

In fact: frequency of alcohol consumption among year 10 students, 2012-14

Background

In 2014-15, more than half (57%) of all 15 to 17-year-olds consumed alcohol in the past year (Ministry of Health, 2015). Alcohol consumption in people under the age of 18 years is associated with an increased risk of accidents, injuries, and risky and anti-social behaviours, compared with older drinkers (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2009). The Health Promotion Agency's (HPA's) current advice to parents and caregivers of young people under age 18 is that not drinking alcohol is the safest option (Health Promotion Agency, 2014).

HPA's Youth Insights Survey (YIS) monitors Year 10 students' behaviours, attitudes, and knowledge on a range of health-related topics, including alcohol consumption. Year 10 students are predominantly aged between 14 and 15 years.

This fact sheet reports on the frequency of past month alcohol consumption and heavy alcohol consumption and changes in these from 2012 for Year 10 respondents in the YIS.

Methodology

Respondents in the 2014 YIS were asked how often they had a) consumed alcohol in the past month and b) consumed five or more alcohol drinks in one session. Responses were examined by gender and ethnicity (Māori, compared with non-Māori).

These questions were also asked in the 2012 YIS. Further analyses were therefore undertaken to assess any change over time. Results are reported as proportions. Only statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) between groups are reported here. Further methodological detail can be found in the 'About the Youth Insights Survey' section of this fact sheet.

Alcohol consumption in the past month

Respondents in the 2014 YIS were asked, "During the past 30 days (one month), how often did you drink alcohol?" Two-thirds (67%, 65-69%) of respondents said they had not consumed alcohol at all in the past month. In the past month, fifteen percent (13-17%) had consumed alcohol once, 12% (10-13%) two or three times, 5% (4-6%) about once a week and 2% (1-3%) more frequently than once a week.

Māori (39%) were more likely than non-Māori (31%) to have consumed alcohol at least once during the past month. There was no difference between male and female respondents in their likelihood of having consumed alcohol at least once during the past month.

Change over time

The proportion of Year 10 students who reported consuming alcohol at least once during the past month decreased between 2012 and 2014, from 41% to 33%. Figure 1 shows the frequency of past-month alcohol consumption for each year.

Between 2012 and 2014, there was a similar rate of decrease in the proportion of Māori and non-Māori respondents who consumed alcohol at least once in the past month. There was also a similar rate of decrease in alcohol consumption for male and female respondents.

High-risk alcohol consumption

Respondents in the 2014 YIS were asked, "During the past 30 days (one month), about how often did you have five or more alcohol drinks in one session? (count one drink as one small glass of wine, one can or stubbie, one ready-made alcohol drink (eg, rum and Coke or one nip of spirits)".

Up to five drinks in one session is the adult male limit for risk of injury given in low-risk alcohol drinking advice (Health Promotion Agency, 2014). Five or more drinks is therefore used for the purposes of these analyses as a conservative estimate of risk of alcohol-related harm among Year 10 students.

More than three-quarters (78%, 76-80%) of respondents said they had never consumed five or more alcohol drinks in one session. Ten percent (8-11%) said they had ever consumed five or more alcohol drinks in one session but not in the past month. In the past month, four percent (3-5%) had done this once, 5% (4-6%) two or three times, and 3% (3-4%) at least once a week or more often.

Among those who had ever consumed five or more alcohol drinks in one session, 57% (52-62%) had done so in the past month.

Māori (36%) were more likely than non-Māori (18%) to have ever consumed five or more alcohol drinks in one session. However, among those who had ever consumed five or more alcohol drinks in one session, Māori and non-Māori were equally likely to have done so in the past month.

There were no differences between male and female respondents in their likelihood of ever having consumed five or more alcohol drinks in one session, or having done so in the past month.

Change over time

The proportion of respondents who reported ever consuming five or more alcohol drinks in one session decreased between 2012 and 2014, from 30% to 22%. However, among those who had ever consumed five or

more alcohol drinks in one session, the proportion that had done so in the past month remained stable between 2012 and 2014 (55% and 57%, respectively).

Figure 2 shows the frequency of past-month high-risk alcohol consumption for each year.

Between 2012 and 2014, there was a similar rate of decrease in the proportion of Māori and non-Māori respondents who consumed five or more alcohol drinks in one session. There was also a similar rate of decrease in alcohol consumption for male and female respondents.

