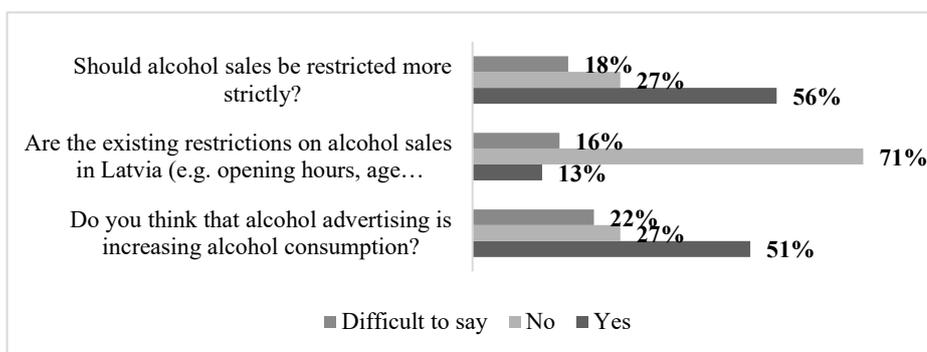


Figure 2. Respondents' views on the influence of advertising and politics on alcohol consumption

Respondents' answers regarding the impact of alcohol addiction on society show that alcohol use is perceived as a multidimensional issue with a wide range of consequences (see Figure 3). Respondents almost equally identified the impact of addiction across various aspects of society – 38% highlighted family problems as the most significant consequence, while 28% believed that alcohol addiction contributes to crime and impairs work performance. A small proportion (6%) provided alternative views, focusing on a combination of all three aspects – crime, family problems, and reduced work capacity – as well as on the health problems caused by alcohol dependence. These health issues negatively affect not only the individual, but also the state support system and the healthcare sector, increasing the burden on medical services and social resources.

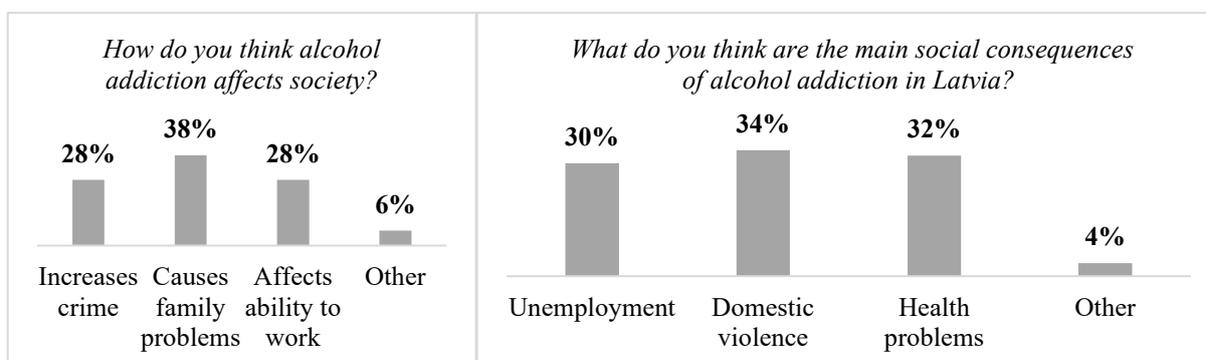
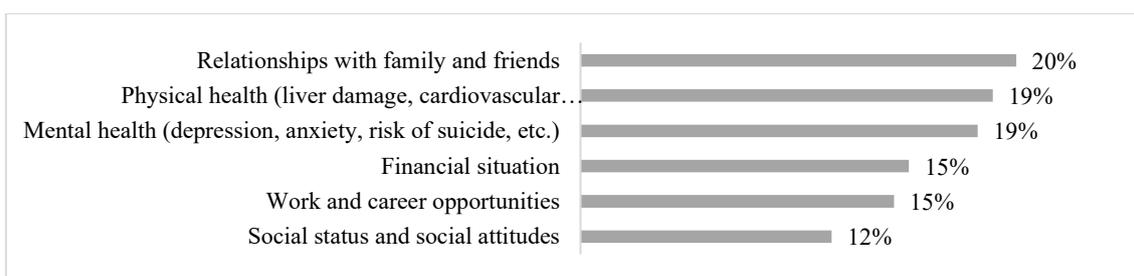


