




 **ALCOHOL
SPOT SURVEY**

**2016
JULY**



**Research and Evaluation Programme
Alcohol and Drug Information Centre
Sri Lanka**



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Spot Survey on alcohol trends is being conducted biannually since 1998. This survey helps to monitor and identify the prevailing trends and patterns related to alcohol consumption, while also identifying the prevailing attitudes with regard to alcohol. This survey contributes to literature, as there is no such study conducted in Sri Lanka to determine the trends in alcohol consumption.

The survey was focused on following districts; Batticaloa, Colombo, Galle, Gampaha, Jaffna, Kandy, Kegalle, Badulla and Mannar. The report, concentrates on the results of the survey conducted in July 2016. In addition, a comparative analysis of results obtained this year with results obtained in July 2015 is also included.

2.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The spot survey is being conducted since 1998 biannually. This report conveys the data of the spot survey conducted in December 2015. The survey was conducted in ten districts covering 2,321 male populations over 15 years of age. Among the respondents, 38.1% of the respondents have completed the Advanced Level examination while 33% have completed Ordinary level examination, which were the two highest percentages of educational levels in the sample.

When the alcohol usage of the respondents is considered, 45.4% have never used alcohol in their life. Most common reason for never using alcohol was dislike / unpleasant feeling towards alcohol use. Only 54.6% have used alcohol at least once during his lifetime. Highest age category of alcohol initiation in the sample was

16 – 20 years (53.8%) Majority of the respondents (44.3%) who use alcohol have initiated the usage at gatherings held with their friends.

Majority 50.8% of the alcohol users used beer as the type of alcohol at the initiation while 41.6% used arrack. 14.8 % of the ever drinkers have felt bitter at the initiation and 14% have felt intoxication. Current alcohol users were 32.9% while the highest percentage 49.2% belonged to ≤ 40 age category. Highest percentage 42.6% of users from all age categories used alcohol only special occasions. Fifty six point one percent users used arrack as the type of alcohol they used. 30.9% Alcohol users expressed they used alcohol to fun, enjoyment and happiness. Average amount spent per month on alcohol was Rs.5790.56.

Among the ever users of alcohol, 28% have attempted to quit alcohol mainly health hazards. Majority 74% of the respondents who ever drank alcohol have never tried to stop alcohol usage. Majority 76.3% of the current users are still continuing the use of alcohol.

Finally, the alcohol prevalence has increased by 0.5% compared to spot survey findings of July 2015. Although there is a slight increase in 2016, an overall decreasing trend in alcohol use can be observed, when considering the biannual spot surveys from 2005 – 2016.



3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the spot survey are as follows:

1. PRIMARY OBJECTIVES :

- To determine the prevailing alcohol consumption trend in Sri Lanka.
- To compare the alcohol consumption trends with the previous years.

2. SECONDARY OBJECTIVES:

- To determine the prevailing alcohol consumption trends according to age groups, districts etc.
- To identify the prevailing attitudes and reasons for consumption of alcohol products.
- To determine the age of initiation and causes for initiation of alcohol use.



4. METHODS

An interviewer administered questionnaire was used to collect information. The questions asked were straightforward and easy to comprehend. The survey was conducted over a period of one month. In order to carry out the survey, the Research and Evaluation Programme trained field investigators with appropriate research techniques. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used for analyzing the data.

4.1 SAMPLE

Survey covered a total number of 2,531 respondents who were males of the age fifteen and above. Survey focused in 10 districts including approximately 250 respondents from each.

4.2 LIMITATIONS

Some respondents did not have time to respond to all the questions, or their answers were vague.

However, the reader of this report should not generalize the prevalence rates given in this report to national level without conducting a validation study.

SECTION 1 - DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

5.1 Age distribution of the sample

Total sample for the survey was 2321 and it was categorized according to main age groups as 15-24 years, 25-39 and forty and above years (figure 1).

