

ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE IN CULTURALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Spanish summary



Introduction

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

Alcohol

Two-thirds were current drinkers, more than half usually drank 1 to 2 standard drinks, and most drinkers consumed alcohol monthly or less frequently. The rate of short term risky drinking was 5%, much lower than the NSW rate of 32% (AIHW, 2005).

Men were more likely than women to usually drink more than 2 standard drinks, as were younger people (under 40 years).

Tobacco

The rate of daily smoking was lower than the NSW rate (AIHW, 2005) and had declined since 1993 (Bertram & Flaherty, 1993).

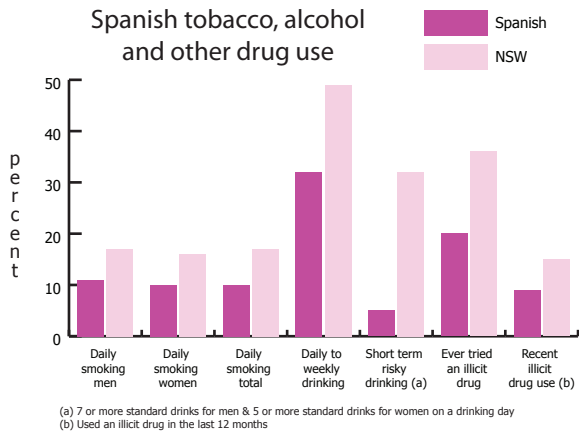
About 40% of current smokers in the Spanish group had tried unsuccessfully to quit smoking in the last 12 months and 80% did not seek any assistance when they tried to quit.

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

1. Increasing the proportion seeking help to stop smoking and improve quitting success rates

Other Drugs

Twenty percent had tried an illicit drug in the Spanish group, and 9% had used an illicit drug in the last 12 months, lower than the 15% across NSW (AIHW, 2005).



“The rate of daily smoking was lower than the NSW rate and had declined since 1993”

Knowledge

There were high levels of knowledge regarding the main health problems associated with tobacco and alcohol. Knowledge of the range of health problems associated with tobacco appeared to have increased since 1993 (Bertram & Flaherty, 1993).

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

There was lower confidence in relation to knowledge about other drugs (illicit drugs, analgesics and sedatives) than was the case with tobacco and alcohol. Knowledge of other drugs did not appear to increase since 1993 (Bertram & Flaherty, 1993).

It is recommended that drug health promotion and education in the Spanish 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 Spanish group were wide consumers of Spanish language media

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 Spanish speaking clients
2. Community language and culturally specific media be utilised for health promotion, particularly SBS television, community radio (Radio Austral and SBS) and Spanish newspapers (The Spanish Herald and El Español)

References

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

Bertram, S & Flaherty, B, 1993, ‘Alcohol and other drug use, attitudes and knowledge amongst Spanish-speakers in Sydney and Wollongong’ DAMEC, Sydney

Conclusion

While the overall prevalence of drug use may be lower amongst the Spanish 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 Spanish community in Sydney’ DAMEC, Sydney).