

**PATTERNS AND TRENDS: SURVEY OF ALCOHOL
USE and CONSEQUENCES in MELBOURNE'S
VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY**

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Funded by



The *Patterns and Trends* research project explored patterns of alcohol consumption and associated alcohol related harms within the Vietnamese community of Melbourne. The project was funded by the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation and was conducted through a partnership between Odyssey House Victoria, the Quang Minh Temple; and the University of Melbourne.

Stage One

The first stage of the project involved focus groups and individual interviews with 12 members of the Vietnamese community (aged 16 years and older). The aim was to obtain a formative understanding of the types of problems associated with alcohol use and identifying the social and cultural context of drinking within the Vietnamese community. Data from these interviews informed the development of the questionnaire used in the second stage of the project.

Stage Two

In stage two, surveys were administered to 1080 people over the age of 16. The sample was stratified to match community population demographics such as age, gender, residential locations within metropolitan Melbourne and religion. Results were compared to Australian normative data.

Sample

Age	16-19 (years)	20-29 (years)	30-39 (years)	40-49 (years)	50-59 (years)	60-69 (years)	70+ (years)	Total
Males (%)	50 (4.7%)	97 (9.1%)	114 (10.7%)	113 (10.6%)	86 (8.1%)	40 (3.7%)	21 (2.0%)	521 (48.7%)
Females (%)	41 (3.8%)	149 (13.9%)	147 (13.7%)	76 (7.1%)	61 (5.7%)	36 (3.4%)	23 (2.1%)	533 (49.8%)
Total	91	253	267	197	149	76	37	1070

Area	Whitehorse	Maribyrnong	Greater Dandenong	Brimbank City Council	Braybrook	Richmond
	32	228	187	168	61	51

Religion	None	Buddhist	Christian	Other
	324	415	324	3

Some of the key findings are as follows:

Drinking Patterns of the Vietnamese Community by Age and Gender (See Table 1)

- The proportion of daily drinkers increased with age; peaking at 40-49 years of age and then decreasing again after 50 years of age. In total, 11% of the sample reported drinking daily, which is higher than that reported by the general Australian population (8.1%)¹.
- Substantially more men in the sample drank daily (20.4%) than women (1.5%). The proportion of men drinking daily was higher than that reported by the general Australian population (10.8%), but the proportion of women drinking daily was lower than the general population (5.5%).
- The group of people most likely to drink daily were Vietnamese men aged 30-39 (32.5%).
- A total of 33.2% of women in the sample had never drunk alcohol compared to 13.8% of men. Both of these figures are higher than that reported by the general Australian population (females 12.1%; males, 8.2%).
- Fewer Vietnamese persons are drinking weekly and less than weekly than the national average.
- More Vietnamese people had never consumed a full serve of alcohol compared to the national average.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2008. 2007 National Drug Strategy Household Survey: first results. Drug Statistics Series number 20.Cat. no. PHE 98. Canberra: AIHW.

- Age of initiation of use was similar for Victorian Vietnamese (17.8 years) compared to the general Australian population (17.0years). Approximately 8% of Victorian Vietnamese had used alcohol by the time they were 14.

Table 1. Alcohol drinking patterns: percentage of community aged 14 years or older, by age and sex.

Drinking Status	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	70+	14+
(percent)								
<u>MALES</u>								
Daily	2.0	12.6	32.5	29.5	15.5	15.4	14.3	20.4
Weekly	20.0	42.1	32.5	36.6	32.1	20.5	14.3	32.2
Less than Weekly	56.0	30.5	22.8	19.6	25.0	20.5	14.3	26.6
Ex-drinker	12.0	5.3	0.9	2.7	7.1	25.6	23.8	7.0
Never had a full serve of alcohol	10.0	9.5	11.4	11.6	20.2	17.9	33.3	13.8
<u>FEMALES</u>								
Daily	2.5	2.0	0.7	1.4	1.6	2.9	0.0	1.5
Weekly	12.5	52.7	48.6	33.8	3.3	2.9	0.0	34.5
Less than Weekly	55.0	25.7	18.5	20.3	14.8	5.7	26.1	22.6
Ex-drinker	15.0	3.4	9.6	8.1	8.2	14.3	8.7	8.2
Never had a full serve of alcohol	15.0	16.2	22.6	36.5	72.1	74.3	65.2	33.2
<u>TOTAL</u>								
Daily	2.2	6.0	14.7	18.6	10.2	9.5	6.7	11.0
Weekly	16.7	50.0	41.7	36.1	19.7	12.2	6.7	34.0
Less than Weekly	55.6	26.8	20.3	20.1	20.4	13.5	20.0	24.3
Ex-drinker	13.3	4.0	5.6	4.6	7.5	20.3	17.8	7.5
Never had a full serve of alcohol	12.2	13.2	17.7	20.6	42.2	44.6	48.9	23.3