Age Category	Number	Percentage (%)
15-24	836	35.9
25-39	841	36.1
<=40	650	28
Total	2327	100

Figure 01: Age distribution of the sample

5.1.2 Educational Level

As far as the highest level of education of the respondents is considered, most of the respondents have completed their education up to G.C.E. Advanced Level (38.1%). Thirty-three point nine percent (33%) of the respondents have completed education up to G.C.E. Ordinary Level

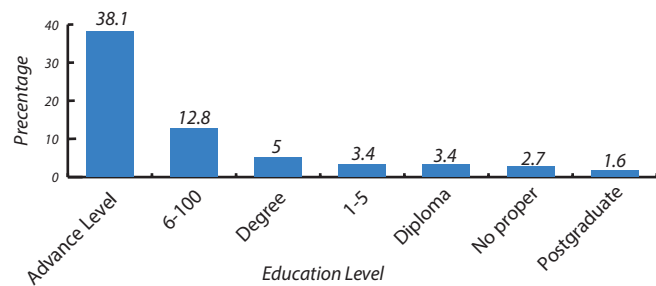


Figure 02: Educational Level

5.3 Occupation Information

Occupation	Number	Percentage (%)
Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers	16	2.6
Professionals	43	7.0
Technicians and Associate Professionals	21	3.5
Clerks	25	4.1
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	90	14.8
Skilled Agricultural and Fishery Workers	15	2.5
Craft and related workers	37	6.1
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	97	16.0
Elementary Occupations	60	10.0
Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers	110	18.1
Legislators and senior officials	38	6.3
Corporate managers	16	2.6
General managers	39	6.4
Total	607	100.0

Figure03: Occupation information

SECTION 2 – Never Users

5.2.1 Never Users of Alcohol

Questions were asked whether the respondents have never used alcohol in their life until now. Fifty eight percent (45.4%) respondents expressed that they have never used alcohol. Forty two percent (54.6%) respondents said that they have ever used alcohol in their life.

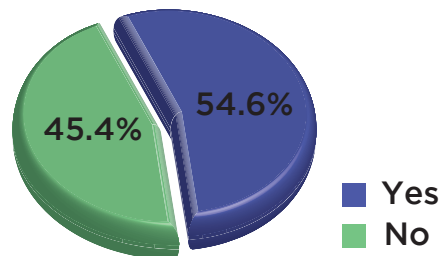


Figure 04: Never users of alcohol

5.2.2 Reasons for Never Using Alcohol

According to the above question, 45.4% of respondents have never used alcohol in their life. Reasons for never using alcohol are as depicted in figure 5. The most frequent reason for never using alcohol was due to dislike and unpleasant feelings (26.7%). Fourteen point nine (16.6%) respondents had fear of potential health hazards. These reasons illustrate that majority of people have knowledge on health effects and have a bad/ unpleasant feeling towards alcohol.

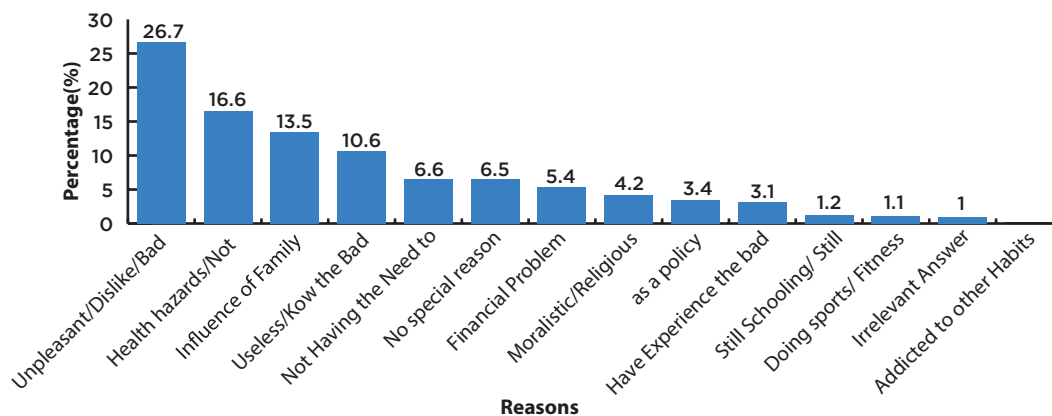


Figure 05: Reasons for never use of alcohol

SECTION 3 – INITIATION

5.3.1 Age of Alcohol Initiation

Among the respondents, the highest percentage of respondents have initiated alcohol at the age range of 16-20 years (53.8%). This is shown in Figure 06. The second highest (24.7%) age range to initiate alcohol is 21-25 years. It is verified that, it is during the teenage years and youth that initiation of alcohol takes place

