

Use of alcohol among Year 10 students

Background

In New Zealand, a third of people who have ever tried alcohol report having had their first drink when they were 14 years old or younger (Ministry of Health, 2009). It is therefore important to understand more about the use of alcohol among this age group. The Health Promotion Agency's (HPA's) Youth Insights Survey (YIS) monitors Year 10 students' behaviours, attitudes, and knowledge on a range of health-related topics, including their use of alcohol. Year 10 students are predominantly aged between 14 and 15 years, and the average age of respondents in the 2012 YIS was 14.1 years.

Methodology

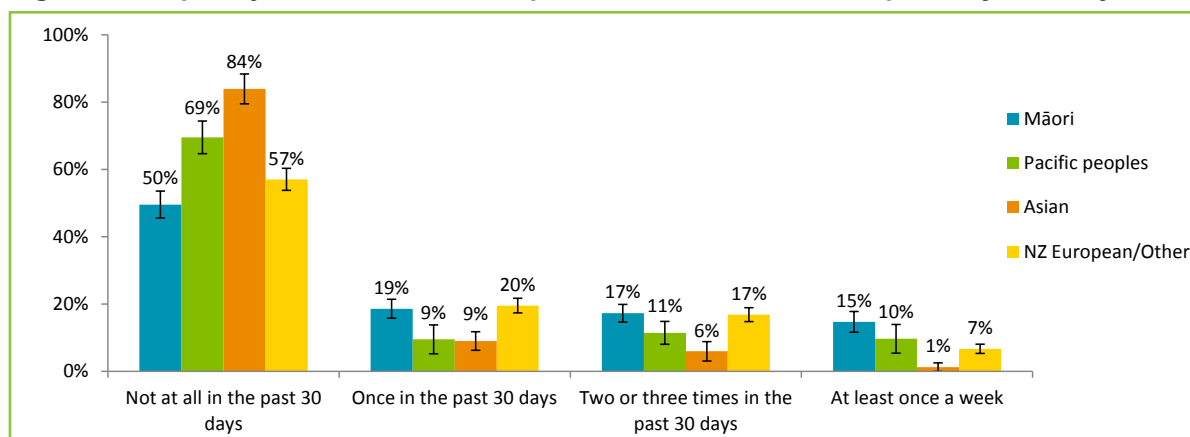
Participants in the 2012 YIS were asked a series of questions about their consumption of alcohol and their estimates of the consumption of alcohol by their peers. Responses were examined by ethnicity (Māori, Pacific peoples, Asian, and NZ European/Other) and gender. In addition, to better understand the links between different alcohol use behaviours, risky drinking and estimates of peer consumption were examined by frequency of alcohol consumption and whether their parents knew they were drinking. Statistically significant ($p < .05$) differences between groups are reported.

Alcohol consumption in the past month

Participants were asked, 'During the past 30 days (one month), how often did you drink alcohol?' Fifty-nine percent (57-61%) of Year 10 students said they had not consumed alcohol at all in the past month, while 17% (16-19%) had consumed alcohol once, 15% (14-17%) two or three times, 5% (4-6%) about once a week, 2% (1-3%) several times a week, and 1% (1-2%) on most days, in the past month.

Māori (50%) were more likely to have consumed alcohol in the past month when compared with NZ Europeans/Others (43%), Pacific peoples (31%), and Asians (16%). Asians were less likely than people of other ethnicities to have consumed alcohol in the past month. See Figure 1. There was no difference between male and female participants in likelihood of having consumed alcohol in the past month.

Figure 1: Frequency of Year 10 students' past-month alcohol consumption, by ethnicity



Note: Due to rounding, in some cases the proportions add to 100 ± 1.

Alcohol consumption without parental knowledge

Participants were asked, 'Thinking about all the times you have ever drunk alcohol, how often has this happened without your parents/caregivers knowing about it?' Eleven percent (10-12%) of Year 10 students said this had happened on 'all occasions', 30% (28-32%) on 'some occasions', and 28% (26-29%) on 'no occasions'. The remainder (32%, 29-34%) said they had 'never had any alcohol'. Of those who had ever had alcohol, the majority had consumed alcohol on some occasions (44%, 41-46%) or all occasions (15%, 14-17%) without their parents or caregivers knowing about it, while 41% (38-43%) said this had not ever happened.