Figure 3. Respondents' views on the impact of alcohol dependence on society

In assessing the social consequences of alcohol dependence, respondents also highlight several equally important aspects. 34% of the respondents point to domestic violence as the most significant social consequence, 32% emphasize health problems, and 30% believe that alcohol dependence contributes to unemployment. In addition to quantitative results, respondents also provided qualitative opinions, which offer a broader interpretation of the impact of alcohol dependence. Others emphasize that this problem has always existed, while others highlight the uncontrolled black market and related crime. Some opinions focus on the aspect of social upbringing, emphasizing the role of the family in shaping alcohol consumption habits. Another interpretation draws attention to the government's possible interest in promoting alcohol consumption in order to divert public attention from social and political problems. These views complement the overall analysis, showing that alcohol dependence is perceived not only as an individual or medical problem, but also as a socially and even politically influenced phenomenon. An analysis of these results indicates that alcohol dependence is considered a complex phenomenon with various negative consequences that affect both the individual level and the broader social context. The consequences of addiction manifest themselves in several areas, including family relationships, crime rates, economic productivity, and the health system, which demonstrates the comprehensive impact of alcohol addiction on society and highlights the need for an integrated approach to reducing it.

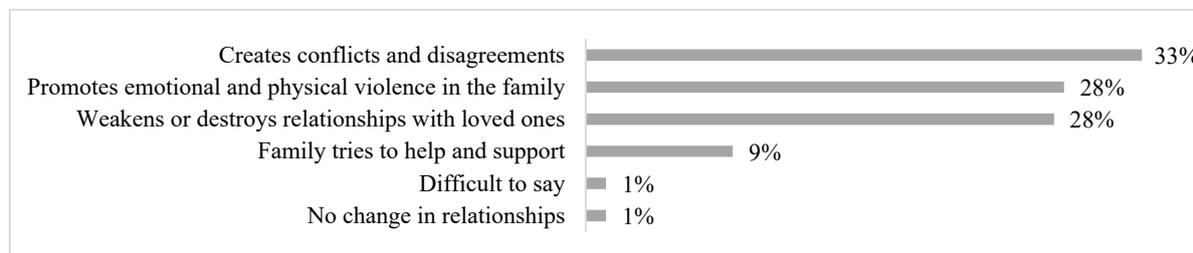
The consequences of alcohol dependence at the individual level are assessed in a multidimensional way, and respondents (multiple answers possible; 281 responses in total) highlighted several important aspects of life that are negatively affected (see Figure 4). The most commonly identified consequences of addiction relate to relationships with family and friends, as indicated by 90% of respondents. The negative impact of alcohol on physical health (86%) and mental health (83%) was also frequently mentioned, reflecting an understanding of alcoholism as both a medical and psychological issue. In addition, a significant proportion of respondents believed that alcohol dependence negatively affects financial well-being (68%) and professional life, including employment and career opportunities (65%), highlighting its economic consequences. The importance of social status and public attitudes was mentioned less frequently (52%), which may suggest that, at the individual level, the consequences of alcohol dependence are perceived more from a personal and health-related perspective than from the standpoint of social stigmatisation.



*Figure 4. Respondents' views on the consequences of alcohol dependence at the individual level (percentage of response frequency)*

By examining respondents' views on the impact of alcohol dependence on personal relationships in greater depth (multiple answers possible; a total of 173 responses received), it can be concluded that the most frequently mentioned consequences are conflicts and disagreements, as indicated by 33% of respondents (see Figure 5). This highlights the destructive impact of alcohol addiction on family dynamics and communication. In second and third place, with equal support (28%), are emotional and physical violence within the family, as well as the weakening or breakdown of relationships. These results confirm that alcohol addiction can be a significant factor in family disintegration and contributes to a toxic

environment that negatively affects not only the addict but also their loved ones. Comparatively fewer respondents – only 9% – indicated that the family attempts to help and support the addict. This may reflect both the challenges of providing support and the distancing caused by the progression of addiction, reinforcing the perception that alcohol dependence is predominantly seen as a factor that damages family relationships. Only 1% believed that alcohol addiction does not affect relationships, and another 1% selected the response “Difficult to say”.



*Figure 5. Respondents' views on the impact of alcohol dependence on personal relationships (percentage of response frequency)*

Considering that only 9% of respondents indicated that their family attempts to help the addict, the assessment of the family's role in the treatment of alcohol dependence provides valuable additional insight into the issue. Almost half of the respondents (48%) believe that family support is essential and necessary in the treatment process. This reflects public awareness of the family's role as a support system in the rehabilitation of individuals with alcohol dependence. At the same time, 41% of respondents stated that family involvement depends on the specific situation, suggesting that some people consider family support important but conditional – for example, if the individual is willing to receive help or if the relationship is not completely broken. Eleven percent of respondents believe that alcohol dependence is the sole responsibility of the individual. The low level of support and assistance highlights the need to improve the rehabilitation system for addicts and the support system for their relatives. This may include education on the importance of family involvement and the development of mechanisms that promote active participation of family members in the treatment process.