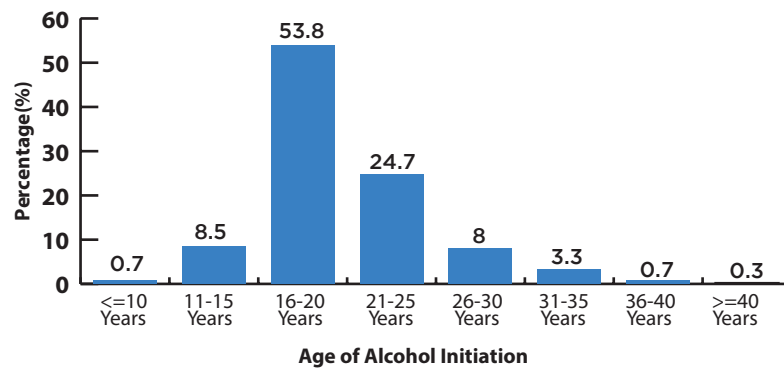


Figure 06: Reasons for never using alcohol

5.3.2 Occasions of Alcohol Initiation

A question was asked about the occasion in which alcohol use was initiated. Most of the respondents stated that they initiated alcohol with friends (44.3%). Thirty eight point five percent (38.5%) of the respondents have initiated the alcohol use when they were at parties. According to the survey it has been confirmed that most of the people initiate alcohol with their friends.

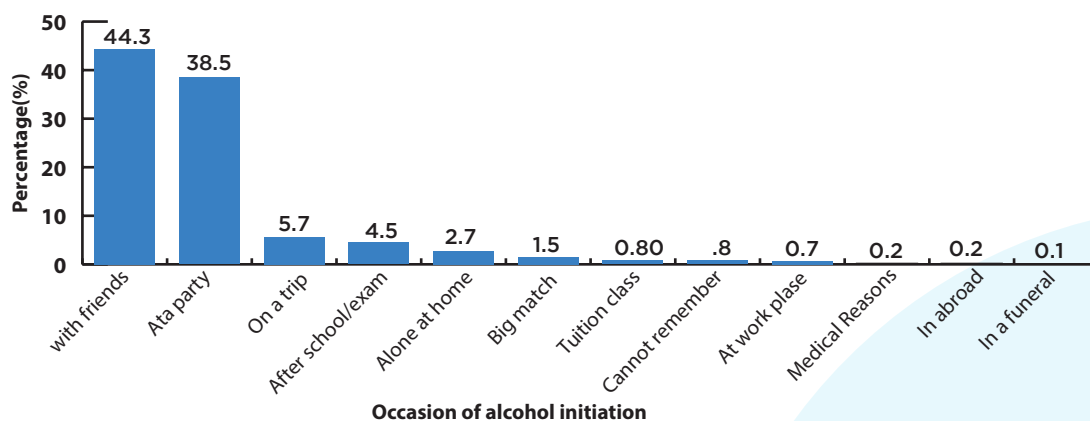


Figure 07: Occasion of alcohol initiation

5.3.3 Type of Alcohol at the Initiation

Questions were further asked regarding the specific alcohol type used at initiation of alcohol. The responses were as follows: The most common type of alcohol at initiation was Beer (50.8%) followed by Arrack (41.6%) while other alcohol types were of smaller proportions (Figure 08).