Of those Year 10 students who had ever consumed alcohol, Pacific peoples (70%) and Māori (67%) were more likely to have consumed it on some or all occasions without their parents or caregivers knowing about it, compared with NZ Europeans/Others (57%) and Asians (41%). NZ Europeans/Others were more likely to have done so compared with Asians. See Figure 2. There was no difference between male and female participants in likelihood of alcohol consumption without parental knowledge.

Risky drinking

To measure 'risky drinking', participants were asked, 'During the past 30 days (one month), about how often did you have five or more alcohol drinks in one session?'

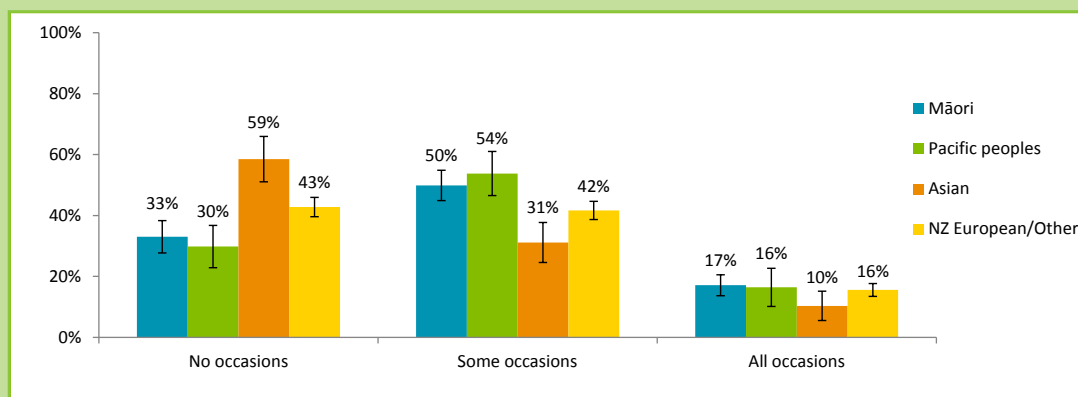
(count one drink as one small glass of wine, one can or stubbie, one ready-made alcohol drink (e.g. rum and Coke or one nip of spirits)'. Almost three-quarters (70%, 67-72%) of Year 10 students said they had never had five or more alcohol drinks in one session. Fourteen percent (12-15%) said they had done this in the past but not in the past month, while 6% (5-7%) had done it once, 7% (6-8%) two or three times, and 4% (3-5%) at least once a week or more often, in the past month.

Māori (51%) were more likely to have ever engaged in risky drinking when compared with Pacific peoples (29%), NZ Europeans/Others (27%), and Asians (7%). Asians were less likely than Māori, Pacific peoples, and NZ Europeans/Others to have ever engaged in risky drinking. See Figure 3. There were no differences between male and female participants in likelihood of ever having engaged in risky drinking.

Those Year 10 students who had ever engaged in risky drinking were also likely to have consumed alcohol:

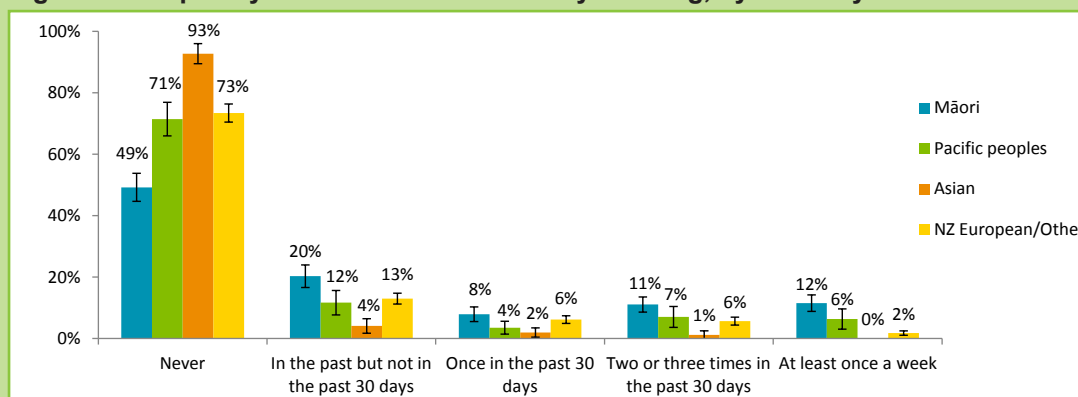
- weekly or more often in the past month (89%), compared with two or three times (68%), once (41%), and not at all (9%), in the past month
- without their parents/caregivers knowing about it on some or all occasions (58%), compared with those who had never consumed alcohol without parental knowledge (22%).

