

***Kapau tete to ha
fu'u siaine he 'ikai
tete ma'u ha talo pe
koha 'ufi ko e fu'u
siaine pe***

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*The place of alcohol in the lives of Tongan people living in
Aotearoa New Zealand*

*A report prepared by Sector Analysis, Ministry of Health for
the Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand*

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Explanation of Title

Kapau tete to ha fu'u siaine he 'ikai tete ma'u ha talo pe koha 'ufi ko e fu'u siaine pe means if you plant a banana, you won't get a taro or a yam, you will get a banana. It is the Tongan version of "you reap what you sow" and in this case it refers to the importance of having good role models for drinking behaviour .

Acknowledgements

Malo e lelei

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Our thanks especially to Lita Foliaki who reviewed the report and made perceptive comments.

Lanuola Asiasiga, Ian Hodges, Yvette Guttenbeil, Sione Liava'a, Wailangilala Tufui and Susana Tu'inukuafe

Tongan Border Design

Vaitoa Baker

As a freelance illustrator of mixed ethnic groups, having the opportunity to work on this project that incorporates many designs of the Pacific, I hope I have done justice to each. I also want to give thanks to my partner, Yvette, whose love keeps me going.

Disclaimer

This report was prepared by staff of Sector Analysis, Ministry of Health for the Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand. Its purpose is to inform discussion and assist future health promotion strategies. Therefore, the opinions expressed in the report do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand nor the Ministry of Health.

ALAC's Alcohol and Pacific Islands Research Project Reports

This report is one of a series of seven studies published in 1997

- The place of alcohol in the lives of people from Tokelau, Fiji, Niue, Tonga, Cook Islands and Samoa living in New Zealand: an overview
- Inu Pia: The place of alcohol in the lives of Tokelauan people living in Aotearoa New Zealand
- Na tabili kavoro: The place of alcohol in the lives of Fijian people living in Aotearoa New Zealand
- Vai Mamali: The place of alcohol in the lives of Niuean people living in Aotearoa New Zealand
- Kapau tete to ha fu'u siaine he 'ikai tete ma'u ha talo pe koha 'ufi ko e fu'u siaine pe: The place of alcohol in the lives of Tongan people living in Aotearoa New Zealand
- Kaikava me kare Inuinu: The place of alcohol in the lives of Cook Islands people living in Aotearoa New Zealand
- O le a'ano o feiloaiga: The place of alcohol in the lives of Samoan people living in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Kapau tete to ha fu'u siaine he 'ikai tete ma'u ha talo pe koha 'ufi ko e fu'u siaine pe

When the first Tongan pioneers arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand they learnt from watching and mixing with other ethnic groups. A lot of what is discussed in this report is about the influence of role models in the family and the community. It is about people watching one another and learning from what they see.

Aims of the study

The Pacific people's alcohol research project was set up to describe the place of alcohol in the lives of Tokelauan, Fijian, Niuean, Tongan, Cook Islands and Samoan people living in Aotearoa New Zealand. The reason for doing this was to enable the Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand (ALAC) to design alcohol health promotion strategies and materials suitable for the different Pacific communities.

Pacific people came from small close-knit communities in the Pacific where everyone knew everyone else, including their genealogy, to large cities where they knew few people. As migrants and the children of migrants, it is important to share and pass on the stories of the homeland. But it is equally important to share the stories of migration. The migration stories tell what it was like to be pioneers in a new land, building new communities, learning new ways from new people. For a lot of the early Pacific migrants, being introduced to alcohol was part of that new learning experience.

How the research was carried out

One important objective of the research was to have at least two members from each of the Pacific communities working in the research field team. Each community would then be able to gather its own stories and information.

Three researchers from the Auckland Tongan community, Sione Liava'a, Susana Tu'inukuafe and Yvette Guttenbeil interviewed Tongan people in the Auckland area. The interviews were conducted in Tongan and English. Wailangilala Tufui transcribed all the interviews carried out in Tongan.

Information about the purpose of the research was given out and people were asked if they wanted to take part. Those who agreed to take part were then asked to read and sign a consent form, which showed that they understood the purpose of the research and were still willing to take part. Some people were interviewed individually and some took part in group interviews. The interviews were taped and transcribed. Copies of these interviews were returned to the participants for checking and editing.

Why the interview method was chosen

The research method of interviewing individuals and groups of people was chosen because the researchers wanted to gain an in-depth account of Tongan people's experiences with alcohol. The people interviewed were able to think over their personal experiences and to give meaning to those experiences.

The information collected does not claim to be representative of the whole Tongan community but only of those persons interviewed. Publishing these stories, will hopefully encourage more discussion within the Tongan community about the role of alcohol in people's lives.

Direct quotes from the people interviewed are presented throughout. This is to help the reader view life through those people's eyes. While the researchers have attempted to represent the views of the participants, they take full responsibility for the interpretation placed on the information gathered and welcome discussion from the Tongan community.

Who took part in the study – the participants

The field team attempted to find people with a wide range of experiences and beliefs about alcohol. People were contacted through church groups, the Tonga High School reunion in Auckland, community groups and contacts in other organisations.

The women's ages ranged from 21 years to 57 years of age, with half of those being questioned being under the age of 30.

The men's ages ranged from 17 years to 70 years of age.

In this study, "younger people" refers to those under 30 years of age and "older people" refers to those of 30 years of age and over.

How the interviews were carried out

Thirteen women took part in four individual interviews and two group interviews.

Four groups of men were interviewed and six men participated in individual interviews. The men's group interviews were larger than the women's group interviews, having at least eight to 10 men in each group. The largest group had 13 men. However, to talk about the numbers of men who took part is a little misleading because, unlike the women's groups, not all the men attending the group interviews contributed to the discussion.

What the interviews asked

The interviews asked open-ended questions around the themes of:

- social or family events where Tongan people would drink alcohol
- who Tongan people drank with, for example, whether men and women drank together
- what type of drinks Tongan people preferred
- the differences between drinking in Tonga and drinking in Aotearoa New Zealand
- whether there was a Tongan style or styles of drinking
- how the people taking part in the interview first started drinking
- issues that were brought up in the interview by the people being interviewed.

Open-ended questions are those questions which ask people to describe or explain their point of view. Closed questions, on the other hand, usually require simple *yes* or *no* answers. Open-ended questions generally start with words like: *How . . .*, *Can you describe . . .*, *What . . .*, *Where . . .*, *Who . . .*

In both the group and individual interviews the interviewer was guided by the direction taken by those being interviewed. For example, younger people tended to talk more about the people they looked up to and respected, that is, their role models, and the influence these people had on their drinking habits. Older men talked more about drinking in Tonga and why they had given up or cut down on the amount of alcohol they drank.

How the research information was analysed (made sense of)

The transcripts from the interviews were analysed by comparing people's experiences and views to identify where the similarities and differences lay and see if any common themes were emerging. Those people in the research field team who were members of the Tongan community offered their experience and wisdom and explained points about the culture and the community. Historical and anthropological accounts of Tonga were read to provide background information and set the context for the report.

Background

The kingdom of Tonga lies about 1100 miles north-east of Aotearoa New Zealand and is made up of 170 islands. People live on 36 of these islands. Fiji lies to the west of Tonga. Samoa lies to the north and Niue to the east.

It is estimated that Tonga was first settled some 3500 years ago (Campbell 1992:1). Of the island nations of the South Pacific, Tonga is the only one that did not come under direct foreign colonial rule.

Early contact with alcohol

Kava has been part of Tongan culture for centuries. (For the origin story of kava, see Appendix). Kava is a psychoactive drug that has similar effects to marijuana.