Harm and Psychological Distress Associated with Drug Use

Harmful Drinking Patterns

Harmful drinking was measured using the World Health Organization's Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT), which is a reliable and simple screening tool sensitive to early detection of risky and high risk (or hazardous and harmful) drinking. An Audit score of 8 or above indicates risky drinking.

- 32.1% of participants classified themselves as risky drinkers

- Men aged between the ages of 30-39 were the most at risk, with 64.8% of men in this age range classified as risky drinkers.
- The women most at risk were between the ages of 20-29, with 38.9% reporting risky drinking patterns.

Drug-Related Harm (See Table 2)

Participants were asked how many times in the past 12 months they undertook potentially harmful activities whilst under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

- Vietnamese people reported undertaking more potentially harmful activities under the influence of alcohol compared to the general Australian population. For example, Vietnamese people were 4 times more likely than the general Australian population to go to school/university or work under the influence of alcohol.
- Vietnamese females were 5 times more likely than the general Australian population to verbally abuse some-one and were 15 times more likely to physically abuse some-one as a result of drinking compared to the general Australian population.
- 38.1% of females and 28.9% of males aged between 30-39 report perpetrating verbal abuse, whilst 12.9% of females and 17.3% of males in the same age category report perpetrating physical abuse under the influence of alcohol.

Table 2: Activities undertaken while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs in the past 12 months: proportion of population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australian representative data, and Victorian Vietnamese data.

ACTIVITY	MALES		FEMALES		TOTAL	
	(percent)					
	Viet*	Aust*	Viet*	Aust*	Viet*	Aust*
Went to school/university/work	23.9	6.0	29.6	2.1	27.8	4.0
Went swimming	4.6	7.1	16.5	3.3	11.2	5.2
Drove a motor vehicle	19.3	16.2	4.3	8.0	11.9	12.1
Operated Hazardous machinery	3.1	1.4	0.4	0.1	1.8	0.8
Caused damage to property	1.5	2.7	0.9	0.7	1.4	1.7
Stole money, goods or property	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.4
Created a public disturbance	1.5	4.2	1.9	1.6	1.7	2.9
Verbally abused someone	14.8	7.4	25.3	4.1	20.9	5.7
Physically abused some-one	9.2	1.7	7.5	0.5	8.6	1.1

Note: *Viet=Vietnamese in Melbourne
 *Aust= General Australian Population (figures taken from the 2007 National Drug Strategy Household Survey)

Victims of Drug-Related Harm (See Table 3)

- Vietnamese Victorians are more likely than the general Australian population to be victims of alcohol-related incidents
- Vietnamese Victorians report being 5.5 times more likely to be victims of physical abuse than people in the general Australian populace.
- Vietnamese women report being 11 times more likely to be victims of physical abuse than women in the general Australian population.

Table 3: Proportion of the population aged 15 years or older who have been victims of alcohol or other drug-related incidents, by sex Australian representative data, and Victorian Vietnamese data.

ACTIVITY	MALES		FEMALES		PERSONS	
	(percent)					
	Viet*	Aust*	Viet*	Aust*	Viet*	Aust*
Verbal abuse	19.2	29.3	39.4	21.5	30.3	25.4
Physical Abuse	14.7	5.9	33.1	3.1	25.0	4.5
Put in fear	18.7	12	36.4	14.1	28.6	13.1

Note: *Viet=Vietnamese in Melbourne
 *Aust=Australian population (figures taken from the 2007 National Drug Strategy Household Survey).

Beliefs around Alcohol Consumption

- On average, Vietnamese Victorians reported that (a) an adult male could drink, on average 2.55 standard drinks in a six hour period (b) an adult female could drink 1.76 standard drinks in a six hour period before putting their health at risk.
- Vietnamese Victorians ages 15-19 believed that (a) males could drink 6.68 and (b) females could drink 4.38 standard drinks in a six hour period before putting their health at risk.
- Roughly 90% of Vietnamese Victorians indicated that they were aware of some of the specific risks of alcohol consumption (i.e., prolonged heavy alcohol use can increase risk of cancer, brain diseases, liver diseases etc).
- Risky drinkers (audit scores of 8 and over) were more aware of the risks of alcohol consumption than non-risky drinkers (audit scores of 8 and under). The exception was that more risky female drinkers believed there was no risk to the baby if a few alcoholic drinks are consumed during pregnancy.