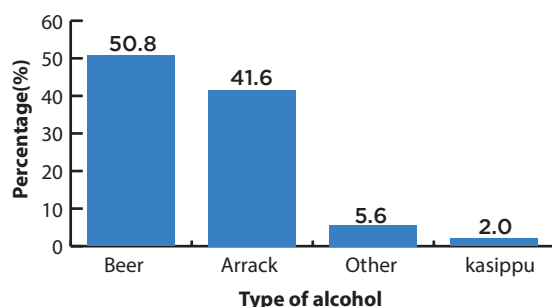


Figure 08: Type of alcohol at the initiation

5.3.4. Feeling at the initiation of Alcohol

Further question was asked about the feeling at initiation of alcohol. Highest percentage of the respondents expressed (14.8%) that they felt bitter. Fourteen percent (14%) respondents have felt intoxicated. Thirteen point one percent (13.1%) have expressed that they felt uncomfortable and disgust

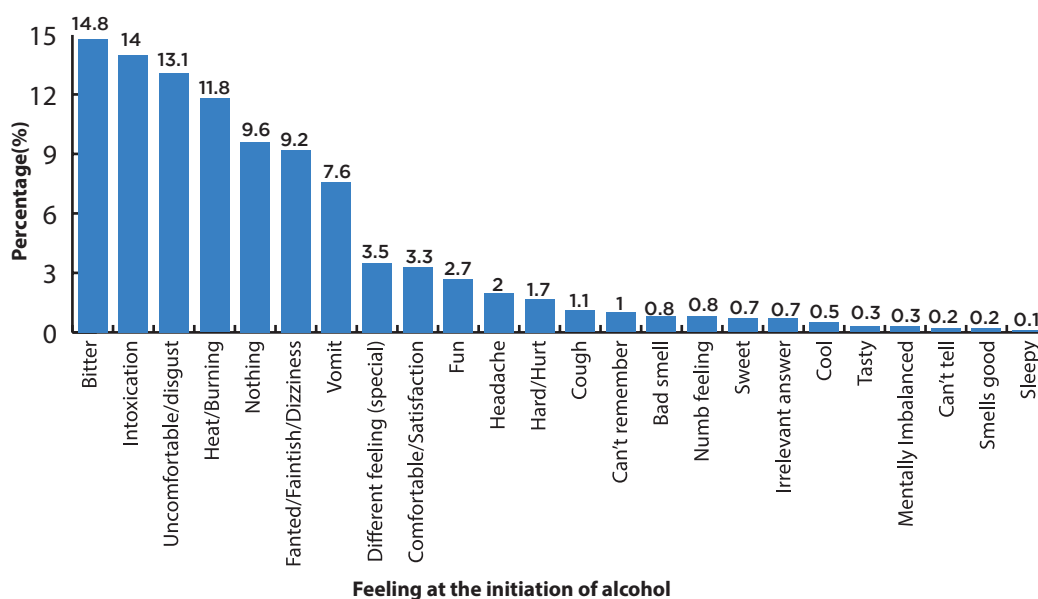


Figure 09: Feeling at the initiation of alcohol

SECTION 4 – USERS OF ALCOHOL

5.4.1 Current Users

Current users were identified based on their alcohol use within the previous month. According to the responses, it was found that 32.9% have used alcohol within last month while 67.1% had not used (N= 2321).

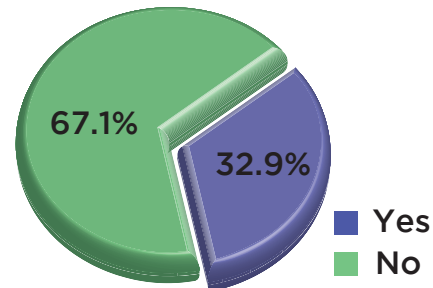


Figure 10: Current users of alcohol

*** Current User: A person who consumed alcohol within the previous month**

5.4.2 Current Alcohol Usage by Age Group

The current alcohol use was further analyzed according to the age distribution. When considering the re-sponses, the highest number of current alcohol usage was from the age category of ≤ 40 years (49.2%). The lowest current usage was recorded, from the age category of 15-24 years(15%).

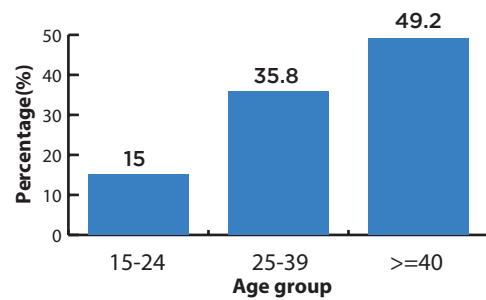


Figure 11: Current alcohol usage by age group

5.4.3 Current Usage by Alcohol Type

Among the current users, highest stated alcohol type was arrack (55%). The second most common alcohol type was beer (39%) among the current users, while 4% used other type of alcohol as the third common alcohol type.

