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'Most of the Youth Are Drinking Because They Have Nothing to Do': How Idle Time Facilitates Adolescent Alcohol Use in Urban Tanzania

Allison Carney[a], Sylvia Kaaya[b], Lusajo Kajula[c], Mobolaji Ibitoye[a], Graca Marwerwe[d] and Marni Sommer[a]

[a]Department of Sociomedical Sciences, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, New York, NY, USA; [b]Department of Psychiatry, Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; [c]Office of Research – Innocenti, UNICEF, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; [d]University of Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

ABSTRACT

Societal factors influencing adolescent alcohol initiation and use are not well documented in Tanzania. The goal of this qualitative study was to explore the structural and environmental factors influencing adolescent alcohol uptake and use in urban Tanzania. 177 adolescents aged 15–19 from varying socioeconomic backgrounds participated in 16 participatory groups (separated by sex and in-school/out-of-school status) at sites in four different locations in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Participatory methods were used, including listing and ranking activities, and photovoice, exploring adolescent's perceptions around youth alcohol use, and recommendations for structural interventions to prevent or reduce adolescent alcohol uptake and use. Themes included: (1) "idle time" shapes adolescent alcohol use in urban Tanzania; (2) societal influences shape the locations where adolescents consume or purchase alcohol; and, (3) adolescents' recommendations about structural approaches for reducing their idle time and vulnerability to alcohol use. Our findings highlight the need for programs and policies aimed at reducing youth idle time as an approach to reducing alcohol use, such as increasing opportunities for employment, extracurricular activities, and entertainment, particularly for adolescent boys in urban Tanzania, given their increased vulnerability to the uptake and use of alcohol.

KEYWORDS

Adolescents; alcohol use; idle time; Tanzania

Introduction

Adolescence represents a developmental period when young people are vulnerable to peer and other influences shaping their behavior and identity (Sommer et al., 2014). Adolescents who begin drinking alcohol early, and develop patterns of heavier use, are vulnerable to negative long-term health outcomes, including cardiovascular disease (WHO, 2018), and to more direct impacts during adolescence, such as impaired decision-making and increased vulnerability to unsafe sex, sexual assault or violence (Coleman & Cater, 2005). Evidence from high-income countries indicates associations between substance use and school dropout, which may in turn increase vulnerability to increased substance use (Merianos et al., 2015; Wang & Fredricks, 2014 Mar–Apr). Delaying adolescent alcohol initiation and heavy usage has been shown to diminish problem drinking later in life (Windle & Windle, 2012). Investing in better understanding of this developmental phase and enabling factors for early alcohol use, could lead to improved health outcomes and well-being in life.

Although a body of literature exists from high-income countries on adolescent alcohol uptake and use (Conrod et al., 2015; Das et al., 2016), there is an urgent need to better understand the influences shaping usage in low-income countries. Evidence on adolescent uptake and use in sub-Saharan Africa in particular remains limited (Ndugwa et al., 2011; Morojele et al., 2016, 2018). Such research is critical given the large population under age 25 across the African continent and increased alcohol marketing targeting youth specifically (Obot, 2013; African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), 2018). Tanzania, the study site, has a population of over 48

CONTACT Marni Sommer marni.sommer@columbia.edu Department of Sociomedical Sciences, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, New York, NY, USA.

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million, 65% of whom are under the age of 24 years old (World Population Review, 2021). Minimal evidence currently exists around the influences shaping adolescent uptake and use in Tanzania, or youth patterns of heavy or episodic drinking (Sommer et al., 2019; Francis et al., 2015). Data from the World Health Organization (WHO) suggests relatively high alcohol consumption in the general population in Tanzania, especially among males aged 15 and above (WHO, 2018a). However, there is insufficient data on how and when adolescents in Tanzania are initiating alcohol use, and the structural and environmental influences shaping on-going usage (Kalichman et al., 2007).