Key points

- In 2014, one-third (34%) of Year 10 students reported consuming alcohol during the past month. Two in ten (22%) reported ever consuming five or more alcohol drinks in one session.
- The proportion of Year 10 students reporting past-month alcohol consumption and ever having consumed five or more alcohol drinks in one session dropped significantly in 2014, compared with 2012. However, among those who had ever consumed five or more alcohol drinks in one session, the proportion that had done so in the past month was unchanged in 2014 compared with 2012.
- Although the proportion of Māori and non-Māori who had consumed alcohol during the past month and ever consumed five or more alcohol drinks in one session decreased at a similar rate between 2012 and 2014, Māori remain more likely than non-Māori to report having done each.

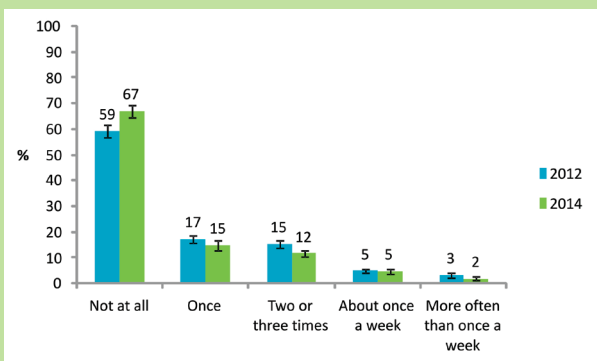


Figure 1. Frequency of past-month alcohol consumption among Year 10 students, 2012-14

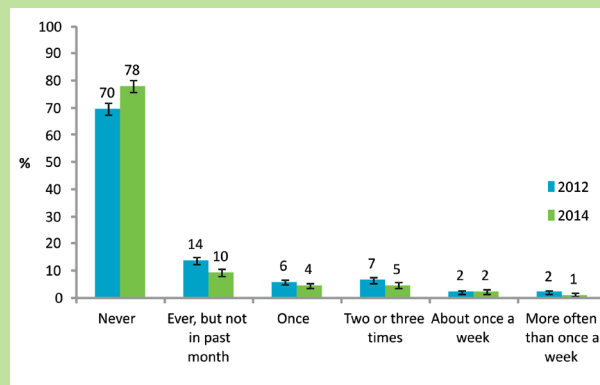


Figure 2. Frequency of past-month high-risk alcohol consumption among Year 10 students, 2012-14

About the Youth Insights Survey

- The YIS forms part of the New Zealand Youth Tobacco Monitor (NZYTM), a collaborative effort by the Health Promotion Agency (HPA) and Action on Smoking and Health (ASH).
- The YIS is a nationwide paper-based survey conducted in schools every two years, first carried out in its current form in 2006 and dating back to 1995 in different formats.
- The YIS collects data on smoking, alcohol consumption and other health-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour, as well as data on students' interests, lifestyles, activities, and media use. It monitors the broad spectrum of risk and protective factors that relate to smoking uptake, alcohol consumption and other health issues among young people.
- The 2014 YIS was conducted with a sample of 2,919 Year 10 students (14 to 15-year-olds). The school-level response rate was 76%, the student level response rate 84%, and the overall response rate was 64%. The sample included 1,352 NZ European, 700 Māori, 321 Pacific, 353 Asian, and 193 people of 'Other' ethnicity (defined using prioritised ethnicity). The data have been adjusted (weighted) to ensure they are representative of the population of New Zealand Year 10 school students.
- For this analysis, jack-knife proportions and 95% confidence intervals were calculated first. Odds ratios were then used to compare responses between groups and over time. Interaction effects were examined to determine group differences in proportional rate changes over time. The significance level used for statistical analyses was set to $\alpha = .05$.
- Comparison groups for these analyses were as follows:
 - Gender (males, compared with females).
 - Ethnicity (Māori, compared with non-Māori).
- A full description of the 2014 YIS methodology and further YIS publications can be found at <http://www.hpa.org.nz/research-library/research-publications>.

References

- Health Promotion Agency (2014). *Alcohol – the Body and Health Effects*. Wellington: Health Promotion Agency.
- Ministry of Health (2015). *Annual Update of Key Results 2014/15: New Zealand Health Survey*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.
- National Health and Medical Research Council (2009). *Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol*. Canberra: NHMRC.

Citation

- Cook, S. & White, J. (2016). *Frequency of alcohol consumption among Year 10 students, 2012-14 [In Fact, Volume 5 Issue 10]*. Wellington: Health Promotion Agency Research and Evaluation Unit.

About the HPA

HPA is a Crown entity that leads and delivers innovative, high quality and cost-effective programmes and activities that promote health, wellbeing and healthy lifestyles, prevent disease, illness and injury. HPA enables environments that support health and wellbeing and healthy lifestyles, and reduce personal, social and economic harm. HPA also undertakes functions specific to providing advice and research on alcohol issues.

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May 2016

ISSN 2350-2991

