

ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE IN CULTURALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Pasifika summary



Introduction

Pasifika communities in Sydney were one of six culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups included in this study. Field staff delivered self-completion questionnaires to households. Data was collected in 2005. The results found that rates of daily smoking was higher in the Pasifika group than in the general NSW population, and alcohol and other drug use was less prevalent amongst the Pasifika communities.

Alcohol

The rate of short term risky drinking was 22%, lower than the general population in NSW where the rate was 32% (AIHW, 2005). More than one-third of drinkers usually drank 5 or more standard drinks on a drinking day.

It is recommended that alcohol education programs in Pasifika communities focus on:

1. Reducing the rate of short term risky drinking
2. Increasing community knowledge of the health problems associated with harmful drinking levels even when they do not occur frequently

Tobacco

One quarter of people in the Pasifika group were daily smokers, higher than in the NSW general population (AIHW, 2005).

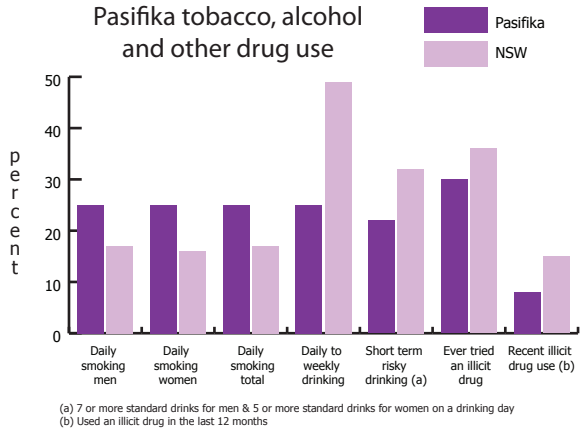
Three-quarters of current smokers in the Pasifika group had tried unsuccessfully to quit smoking in the last 12 months, and 58% did not seek any assistance when they tried to quit.

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

1. Reducing the rate of current smoking
2. Improving quitting success rates and increasing the proportion seeking assistance with quitting

Other Drugs

Almost one-third had ever tried an illicit drug, and 8% had used an illicit drug in the last 12 months lower than the 15% across the NSW general population (AIHW, 2005).



“More than one-third of drinkers usually drank 5 or more standard drinks on a drinking day.”

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.

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

Cannabis and heroin were the drugs most commonly associated with the term ‘drug problem’ and most selected alcohol for being responsible for the most number of deaths (above tobacco).

It is recommended that drug health promotion and education in the Pasifika 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.

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 Pasifika clients

References

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

Conclusion

While the overall prevalence of drug use may be lower amongst the Pasifika language community than in the general population, access and equity issues are still of concern, with evidence from this study demonstrating that this is particularly true in relation to current smoking 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 Pasifika communities in Sydney’ DAMEC, Sydney).