

TCN Spotlight Presentation

Karlynn BrintzenhofeSzoc, PhD, MSW, FAOSW

Professor (as of August 15, 2019)

School of Social Work

College of Allied Health Sciences

My Topic for the Day

Alcohol use during active cancer treatment: What do we know now, what do we need to know, and will getting answers improve the psychosocial and health outcomes for people with cancer?

Why this topic?

Over the past 6 years I discovered that there is little to nothing published on the interaction of the psychosocial issues related to having cancer and undergoing treatment and the psychosocial issues related to alcohol use.

What do we already know?

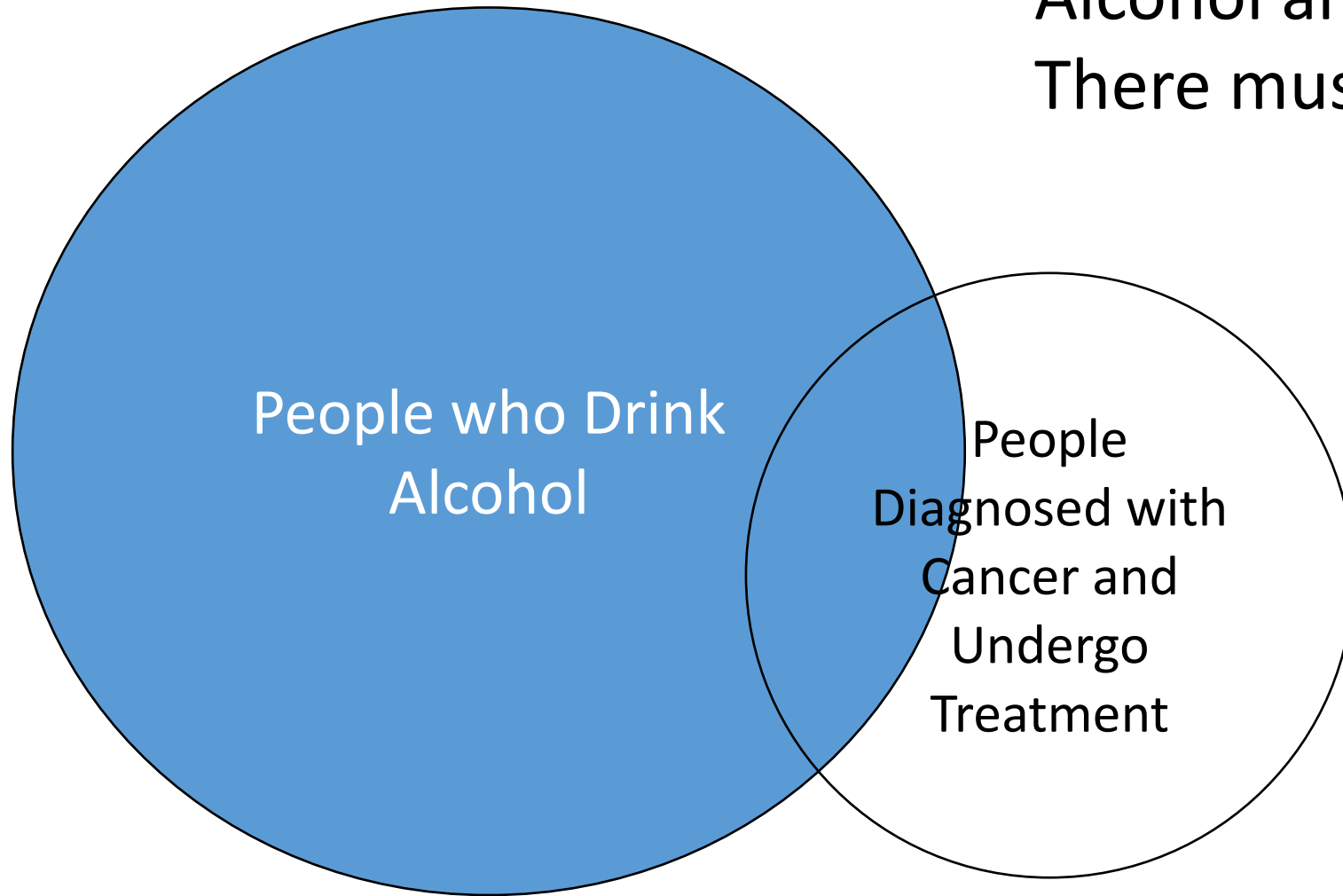
The cancer numbers

- In 2019 over 1.7 million persons will get a cancer diagnosis
- Around 600,000 will die from cancer in 2019
- About 17 million people have cancer, are in treatment for cancer, or are post-treatment (survivors)
- Survivors are expected to increase to 26 million by 2040

The alcohol numbers

- In 2015 the prevalence of drinking within the past 30 days was 55.6% and drinking in the past year was 69.2% of the general population aged 26 and older.
- These percentages equate to 115.6 and 143.8 million, respectively
- In all ages the reported past year drinking in 2002 was 65.4% and in 2013 it was 72.7%
- Increases in past-year drinking rose 15.8% for women and 6.8% in men

Alcohol and Cancer –
There must be an overlap



People who Drink
Alcohol

People
Diagnosed with
Cancer and
Undergo
Treatment

Alcohol use during cancer treatment

- Alcohol is a known risk factor for eight cancers
- The literature on the impact of alcohol use among survivors of cancer on recurrence, second primary, disease free survival, and overall survival is inconsistent
- Getting a diagnosis of cancer and undergoing treatment brings about a wide range of negative psychosocial outcomes

Alcohol use during cancer treatment (con't)

- Alcohol use can bring about its own set of problematic psychosocial outcomes
- People with cancer who are or were heavy drinkers experience less treatment related nausea and vomiting
- People with a diagnosis of head and neck cancer who are moderate drinkers report fewer overall side effects from treatment

Study results by me and Susan Pinney

- Among women in the Breast Cancer Registry of Greater Cincinnati
 - Completed update survey #5
 - Had received chemotherapy in the past
 - Answered at least one of the three alcohol questions
- Findings
 - 28% drank during last round of chemotherapy

What do I think we need to add to the knowledge base?

Lots

and lots and lots and even more ...

My current focus of research

1) What is the prevalence of alcohol use during treatment?

2) What is interaction of psychosocial issues of cancer and alcohol use?

- Does the use of alcohol during cancer treatment complicate psychosocial issues?
- What is the impact of this complication on treatment adherence, patient-doctor relationships, and family dynamics, to name a few?
- Does the use of alcohol during cancer treatment result in higher healthcare costs?

3) What is the interaction of alcohol use on treatment efficacy?

Current plan and what do I need

- 1) Identify people who are interested in this topic, have skill sets needed, and have the time to participate
- 2) Conduct and publish a comprehensive search of the literature, review of the findings, and compilation the results.
- 3) Using the finding from #1 develop a research proposal, get funding, and implement study
- 4) Long term if findings support it develop an intervention that focuses on dealing with the co-occurring cancer treatment and alcohol use

Thank you

Questions and Answers
brintzkn@ucmail.uc.edu