Empirical study confirms that society largely displays a judgmental attitude towards individuals with alcohol dependence, highlighting the need for greater understanding and support. The majority of respondents (49%) believe that society is judgmental towards people with alcohol dependence, often avoiding them and expressing negative attitudes. However, a significant number of respondents (41%) emphasised that attitudes depend on the specific case, pointing to the need for an individualised approach. Only 2% believe that society provides sufficient support and assistance, indicating a low level of awareness of the issue and a need to improve public attitudes. 8% of respondents found it difficult to answer this question.

### **The importance of public education in reducing alcohol dependence**

In order to effectively address the problem of alcohol dependence in Latvia, restrictive policies and treatment measures alone are not sufficient – public education also plays a crucial role. Empirical data from this study show that societal attitudes towards addiction are often contradictory, with alcohol dependence perceived both as a disease and as a personal weakness. Only 2% of respondents believe that society provides sufficient support to individuals with alcohol dependence, while almost half consider society's attitude to be judgmental. This trend indicates a lack of awareness and an insufficient understanding of alcohol addiction as a complex medical and social issue.

Public education can serve as an important preventive and supportive mechanism. Targeted campaigns, informational events, and the integration of alcohol addiction topics into educational curricula promote understanding, reduce stigmatisation, and can change people's attitudes towards alcohol and drinking habits. An educated society is more likely to support individuals with addiction rather than condemn them, and is better informed about the risks of developing addiction and the possibilities for prevention.

Educating young people is particularly important, as alcohol consumption habits are formed at an early age, and early information can be decisive in shaping future life choices. At the same time, it is also necessary to engage adult audiences, including parents, employers, and community leaders, who can influence behavioural patterns within their environment. With the aim of informing young people about the negative consequences of alcohol consumption, several projects funded by national and international institutions are currently being implemented in Latvia, and addiction prevention programmes are being introduced with the support of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). One example of such a programme is Unplugged, which is currently being piloted with the support of the Ministry of Health (Eiropas Narkotiku un narkomānijas uzraudzības centrs, 2019). It is a prevention programme for adolescents aged 12 to 14, implemented in general education schools and based on the cognitive social influence model. The programme has been developed, implemented, and evaluated in seven European countries: Belgium, Germany, Spain, Greece, Italy, Austria, and Sweden. An important aspect that has been considered by only some implementers of addiction prevention programmes in Latvia is the assessment of awareness and effectiveness at the end of the programme.

## **Conclusions**

1. The development of alcohol dependence is influenced by a combination of biological, psychological, and social factors. This multifactorial interaction shapes an individual's vulnerability to addiction and its progression. Biological factors include genetic predisposition and neurochemical changes in the brain that increase susceptibility to dependence. Genetic influences affect both the physiological response to alcohol and the functioning of neurotransmitter systems.
2. To reduce alcohol dependence, it is essential to change political discourse and public attitudes, while also providing preventive support. One of the most important prerequisites is the long-term impact of education – offering people the necessary information and training both through lifelong learning and during school years – to raise awareness of the consequences of alcohol addiction and reduce its prevalence.
3. Psychological factors include mental health conditions such as depression, which may contribute to the onset of addiction. Individuals with low self-esteem or poor stress management skills are more likely to use alcohol as a form of self-medication. Social factors – such as environmental influences, family dynamics, and societal attitudes towards alcohol – also play a significant role in shaping drinking behaviours. Individuals with limited social support are more likely to turn to alcohol for emotional compensation. Moreover, children raised in environments where alcohol use is normalised are more likely to adopt similar behaviours in adulthood.
4. Alcohol dependence is a complex issue with far-reaching consequences that affect both individuals and society. It disrupts family relationships, contributes to crime, reduces economic productivity, and places a burden on healthcare systems. These wide-ranging effects underscore the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to prevention and intervention.

