

Older people moderate with alcohol

December 11 2014

Most people in advanced age don't drink alcohol or only drink alcohol moderately, according to recent research from the University of Auckland.

The findings are from a population-based sample of Māori (aged 80 to 90 years) and non-Māori (aged 85 years), living in the Bay of Plenty, who are taking part in a [longitudinal study](#) of advanced ageing, called Life and Living in Advanced Age: a Cohort Study in New Zealand - Te Puāwaitanga O Ngā Tapuwae Kia Ora Tonu (LiLACS NZ).

The LiLACS report presented key findings about alcohol use in advanced age including patterns of use and the relationship between alcohol use and falls. It described the prevalence of any alcohol use and the frequency and amount of alcohol use in advanced age by gender, ethnic group and socio-economic deprivation.

Alcohol consumption was not significantly related to the number of falls over the last 12 months after adjusting for age, ability to complete activities of daily living, and medical conditions.

"It is intriguing that falls are not associated with [alcohol consumption](#) in advanced age," says study co-author Professor Ngaire Kerse. "Potentially this may be because older people drink a lot less than younger age groups and the drivers for falls are mainly related to mobility issues."

"Overall, [older people](#) appear to be quite responsible about drinking," she says.

The findings from this report are split into two sections: findings from all LiLACS NZ participants; and findings from those who drank alcohol (drinkers).

The study showed that Māori in advanced age drank less alcohol than non-Maori. People in advanced age who lived in areas of higher socio-economic deprivation drank alcohol less often than those who lived in less deprived areas.

It also showed that those in areas of higher socio-economic deprivation who did drink alcohol were more likely to drink hazardously. For this report, a hazardous drinker referred to someone who drank six or more alcoholic drinks on any occasion, while a moderate drinker referred to someone who drank four or more times a week but less than six drinks on each occasion.

In the findings from all LiLACS NZ participants, people in advanced age, especially Māori, drank alcohol moderately or not at all.

The research showed that more non-Māori reported that they drank alcohol in the last month than Māori: 82 percent of non-Māori men and 64 percent of non-Māori women compared to 64 percent of Māori men and 46 percent of Māori women..

Significantly more men drank alcohol four or more times a week compared to women, 48 percent of all non-Māori men and 22 percent of all Maori men, compared to 23 percent of all non-Māori women and eight percent of all Māori women.

Drinkers in areas of higher socioeconomic deprivation drank six or more alcoholic drinks on any occasion more often than drinkers in less deprived areas. Few people drank to a hazardous level - of drinkers, 12 percent reported hazardous drinking.

People in advanced age who lived in areas of high [socioeconomic deprivation](#) drank alcohol less frequently, but when they did drink [alcohol](#), they drank more heavily, compared to those in less [deprived areas](#).

Provided by University of Auckland

Citation: Older people moderate with alcohol (2014, December 11) retrieved 24 January 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-12-older-people-moderate-alcohol.html>

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