Help Seeking Behaviours (See Table 5)

- 72% of Vietnamese Victorians said they would seek help if they believed they or some-one else in their family had an alcohol problem, whilst 20% said they would possibly seek help.
- 4% said they would not seek help, the majority of whom were males.
- If they believed they or some-one in their family had alcohol problems, people were more likely to go to their doctors (77.6%) than other sources for help.
- As the age of the participants increased so did their preference for a Vietnamese helper.
- The younger participants (15-29) were most likely not to have a preference for the nationality of their helper.
- Confidentiality was the biggest factor that people thought would facilitate them seeking help. For people over the age of 40, language was also a major factor.
- The biggest barrier that would prevent people from seeking help was fear that other community members would find out that they or some-one in their family had a problem with drug and/or alcohol. For people over the age of 30 the idea that help seeking is not in line with cultural values was also endorsed as a major barrier.

Table 5: Help Seeking Behaviours of the Victorian Vietnamese, by age

	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	70+	14+
<i>Help Seeking</i>								
	(per cent)							
Doctor	65.1	83.0	77.8	75.4	77.2	79.2	79.5	77.6
Telephone Helpline	39.8	71.0	69.6	50.8	51.5	50	36.4	58.8
Counselling/Community service	42.2	73.7	69.2	55.2	57.4	52.8	20.5	60.9
Family member/friend	60.2	77.2	64.3	60.1	47.1	54.1	34.1	61.7
Church temple	10.8	50.6	42.5	32.8	17.6	30.6	31.8	35.4
<i>Factor facilitating Help Seeking</i>								
Access to Language	14.0	16.8	30.0	46.8	60.6	74.6	72.1	37.7
Anonymity	27.9	21.3	20.1	14.9	10.6	9.9	18.6	18.0
Confidentiality	79.1	82.0	74.8	55.9	47.2	52.1	27.9	66.1
Understands our Culture	18.6	33.2	37.2	37.8	38.0	33.8	23.3	34.1
Home Visits	8.1	27.0	27.7	23.9	20.4	28.2	16.3	23.8
<i>Barriers to Help Seeking</i>								
Not in line with cultural values	11.0	37.3	48.3	54.9	59.0	59.0	48.6	45.5
No language specific services	1.2	3.9	5.5	12.8	12.8	9.8	20.0	7.7
Worried family will find out	47.6	52.8	49.6	34.1	25.6	39.3	28.6	43.0
Worried others will find out	45.1	61.8	69.7	55.5	41.0	41.0	34.3	56.2

Possible points of intervention (See Table 6)

- More Vietnamese Victorians listen to Vietnamese radio programs or read Vietnamese newspapers than watch Vietnamese programs on TV.
- Vietnamese Victorians under the age of 30 are less likely to engage with Vietnamese media than those over the age of 30.
- There were no significant gender differences in engagement with Vietnamese media.

Table 6: Engagement with Vietnamese media by age

	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	70+	14+
	(per cent)							
<i>Proportion who read Vietnamese newspapers</i>								
No	80.2	38.9	11.6	2.0	0.7	2.6	2.2	17.1
Yes sometimes	14.3	62.1	64.8	62.4	53.0	42.1	39.1	55.1
Yes often	5.5	9.1	23.6	35.5	46.3	55.3	58.7	27.7
<i>Proportion who watch Vietnamese programs on TV</i>								
No	73.6	41.1	29.2	24.4	12.1	9.2	4.3	30.0
Yes sometimes	23.1	53.8	59.2	61.9	71.1	57.9	47.8	56.4
Yes often	3.3	5.1	11.6	13.7	16.8	32.9	47.8	13.5
<i>Proportion who listen to Vietnamese radio programs</i>								
No	63.7	24.9	9.7	3.6	0.7	1.3	4.3	14.6
Yes sometimes	27.5	68.0	63.7	60.4	49.7	39.5	23.9	55.7
Yes often	8.8	7.1	26.6	36.0	49.7	59.2	71.7	29.7