It is the time for serious conversations, to tell stories and myths and to talk politics and discuss matters of deep interest to the men. It may seem unlikely, but under the influence of *kava*, one feels a sensation of immense peace and has such a wide range of thoughts, that there seems to be an answer to even the most inextricable problems (Lebot, Merlin and Lindstrom 1992:111-2).

Thus kava was already an established part of Tongan culture when alcohol first came to Tonga. The Tongan people learnt about alcohol by watching the Palangi (European) sailors and traders who brought it in. Since the sailors were frequently drunk and brawling, alcohol was associated with out-of-control behaviour.

The arrival of the Wesleyan missionaries and their anti-alcohol stance gave another perspective. Under the missionaries' influence, a permit system was introduced that controlled access to liquor. Only the wealthiest people were able to obtain alcohol so people developed home-brew; a cheaper source of alcohol. Methylated spirits was another alternative used.

Despite the introduction of alcohol, kava maintained its popularity in Tonga because of its cultural significance and because it was more readily available than alcohol. Kava use has only increased recently in New Zealand, as it has become easier to obtain.

Migration to Aotearoa New Zealand

This chapter tells how alcohol has fitted into the lives of some members of the Auckland Tongan community and the people's views on this.

Migration can be seen as a process in which large numbers of individuals and families begin to write a new history for themselves. The initial act of leaving one's parents, family, neighbourhood, society and culture, and adopting a new life- and work-style is a crucial one. Only a small proportion of people who enter a migration process, or who have participated in major migration movements in the past, have had a clear perception of what they are going to encounter, or the extent to which their lives were going to change (Cowling 1990:187).

Most Tongan migrants came to Aotearoa New Zealand from 1969 onwards (Tu'inukuafe 1990) when the economy was expanding and more factory workers were needed. Tongan people were part of the move away from the Pacific to New Zealand factories. They mostly settled in Auckland.

The Tongan people are the third largest Pacific community living in Aotearoa New Zealand. During the 1980s they were the fastest growing Pacific group. More than half of the Tongan population was born in the Pacific islands. The Tongan population in New Zealand is a young population with half being under the age of 20 years and 4 percent being over the age of 60 years (Statistics New Zealand 1995).

Main findings

When the research team first came together, they anticipated that the study would find differences between New Zealand-born Tongans and Tongan-born Tongans. To a certain extent that has happened, but in a different way to what was expected.

The team found a range of views amongst New Zealand born and Tongan born. The Church supported the traditional point of view. As the Tongan community belongs to a range of churches, so there were a range of traditional views depending on which church was attended, for example, Catholic, Methodist, Seventh Day Adventist etc. Generally, though, the churches supported the people using kava rather than alcohol. Some churches, Seventh Day Adventist for example, were totally against alcohol and did not approve of their members drinking alcohol, even occasionally. Other churches supported the use of alcohol at special occasions such as weddings, and agreed with moderate drinking. In the 1991 census, nine out of 10 Tongan people belonged to a religious group (Statistics New Zealand 1995). The churches' views on alcohol must have some influence on how a Tongan person views alcohol.

As well as the church, there were other factors which influenced how a person viewed alcohol. One important one appeared to be whether a person came from a drinking family. Right into the 1980s in Tonga, access to alcohol was through a permit system. Most of the early Tongan migrants to Aotearoa New Zealand had limited access to kava Palangi in Tonga because of the permit system. Those who drank alcohol usually drank it in the form of hopi (home-brew).

Other influential factors were education and social status. For example, those who attended schools for the elite, such as Tonga High School, were mixing with students who had access to alcohol. By contrast in Aotearoa New Zealand, alcohol was available to everyone. The established social lines in Tonga of who had access to alcohol and who did not never existed in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Those who had grown up in families of heavy drinkers tended to be either heavy drinkers themselves or totally against alcohol. People from heavy-drinking families, whether they themselves were drinkers or not, and people who at some stage of their lives had been heavy drinkers, often spoke of the negative aspects of alcohol and as they became older often spoke out against alcohol. Those people who were moderate drinkers tended to talk of the positive aspects of alcohol rather than the negative.

There were differences between Tonga-born and Aotearoa New Zealand-born Tongan people. Young people raised in Aotearoa New Zealand tended to question some of the cultural traditions. The older group were also beginning to question the traditions. This can be seen in the way the rules around the brother/sister relationship have been relaxed.

Women, as a group, were challenging some of the ideas/values imposed on them by the men. For example, men's views on women drinking. Despite many men opposing

women drinking, it appeared that, compared to the past, more women, especially younger women, were drinking.

It sounds funny but understanding that alcohol was not readily accessible in Tonga and when it was you had to have money to be able to afford it. So if you drink in Tonga it meant that you were pretty well off financially and therefore you got respect from your peers and others. (Woman)

It was very hard to acquire alcohol in Tonga and when you obtained it you would drink as much as you could and before you know it you lose control of your senses but in New Zealand it's so easy to obtain beer and one is free to obtain it so one goes to the pub to enjoy a drink but not to have too much of it. That's why people who grew up in Tonga misuse alcohol here because they were not used to getting alcohol easily. (Man)

Both older and younger people were concerned about the amount of violence in the community which they felt was linked to alcohol.

The role of alcohol in the Tongan community in Aotearoa New Zealand

In this study, alcohol was used in different ways and for different purposes in the Tongan community. The following examples illustrate this:

Social functions

Participants described how at social functions the hosts would provide alcohol in the same generous way that food is provided. The amounts available often indicated the host's generosity. In some social circles, alcohol has become a status symbol associated with wealth. Being able to supply a generous amount of alcohol can signify that the family is successful or wealthy. Where alcohol has become a status symbol, it is important to be seen drinking alcohol and drinking more than you should is proof of this.

Reward

Alcohol is also used as a way of thanking people for work done. For example, when he was back in Tonga, one participant would have men from his village come in and help with his gardens. To thank them he would provide beer at the end of the day.

Historical

For the early Tongan migrants of the 1970s, (before church congregations were set up), there were few other Tongan people to mix with so getting together over a glass of beer was a way of getting back in touch and meeting new arrivals:

You know in '73 it was rare to meet anyone. (Man)

Where do Tongan people drink?

Alcohol has become an acceptable part of most social events, such as family gatherings, weddings, birthdays and community dances.

Participants in the research thought that older people were moving away from the pub scene to drink with friends in private clubs or sports clubs. The pubs and the night clubs were being taken over by the younger people.

Night clubs

The younger people enjoyed the night club scene. In particular, they mentioned the two Tongan night clubs in Auckland, Tali Eva and Hufangalupe. Also popular were the university bar, Shadows, Sunset, Apia Way and Characters (formerly Caspers).

Most of the younger women enjoyed Tongan night clubs where they knew other people and felt they belonged. The downside was that the clubs were small and cramped and fights often broke out.

Sports clubs

Those who took an interest in sports were often involved in drinking sessions after a match to either commiserate or celebrate with others. Drinking together “created a better club spirit”:

I drink a lot more after the Saturday rugby game with my co-players. Sometimes even more if there is a party afterwards. (Older man)

Work

Some workplaces organised “Happy Hours” or had social clubs which enabled work mates to socialise together instead of going to the pub. Having a few drinks at work was often more acceptable to the family than going to the pub.

Why do Tongans drink?

