



Alcohol Use and Māori Young People

This fact sheet presents findings about alcohol use among young Māori attending secondary schools in New Zealand. These findings were drawn from a large national survey that investigated the health and wellbeing of secondary school students, in which 1,702 Māori students (18.7% of the total survey sample) participated. Māori students are all those who identified Māori ethnicity from a list of ethnic groups.

What do Māori students think about using alcohol?

44% of Māori students thought it was okay for them to drink alcohol regularly. Most Māori students (78%) reported that their friends regularly drank alcohol and 66% reported that their parents drank alcohol regularly at home.

How many Māori students drink alcohol?

85% of Māori students (reported they had ever used alcohol and 73% reported that they were current drinkers. Of the current drinkers, about half (51%) reported binge drinking (consuming 5 or more alcoholic drinks within one 4 hour period). When Māori students drink alcohol, they usually drink with their friends (90%), with whānau (60%) or with 'other' people (32%).

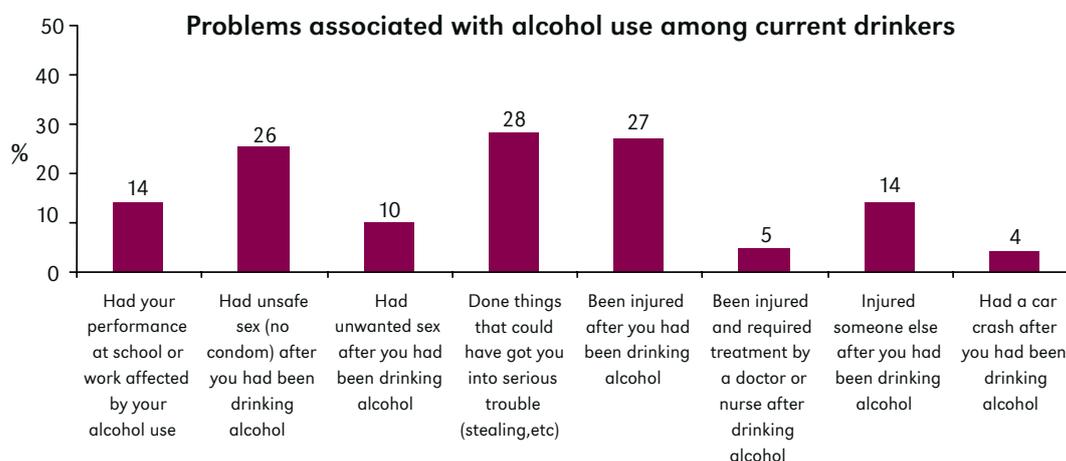
Where do Māori students get their alcohol from and what do they drink?

The most common sources of alcohol for Māori students who were current drinkers were from parents (53%), friends (58%) or 'someone else' (44%). 16% reported that they bought alcohol themselves, most commonly from a bottle or liquor store (70%). Of those Māori students who had bought their own alcohol, almost half (47%) reported that they were 'hardly ever' asked for ID for proof of age. The most common types of alcohol consumed were ready to drink or RTDs (38%), beer (30%), spirits (19%) and wine (13%).

What are the problems associated with drinking alcohol?

The most common problems associated with drinking alcohol were doing things that could have got them into serious trouble (reported by 28% of current drinkers) and getting injured after drinking alcohol (27%).

34% of all Māori students reported that within the previous month they had been a passenger in a car with a driver who had been drinking alcohol. Of those Māori students who had driven on a public road, 15% reported that they had driven a car after consuming alcohol.



What are the services that Māori students needed and used to get help for their alcohol use?

Some Māori students recognised that they needed to reduce or stop drinking alcohol. 16% of current drinkers reported that they worried about their alcohol use, and 18% reported that they had tried to cut down their alcohol use. In addition, 24% of Māori students reported they had a friend or family member tell them they needed to cut down on their alcohol use.

Māori students reported that if they were concerned about their alcohol or drug use they would seek help from friends (69%), parents (56%), school guidance counsellor (43%), family doctor (34%), school nurse (21%), teachers (19%), 'other' (21%) and 31% would talk to a drug and alcohol service. 9% of Māori students said they would not look for help from anyone about their drug and alcohol concerns.

6% of all Māori students reported having difficulty within the previous year accessing drug and alcohol services, and 23% reported having difficulty within the previous year accessing any type of health service when they had needed one. In general, it appears that accessing support and services for alcohol concerns is difficult for Māori students.

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For the full report see:

Ameratunga, S., Waayer, D., Robinson, E., Clark, T.C., Crengle, S., Denny, S., Sheridan, J. & Teevale, T. (2011). *Youth'07: The Health and Wellbeing of Secondary School Students in New Zealand. Young People and Alcohol*. Auckland, New Zealand.

Downloadable free from: www.youth2000.ac.nz

Summary and conclusions

Many Māori students attending secondary schools throughout New Zealand use alcohol regularly, and they perceive it to be an okay thing to do. They appeared to have easy access to alcohol, mostly sourced from friends and whānau. Māori students reported problems associated with alcohol that could threaten their physical and emotional wellbeing now and in the future. Measures that restrict access to alcohol for secondary school students are important. Any significant reduction in alcohol-related harm among Māori young people will require a multi-pronged community approach that is culturally relevant and engages whānau, schools, the wider community and agencies, including supporting legislative and governmental strategies.^{1,2} The evidence points to developing effective, culturally-relevant and youth-appropriate services for Māori youth when they want to address their alcohol misuse.³ Māori young people deserve a healthy, positive future that supports them to make healthy decisions and realise their potential.

References

- 1 Foxcroft, D.R., Ireland, D., Lowe, G., Breen, R. (2006). Primary prevention for alcohol misuse in young people (Cochrane Review). *The Cochrane Library, Issue 2*.
- 2 Measham, F. (2006). The new policy mix: Alcohol, harm minimisation, and determined drunkenness in contemporary society. *International Journal of Drug Policy, 17*(4), 258-268.
- 3 Ministry of Health (2002). *Youth health: A guide to action*. Wellington, New Zealand. Ministry of Health.