The most recently available national evidence reported the prevalence of heavy episodic or "binge" drinking in Tanzania to be 33.4% among males and 7.7% among females aged 15 years and above (WHO, 2018a). In contrast, the prevalence of heavy episodic drinking in Kenya, a neighboring country, was reported to be 19% among males and 3% for females (aged 15 years and older) (WHO, 2018). Many factors may be shaping heavy usage, such as availability of inexpensive, unregulated alcohol. Globally, unregulated alcohol use accounts for about 9% (65% in Africa) of all alcohol consumption, and in Tanzania, around 86% of alcohol consumed is unregulated, and primarily homemade (WHO, 2018; WHO, 2018). Home-brewed alcohol, which is reported to be more affordable for adolescents than regulated commercial alcohol, serves a frequent role in social and community functions, such as marriages and funerals (Josephat et al., 2012).

Both in-school and out-of-school adolescents are vulnerable to pressures to consume alcohol (Wang et al., 2015). Previous studies exploring adolescent alcohol use in low-income countries have focused on students, given the ease of sampling such populations (Stroeken et al., 2012). However, some evidence suggests out-of-school adolescents may be more vulnerable to using alcohol (Tice et al., 2017). Qualitative studies conducted with adolescent boys in Cambodia and Tanzania indicated an increased vulnerability to alcohol use among out-of-school boys (Sommer et al., 2013; Scandurra et al., 2017). However, more evidence is needed on the differing vulnerability of in-school and out-of-school adolescents, and factors shaping their use.

In exploring young people's vulnerability to alcohol use, there is a need to understand the contexts in which they are living, including their access to education. Although challenges around education quality remain, the Tanzanian government has consistently sought to reduce financial barriers. Fees for primary school were removed two decades ago, and in 2015 the government removed fees for secondary school (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Although there are improvements in enrollment, in 2017, the approximate net enrollment rate for secondary school was about 22%, without significant differences between male and female students (United Republic of Tanzania | UNESCO UIS, 2019). These numbers differed by urban versus rural context, with 16% of rural and 36% of urban adolescents enrolled in secondary education (Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children – MoHCDGEC/Tanzania Mainland, Ministry of Health – MoH/Zanzibar, National Bureau of Statistics – NBS/Tanzania, Office of Chief Government Statistician - OCGS/Zanzibar, and ICF, 2016). Given ongoing challenges to cover the cost of other necessities for school, such as uniforms and textbooks, which hampers access to education, and the possibility that out-of-school status may increase adolescent vulnerability to alcohol use, there is a need to explore adolescents' voiced perceptions of their experiences with alcohol, and the ways in which schooling and other aspects of their environments may shape their uptake and use.

We applied an adapted version of Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model (Kilanowski, 2017) to an examination of the multiple levels of influence shaping adolescent uptake and use of alcohol in urban Tanzania. In particular, the study focused on the macro and meso levels of influence, such as societal and gender norms shaping patterns of alcohol uptake and use, the role of policy in preventing adolescent alcohol use, alcohol seller outlet density, and accessibility of alcohol to adolescent boys and girls in urban Tanzania (Kilanowski, 2017; Sommer et al., 2019). The study also examined

Table 1. Four sites in Dar es Salaam.

Ilala	City center
Temeke	Industrial area
Tandale	Informal settlements
Bunju	Peri-urban, furthest from center

See images on separate file.

community norms and beliefs regarding alcohol use, including peer and familial dynamics, in order to acquire a more in-depth understanding of the alcohol environment shaping adolescents' experiences of usage in Dar es Salaam, the largest and most diverse urban area of Tanzania.

In an effort to capture adolescents' voiced experiences with alcohol uptake and use, a range of qualitative and participatory methodologies were used. This paper describes adolescents' alcohol-related experiences, perceptions and recommendations for how to reduce adolescent alcohol uptake and use in urban Tanzania.

Methods

Research setting

The study was conducted in four sites (Ilala, Temeke, Tandale, Bunju) across Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's commercial capital, which has over 5.1 million people (World Population Review 2021). Half (51%) of Dar es Salaam's population lives in peri-urban slums (World Bank, 2019). The city center is comprised of a busy shopping district, tall office buildings, ferry ports, and restaurants. Districts in Dar es Salaam vary greatly by socioeconomic status, with a robust mixture of ethnic backgrounds. Study sites were chosen to reflect the diversity of Dar es Salaam's social and physical environments. The four selected sites (Table 1) represent this diversity, including proximity to the city center. In each site, a secondary school and a youth center were identified for recruiting in and out of school youth for the study, for a total of four schools and four youth centers in the study.

