

ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE IN CULTURALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Vietnamese summary



Introduction

The Vietnamese 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 Vietnamese 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 Vietnamese community than in the general NSW population.

Alcohol

About 60% currently drank alcohol, and the rate of short term risky drinking was 6%, much lower than the general population in NSW where the rate was 32% (AIHW, 2005).

Men were more likely to drink alcohol weekly, as were those aged over 40 years. Those without post-school education were less likely to know how many standard drinks they usually drank on drinking days.

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

1. Increasing community knowledge of standard drinks, particularly among those without tertiary education, in particular the amount of wine and beer that is equal to one standard drink

Other Drugs

The proportions that had ever tried an illicit drug, or used an illicit drug in the last 12 months were both 3 times lower than the NSW general population (AIHW, 2005).

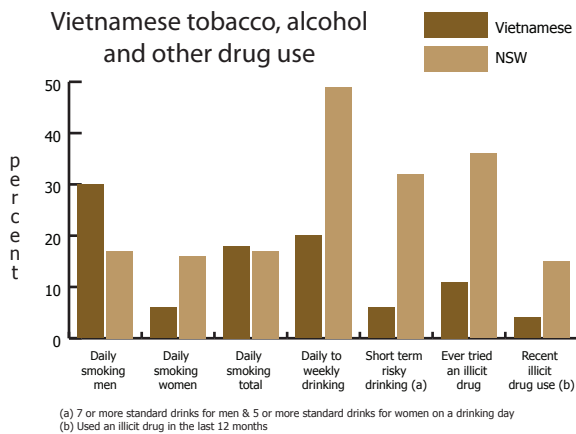
Tobacco

Higher rates of Vietnamese men smoked than men in the NSW general population (AIHW, 2005), and Vietnamese men were 7 times more likely than women to smoke. Those born in Vietnam were also more likely to smoke than those born in Australia.

More than one-third of current smokers in the Vietnamese group had tried unsuccessfully to quit smoking in the last 12 months, and 60% did not seek any assistance when they tried to quit.

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

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



“Thirty percent of men smoked daily, higher than in the NSW general population.”

Knowledge

There were high levels of knowledge regarding the main health problems associated with tobacco and alcohol use. However knowledge of the range of associated health problems was limited and did not appear to increase since 1992 (Bertram & Flaherty 1992).

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 Vietnamese 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. Print media was also a popular source for information.

The Vietnamese group were wide consumers of Vietnamese language media, with Vietnamese language radio, newspaper, and SBS television being regularly utilised by about 60% each.

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 Vietnamese speaking clients
2. Community language and culturally specific media be utilised for health promotion, particularly SBS television and radio, and Vietnamese newspapers ‘Chien Doung’ followed by Viet Luan.

References

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

Bertram, S & Flaherty, B, 1992, ‘Alcohol and other drug use, attitudes and knowledge amongst Vietnamese-speakers in Sydney’ DAMEC, Sydney.

Conclusion

While the overall prevalence of drug use may be lower amongst the Vietnamese 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 smoking particularly among men 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 Vietnamese community in Sydney’ DAMEC, Sydney).