



Pacific Young People and Alcohol

Although half of the Pacific secondary school students in New Zealand do not drink alcohol, the 48% who do drink, drink heavily. It is dangerous to accept this binge drinking as normal: it can lead to serious health and social problems. There is an urgent need to reduce access to alcohol and to encourage changes to social norms about the overconsumption of alcohol among New Zealand's Pacific young people.

This fact sheet presents findings on Pacific young people in New Zealand and alcohol. The results are drawn from the *Youth'07* national survey of secondary school students in New Zealand, carried out in 2007. The results given here are based on the 1,190 Pacific students surveyed in *Youth'07* – those who identified as Samoan, Cook Islands, Tongan, Niue, Tokelauan, Fijian, or Other Pacific Peoples.

How many Pacific students drink?

- 65% of Pacific students said they had ever tried drinking alcohol.
- 48% of Pacific students said they currently drink, ie, they occasionally or regularly drink alcohol.
- The proportion of Pacific students who drink (48%) is comparatively low (by comparison, 66% of NZ European students drink).

How much do Pacific students drink?

Much of the harm from alcohol results from heavier drinking occasions or 'binge drinking', ie, 5 or more drinks within a 4 hour session. The results below count the Pacific students who had been binge drinking within the previous 4 weeks.

- Of **all** Pacific students, 32% were binge drinkers.
- Older Pacific students drink more: 15% of the 13 year-olds were binge drinkers, but by age 17, 47% were binge drinkers.

- Binge drinking was just as high among Pacific girls (33%) as among Pacific boys (31%).
- Of the Pacific students who drink, 66% were binge drinkers, which is higher than the proportion among NZ European students (50%). For many of the Pacific students who drink, binge drinking is their normal pattern of drinking.

Where do Pacific students who binge drink get alcohol from?

- 71% got alcohol from their friends.
- 43% got someone else to buy alcohol for them.
- 34% got alcohol from their brothers or sisters.

These results are given in more detail in the graph over the page.

What do Pacific students drink?

Of the Pacific students who drink:

- 42% usually drink RTDs ('Ready-To-Drink' ready-mixed alcoholic drinks).
- 27% usually drink beer.
- 17% usually drink spirits.

Pacific students as social drinkers

Nearly all of the Pacific students who drink (88%) said that they usually drink with their friends, while only 11% said they usually drink by themselves.

When asked why they drink, the most common reasons the Pacific students who drink gave were: "to have fun" (81%) and "to enjoy parties" (60%).

But it is of concern that 47% said they drink "to get drunk" and 35% said they drink "to forget about things".

However, it is important to note that of the Pacific students who drink, 40% said they were worried about their alcohol consumption, and 26% said their friends or family had told them to cut down their drinking.

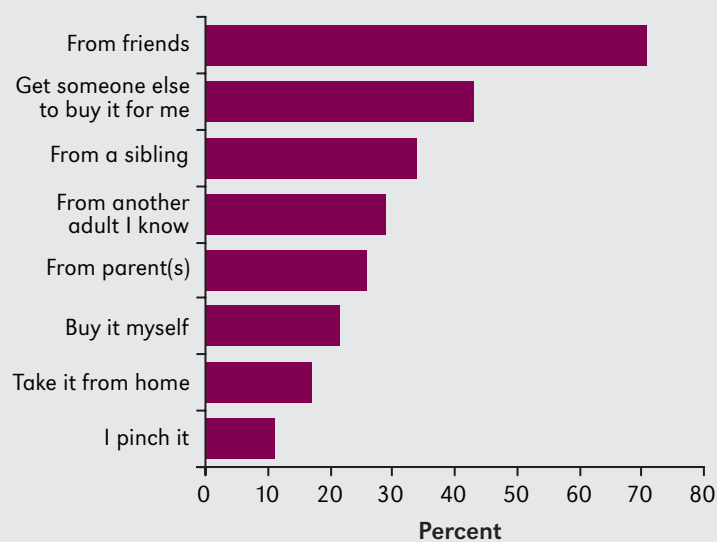
Pacific students' problems with alcohol

The Pacific students who drink reported various problems related to their drinking. During the previous year:

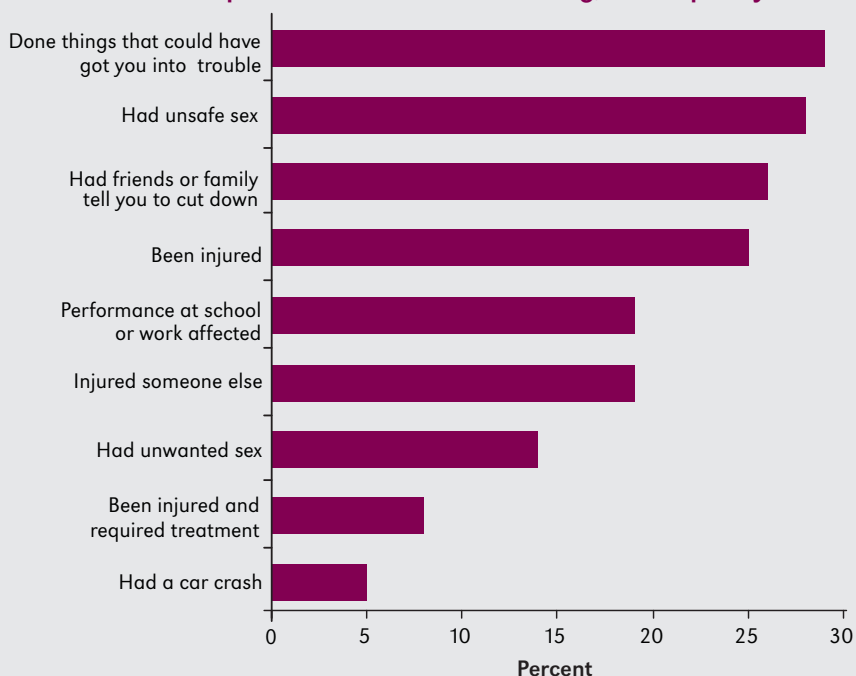
- 29% had done something after drinking alcohol that could have got them into serious trouble.
- 28% had unprotected sex after drinking alcohol.
- 25% had been injured after drinking alcohol.
- 19% said their performance at school had been affected by their alcohol consumption.

These results are shown in more detail in the graph below:

Sources of alcohol for Pacific students who binge drink



Pacific students' problems from their drinking, in the past year



For more information go to:
www.youth2000.ac.nz

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The opinions and recommendations expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Health Research Council or the Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand.



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