Research design

The findings discussed in this paper are drawn from an exploratory case study focused on understanding the intersections of alcohol use and related unsafe sexual activity among adolescents in Tanzania. The study used multiple methodologies: key informant interviews with stakeholders (e.g. government, alcohol industry); in-depth interviews with adolescents (aged 15–19); participatory activities with groups of adolescents; photovoice activities with adolescents; in-depth interviews with adults interacting in adolescents' lives (e.g. parents, teachers, police), and community mapping to assess alcohol density and placement of alcohol adverts. The use of participatory methods is particularly appropriate when focusing on sensitive data, such as the sharing of information about alcohol use and related sexual activity, both sanctioned activities for youth in society. Details on the range of methods used are reported elsewhere (Sommer et al., 2020), while this paper draws on three of the participatory methodologies for the findings described in this paper:

1. *Mapping Alcohol in the Community*: Adolescents were divided into small groups of 3-4, given large white paper and pens, and asked to draw (and label) the places in their community where alcohol was available (sold, used, given out) and who frequented the sites. The research team then spent time discussing each map with the groups,
2. *Brainstorming and Ranking: Changing the alcohol environment:* First the youth explored in a large group (listing) their understanding of what it means "to change the alcohol environment," and why changing the environment might reduce youth alcohol use. Second, the youth broke into groups (with pieces of paper and pen) and listed the ways to change the environment that they felt would be most effective in reducing youth alcohol use. A larger group discussion with probing and ranking items was then conducted;
3. *Photovoice Activities:* Adolescents in groups of two or three (mixture of coed and same-sex groups) were given a disposable camera to take pictures in their community of factors facilitating adolescent alcohol use. Photos were then distributed to each group who wrote about what the picture depicted, including what were contributing factors to alcohol use by youth. Subsequently, the groups discussed how structural approaches could modify use.

Sample and data collection

Adolescents (in and out of school) were purposively sampled for inclusion: (e.g. differing socioeconomic status, academic abilities, tribal and religious backgrounds). Students were recruited through school administrators, and out-of-school adolescents through youth center staff in each of the four sites ($n = 43$–45 total per site, total all sites = 177). Four groups were formed per site ($n = 6$–12 per group): (1) in-school girls, (2) in-school boys, (3) out-of-school girls, and (4) out-of-school boys.

The research team consisted of four Tanzanian research assistants (two women and two men), who spent eight weeks conducting research in the four sites (four weeks per site, with two sites co-occurring). The teams met weekly with the groups of adolescents, working in pairs. The weekly sessions were conducted in same sex groups, except for the photovoice activity, which included a subsample of participants, and was conducted in coed groups (with exception of Ilala site, which were only boys). The group sessions were conducted in a confidential setting with no teachers or center staff present.

All adolescents provided informed consent before data collection began. Given the noise-related challenges of aluminum-roofed buildings during the rainy season, the activities were not tape-recorded. Careful note taking was conducted by the two research assistants, with transcripts developed subsequent to each participatory session, and all written participant data (e.g. lists, drawings, notes) translated for analysis by the larger research team.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was received from Columbia University Medical Center IRB, Muhibili University of Health and Allied Sciences IRB, National Insitute of Medical Research (NIMR) IRB, and COSTECH. A waiver of parental consent was obtained, given the sensitivity of the topic of alcohol and interest in assuring the adolescents felt comfortable being honest about their experiences.

Data analysis

The data analyzed for this paper consisted of field notes, participatory group activity transcripts, alcohol drinking and purchasing locations drawn and labeled by the adolescents, lists created (and ranked) by groups of adolescents, and photos with written descriptions. All of the data were coded and analyzed by the Tanzanian research assistants with oversight from the larger investigative team. This included NVivo coding of interview transcripts (findings not described in this paper) and matrices developed for the analysis of the participatory activity generated data. We conducted thematic analysis on the transcripts from the participatory activities (including photovoice), and the notes from the ethnographic observations. First, all of the participatory transcripts were read by a member of the research team and preliminary coding matrices were developed. Next, the four research assistants independently read through a set of transcripts and placed the responses obtained from participants into matrices containing the different codes. Discrepancies were resolved by discussion until consensus was reached and the matrices were revised to minimize overlap of codes and to highlight and cluster overarching themes. Once the matrices were finalized, two research assistants independently coded all the remaining transcripts. Notes from ethnographic observations were also analyzed for common themes and were used to triangulate the findings from the participatory activities. Findings were triangulated through the analysis of data from multiple methodologies.