If I go to a social and there is no alcohol then I can't enjoy myself. I cannot get into the fun mood but if I have a drink then I enjoy and feel the spirit of the occasion. I am happy and when I feel I have had enough then my body no longer wants more. (Older woman)

Like sometimes after I drink I go out night clubbing and someone might cause trouble and anything will happen. (Younger woman)

I only drink when I want to loosen up. I don't want to drink because I want to get drunk. (Younger man)

Most participants drank alcohol to enjoy themselves. It enabled them to relax and socialise. For those who felt insecure at social functions, alcohol helped them get into the social mood and to be able to talk with others. In particular, men spoke of being more able to talk with women, of overcoming shyness and finding it easier to express their feelings. Others spoke of having more courage to do things that they would not normally do, for example, dancing.

Families often used alcohol in their gatherings to draw the members together. One participant said that his family used alcohol as an “ice-breaker.” His family members were living in many different parts of the country and were only able to get together on special occasions. Alcohol enabled them to socialise with each other and form connections again.

Some of the participants spoke of having watched their fathers and uncles drink heavily when they were young. They felt certain that they would drink too. Some of the younger men believed that drinking habits were handed down from generation to generation (perhaps implying that they felt their drinking could not be controlled). They thought that parents who drank alcohol would have children who drank. This reasoning did not take into account those parents who did not drink alcohol but who nevertheless had children who drank.

One young man who started drinking through pressure not from his friends but from his father's family said that there was a tradition of drinking in his father's family. Alcohol was “like the life blood that keeps us going”. Young people from heavy drinking families felt they had to drink to prove they were part of the family:

It was almost like a family crest that you had to be a drinker to belong. (Younger man)

Younger people were under considerable pressure from their friends to take part in drinking sessions and to drink when they did not want to. Younger people sometimes started drinking because they wanted to appear cool or to escape from home.

Some of the younger men who were born in Tonga felt that they drank less alcohol in Aotearoa New Zealand than in Tonga but that they drank more often. They also felt that there were tighter controls over their behaviour in Tonga, whereas in Aotearoa New Zealand they were freer to express themselves. This often led to strong feelings and emotions being let loose, which in turn resulted in arguments and fights.

Sometimes I do not feel like drinking, but because I know my mates won't like drinking by themselves, I feel obliged to join them so we can all be in the same happy mood, etc. (Younger man)

Sometimes when you don't feel like drinking you get pressured into it. Sometimes you go out just not to drink and you just want to go out. Other people who are drunk they go, "Come on, don't be a party-pooper, you're a piker". Then you'll just have one and then they'll pressure you into another one. You'll have heaps then you find that you got drunk. (Younger man)

We think that very often our friends' needs come first before our own common sense. There is torn loyalty if my friends want to continue drinking after we've run out of alcohol and I want to quit and go home. We cannot say no, even when they suggest we pawn off some valuables, like the tv or video, etc, to buy drinks from the black market. (Younger man)

Who do Tongan people drink with?

People spoke of how important it was to drink with people they knew, meaning family and friends. There was a danger in drinking with strangers because, for example, somebody could say something out of place which would be offensive to a stranger but would be acceptable among friends.

Some men thought that it was good to drink with non-Tongan people because then they learned how to mix and understand others and also had the opportunity to learn new drinking habits. It was implied that this meant they would learn moderate drinking habits.

The younger women mentioned social groups or circles of drinkers. Social groups might be made up only of New Zealand-born Tongans or only of Tongan-born Tongans, or they might contain people from only certain social placings or ranks:

They'd have to drink with somebody like, "who's your father? Who's your mother? And where do you live in Tonga? What's your house look like?" That kind of thing.

One young woman who particularly enjoyed going to the Tongan night clubs was told by her friends that she should not go there because her friends saw the Tongan nightclubs as "fresh city". This statement shows the conflict that young people who are the children of migrants seem to go through when they are coming to terms with who they are. In these instances, perhaps young people try to separate themselves from anything that would strongly identify them as Tongan. Consequently they lack an in-depth knowledge of their own culture.

Younger women in particular spoke of going out with friends and having one person in the group who would not drink. That person was responsible for driving and taking care of all the members of the group. Both younger and older men often took the risk of drinking and driving.

Alcohol and the expression of sexuality

The role of alcohol in the expression of sexuality is connected with how men and women view each other, what they see as being a man's role and what they see as being a woman's role.

People spoke of alcohol helping them to speak more freely and to summon up the courage to do things they would not normally do if they were sober. Two young men said:

It gave me the confidence to talk with my girl-friend or to chat another girl up.

(It is) easier for me to express how I think and feel while sharing a few drinks at the same time.

However making sexual advances could have negative results. Fights often broke out after community dances and at night clubs because of sexual jealousy. It is difficult to say if this would have happened whether alcohol was involved or not, but the evidence from this study suggests that alcohol contributes to violence and jealousy and that people who were drinking felt freer to behave in ways which they would not normally.

Older men spoke of "womanising" and younger men spoke of "scoring". Younger women feared that if they drank too much they might wake up the next morning in bed with someone they did not want to be with. Women spoke of being aware that they were being watched by their partners all the time when in a mixed group of males and females. Most tended to be careful of their drinking in such situations in case they smiled or talked too much with any other males and their partner took offence:

If there is drinking and the music plays and someone comes and asks someone's wife to dance 'OIAUE!! This is bad news and there will be trouble . . . (Older woman)

The younger women were particularly critical of Tongan-born men who, they said, did not understand that women could have male friends too. For example, the women who had grown up in Aotearoa New Zealand had male friends from school who they kept in contact with and enjoyed seeing. Their male partners interpreted this interest in old school friends as evidence of sexual affairs.

Gender and alcohol

Both men and women spoke of the cultural belief that Tongan women should not drink. Women who do not drink are seen as "molumalu" (ladylike, dignified). The women felt

that men saw women who drank as being “real easy”, that is, sexually available and the men agreed.

Both men and women expressed the view that it was all right for men to drink in order to get drunk, but it was not all right for women. Younger women challenged this point of view and talked about there being double standards. They said men who had strict ideas and rules about how women should behave around men forgot that when they were making sexual advances to women that those women were also someone’s daughter, someone’s sister.

Men felt that women and men should not drink together because there had to be respect and courtesy between drinkers and sexual tension/expectations/advances would destroy that. Men saw themselves as making the sexual advances, while women saw other women as “coming on” sexually to men.

While younger women who drank also spoke of having to come to terms with the amount they drank, most of the women were concerned about having to deal with partners who drank too much and the effects this had on their families.

Women see themselves as being responsible for the family and home. Even women who defined themselves as heavy drinkers put their children and families first. They were particularly concerned about the safety and wellbeing of their children. For example, at alcohol-drinking and faikava sessions, the men would smoke continuously, and the women worried about the effect of the smoke on their children’s health, especially as some of the children had asthma. The women shared advice on how to cope and avoid conflict when their partners came home drunk. They recommended having food ready and not confronting partners while they were drunk, instead just “going with the flow” of conversation.

Unfortunately, sometimes partners came home and said “stupid things” like, “I went to a dance or to a social and I danced with this girl”, which was sure to upset the woman who was left at home. The way to cope was:

. . . kete hanga ‘o fakakehekehe’i ‘a ‘ete pehe atu, ‘Io, na’e haa? Pe’i tu’u atu aa ‘o alu ‘o kai, hange ko e ‘oku te pehe atu oo pea ha? Hange ko e ki’i lea fakatuituia pehe atu, ifo ia pea vave ‘ene mohe ‘a ‘ana. ‘Ikai ke toe fakafepaki . . .

Like when he comes home and says those stupid things just carry it on and say, “Oh yes that’s good, now come and eat”. Little things like that will shorten the whole process and you feel better.

The whole idea was to get him asleep without disturbing the rest of the house.

