

ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE IN CULTURALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Chinese summary



Introduction

The Chinese speaking community in Sydney was one of six culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups included in this study. Bi-lingual field staff delivered English or Chinese language self-completion questionnaires to households. Data was collected in 2005. The results found that alcohol, tobacco and other drug use was less prevalent amongst the Chinese community than in the general NSW population.



Alcohol

Two-thirds currently drank alcohol, and the rate of short term risky drinking was only 2%, much lower than the general population in NSW where the rate was 32% (AIHW, 2005).

Compared to the 1995 data there was a marked increase in the proportion of Chinese females who said they had tried alcohol (Everingham & Flaherty, 1995).

It is recommended that alcohol education programs in the Chinese community focus on:

1. Increasing community knowledge of standard drinks, particularly among women, in particular the amount of wine and beer that is equal to one standard drink

Other Drugs

Very few people had used illicit drugs in the Chinese group, particularly when compared with rates of use in the general NSW population (AIHW, 2005). Only 3% had used an illicit drug in the last 12 months, five times lower than the proportion across NSW (AIHW, 2005).

Tobacco

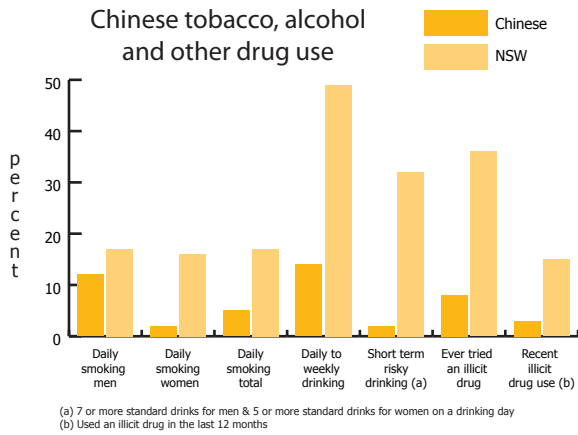
Only 5% of the Chinese group smoked daily. More than half the current smokers in the Chinese group (53%) had tried unsuccessfully to quit smoking in the last 12 months, the vast majority (88%) did not seek any assistance when they tried to quit.

Men were 7 times more likely than women to currently smoke despite a sharp decline in current smoking rates among Chinese males since 1995 (Everingham & Flaherty, 1995).

Birthplace was also found to be predictive of current smoking, where those born in China were more likely to be current smokers.

It is recommended that tobacco education and quit smoking programs in the Chinese community focus on:

1. Men, especially those born in China, in order to assist in further decreasing smoking rates
2. Increasing the proportion seeking help to stop smoking and improving quitting success rates



“Men were 7 times more likely than women to currently smoke”

Knowledge

There were high levels of knowledge regarding the main health problems associated with tobacco and alcohol use. Knowledge, however, of the range of associated health problems was limited and did not appear to increase since 1995 (Everingham & Flaherty, 1995).

There was lower confidence in relation to knowledge about other drugs (illicit drugs, analgesics and sedatives) than was the case with tobacco and alcohol.

Heroin was the drug most commonly associated with the term ‘drug problem’ and most selected for being responsible for the most number of deaths (above both tobacco and alcohol).

It is recommended that drug health promotion and education in the Chinese community focus on:

1. The range of health problems that are associated with tobacco and alcohol use beyond lung and liver damage and cancer
2. The seriousness of tobacco related illness and mortality
3. The health impacts of other drugs

Information

The doctor or GP was an important source of information and help for alcohol and other drugs. The internet was also a popular source for information.

The Chinese group were wide consumers of Chinese language media, with nearly two-thirds reading a Chinese newspaper regularly, 60% watching SBS weekly, and nearly half listening to Chinese language radio programs.

It is recommended that:

1. Current programs supporting and training GPs in alcohol and other drug issues, including referral sources, be expanded with particular attention being paid to GPs treating Chinese clients
2. Community language and culturally specific media be utilised for health promotion, particularly SBS television and Chinese newspapers ‘The Australian Chinese Daily’ and ‘Sing Tao’

References

AIHW 2005, ‘2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey State and Territory supplement’ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra.

Everingham, S & Flaherty, B 1995, ‘Alcohol and other drug use, attitudes and knowledge amongst Chinese-speakers in Sydney’ DAMEC, Sydney.

Conclusion

While the overall prevalence of drug use may be lower amongst the Chinese language community, access and equity issues are still of concern, with evidence from this study demonstrating that this is particularly true in relation to current smokers and smoking cessation. See full reports for further information (Donato-Hunt, C, Munot, S, Copeland, J, Black, M, Chambers, K, Cooper-Stanbury, M, Rissel, C & Taylor, R, 2008 ‘Alcohol and other drug use, attitudes and knowledge amongst the Chinese community in Sydney’ DAMEC, Sydney).