The thematic areas that emerged from the described methods analyzed for this paper included: (1) "idle time" shapes adolescent alcohol use in urban Tanzania (2) societal influences shape the locations where adolescents spend their idle time and consume or purchase alcohol, and (3) adolescents' recommendations about structural approaches for reducing their idle time and vulnerability to alcohol use.

Results

"Idle time" shapes adolescent alcohol use in urban Tanzania

Across all of the sites, both adolescent girls and boys described how excess discretionary or "idle" time influences alcohol use among young people.

Some differences emerged in the ways in which such idle time arises for those currently in versus out of school. However, overall the suggestion was that a lack of extracurricular or income-generating activities during unscheduled time creates a vulnerability to consuming alcohol:

> To the youth who have no busy schedule due to lack of employment they would just wander around the street so they find themselves with time to drink. (Female non-student, Bunju)

The challenge of idle time related both to adolescents who were no longer in school and to those who had too much free time before or after school hours. The crowded Tanzanian public? school system sometimes means education occurs during a morning or afternoon shift, with young people having many free hours when they are not in a school setting. For those no longer in school, a number of adolescents described how school fees (this study was conducted during the initial months of the abolishment of secondary school fees) cause many adolescents to drop out of formal schooling, which results in their having excess idle time. This suggests the potential for increased vulnerability to alcohol consumption by adolescents from lower-income families:

> If the person is from a poor family, he or she could easily join a bad group because they are not educated [and have] idle time from not going to school. They don't go to school because their parents cannot afford school fees. (Female, student, Ilala)

In addition, some participants described how a lack of opportunities outside of school or for employment contributed to shaping adolescent's uptake and use of alcohol:

> Young people who have completed school and those who dropped out of school are just idle. When there are no jobs, young people resort to drinking alcohol and robbing other people, since they are not occupied by any activity and they have no means to earn money. (Male, non student, Bunju)

The above quote should be understood as referring to varying ages of adolescents in relation to school completion, as depending on scores received on national exams, some adolescents leave secondary school after completing Form 4 (around age 18), while others leave after Form 6 (around age 20). Some youth shared how if an adolescent boy leaves school, he can often find unskilled labor that requires hard physical work, such as at construction sites. This work is a common economic activity for boys who have left school in the Tandale market area. Such jobs were mentioned by out-of-school boys as one reason that young people drink alcohol:

> Boys are drinking alcohol in order to do hard jobs like construction work or carrying loads for a fee. The alcohol works as a stimulator so they are able to do this hard work. (Male, non student, Tandale).

> Stimulate muscles to do work – specifically viroba [liquor sold in sealed plastic packs of about 50mls -the manufacture and sale of which was banned just after completion of data collection for this study] – if you are working and you take viroba, it will stimulate you to work more. (Male, non student, Temeke).

Adolescents also explained how gendered differences in idle time contribute to alcohol uptake and use, and in particular the heavy use by boys. A number of participants explained that adolescent girls have less "idle time" than boys because they are kept busy after school with household chores and cannot spend their time as they choose. This in turn, male and female adolescents explained, decreases their vulnerability to alcohol uptake:

> Boys can easily get influenced from the peer groups, while girls are less likely to get influenced from peer groups because they have less time to meet with them as for they are busy with domestic work. (Female non-student, Tandale)

Overall, gendered differences in idle time activities were described as acting as a catalyst to reinforce (mostly) male vulnerability to alcohol use in urban Tanzania. Girls are kept at home more often, which limits the opportunities for access to and use of alcohol. Adolescent boys have more discretionary time, including more freedom to gather with their peers or informal work-related situations [for example petty trade activities] that encourage usage, which in turn increases the pressure on them to consume alcohol.