Women’s views of men who drink

Women accepted that men drank alcohol, but were concerned about men who drank too much. They called such men vale (stupid).

Women who drank with men found that the men were quite open about “coming on” sexually to women but that women were more discreet. The women were annoyed that

men would want to discuss their current relationships and the problems they were having with their girlfriends.

Men's views of women who drink

Most of the men interviewed had difficulty accepting the idea of women drinking yet at social events they mixed with women who drank. Perhaps it was more that they had difficulty with the idea of their partners, sisters and daughters drinking whereas it was alright for other women to drink.

The men's view of women drinking matched how women thought men saw them. Women who drank were not respected by a lot of men because they were seen as not being in control of their behaviour and therefore morally loose, "... they cannot be trusted, or must have a bad history". At the same time, some of the younger men felt that times were changing, because they could see more women were drinking. "We must try and accept it".

The image of men

There was evidence that men feared to openly show commitment to their partners and families in front of their drinking mates. They were afraid of being laughed at and ridiculed as a weakling. In some circles, a man who put his partner and family first was seen as being controlled by his partner and was accused of allowing her to "wear the pants". He was not behaving as a real man should.

Hange ko au mo (hoa) ka ma oo ki ha hulohula, pehe mai 'e ia, 'alu pe 'o ta'utu, 'oua na ka 'alu atu ha taha 'o punou atu pea ke tu'u. Kou pehe atu, pehe pe mo koe . . . osi ange kuo hala, ko e oo ki he fale ko ia ke enjoy . . . pea kapau 'oku te ta'utu kita ia 'o siofi atu 'a (hoa) na'a tu'u 'e ta'utu ia 'o siofi mai au na'aku tu'u . . . [Laughter]

Yes, you know like me and [speaker's partner] if we go to a social, before we enter the hall [speaker's partner] will say to me to go over there and sit down. If anyone comes and asks you to dance don't get up and then I say to him yes, ok but you have to do the say too [Laughter] . . . yes, this is what happens and then at the end of the night you get nothing. You are supposed to go out and enjoy yourself but when it is like this you get nothing out of the night . . . [Laughter] . . . yes, because he will sit there and watch me and I will sit there and watch him and you get nothing out of it . . . [Laughter] (Older woman)

Ka ma oo kiha me'a pehe, ko 'ene sio mai pe ko ee 'a (hoa) 'oku ou ta'utu ma'u, ko 'ema heka mai pe koe kema ki'i fuhu. Pehe 'a e fo'i lea 'a (hoa), sai ia ho'o anga maau. 'E 'eku faka lili'a pehe he'ene lea pehe. Kou pehe atu kia (hoa) koe ha? Tangata fakalielia ke pehe ko e 'oku fakalielia 'a e fiefia . . . Tala mai 'e ia 'ilo'i anga maau, sio mai, sio'i mai 'e ia kita, kovi 'aupito, 'ikai ma'u ha me'a ia . . . [Laughter]

You know if we go out to something like that, [speaker's partner] will keep an eye on me all night, and if I have been sitting down all night then when we get into the van he will say, "Sai ia ho'o anga maaui" - "it is good you have acted like a lady tonight". [Laughter] Oh man! I go wild because of what he has said to me, and we get into a really big fight because I say to him - "Even if I wanted to get up and have a good time I would still be a lady". He makes it sound like I have to be controlled and behaved and I hate it. I hate it when he says things like that to me because it makes me feel like a child and that I have to listen to him and do as he tells me and just the way he says it is like the other women who were having a really good time and enjoying themselves were not ladies or whatever. (Older woman)

Ikai foki me'a ko e tokoua 'o (hoa) ko . . . pea mo . . . ko hono famili pe 'o 'ona. Pea mao tu'o taha. 'Ai 'ema fo'i o ki he naitikalapu. Ma oo talamai 'e ia kiate au. Ta'utu ma'u ta ko ee mahalo 'oku pretend pe ia 'oku inu. Talamai 'eia ta'utu ma'u hena'oua na'ake tu'u, ka ha'au ha taha pea 'oua na'aku tu'u. Taimi si'i pe ha'u 'o fusi au ki loto, ma 'alu 'o taupotu taha pe, 'osi ha'u tangutu ma'u hena. Ta'eoli 'ete 'alu . . . [Laughter] . . . 'ikai keu teitei ongo'i 'e au 'oku ou ifo'ia he'eku 'alu . . . [Laughter] . . . Kou sio au ki he 'ete 'alu, talamai 'e . . . Popula 'osi . . . Pehe au ko 'ete 'alu ko e 'osi 'ene me'a, kou talaange sioange me'a ta'eoli lahi, ta 'oku 'ikai ifo. Ko e hoko 'ete 'alu kihe feitu'u pehe 'oku 'ikai kete fiefia. He 'oku te fie ki'i tu'u kita . . . 'Io ka ko e tuku ia ka hoko he po koia. 'E pehe mai ia ma'aku talaatu ke ta'utu . . .

You know you are right. When I go out with [speaker's partner] he will tell me the people I can dance with and they will all be his relatives [Laughter] . . . I will only be allowed to dance with the men he has ok'd and they will all be related to him in some way. You know, one night there was a youth social and after that he said he was going to take me out to a night club. I got excited because I had never been to a nightclub and I wanted to go with him. Yeah, when we got to the club he made me sit down all night and when he went to get some drinks he would come up to me and grab my hand tightly and say, "You are not to get up and dance with anyone, if someone comes and asks you to dance". [Laughter]. I hated it that night because I did not feel any fun. He would come and take me for a dance and then he would tell me to sit down and not move. I hated it! I did not feel enjoyment there and I regretted going because it was a waste of time. I was not free to enjoy myself because he would just watch me and his body language was enough to make me want to go home [Laughter] . . . Man, I felt like a prisoner. After that night I told him I had a horrible night and he said to me that is what happens at nightclubs and if I did not like then he wasn't going to take me again. He did not get it into his brain that I had a bad time because of him not because of the nightclub. (Older woman)

Discussion

Problems that occurred were often because of the different rules of behaviour for men and women. The community's expectations of how men should behave and how women should behave was quite different. Perhaps more importantly, most men had a set ideal of how women should behave and most women had an ideal of how they would like men to behave.

Trouble broke out when neither agreed with the others' expectations. When men were drinking they expected to enjoy themselves and part of their enjoyment was making sexual advances to women ("womanising" or "scoring") which often caused fights with other men or women.

However most of the men did not like women to behave in the same way they did, especially their female partners. Therefore some of the men in the study preferred their partners not to drink alcohol. In particular, men who were heavy drinkers tended to see alcohol as something that could not be controlled and that led to behaviour that could not be controlled. For those men, there were only two extremes: drinking and not drinking. Some of the younger participants from heavy-drinking families also believed this way of thinking. Therefore it was expected that women who drank alcohol would also behave in an uncontrolled way which for men meant being sexually available.

Women did not see that their drinking alcohol was a signal to men that they were sexually available. They, like the men, drank alcohol to enjoy themselves and socialise. Women expected men to be able to control their behaviour when drinking so that men's unwanted sexual advances or fighting were unacceptable to women.

The brother/sister relationship and alcohol

The social distance between people is important when talking about the social structure of Tongan society. An example of social distance is the brother/sister relationship. Brothers and sisters are seen as having a special relationship and there are rules about how they should behave in each others' presence. Alcohol can sometimes help close that social distance.