5. Empirical findings reveal that alcohol consumption is perceived and regarded as excessively high and regard it as a significant social issue requiring urgent attention. Respondents expressed diverse and sometimes conflicting views on the causes of alcohol dependence. While the most of them consider it a medical condition requiring treatment, many also emphasise the role of social influences and personal responsibility. A majority of respondents support stricter regulation of alcohol sales and express scepticism regarding the effectiveness of current policies.
6. Respondents perceive the consequences of alcohol dependence at the individual level as multidimensional, focusing primarily on personal and health-related impacts rather than social stigma. A significant proportion also highlighted the negative effects of addiction on financial stability and professional life, pointing to the broader socio-economic implications of alcohol dependence.
7. The role of the family in addiction recovery is widely acknowledged, although public attitudes remain mixed. Nearly half of the respondents view family support as essential for successful rehabilitation, while others consider it a situational factor. These findings suggest the need to strengthen both the rehabilitation infrastructure and the involvement of family members in the recovery process. The prevalence of judgemental attitudes towards individuals with alcohol dependence further indicates a need for improved public awareness and support systems.
8. Empirical studies confirm that residents largely condemn people with alcohol addiction, emphasising the need for greater understanding and support. The majority of respondents (49%) believe that society treats people with alcohol addiction with condemnation, often avoiding them and expressing negative attitudes. Only 2% believe that society provides sufficient support and assistance, indicating a low level of awareness of this issue and the need to improve public attitudes. Eight percent of respondents found it difficult to answer this question. These results highlight the importance of promoting public education about the nature of addiction as a medical and social issue, rather than as a manifestation of individual weakness. Educational campaigns, media coverage, and the integration of mental health and addiction topics into educational programmes can help reduce prejudice, promote empathy, and motivate society to offer support rather than condemnation. A sustainable and inclusive approach is only possible if society is informed and encouraged to understand alcohol addiction as a complex problem that affects both individuals and their immediate social environment.
9. At the national level, several policy measures are recommended: (1) Introduce stricter regulations on alcohol sales, including raising the legal drinking age from 18 to 21 and restricting points of sale (e.g., banning alcohol sales at petrol stations); (2) Increase excise taxes on alcoholic beverages to reduce affordability, particularly among youth; (3) Develop and expand state-funded rehabilitation programmes accessible across all regions of Latvia; (4) Launch a comprehensive public awareness campaign on the harmful effects of alcohol, with a focus on youth education; (5) Develop targeted educational campaigns that explain alcohol addiction as a disease rather than a character flaw or individual failure; (6) Establish a national data monitoring and analysis system to track alcohol consumption trends and enable timely, region-specific interventions.

## References

- Adu, P., & Miles, D. A. (2023). *Dissertation Research Methods: A Step-by-Step Guide to Writing Up Your Research in the Social Sciences*. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003268154>
- Albrekte, I., Zvejniece, L., Sudraba, V., & Vanaga, T. (2021). *Atkarību veidošanās un terapija. Psihodinamisks skatījums*. Retrieved from: <https://www.doctus.lv/raksts/medicina-un-farmacija/kliniska-prakse/atkaribu-veidosanas-un-terapija.-psihodinamisks-skatijums-4835/>