Societal influences shape locations where adolescents spend their idle time and consume or purchase alcohol

Across all four sites, both formal (meaning legal) and informal locations were described as options



Figure 1. Picture of "Vigenge" or "Vijiweni", a youth hang out place, captures anonymously in their communities by Tanzanian youth.

for adolescents to purchase and/or consume alcohol. The photovoice activities served to document some of these insights. Formal locations included licensed bars where adolescents' age was not questioned and small kiosks selling alcohol during operating hours. Informal locations (Figure 1) frequented by adolescents where alcohol consumption occurred were described as unofficial youth hang out places ("*Vijiweni*" or "*Vigenge*").

One of the photovoice groups from the peri-urban site reflected upon the "youth hang out place" they had captured in a picture (Figure 1), and explained why they thought it contributed to adolescent alcohol use:

> In these places [vigenge and vijiweni], youth of different ages meet, so from there, some might learn how to drink alcohol if they have never used before. (Co-ed student group, Bunju)

The indication being the socializing that occurred, oftentimes of older and younger youth together, and primarily boys, helped to influence the uptake of alcohol. Adolescents also explained during the mapping (drawing) activity that young people will buy and consume alcohol at both formal bars (e.g. selling commercial, regulated alcohol) and informal bars (called "Kilabu" or "Vilabu" which make and sell homebrew) (Figure 2) that do not enforce the legal age restrictions.

> Both females and males of 15 years and above go to [Kilabu], even students. The seller only cares about money, so whoever comes is served. (Male, non student, Tandale)

While some alcohol regulations exist in Tanzania, such as the legal age of drinking being above 18 years old, age restrictions are unlikely to be enforced at informal bars and local brew houses, or if the alcohol seller is a young person. The adolescents similarly described seeking out alcohol at small grocery shops or kiosks where alcohol is sold and that do not enforce the legal age of drinking.

> Even if you are in the [school] uniform you can buy at the shop because they do not know if it is for yourself or the parents, so you can buy and just not drink there. The shop does not question them. (Female, student, Tandale)

As the female student implies in the quote, wearing clothes other than school uniforms when accessing alcohol sale points is a way that adolescents hide their adolescence (or below legal drinking age status) from bar or shop owners



Figure 2. Picture of a "Kilabu" or "Vilabu" (plural form), an informal bar where local alcohol is sold and sometimes made, captured anonymously in their communities by Tanzanian youth.

and servers. Importantly this quote also highlights the way in which the practice of parents sending children to purchase alcohol can enable adolescent purchase and consumption for their own use.

In terms of drinking locations, girls in particular described how they will purchase their alcohol at one location or have a male peer or older acquaintance buy alcohol for them and drink elsewhere. After acquiring alcohol, girls explained that they will consume alcohol at a "youth hang out place" or at a friend's house. While adolescent girls feared being seen in public, adolescent boys described how some boys would intentionally drink publicly, as a way of demonstrating their "prestige," meaning an effort to appear as someone who has money and is "modern," to their peers and community.

Across all four sites, adolescent boys described purchasing or consuming alcohol at informal and formal bars. Boys' explanation for preferring bars was that it enables listening to music by DJs or live bands, playing games like pool, or watching a football match on TV (additional findings published elsewhere in Ibitoye et al., 2019). This was also reflected in adolescents' descriptions of buying alcohol from one location and consuming it elsewhere, with the elsewhere usually explained as being an open place where they can play music. Groceries, or shops selling alcohol with a small area for seating, were additional locations described as preferred given their entertainment options:

> [Youth] go there because there is a pool table; PlayStation games, so the youth of this age like the place because of that, so they are drinking alcohol too. Generally, youth prefer to go to the grocery because of the pool table and PlayStation games. (Male, student, Bunju)

> [The bar] has concerts on the weekend (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) including "Khanga moja" (girl dancers wearing just wrappers) and "Tarumbeta" (trumpets) … including both students and non-students; students in uniform are not allowed, but they don't check age as long as you don't have uniform you will be allowed. (Female, non student, Ilala)

These descriptions suggest that if music, games and sports watching were easily accessible in environments without alcohol, youth might gravitate toward those instead, potentially reducing

their alcohol intake. Reinforcing this possibility, adolescents also explained how they would choose not to drink at a certain location if other entertainment options (e.g. music and dancing) were not available:

> … youth don't prefer to go there (informal bar) because there is no live music performance. (Female, non student, Tandale)

> [This bar is] preferred because there are many girls there, they show football, there is a pool table; so youth also go there to play pool. (Male, non student, Temeke)

Thus, many societal influences, including peer dynamics, social norms, ease of access, and availability of other entertainment options, appear to be shaping the purchase and use of alcohol among adolescents at different types of locations in Dar es Salaam. Such influences provide potential entry points for interventions that could prevent or reduce adolescent alcohol use.