Anthropologists have written about the importance of the brother/sister relationship in Pacific Islands societies. The difficulty with the term is that the English definition means children/offspring of the same parents and does not take into account that first cousins in particular are regarded as brothers/sisters as well. Hence many of the participants referring to the brother/sister relationship also included cousins. The importance of the brother/sister relationship is that it is about how closely-related males and females should behave towards one another. Keeping brothers and sisters separated avoided incest and any sexual connotations being put on the relationship.

Participants spoke of the brother/sister relationship as tapu (sacred). Those brought up in Tonga were careful to observe this tapu. Sisters should not be present when their brothers and male cousins were drinking alcohol because they may hear comments that would be offensive and could break the tapu.

Coming to Aotearoa New Zealand, where brothers and sisters grow up together much more closely than in traditional Tongan society, some of the strict rules relating to brother/sister behaviour have been relaxed. For example, in Aotearoa New Zealand brothers and sisters live in the same house, eat at the same table, and travel to school together.

There was a range of differences in the way people taking part in the study viewed brother/sister relationships. Some participants spoke of enjoying being able to get to know their brother or sister. One young woman talked about her brother only showing he really cared about her when he was drunk. When he was sober, “he’ll just keep himself to himself”. At family gatherings when everyone was drinking he would keep an eye on her, always checking that she was alright:

... that shows to me that he wants to be nice but he’s too, he’s just hiding, hiding his true feelings.

In contrast to this, another young woman said:

But you know what I think alcohol has done at Tali Eva, ‘cause I’ve seen a lot of brothers and sisters drink together when the old Tongan tradition, you wouldn’t allow that and now brothers are drinking in front of sisters, kissing their girlfriends in front of their sisters and it’s like, oh my God, you know.

Why give up/reduce drinking?

Men who had given up drinking or reduced their drinking had been motivated to do so because something else in their lives had become more important than drinking. Reasons for giving up or reducing drinking included: becoming involved in a serious relationship, wanting to meet obligations to wife and family, wanting to belong or play a bigger part in the church, health problems and being advised by a doctor to reduce drinking, joining a kava club, and becoming older. Younger women also spoke of reducing their drinking when they became involved in a serious relationship, or had family commitments, or saw their study suffer.

In Pacific Islands communities the hierarchy of power/authority is based on age. In this study, the older Tongan men interviewed were more likely to have given up drinking or cut down on the amount they drank.

As men grow older they are more likely to reduce their drinking because of becoming an elder in the church or community, and taking on more family responsibilities. Some find they are physically unable to drink as much as before and that they want to do other things such as spend more time with their family. As they become older they find their friends are also drinking less or not drinking at all and thus, there is less pressure from friends to drink.

As men become older and move towards the status of becoming an elder, there is considerable pressure placed on them by the community to be good role models and to pass on knowledge to the younger generation. In a sense, their responsibilities widen in

that they not only have family responsibilities, but also community responsibilities. Those family and community responsibilities have always been there, but as men become older the pressure to take part in the community increases.

What types of alcohol do Tongan people drink?

Men and women drank a variety of alcoholic drinks but men drank mainly beer and spirits.

Hopi (home-brew)

In Tonga, hopi is often a person's first introduction to alcohol. Compared to Palangi alcohol, hopi is cheap and easy to obtain or make. Younger men spoke of being given hopi in Tonga from an early age, 10 years old upwards. Hopi was given as a reward for running errands for older boys, for example, going to the shops for cigarettes or climbing a coconut tree for drinks (coconut).

Yes I made beautiful hopi. I boiled some pineapple and added it. I would leave the hopi to ferment for two weeks and then fill bottles with hopi and drink them. (Older man).

Ka ko Tonga foki ia, kapau he 'ikai hata me 'i suka mo ha 'ate fo 'i lesi ke fakapala he 'ikai kete sio kita ha fo 'i hopi. Ka ko e taimi ni 'ihe lahi 'a e ngaahi matapu kehekehe 'ihe pa'anga 'oku ne fakaava mai leva faingofua 'a e ma'u 'o e kava. Pea ha'u leva 'a e Tonga ia mei he Island 'o ngaohi ia ke 'ova 'aupito.

In Tonga the men will have to wait for a pawpaw to go "pala" [off] and if they don't have any sugar then they can't make their hopi so when they get the chance to make some hopi they go crazy and overdrink. They then come to New Zealand with this type of thinking and drinking. (Older woman)

Methylated spirits

Older men had often used methylated spirits (meths) when they first started drinking as young men or school boys. They filtered it by pouring it over bread and then mixed it with lemon juice and sugar. Researchers were concerned to hear that in Auckland some schoolboys were also experimenting with meths and mixing it with coca cola.

Kava and alcohol

. . . every kava drinker knows everyone else and there is a certain bond between them. There are also older people that give good advice which is very effective because they are respected. When I was still drinking at the pubs it was a weekly event, from Wednesday to Friday and the weekend, but since joining this club I would be lucky to have an alcoholic drink in two months.

This kind of fellowship is good for one's "community image" because it is so often related to the church you belong to and it also makes the wives and family happy that the hassles of other alcohol abuse-related problems are minimised or gone. (Younger men's group)

Ko e me'a ia 'oku kovi ai 'ae kava malohi he ko e 'uhi kuo liliu ai leva 'a e 'atamai ia 'o kovi ia 'ikai fai 'eia 'a e me'a 'oku totnu ke fai, pea toki 'osi pe 'a e malohi 'ene kona pea toki 'ilo leva kuo pupula hoto fo'i mata . . . fahi mo e maumau hoto ki'i 'api, fahi atu mo e haa mo e haa 'osi ange koia kuo . . . ka ko e kava Tonga ko e vave pe ke vaivaia pea 'ikai ke hoko ha me'a . . .

This is the one thing I did not like about kava Palangi because my husband would do things to me and not realise it until the next morning when we wake up and I have a black eye or something. Once he started drinking kava Tonga he has not hurt me this way . . . (Older woman)

Kava (kava Tonga) is a psychoactive drug which has different effects to that of alcohol (kava Palangi). For example, a group of people drinking alcohol tend to get louder and louder as more alcohol is consumed. By comparison, the more kava is drunk, the quieter the drinkers become. Being intoxicated with kava is generally considered to inhibit aggression and lessen sexual desire. These two social behaviours are frequently thought by Tongans to be the most "socially disruptive" (Lemert 1965). Kava's effects are similar to that of marijuana. By comparison, participants in the research thought alcohol encouraged and loosened up emotions and desires so that men felt like "womanising" or fighting. Being in the kava circle allowed the user to be part of the group and yet still be separate. It could be seen as an acceptable form of "time out".

In the Tongan community, kava has been sanctioned by the churches and many of the men interviewed had reduced their alcohol intake by becoming kava drinkers. Tongan churches often had their own kava fellowships. The men preferred the fellowship of the kava club because kava drinking was socially accepted and approved of by their families and the community. Therefore they were free and even encouraged to attend sessions. Drinking kava was seen as being good for one's "community image".

Some of the men belonged to the Pioneer Club run by the Catholic Church. The Pioneer Club is a support group for people who want to give up drinking and smoking. Many of these men joined kava clubs. The kava clubs discouraged their members from drinking alcohol, although some members still drank both. It seems that the more the men became involved in the kava fellowship, the less alcohol they consumed.

Abuse of kava could have similar detrimental effects as alcohol abuse. Lemert (1965) talks about tangata inu kava (big kava drinkers) in Tonga who were known for their ability to drink vast amounts of kava. They drank kava in sessions which could last for three days. However they also suffered from the scaly skin (ichthyosis) and sometimes constipation and intestinal obstructions. One of the participants mentioned that kava Tonga:

Oku ou pehe 'eau 'oku sai pe kava palangi ia he kava Tonga. He 'oku ngaue pe kava Palangi 'o tupe'i 'a e sino 'o e tangata, ka ko e kava ko ee, toka ia, pea 'oku fakatu'utamaki pea 'oku lahi 'a e kakai 'oku 'ave ki falemahaki, ko e block koaa. Poloka 'a e halanga 'alu ki toileti.

