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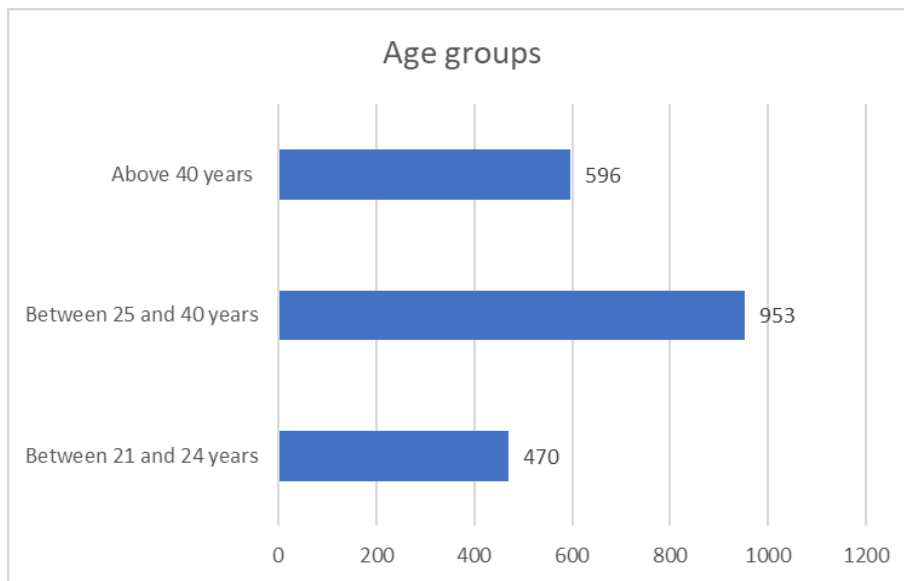
14<sup>th</sup> May 2020

## PRESS RELEASE

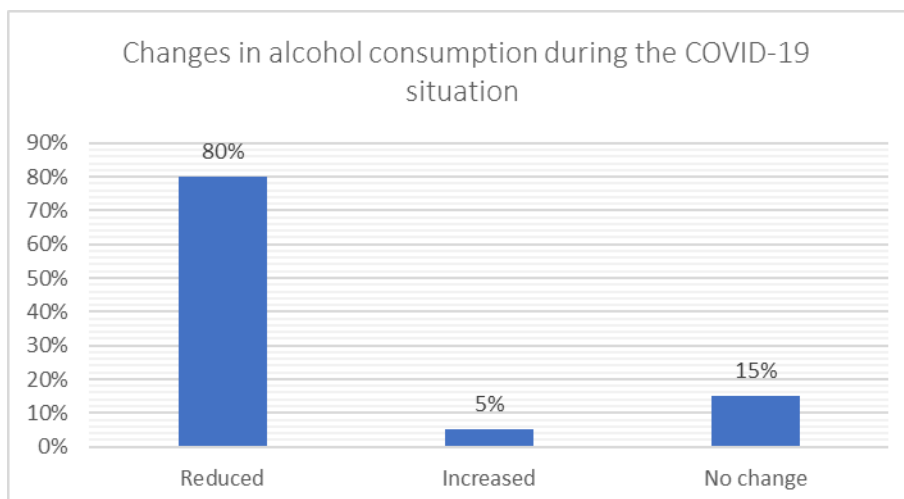
### During the COVID-19 situation 80% of alcohol users and 68% of tobacco smokers have reduced their consumption

The Alcohol and Drug Information Centre (ADIC) – Sri Lanka conducted a study on alcohol (legal and illegal) users and tobacco smokers, and their families on alcohol and tobacco consumption and changes related to consumption during the COVID-19 situation in Sri Lanka.

This study was conducted from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2020 on a sample of 2019 individuals covering the entire country including all 25 districts.