Figure 2: Frequency of Year 10 students' alcohol consumption without parental knowledge, of those who had ever had alcohol, by ethnicity



Note: Figure only includes those Year 10 students who said they had ever had alcohol; therefore, results are not indicative of total population proportions. Due to rounding, in some cases the proportions add to 100 ± 1.

Figure 3: Frequency of Year 10 students' risky drinking, by ethnicity



Estimates of peer consumption

Participants were asked, 'Out of 100 people your age, how many do you think...'

- drink alcohol regularly?
- get drunk regularly?
- get drunk occasionally?

On average, Year 10 students estimated that out of 100 people their age, 52 (50-54) drink alcohol regularly, 42 get drunk regularly (40-44), and 44 get drunk occasionally (42-45).

Those who gave significantly higher estimates out of 100 for how many of their peers get drunk regularly were:

- Māori ($\mu = 56$), compared with Pacific peoples ($\mu = 50$); and both Māori and Pacific peoples compared with NZ Europeans/Others ($\mu = 36$) and Asian people ($\mu = 33$)
- females ($\mu = 47$), compared with males ($\mu = 37$)

and had:

- consumed alcohol at least once a week in the past month ($\mu = 57$), compared with those who consumed alcohol two or three times ($\mu = 49$), once ($\mu = 43$), or not at all ($\mu = 38$), in the past month
- consumed alcohol without their parents/caregivers knowing about it on some or all occasions ($\mu = 48$), compared with those who had never consumed alcohol without parental knowledge ($\mu = 38$)
- ever engaged in risky drinking ($\mu = 54$), compared with those who had not ($\mu = 36$); and of those who had ever engaged in risky drinking, those who had done it in the past month ($\mu = 57$), compared with those who had done it but not in the past month ($\mu = 47$).

References

Ministry of Health (2009). *Alcohol use in New Zealand: Key results of the 2007/08 New Zealand Alcohol and Drug Use Survey*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

Citation

White, J. (2013). *Use of alcohol among Year 10 students. [In Fact]*. Wellington: Health Promotion Agency Research and Evaluation Unit.

Key points

- Four in 10 Year 10 students had consumed alcohol at least once in the past month, while nearly one in 10 (8%) had consumed alcohol at least once a week in the past month.
- Of those who had ever consumed alcohol, six in 10 had done so on some or all occasions without their parents or caregivers knowing about it.
- Three in 10 had engaged in risky drinking at least once in their lives, while just under two in 10 (17%) had done so in the past month.
- Māori were more likely than non-Māori to have consumed alcohol in the past month and to have ever engaged in risky drinking.
- Those who had ever engaged in risky drinking were likely to drink alcohol more frequently and without parental knowledge compared with those who had never engaged in risky drinking.
- Year 10 students estimated that around four in 10 of their peers get drunk regularly.
- Those with higher estimates of how many of their peers get drunk regularly were those who had consumed alcohol more frequently themselves in the past month, consumed alcohol without parental knowledge, and engaged in risky drinking.

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-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour, as well as data on students' interests, lifestyles, activities, and media use, and use of other substances including alcohol.
- The 2012 YIS was conducted with a sample of 3,143 Year 10 students (14 to 15-year-olds). The school-level response rate was 77%, the student level response rate 82%, and the overall response rate was 65%. The sample included 1,589 NZ European, 704 Māori, 295 Pacific, 340 Asian, and 199 people of 'Other' ethnicity (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, proportions and 95% confidence intervals were produced. Odds ratios were undertaken to compare responses between groups. The significance level used for statistical analyses was set to $\alpha=.05$.
- Comparison groups for these analyses were as follows:
 - Ethnicity (Māori, Pacific peoples, and Asian compared with NZ European/Other ethnicity).
 - Gender (females, compared with males).
- A full description of the 2012 YIS methodology and further YIS publications can be found at <http://www.hpa.org.nz/research-library/research-publications>.

About the HPA

The 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, and prevent disease, illness and injury. The HPA also enables environments that support health and wellbeing and healthy lifestyles, and reduce personal, social and economic harm.

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