Adolescents' recommendations of structural approaches for reducing idle time and vulnerability to alcohol use

In reflecting on why adolescents drink in Dar es Salaam, a common response from adolescent boys and girls was that "they have nothing to do." As noted above, many Tanzanian schools are scheduled in shifts to accommodate the large numbers of students, so students often have entire mornings or afternoons free (if not filled up with chores at home). The adolescents had numerous recommendations for how to fill the excess idle time adolescents, mostly boys, face either because school is out for the day or because they have stopped attending school. Suggestions included, for example:

> One way to change the environment is to create employment and with this, it will help reduce alcohol drinking, because people will be concentrating on working and not drinking. Most of the youth are drinking because they have nothing to do. (Male, student, Bunju)

> Put a certain thing in the environment that will help youth avoid drinking alcohol. For example, introducing different sports/games/competitions. That will reduce the time that youth spend drinking alcohol … .Youth will not get time drinking after sports because they are tired. (Male, student, Ilala)

Along with suggestions focused on constructively filling the after-school time of adolescents, a number of participants focused on activities that would help adolescents who already have drinking habits. For example, this included introducing sports as a form of social support:

> The government should put sports for the youth. The youth will have to form a sports group, which consists of the ones that don't drink and the ones that need to quit drinking and making them engage in sport activities will keep them busy as they will have no time to drink. (Female, non student, Tandale)

> Put more emphasis on sports and games in schools, streets, and at the municipal level. This will make youth concentrate on sports and games instead of drinking. The days that they are going to the games would replace the days they go to drink. (Male, student, Temeke)

Most of the adolescents described activities for adolescent boys, who were reported across all sites to be facing significantly greater pressure to consume alcohol than girls. The idea of building peer support through such activities, with non-drinkers supporting drinkers, emerged in a number of their recommendations.

In addressing more specifically the environments where adolescents are perceived to be influenced to drink, they emphasized the need for activities that will keep them away from their "Vijiweni," or hang-out spaces:

> To increase the sports and games among the youth. This is will make the youth stay at the sport places and grounds and not spending time at the hang out areas. It is the hang out places that make youth drink, so if they stay away, the alcohol users will decrease. (Male non-student, Tandale)

Or, as emerged from the photovoice activities during which many adolescents took pictures of the youth hang-out spots ("Vijiweni"), an emphasis was placed on the need for increased opportunities for employment:

> This is a picture of a Kijiwe (hang-out spot) where hooligans like to stay. The picture shows the place where people drink alcohol, especially from the time of 5pm to 7 or 8pm. We learn from this picture is people of 15–19 years and above like to go to these areas … What has to be done is for the youth to get employment in order to reduce their presence in those areas. (Male, students, Bunju)

In addition, during many activities, the phrase, "We are the future nation" was repeated, with adolescents sharing their perception that the future prosperity of Tanzania rests in the hands of young people. They would emphasize this notion followed by the strong desire to have more employment, entertainment, and educational opportunities in their communities to reduce adolescent vulnerability to alcohol and enable young people, boys in particular, to succeed.

Discussion

This exploratory case study conducted in urban Tanzania found that the experience of "idle time," either during the non-school hours or for those not in school, is shaping adolescent vulnerability to the uptake and use of alcohol. In addition, specific factors of locations where young people access and consume alcohol were found to shape their uptake and use. Although not focused on adolescents specifically, prior research conducted in northern Tanzania found differences in alcohol use among secondary school students, university students, and casual laborers (aged 15–24), which were consistent with the findings from the study described here (Francis et al., 2015).

