

Profiling non-drinkers: 2014/15 ABAS

Background

In 2014/15, around one in five New Zealand adults (21%) aged 15 years and over reported that they had not consumed any alcohol within the last 12 months (Ministry of Health, 2015). The proportion of non-drinkers varies with sex, age and ethnicity. The 2014/15 Health Promotion Agency (HPA) Attitudes and Behaviour towards Alcohol Survey (ABAS) monitors behaviour and attitudes towards alcohol, including non-drinkers. This fact sheet reports on the demographic profile of non-drinkers in the ABAS, the length of time they report not consuming alcohol, and their reasons for not drinking.

Methodology

The 2014/15 ABAS included questions about the length of time respondents had not been drinking, and their reasons for not drinking (multiple responses were permitted). Those who self-identified as non-drinkers or had not consumed alcohol during the previous 12 months were classed as “non-drinkers”. There were 1,153 non-drinkers aged 15-years-and-over. Univariate regression analyses were conducted first to assess whether responses varied by gender, ethnicity and age. Multivariate analyses were then conducted to assess which variables were still associated with different responses after adjusting for all others. Statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) between subgroups are reported in cases where the differences remained significant after accounting for gender, ethnicity and age group.

Profile of non-drinkers

Overall, 30% (28-31%) of respondents to the 2014/15 ABAS were non-drinkers. Those more likely to be non-drinkers were:

- females (34%), compared with males (25%)
- people aged 15 to 17-years (60%) and those aged 65-years and over (34%), compared with 18 to 24-year-olds (27%).
- Māori (31%), Pacific people (50%) and Asian (54%), compared with European/Other (24%).

Length of time not consuming alcohol

All non-drinkers were asked how long they had not been consuming alcohol (see Figure 1). Half (50%, 46-53%) said they had always been non-drinkers. Just over one in three (36%, 33-39%) had stopped consuming alcohol more than two years previously. The remaining 14% had stopped consuming alcohol within the last two years.

Those who were classified as non-drinkers within the past 12 months more likely to report always having being non-drinkers were:

- females (53%), compared to males (46%).
- people aged 15 to 17-years (88%), compared to 18 to 24-year-olds (58%). Note, 25 to 44-year-olds (42%) and 45 to 64-year-olds (44%) non-drinkers were less likely to report always being non-drinkers than 18 to 24-year olds.
- Pacific people (63%) and Asian (76%), compared to European/Other (46%). Note, Māori (40%) non-drinkers were less likely to report always being non-drinkers than European/Other.

Reasons for not consuming alcohol

Non-drinkers were asked about their reasons for not consuming alcohol. Multiple responses were permitted. Table 1 shows the ten most common responses to this question, with the weighted proportions of non-drinkers who nominated each reason.

The demographic differences for the five most common responses are listed below.

Health-related reasons, given by one in five non-drinkers (20%, 18-23%) was the most common reported reason for not consuming alcohol. Non-drinkers more likely to give health-related reasons were European/Other (22%), compared with Māori (16%), Pacific (10%) and Asian people (14%).

The second-most commonly given reason, by one in five non-drinkers (20%, 17-22%), was not being interested in alcohol, or not having alcohol as part of their life. Non-drinkers more likely to report this reason were:

- those aged 18 to 24-years (35%), compared with 15 to 17-year-olds (19%), 25 to 44-year-olds (18%) and 45 to 64-year-olds (20%).
- Asian people (27%), compared with European/Other (18%).

Around one in seven non-drinkers (14%, 12-16%) reported that they did not like the way alcohol tasted or made them feel. Non-drinkers more likely to report disliking alcohol were females (17%), compared with males (11%).

One in ten non-drinkers (11%, 9-13%) provided no particular reason for not consuming alcohol. Those more likely to give no reason for not consuming alcohol were:

- European/Other (11%), compared with Māori (6%).
- 15 to 17-year-olds (22%), compared with 18 to 24-year-olds (9%).

Around one in ten non-drinkers (10%, 8-12%) provided religion as a reason for not consuming alcohol. Non-drinkers more likely to cite religion were Pacific

people (21%) and Asian people (16%), compared with European/Other (8%).

Key points

- Almost one in three respondents (30%) reported not consuming alcohol in the past 12 months.
- Half of those who did not consume alcohol within the last 12 months reported that they had always been non-drinkers.
- The highest proportions of non-drinkers were those aged 15 to 17 years and those of Pacific or Asian ethnicities.
- Top five reasons provided by non-drinkers for not drinking alcohol were health, disinterest in alcohol, disliking alcohol, and religion, and no particular reason provided.

Table 1: Reasons for not drinking among current non-drinkers (n=1,153)

Reasons for not drinking	Weighted %
Health-related reasons	20
Not interested/it is not a part of my life	20
Don't like the taste/way it makes me feel	14
No reason provided	11
Religion	10
Have seen the negative effects alcohol can have	9
Family reasons or commitments	8
Social reasons	6
Bad experiences in the past	5
To be a good role model to others	3

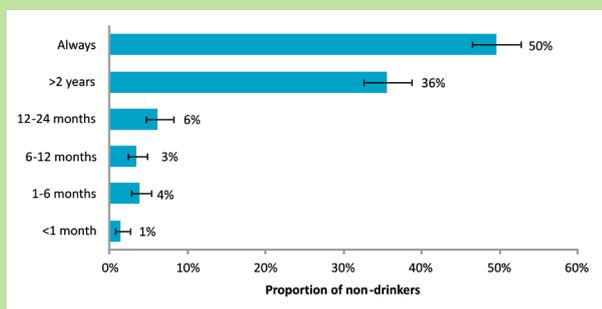


Figure 1: Length of time that non-drinkers have not been consuming alcohol (n=1,144)

About the Attitudes and Behaviour towards Alcohol Survey

- The ABAS is a nationwide telephone survey conducted annually. The survey focuses on behaviour related to the previous month and last drinking occasion, and a range of attitudes/opinions towards alcohol. The 2014/15 ABAS consisted of a sample of 4,005 New Zealanders aged 15-years and over. The survey was conducted between November 2014 and February 2015.
- The main sample, with a response rate of 21%, included 610 Māori, 215 Pacific people, 316 Asian people and 2,864 people of European or other ethnicities (prioritised ethnicity).
- The data have been adjusted (weighted) to ensure they are representative of the New Zealand population.
- For this analysis, proportions and 95% confidence intervals were produced. Odds ratios were used to compare responses between groups. The significance level used for statistical analyses was set to $\alpha=0.05$.
- Comparison groups for these analyses were as follows:
 - Gender (males, compared with females).
 - Ethnicity (comparisons between European/ Other, Māori, Pacific and Asian).
 - Age (comparisons between 15 to 17, 18 to 24, 25 to 44, 45 to 64, 65+ years).
- A full description of the 2014 ABAS survey methodology and further ABAS publications can be found online at <http://www.hpa.org.nz/research-library/research-publications>.

References

Ministry of Health. (2015). Annual update of key results 2014/15: New Zealand Health Survey. Information from adult data tables on health status, health behaviours and risk factors. Wellington: Ministry of Health. URL: <http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/annual-update-key-results-2014-15-new-zealand-health-survey>

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