. . . blocks everything and that's why lots of people go to hospital because of this blockage. They can't go to the toilet because the kava Tonga has blocked the way out. (Woman)

Participants spoke of kava sessions lasting the whole night resulting in tiredness and not turning up for work. Long hours spent in kava fellowship also meant little time at home. Partners and families seemed to tolerate this because there was a certain status in being part of a kava group; it was socially acceptable, and because of the lack of violence involved. However, because it was socially acceptable, men could say they were going to the kava group and instead go off to an alcohol-drinking session. Women interviewed also spoke of men telling their wives they would be in a kava session all night, when they were really with another woman.

Kava is seen as an acceptable way of getting wasted in Tongan culture.

The women participants seemed to be more aware of kava abuse than the men. They advocated moderate use of both alcohol and kava. The one positive point about kava mentioned by the women was the lack of physical abuse by men drinking kava Tonga. Possibly because some of the men interviewed had given up or reduced their alcohol drinking in order to take up kava drinking, these men were less inclined to see the possibility of kava abuse.

Tongan black market

Some members of the Tongan community operate a black market in alcohol where people can buy alcohol after hours. The market seems to operate like a pawn shop in that people can take in, for example, their stereos and get money in the form of a loan. The stereo is held as guarantee that the buyers will pay for the alcohol. They then purchase alcohol:

You can walk away with a whole keg and pay for it later if you leave something there.

However, according to participants the alcohol is much more expensive, up to double the price of a legal outlet, so people often get into debt and have to organise automatic payments from their pay to meet their loan repayments.

Is there a Tongan way of drinking?

There seemed to be general agreement that the Tongan way of drinking was “binge” drinking because alcohol was difficult to obtain in Tonga and the men would overdrink when they got it. It was not about how often they drank but rather how much they drank when they did drink. Large quantities would be consumed in one sitting but then it might be quite some time before Tongan men had alcohol again.

Some mentioned a saying in Tonga that people with no money would take advantage of whatever opportunity they could get. This was used to illustrate that people attending a social event where free alcohol was served would overdrink – “I’ll drink today to make up for the rest of the week and the month . . .” The women described men who overdrank as vale (stupid).

Participants felt that this pattern of binge drinking had been brought to Aotearoa New Zealand and carried on. Another theory put forward was that Tongan men drank alcohol the same way they drank kava, draining the cup in one gulp, similar to sculling. Also, in kava drinking, the drinking did not finish until all the kava was finished. Men felt the same about alcohol, that the drinking should not finish until all the alcohol had been drunk.

*Yes, drinking until too drunk or until there is nothing more to drink.
(Younger man)*

There is the kava drinking and home-brew for the ones who cannot buy alcohol from the store. We believe that preference to drink in a group comes from the fellowship of the kava ceremony where people and friends share information or feelings. (Younger man)

Another Tongan way is how drinkers compete who can outdrink the rest which is believed to be manly and a good sign you can handle your drinks. It is not manly to vomit either or you are considered a weakling. Men boast of how much they can drink. (Younger man)

Yes, perhaps it is how we scull down alcohol too quickly. This is related to kava drinking when you get your drink in a bowl, you drink it down in one go. We tend to drink too much too fast because it is also related to making the most of a “treat” that do not come often enough. (Younger man)

However these drinking patterns are not only a Tongan way of drinking. The other Pacific groups each claimed ownership of similar drinking patterns, as have certain groups of Palangi males.

Some participants used the term “civilised drinker” to describe people who they felt were socially acceptable drinkers. Civilised drinkers never reached the stage of having had too much to drink. Civilised drinkers were similar to Maori and Palangi drinkers. They were:

More experienced, more adept at mixing and understanding each other better.

Some of the older people agreed that the young people born in Aotearoa New Zealand were *poto* (clever, smart) in that they knew how to drink:

. . . the children born here will be more civilised drinkers. Their mentality will be different to those born in Tonga.

Social problems associated with drinking too much alcohol

I just black out and that’s the worse part of my drinking. I hate it. But I still drink. (Younger woman)

Anyway when I used to drink a lot I became self-centred. Everything was what I wanted. It was like other people would be saying, “I want to do this” and I would say, “No I want to do this”. Someone else would say, “I want to go to this place” and I would say, “No I want to go to this place” . . . it was pathetic. (Younger woman)

I know when I used to drink a lot, if I was just to drink and have a good time and then get to that tiddly stage and then stop drinking I would be alright, but if I went over that it would be too much and then I don’t know what happens. Crazy thing takes over. You see this big ape coming out. (Younger woman)

Men who drank a lot spent more time at the pub with their friends and hardly any time at home with their families which caused trouble with their partners. These men were seen as running away from or trying to avoid their responsibilities as partners, fathers and sons.

Violence

You can lose the respect of your children because you become a bully when drunk and do not respect your wife. (Man who has given up drinking)

When I grew up in my village and as a child I used to watch people fighting after having had alcohol. I grew up and went to college. I was mild-natured but when people teased me and made me angry I remembered what I used to see as a child, so when I got mad with someone I thought of going for a small drink so I can come back and fight him . . . and since then it has become a habit of mine to go for a drink every time I want to quarrel with somebody. And although at times I could hear the sirens from the police or ambulance I was at that stage I couldn't care less. (Man)

When one has too much you get to the stage when you cannot control yourself. You cannot comprehend what is happening around you and you misunderstand what is being said. People could be talking about something totally different and you could perceive this to be something derogatory about you and you get angry. I have reached that stage quite a few times, although not very often. Sometimes I woke up in the morning and tried to remember what had happened and sometimes the words would reach you and you would feel embarrassed and you promise yourself you won't do it again. But a week or two after . . . (Man)

Violence was associated with misuse of alcohol. Some men felt that the level of abuse depended on the mood they were in when they started drinking. One man spoke of how as a young boy he had watched people fighting in his village after drinking alcohol and as he grew up he adopted the same pattern. Some men admitted beating up their partners when they were drunk. A woman's pride could stop her from seeking help or calling the police when she had been beaten.

Children got caught in between parents' fighting. Sometimes the father who had been drinking, beat up his wife. Then:

She couldn't do anything back to the husband so she would give her kids a bad hiding.

Participants mentioned children being victims of a drinking game where they were burnt with cigarettes.

The community appeared unsure of how to deal with domestic violence. Alcohol could be used as an excuse, implying that men only beat their partners when they were drunk. But some of the men interviewed beat their partners when they were sober.

Banking at the pub

I had not come to realise that there was such a thing as direct payment from work to an account in the bank so it was dependent on me getting my pay and then going to the bank to bank say about \$40, but most often I'd bring the money home and leave it there whilst I go to the pub for a drink and would do the banking the next day but the truth is most times the money never got to the bank . . . If this thing – direct credit had been there at the time maybe I could have saved some money but there was more invested at the pub.

. . . sometimes we get to the stage when there is no butter and no sugar and when they asked for money for these things I told them there is no money and to wait till pay day. They are the small requirements that I am talking about and this included the small requirements of the kids at school. The things that I considered alright if they can't get, but to them they felt embarrassed because they could not get it like the others, like barbecues at school, things like that. (Older man looking back)

Having a budget for drinking did not mean that people kept within their budget. Men who overspent their budget used money which should have been kept for household expenses and this caused much misery for their partners and children.