- Apīnis, Ē. (2006). *Dzert vai nedzert?* Rīga: Nacionālais apgāds.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <https://lib.mdpu.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Alan-Bryman-Social-Research-Methods2016.pdf>
- Eiropas Narkotiku un narkomānijas uzraudzības centrs (2019). *Eiropas profilakses programma: Rokasgrāmata lēmumu pieņēmējiem, viedokļu līderiem un politikas veidotājiem par zinātniski pierādītu atkarību izraisīto vielu lietošanas profilaksi*. Retrieved from: [https://www.spkc.gov.lv/sites/spkc/files/media\\_file/eiropas-atkaribu\\_profilaksesrokasgramata.pdf](https://www.spkc.gov.lv/sites/spkc/files/media_file/eiropas-atkaribu_profilaksesrokasgramata.pdf)
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>
- Facal, F., Flórez, G., Blanco, V., Rodríguez, J., Pereiro, C., Fernández, J. M., Fariñas, E., Estévez, V., Gómez-Trigo, J., Gurriarán, X., Sáiz, P., Vázquez, F. L., Arrojo, M., Costas, J., & GenPol Study Group (2021). Genetic predisposition to alcohol dependence: The combined role of polygenic risk to general psychopathology and to high alcohol consumption. *Drug and alcohol dependence*, 221, 108556. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2021.108556>
- Hussong, A., Bauer, D., & Chassin, L. (2008). Telescoped trajectories from alcohol initiation to disorder in children of alcoholic parents. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 117(1), 63-78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-843X.117.1.63>
- Jackson K.M. (2010). Progression through early drinking milestones in an adolescent treatment sample. *Addiction*, 105(3), 438-449. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2009.02800.x>
- Khadse, V., Dhillon, H.S., & Sasidharan, S. (2024). Psychological hardiness, personality factors and coping styles in male patients of alcohol dependence syndrome. *Medical Journal Armed Forces*, 80(2), 172-177. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mjafi.2022.07.007>
- Koob, G.F. (2021). Drug Addiction: Hyperkatifeia/Negative Reinforcement as a Framework for Medications Development. *Pharmacol Rev*, 73(1), 163-201. <https://doi.org/10.1124/pharmrev.120.000083>
- Koroļeva, I., Mieriņa, I., & Sņikere, S. (2008). Atkarību izraisīto vielu lietošana: riska un aizsargājošo faktoru ietekmes analīze. I. Stašulāne (Red.), *Latvijas jaunatnes portrets: integrācija sabiedrībā un marginalizācijas riski* (pp. 259-297). Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). London: SAGE Publications.
- Maksima I., Zaļizko P., Hansone S., & Sūna I. (2024). *Kas ir alkohola atkarība un kādu postījumu tā nodara? Multidisciplinārs skatījums*. Retrieved from: <https://www.doctus.lv/raksts/medicina-un-farmacija/kliniska-prakse/kas-ir-alkohola-atkariba-un-kadu-postijumu-ta-nodara-multidisciplinars-skatijums-6412/>
- Nodarbinātības valsts aģentūra. (2023). *NVA piedāvā atbalstu klientiem, kuriem atrast darbu traucē atkarības problēmas*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nva.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/nva-piedava-atbalstu-klientiem-kuriem-atrast-darbu-trauce-atkaribas-problemas>
- Nurnberger, J., & Bierut, L. (2007). Seeking the connections: alcoholism and our genes. *Scientific American*, 296(4), 46-53. <https://doi.org/10.1038/scientificamerican0407-46>
- Pan American Health Organization. (2019). *Alcohol consumption*. Retrieved from: <https://www.paho.org/en/enlace/alcohol-consumption>
- Poludasu, V.M., Godi, S., & Gurrām, V.C. (2015). Alcoholism and Ethnicity: A Genetic Perspective. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research*, 4(2), 147-151.
- Psychology Today. (2021). *Co-Occurring Disorders*. New York: Sussex Publishers LLC. Retrieved from: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/conditions/co-occurring-disorders>
- Sartor, C.E., Jackson, K.M., McCutcheon, V., Duncan, A.E., Grant, J.D., Werner, K.B., & Bucholz, K.K. (2016). Progression from First Drink, First Intoxication, and Regular Drinking to Alcohol Use Disorder: A Comparison of African American and European American Youth. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 40(7), 1515-1523. <https://doi.org/10.1111/acer.13113>
- Slimību profilakses un kontroles centrs. (2023). *Datu vizualizācijas par alkohola lietošanu*. Retrieved from: <https://www.spkc.gov.lv/lv/datu-vizualizacijas-par-alkohola-lietosanu>
- Sociālā darba vārdnīca. (2023). Zin.red. Bela, B., & Rasnača, L. Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 24-25. Retrieved from: [https://www.apgads.lu.lv/fileadmin/user\\_upload/lu\\_portal/apgads/izdevumi/2023/Sociala\\_darba\\_vardnica.pdf](https://www.apgads.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/lu_portal/apgads/izdevumi/2023/Sociala_darba_vardnica.pdf)
- The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2022). *Alcohol consumption*. Pieejams: <https://www.oecd.org/en/data/indicators/alcohol-consumption.html>
- Tomme, A., Lazdiņa, A., Kajandere, A., Vanaga, T., Sudraba, V. (2021). *Pacientu ar atkarībām aizsardzības mehānismi un īsā interence primārās prakses ārstu darbā*. Retrieved from: <https://www.doctus.lv/raksts/medicina-un-farmacija/pacientu-ar-atkaribam-aizsardzibas-mehanismi-un-isa-intervence-primaras-prakses-arstu-darba-5016/>

Vītola, L. (2022). *Atkarība*. Rīga: Bērnu klīniskā universitātes klīnika. Retrieved from: <https://www.veselapasaule.lv/lv/enciklopedija/diagnoze/atkariba#atkaribu-veidi>

World Health Organization. (2025). *Alcohol*. Retrieved from: [https://www.who.int/health-topics/alcohol#tab=tab\\_3](https://www.who.int/health-topics/alcohol#tab=tab_3)