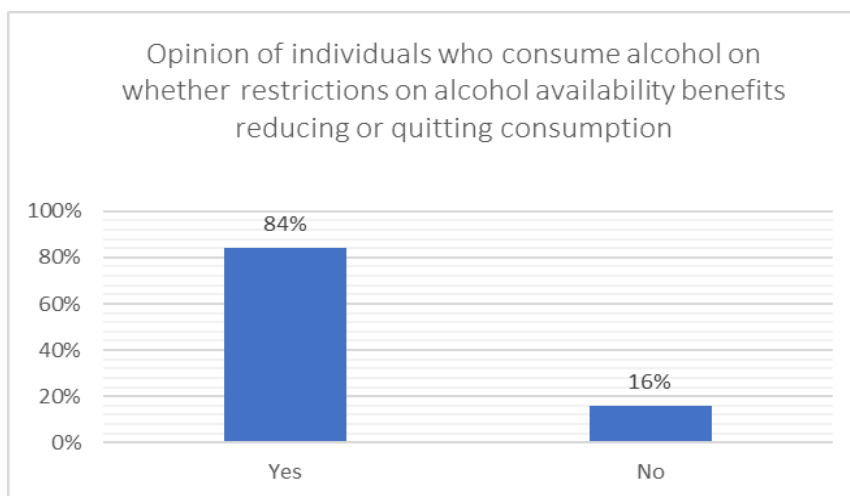
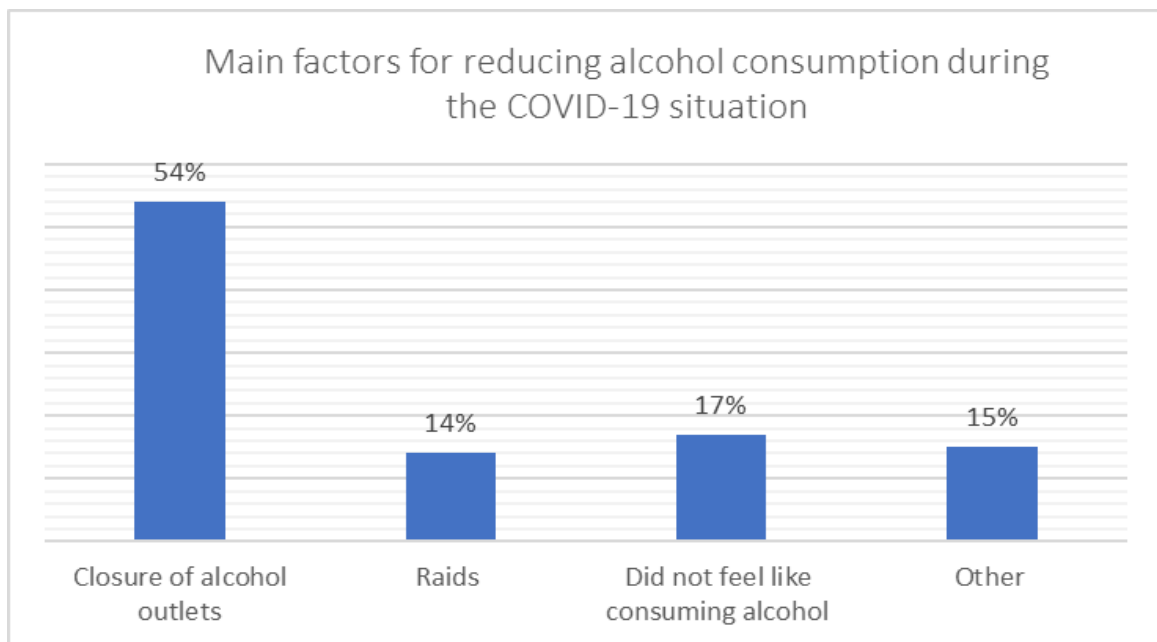


In the sample, 23% respondents were between 21 to 24 years, 47% were between 25 to 40 years, 30% were above 40 years.



The study found that during the COVID-19 situation 80% individuals who consume alcohol reduced their alcohol consumption.

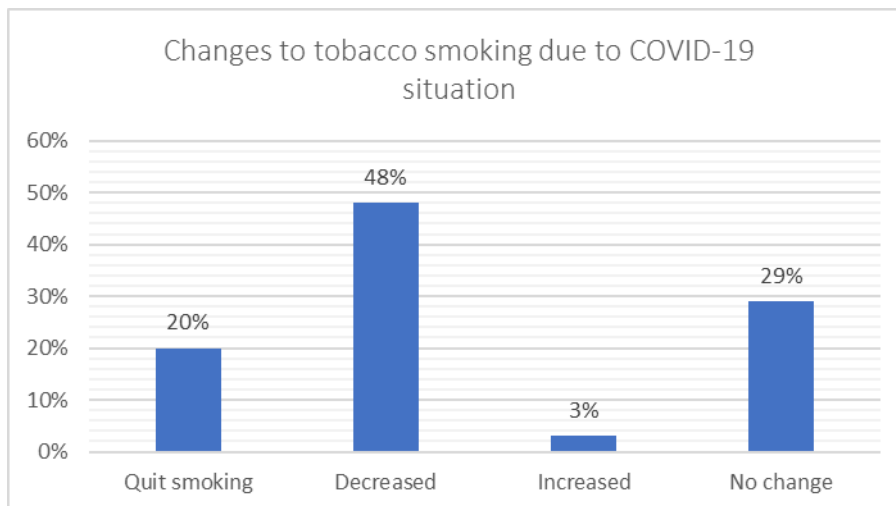
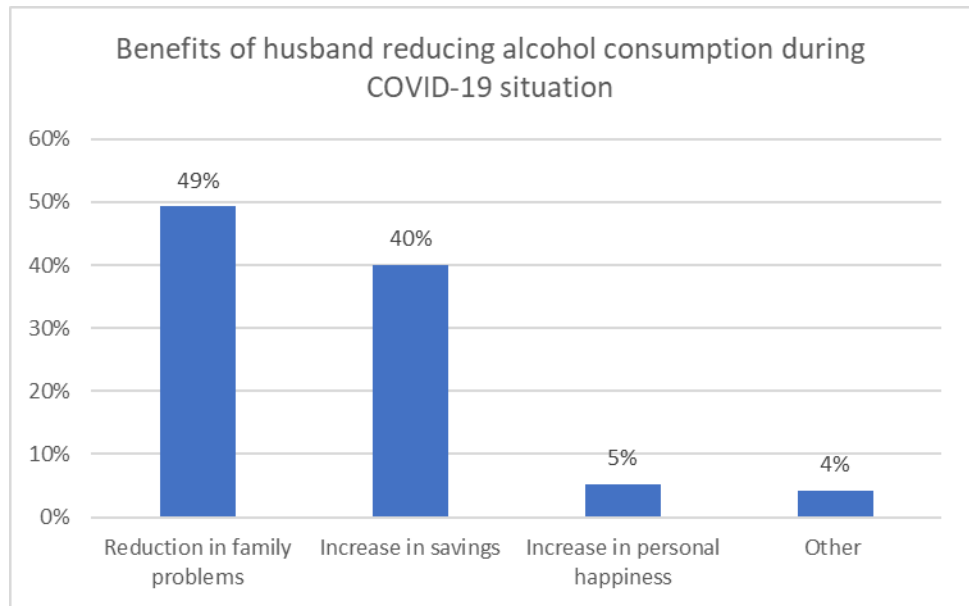
### Main factors for reducing alcohol consumption