The predominance of idle time as a contributor to alcohol use was observed particularly for adolescent boys; adolescent girls were found to be more constrained by household chores, as has been found in other African countries, such as Uganda and Kenya (Ninsiima et al., 2018; Kågesten et al., 2018). This protected girls from alcohol use, in contrast to the many opportunities that were found to increase boys' vulnerability to usage. In terms of the locations where adolescents described spending their idle or free time when away from their homes, Tanzanian boys in particular experience peer pressure to use alcohol, or are exposed to scenarios with easy availability of alcohol. For example, in a recent survey of more than 600 predominantly out of school adolescents and young men (age range 15–19 years) in urban Tanzania, that mapped 66 venues where participants congregated informally, alcohol was sold at 21% of the venues, with patrons reportedly bringing alcohol to consume at an additional 33% (Yamanis et al., 2013). In the United States, researchers found Mexican-American adolescent boys, projecting "traditional masculine roles," were generally associated with increased peer pressure to conform to alcohol use (Kulis et al., 2010). Similarly, boys in Lusaka, Zambia reportedly consumed more alcohol than their female peers, and were likely to consume alcohol more regularly if they had friends who also consumed alcohol or went to gatherings where alcohol was accessible for youth (Tyler et al., 2016).

The structural environment was also found to influence vulnerability to alcohol uptake; with many youth describing easy access to purchasing alcohol, particularly when not in school uniforms. Studies conducted in South Africa and Botswana suggest that age restrictions on alcohol purchases are not regularly enforced, even if a youth is easily identified as a student (Letsela et al., 2019; Magowe et al., 2017). Evidence, primarily from high-income countries, has suggested that enforcement of the legal age of drinking can reduce alcohol sales to youth (Green et al., 2015; Stockings et al., 2016). However, training of alcohol sellers to not sell to underage drinkers may only have a minimal effect, such as was found in Vancouver, British Columbia, except when law enforcement conducts random checks (Wagenaar et al., 2005). Other types of enforcement may be effective, such as an example from the Cherokee Nation, USA in which community members participated in enforcing alcohol regulations, which in turn reduced alcohol sales to youth (Wang et al., 2015). Although the latter might be unique to the Cherokee cultural context, the engagement of community in other youth-related interventions was suggested as a missing component to effective implementation of youth-focused interventions in Botswana, which reportedly followed a top-down policy structure without strong involvement from communities, specifically young people (Diraditsile, 2016). In addition, studies conducted in various European countries suggest that strengthening a range of parental, school, and community protective factors can have a significant impact on reducing adolescent alcohol use (Sigfusdottir et al., 2008).

The finding that Tanzanian adolescent boys in particular favor drinking and purchasing alcohol in locations that have entertainment, such as football on TV or music, has been found elsewhere in Africa. In urban Zimbabwe, establishments that catered to youth and included entertainment options (in addition to alcohol availability) were found to enable adolescent alcohol consumption; such locations could thus serve as useful sites for interventions (Mataure et al., 2002). In addition, alcohol has similarly been described elsewhere as a form of entertainment for youth when other options are missing. In South Africa, youth described how they have nothing to do after school or on weekends, resulting in alcohol use for entertainment (Thobejane & Raselekoane, 2017). Promising interventions in South Africa, implementing new school curriculum and activities to reduce after-school leisure boredom, found overall positive effects in reducing situational adolescent alcohol use (Caldwell et al., 2008). Secondary school students in southern Nigeria, in particular adolescent boys, reported alcohol use during evenings and discretionary time was a "fun" entertainment option, highlighting the need for substance-free alternative locations with additional options for "fun" (Alex-Hart et al., 2014). And in rural Kenya, research indicated that a lack of alternative entertainment options is a driver of youth alcohol use (Muturi, 2014).

