Abstract

Objective: Alcohol consumption is a public health problem that can involve risks to the integrity of the prefrontal cortex, especially with respect to executive functioning. Although the negative effects on the prefrontal region have been studied in adults, there is less evidence concerning the adolescent population. The objective of this article is to understand the state of the art with respect to the relationship between alcohol consumption and executive functions in adolescents. Materials and methods: AcademicOneFile, Academic- Search Complete, Dialnet, DOYMA, Journal @ Ovid, MedicLatina, Medline, Proquest, PsycArticles, SAGE and Springer were subject to a database search for articles published between January 2006 and November 2011. The final sample was comprised of thirteen articles. Results: The studies showed inconsistent results for the components of executive functions; however, the components that deal with response inhibition and decision-making appear to be altered by different patterns of alcohol consumption in more than 70% of the studies. Conclusions: The findings indicate the research on this phenomenon in adolescents is still in the exploratory stage. Nevertheless, there is evidence that alcohol can be dangerous for adolescent cognitive functioning.

Keywords

Executive function, adolescent, ethanol, prefrontal cortex, review, nursing. (Source: DeCS, BIREME).