The opinion of 84% respondents who quit/reduced alcohol consumption was that restrictions on alcohol availability was helpful in quitting/reducing their alcohol consumption. It can be concluded that, a large proportion of respondents held this opinion because under normal circumstances many users miss out on the benefits of becoming free from alcohol use unlike in

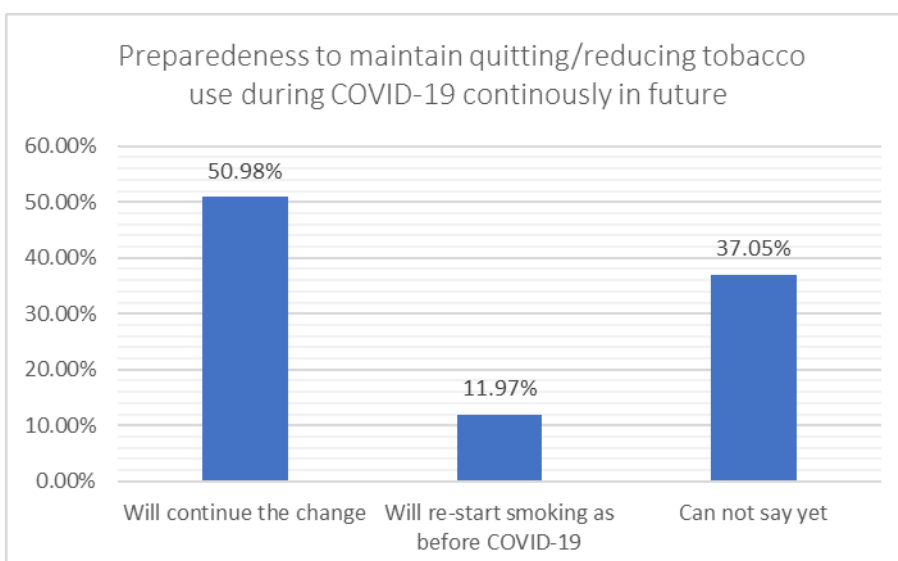
the special situation during COVID-19 which would have enabled them to experience first-hand the benefits of becoming alcohol-free. Only 16% respondents claimed the restrictions did not help them to quit or reduce their alcohol consumption.

According to the responses of wives of men who consume alcohol, 49% reported a reduction in family problems and, 40% reported an increase in family savings, due to husband reducing alcohol use.



This graph shows that out of those who were smoking tobacco, a majority of 68% reduced their tobacco smoking during the COVID-19 situation. Among them, 48% have reduced tobacco smoking while 20% quit smoking tobacco. The possible reason for this result is that many individuals who smoke tobacco would have used the

restricted availability of tobacco during COVID-19 as an opportunity to reduce or quit their smoking.



51% of those who reduced/ quit tobacco smoking during COVID-19 reported they are prepared to continue this change in the future even after the situation normalizes.

The overall results of the study found during the COVID-19 situation in Sri Lanka alcohol consumption among 80% of alcohol users reduced and smoking among 68% of tobacco smokers reduced.

Out of the individuals who quit/reduced alcohol consumption during the COVID-19 situation 37% claimed they were prepared to continue their change in future even after the situation normalizes.

Out of individuals who quit/reduced tobacco smoking during COVID-19 situation 51% claimed they were prepared to continue their change in future even after the situation normalizes.

Among the wives of men who consume alcohol, 49% reported family problems reduced due to husband quitting alcohol consumption. A further 40% reported there was an increase in family savings.

Therefore, the results of this study show that restricted availability of alcohol and tobacco led to users' reducing/ quitting use of these two substances. While it may be difficult to quit/ reduce use and experience its benefits under normal circumstances, this study shows that the situational influences during COVID-19 provided a chance to experience the benefits of being free from use.

Globally, the alcohol and tobacco industries are against sales restrictions and reduced availability of their products because users will quit use by realizing that they can live without these substances and specifically by understanding that it is more comfortable to live free from these substances.

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