Excessive drinking is not a problem until you're caught

Some men did not feel drinking and driving was a problem unless they were caught by the law. For example, one man who used to drive his car when he had drunk more than the legal limit said he had not broken the law because he had not been caught. In his mind, he had not done anything wrong. He thought he was more aware and careful with his driving when he was over the limit. The fact that his partner refused to ride as a passenger with him when he had had too much to drink helped stop his drinking and driving.

Another man said:

. . . You could have chronic problems with alcohol, but if you haven't had any problems with the law, like if your wife hasn't rang the police, you know, and reported on your violence . . . you don't have a problem with drinking.

It's scary too for . . . like I've driven drunk people home and it's scary for drivers also because they are making so much noise, and I hate it when after a night and it's time to go home and then people don't have rides home and you're taking them home and the car is packed full with drunk people kicking each other, laughing, drinking. (Younger woman)

Of course, when I drink with my mates I forget I have a wife and children or parents to go back to. If things at the party went as I wanted I am in a good mood and when not, I take it out on my wife and family. (Man)

. . . Almost all the guys that drink are bums at school and all the good boys are the ones doing well at school . . . I reckon we all need help. Sometimes you can't really do it by yourself. (Younger man)

The need for discussion and more alcohol education

One of the women talked about how difficult it had been for her coming from a family background where no one drank alcohol to marrying a man who was a heavy drinker. Her family was very much involved in their church, a church which was against alcohol, tobacco and dances. Since her marriage she has had to learn how to socialise with people who have quite different values to the ones she had grown up with. For example, before she met her husband, she had never had to deal with drunk people. The discussion she joined for this research helped her to talk about her problems and hear how other women coped in similar situations.

Some of the other women spoke of the amount of violence and sexual jealousy at social events and wondered if this violence was because people did not really know how to socialise with each other. The older women discussed the need to be able to:

Ko e anga 'eku sio 'a'aku ia hange ko e lau 'a me'a, kapau 'e fai aipe 'a e sosiolo he'ikai fai ha femahino'aki ia. Ko e anga 'eku sio 'a'aku ia kapau 'e sai 'a e fetalanoa'aki hufakataha pea mo e sosiolo, femahino'aki, he kou tui 'e fai ha liliu ai. Ke hanga ha taha 'o ui ha fakataha . . .

. . . have a place where we can talk about these things and discuss it within the community. What I mean is we can sit down and talk and have someone facilitate the conversation, and we can bring up things like this and talk about it and then have socials . . .

This led on to discussion about community programmes that had happened about 20 years ago, when families came together regularly to discuss and share with each other issues about living in Aotearoa New Zealand and in Tonga:

Na'e fai 'a e potalanoa. 'Ai mai he fanau 'enau fakakaukau pea 'ai mai he matu'a 'enau fakakaukau. Ko e debate fakataha pea mo e matu'a . . . 'Ihe taimi ko ee, na'aku manatu'i na'e 'iai 'a e taimi 'o e fanau mo e matu'a 'i he komiuniti. Na'e 'iai 'a e 'u polokalama na'e fokotu'u 'ehe komiuniti ke feohi 'a e matu'a mo e fanau, na'e fai 'a e semina ko e talanoa pea ko e me'a leva 'oku hoku mei ai ko 'ete talanoa mo 'ete fa'e pa mo 'ete tamai. Na'e 'aonga ki au 'a e 'u polokalama ko eni he nau tupu hake pe 'o sio kia Mum pea mo Dad 'oku na inu mo fiefia pea 'ikai teu ilifia . . .

It was various programmes during the year. There were debates between parents and the children, and there were topics to talk about and all sorts of things. I was very young but I remember my Mum and Dad during these programmes debating and talking with older children than myself about various issues. Everyone had to think and talk. It was a good thing . . . through the community programmes I got to spend time with my parents. They would be working all week and then they would be busy with church things and going out with their friends, but there was also time for the children in the community programme. These programmes were great because I could talk to my parents and they were always there to listen because it was done in a community setting. Yes, it was helpful for me because I understood things that were happening around me. (Younger woman)

Participants saw a need for more alcohol education for Tongan people. Some of the women felt that it was too late for the older generation but that those following would benefit. The women in particular wanted to learn how to drink, how to control alcohol and how to present alcohol education to the community. The men believed that the younger people who were raised in Aotearoa New Zealand were learning how to drink moderately from Palangi people but the women did not want to leave this to chance. They wanted to be good role models for their children:

We should include the community in this. We should have discussion with them about being good role models for our children. Let the men know about it because like they say, “If you plant a banana, you won’t get a taro or a yam, you will get a banana”. (Woman)

Summary of main points

1. There has been a tendency in the past to assume that all Tongan people think alike about alcohol. This study illustrates that there is not in fact a single, unified Tongan view about alcohol. Rather, there is a range of different perspectives. The only common thing is that all the people expressing them are Tongan. But their stories, and the alcohol-related values expressed or implied by them, are often very different.
2. Only some people felt moderate drinking was ideal. For some people, men especially, the ideal was someone who could drink huge amounts of alcohol but still act “normal”, that is, “hold his liquor”. Men who had been heavy drinkers and for whom alcohol had caused problems with their families, were more likely to support not drinking at all.
3. Kava clubs were seen as a solution for heavy alcohol drinkers. Faikava was socially and culturally acceptable to the community. Kava drinking also resulted in more passive behaviour than violence associated with alcohol. Kava clubs discouraged alcohol drinking and would not allow drunk men to take part. However, some men used faikava as an excuse for long absences from their families.
4. Binge drinking, that is not drinking for days or weeks and then drinking large amounts in one sitting, was said by some to be a style developed in Tonga where people have limited access to alcohol. Another influence is the kava style of drinking of skulling a cup in one swig and drinking until there is no more drink remaining. However, this style of not drinking for weeks and then drinking large amounts in one sitting, is still followed in Aotearoa New Zealand. While ALAC aims to promote moderate drinking, it must be remembered that moderation is a rare concept for the Tongan people whose culture encourages generosity and providing abundant supplies of food and drink. To suggest that food be eaten in moderation would seem stingy to Tongan people and likewise with alcohol.
5. As far as alcohol problems go, in general people were more concerned about the social behaviour of drinkers than with the actual amounts of alcohol they drank or the physical effects of alcohol. People seemed totally unaware of the effects that binge drinking could have on their health. People generally lacked awareness about the effects of alcohol on physical health. Only a few people mentioned the effects of excessive drinking on health. These tended to be older women with partners who were heavy drinkers and men who had been advised by their doctors to reduce their drinking for health reasons.
6. A few people acknowledged that they needed help because of their drinking but did not know where to go. This suggests a lack of awareness of how to access services and of what services were available.

7. More Tongan women are drinking alcohol. Some men feels this conflicts with their ideas of women and their understanding of the term molumalu (ladylike, dignified). However, women are saying that they can drink and still be molumalu. Women also objected to men thinking that women who drink are sexually available. The older women in this study enjoyed drinking but tended to be careful with their drinking in that they were aware of their family responsibilities and of how the community viewed women drinkers. The younger women were more willing to take risks but were also aware of the community's perception of women drinkers.

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Appendix 1

Interview schedule

Drinking Beliefs and Practices:

*Do you drink alcohol on **special occasions, every week, or not at all?***

Can you tell me about some of the times when you have been drinking in the last couple of weeks?

When

How often do you drink?

(How long have you been drinking? What age did you start drinking?)

What times of the week do you put aside for drinking?

Where

Where do you go to drink?

Who

Who do you drink with?