Although limited interventions have been described in the literature that intentionally focus on filling up adolescents' unstructured time in Africa to prevent alcohol use, studies from the United States have shown students involved in more organized activities routinely use substances less than those not engaged in organized leisure time activities (Seaman et al., 2014; Sznitman & Engel-Yeger, 2017; Badura et al., 2017). In Dar es Salaam, sports interventions have been used to address other adolescent health issues, such as HIV education (Maro et al., 2009). Although a very different sociocultural and economic context, Iceland reduced adolescent alcohol use by implementing country-wide, community-based after school activities, parental engagement meetings, and curfews (Kristjansson et al., 2010). Supervised sports activity was speculated to have reduced alcohol use among Icelandic adolescents, as occupying their time reduced the occurrence of drinking (Thorlindsson et al., 2007). The Icelandic model heavily relied on community involvement, sports-club facilities, parents, schools, and youth worker volunteers to create an organized network of support and monitoring of Icelandic youth (Sigfusdottir et al., 2008). Conversely, South African youth reported not participating in sport activities and choosing to engage with alcohol instead, due to a lack of facilities in the community to utilize for games and sports, thus, suggesting a need to address structural and spatial limitations preventing alternative sport interventions from succeeding (Koloba & Surujlal, 2014). Such approaches would entail engaging with the community, families and urban planners to allow for additional sports spaces to be integrated into the rapidly growing infrastructure of Dar es Salaam (or other similar African cities).

The challenge identified in this study of adolescent "idle time" creating vulnerabilities to alcohol use links to the economic barriers of accessing education, particularly secondary school. In Machakos County, Kenya, the elimination of school fees for primary and secondary school education only accounted for roughly 27% of economic barriers preventing young people from transitioning from primary to secondary school, making school continuation unattainable for the county's most vulnerable youth (Ayugi, 2016). Although Tanzania abolished school fees, other costs such as uniforms and transportation, keep formal education out of reach for many youth (Martínez & Odhiambo, 2018).

Young people in Tanzania provided numerous suggestions, interestingly that were similar to the components of the Icelandic Model mentioned above, for how to shift the structural and environmental context in order to reduce their vulnerability to alcohol use. They in particular focused on how to address idle time – particularly for boys – during after school hours or for those who had dropped out or been unable to stay in school. Most recommendations focused on increasing the availability of extracurricular activities, such as introducing community sports competitions or musical events. Such approaches

have proven to be effective in other contexts for reducing alcohol use. For example, studies from the rural US have reported that average or high involvement in extracurricular activities resulted in reduced substance use as compared to those with low activity. Researchers further suggested that rural adolescents may take more advantage of existing after-school activities when school and community resources are limited (Sharp et al., 2015). Alternative engagement strategies, such as football coinciding with job training, were found to be effective in reducing substance use and increasing HIV knowledge in South Africa among young men and could be considered for other Sub Saharan African contexts (Rotheram-Borus et al., 2016). The Tanzanian participants were specific in their ideas, recommending more youth employment and creating spaces (physical and temporal) for organized sports and activities in their neighborhoods. Although such approaches vary in the level of government and donor engagement they might require, others may be do-able at the community level. And given the intensity of youth vulnerability to alcohol within their current environments, seem like an investment worth exploring (Ibitoye et al., 2019).

The study had some limitations that are important to note. First, the study was qualitative in methodology, limiting the generalizability to all young people of Tanzania. However, the diversity of the sample across Dar es Salaam would indicate similar realities may face urban youth. Second, out-of-school youth participants were recruited through youth centers or youth group organizers, therefore, they may be different from out-of-school youth who are not involved in such programs. Additional research with a target population of young people not involved in any supportive programs and living on the street would be useful to capture their unique experiences with alcohol, including influences shaping their vulnerability to uptake and use.

Conclusion

The findings from this study indicate that the alcohol uptake and use by young people growing up today in urban Tanzania, particular adolescent boys, is influenced by numerous social and environmental factors, including their experience of "idle time" outside of school. However, youth have critical insights into their lived experiences that can guide government and community programming to address their vulnerabilities. One, identifying new approaches for filling up youth "idle time"; either after school (e.g. entertainment/sports) or for those who have left school (e.g. employment), might reduce their vulnerability to spaces and time for drinking. Two, increased enforcement of the existing legal age of alcohol consumption could serve to reduce intake. Three, youth are the knowers of their own lives, and utilizing participatory methodologies in future studies is recommended as an effective approach for understanding how to provide more protective environments around alcohol use. Considering approximately 65% of Tanzania's population is under 24 years old (World Population Review 2021), there is an urgent need to work toward youth-centered approaches that will be most effective in reducing alcohol use.

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