

# Attitudes of portuguese health professionals towards alcohol consumption and perceived self-efficacy

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## Abstract

### Introduction

People attribute meanings, develop behaviors and present attitudes towards alcohol consumption. Health professionals, despite their specific training, have attitudes that influence their professional practice and impact their relationship with their patients.<sup>1</sup> It is not yet known how these attitudes are characterized in Portuguese health professionals, even though Portugal is one of the countries in the world with the highest rates of alcohol consumption. The relationship between these attitudes and the perception of self-efficacy is also to be understood.

### Objectives

To describe the attitudes of Portuguese health professionals towards alcohol consumption and the relationship between these attitudes and the perception of self-efficacy.

### Method

Descriptive, correlational, cross-sectional, quantitative study carried out in 2021, accepted by the ARSLVT's Ethics Committee. Two scales were used: the Scale of attitudes toward alcohol, alcohol use disorder and individuals with alcohol use disorders<sup>2</sup>-PT (Escala de atitudes face ao álcool, aos problemas ligados ao álcool e às pessoas com perturbação por consumo de álcool - portuguese version, previously adapted) and the General Self-Efficacy Scale.<sup>3</sup> After requesting collaboration and sending the link to health and professional institutions, 535 professionals answered an online questionnaire (physicians, nurses, psychologists and social workers and final year nursing and medicine students) anonymously and with informed consent.

### Results and Discussion

Participants had a mean age of 42.2 years (SD=12.7). 81.3% were women. Mainly nurses (46.7%) and physicians (26.9%). 12% were nursing or medical final year students. Health professionals had a mean age of 20 years (SD=11.2) of professional practice. From all sample 71.2%, had professional experience with people with problematic alcohol consumption, 24.5% never had access to academic training in this area and 57,9% had never had in-service training on the subject. These data reveal the differences in substance use training, between courses and between health and educational institutions. 45.2% said they had a relative with problematic alcohol consumption, which is expected given the high prevalence of alcohol consumption in Portuguese society regarding the attitudes of professionals towards alcohol consumption, 30.1% had negative attitudes, with nurses having less positive attitudes. No differences were found according to sex or time of professional practice. The older the participants are the more negative attitudes towards alcohol consumption ( $r=-0.105$ ;  $p<0.015$ ). Those who do not actually care of patients with alcohol problem have more negative attitudes ( $F(3)=3,102$ ;  $p=0,026$ ).

There is a positive and statistically significant correlation between attitudes towards alcohol consumption and self-efficacy ( $r=0.171$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), which can be revealed in better professional performance and personal satisfaction.



### Conclusions and implications for knowledge development

Portuguese health professionals have globally positive attitudes towards alcohol consumption and people with alcohol problematic use. Nonetheless, more than a quarter have negative attitudes, with nurses standing out. Surprisingly, there were no differences in attitudes between those who have close relatives with problematic alcohol consumption and those who have not. Those who have better attitudes have better self-efficacy, which indicates the need for attention and monitoring this indicator to promote best professional practices. More research is needed to understand the predictors of negative attitudes about alcohol consumption.

### Keywords

Alcohol-related Disorders; Health Knowledge; Attitudes; Practice; Self-efficacy; Healthcare Providers.

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