(Are they usually male/female friends?)

(Are they usually people that you know?)

Differences between male/female

Are there any differences between drinking in an all male/female group or in a mixed group?

Do people behave differently within these drinking groups?

Do you talk about different/same things depending on which group you are in?

Buying

Who buys the drinks?

(Is there an arrangement for buying the drinks?)

Do you buy drinks for others?

Before & After

What things do you/people do before having a drink? for eg. sports, movies ...

What do you do afterwards?

(What sort of activities do you take part in that don't include alcohol?)

Drinking Practices

Type of drink

(a) What is your favourite drink?

(a) What kinds of drink do you drink?

(b) What other types of drink do you like?

(b) Which do you drink most of?

How much

How much do you drink?

Are there times when you want to drink as much as you want/can?
(Why?)

Effects

Are there any changes in your behaviour when you've been drinking?

How you feel after 2-3 drinks?

How you feel after you've had quite a lot to drink?

How do you know when you've had enough to drink?

Drinking Behaviour

Normal Behaviour

From your own experience, can you describe what [insert name of Pacific group] people see as normal drinking behaviour?

Can you describe [insert name of Pacific group] people's behaviour when they've had a lot to drink?

Differences

What differences have you noticed between those who drink and those who don't?
(Look for words that describe alcohol and alcohol related practices)

What differences have you noticed between drinking in [insert name of Pacific island] and drinking in New Zealand?

(Why do you think there is or there isn't?)

Is there a [insert name of Pacific group] style of drinking?

Demographics:

Male/Female

Age Group:

under 20

20-29

30-39

40-49

50-59

60+

When did you come to live in Aotearoa New Zealand?

For: "Non-Drinkers"

Do you mix socially or go out with people who drink alcohol?

[If yes ...] How do you fit into that situation?

Who

(Are they friends, family, work mates, etc.)

Are they male/female?

(And are they people you know?)

When

Can you describe any occasions that you go to where alcohol is drunk?

Where

Where would the occasions take place?

Differences between male/female

From your own experience, are there any differences between drinking in all male/female group or in a mixed group?

Do you see people behave differently within these drinking groups?

(Do people behave differently when they drink and when they don't drink?)

Do you/they talk about the same/different things as those who drink? (depending on which group you are in?)

Buying

Who buys/arranges the drinks?

Do you buy drinks for others?

What sort of activities do you take part in that don't include alcohol

As a non-drinker, what made you decide not to drink alcohol?

[If no ...] What social events/activities do you take part in where there is no alcohol?

Are there any occasions that you go to where alcohol is drunk?

Can you describe it?

As a non-drinker, what made you decide not to drink alcohol?

Questions for focus groups

These are the main questions but may need prompt/probe questions.

1. *Can you remember back to the first time you tasted/ tried alcohol? How long ago was that and how did it come about?*
2. *Can you tell us something about the times when you drink alcohol?*
For example, how often do you drink?
Where do you drink? [at home, which pubs? which nightclubs?]
Who do you drink with? [mix of ages, women/men, ethnicity, friends, family, workmates]
3. *When you're drinking with other men, do you behave differently from when you are drinking with women?*
Can you describe/talk about this?
4. *What types of drink do you drink? (which do you drink most of?)*
5. *Who buys the drinks? (What sort of arrangement is there for buying drinks?)*
6. *How much do you drink?*
7. *Are there times when you want to drink as much as you can? What times are they?*
8. *How do you know when you've had enough to drink?*
9. *What differences, if any, have you noticed between drinking in [insert name of Pacific island] and drinking here?*
10. *Do you think there is such a thing as a [insert name of Pacific group] way of drinking?*
If yes, can you explain what that is?
11. *What do you think your community sees as being acceptable drinking behaviour ?*

Appendix 2

The origin of kava

(In: Lebot, Merlin and Lindstrom 1992:122 as narrated by former Queen Salote: Bott 1972.)

“One day the King of Tonga went fishing with a friend. They did not catch anything, and as they were tired and hungry they called in at the little island of ‘Eueiki to get something to eat. At that time there was only one couple living on the island and they had one child, a daughter, whose name was Kava’onau. (In some versions the name is abbreviated to “Kava”) She had leprosy. It was a time of famine and the only food the couple had left was a large kape plant (*Alocasia macrorrhiza*) which stood near the beach. When the King landed he sat down to rest against this plant. When the couple realized who their guest was they set about making an earth oven, but when they came to get their sole remaining food plant they could not use it because the King was leaning on it. The King’s friend saw the couple hit something in their house and bring it out to be baked in the earth oven. He saw that they had killed their daughter because they had nothing else to give their King. The King’s friend told the King what the couple had done. The King was deeply moved by their sacrifice. He rose up immediately and returned to the main island, telling the couple to bury their child properly. Two plants grew from the grave, one from the head and one from the foot. One day the couple saw a rat bite the first plant, stagger a bit, and then bite the second plant, after which he recovered his balance. One day Lo’au [a Tongan hero] came to the island and the couple told him all that had happened. When Lo’au heard the couple’s story he sat in silence for a time, deeply moved, and then he spoke in poetry telling them what they should do. They must take the two plants to the King and give him Lo’au’s instructions about how the plants should be used. The one from the head was to be used to make a drink, and that was the kava, and the other was to be eaten with the drink, and that was the sugarcane. The couple did as Lo’au had told them. At first the King thought their plant might be poisonous. He had one of his matapule [ceremonial attendants] taste it first. But on finding it was all right he directed the people to carry out Lo’au’s instructions. And so kava was made for the first time, and the rules and procedures for making it were established”.

The Research Team

Lanuola Asiasiga

Lanuola has a background in education and social science research. She is now enjoying working as a health researcher. Lanuola has three children and lives in Porirua.

Yvette Guttenbeil

Yvette is a youth worker in Auckland. Her father is from Vava'u and her mother is from Vaini. Yvette's parents migrated from Tonga in the early seventies. At the time, Yvette was three years old. She grew up in Avondale attending school there and going on to Auckland university.

Ian Hodges

Ian has research training in social anthropology and is an experienced researcher in health. He undertook a PhD in the rituals and customs associated with alcohol consumption amongst New Zealand men. Ian lives in Blockhouse Bay, Auckland.

Sione Liava'a

Sione is from Ha'avakatolo in Tonga. In the early seventies, after working for Radio Tonga for three years, Sione decided to emigrate. He arrived in Auckland and worked for Telecom for thirteen years. He is now involved with broadcasting again, sending news to Tonga every morning via Radio New Zealand International. Sione is also helping out with a local Tongan news programme on Access Radio Auckland every morning. He is currently training to be a Pacific Islands educator in sexual health. Sione has a seventeen year old son who attends Auckland Boys Grammar where Sione sits on the Board of Trustees. Sione's daughter is fourteen years old and attends Epsom Girls Grammar.

Wailangilala Tufui

Wai has been a broadcaster with Radio New Zealand for thirteen years but is now running her own news programme, Koli Tala'aho, on Access Radio every morning at 6.30. Wai is also involved with community projects such as, the Miss Heilala Beauty Pageant, and is secretary of the Tonga High School Ex-students New Zealand Association. Wai has six children.

Susana Tu'inukuafe

Susana has been working in drug and alcohol counselling since 1989. She was the first Tongan woman to work in the drug and alcohol field. In her work, Susana goes to the prisons to work with Tongan offenders. Susana is from Ha'avakatolo in Hihifo, Tonga. She migrated from Tonga in the early seventies. Susana is married to Siasia and they have a daughter, Talafaiva Ana, and a son, Zvi Karl.