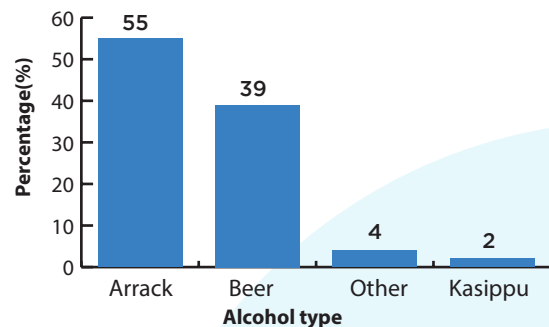


Figure 12: Current usage by alcohol type

5.4.4 Frequency of Alcohol Use

The current alcohol users were analysed based on the frequency of usage; daily, monthly and special occasion basis. The highest percentage of users was consuming alcohol only special occasions (42.6%) while the lowest percentage was daily users (15.8%).

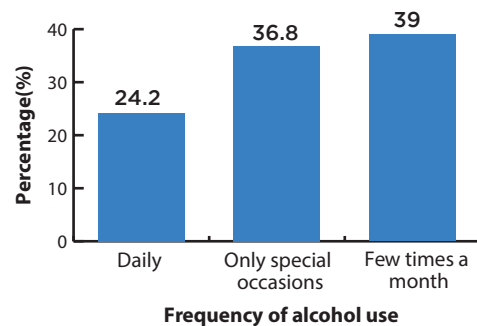


Figure 13: Frequency of alcohol use.

5.4.5 Reasons of Alcohol Use

The survey also emphasized on the reasons of alcohol use. Most of the current users mentioned that they use alcohol to socialize with friends (29.5%). The second highest (26.5%) stated that they use alcohol for fun, happiness and enjoyment. Third highest (22.2%) did not mention any obvious reason for their alcohol use.

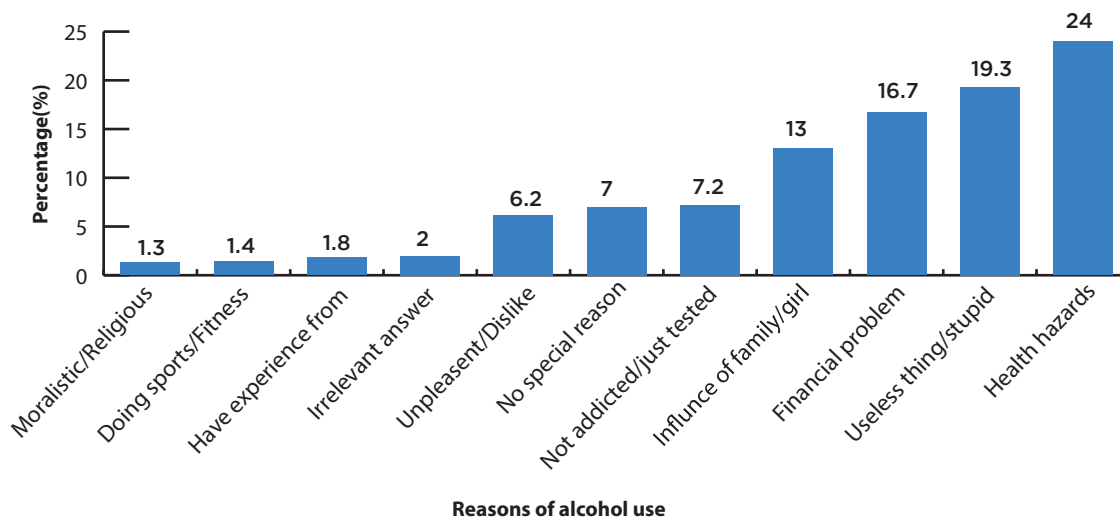


Figure 14: Reasons of alcohol use

5.4.6 Reasons for Alcohol Use by Age Category

The reasons for alcohol use by age groups are shown in Figure 17. All respondents the main reason for alcohol use for fun, happiness and enjoyment.

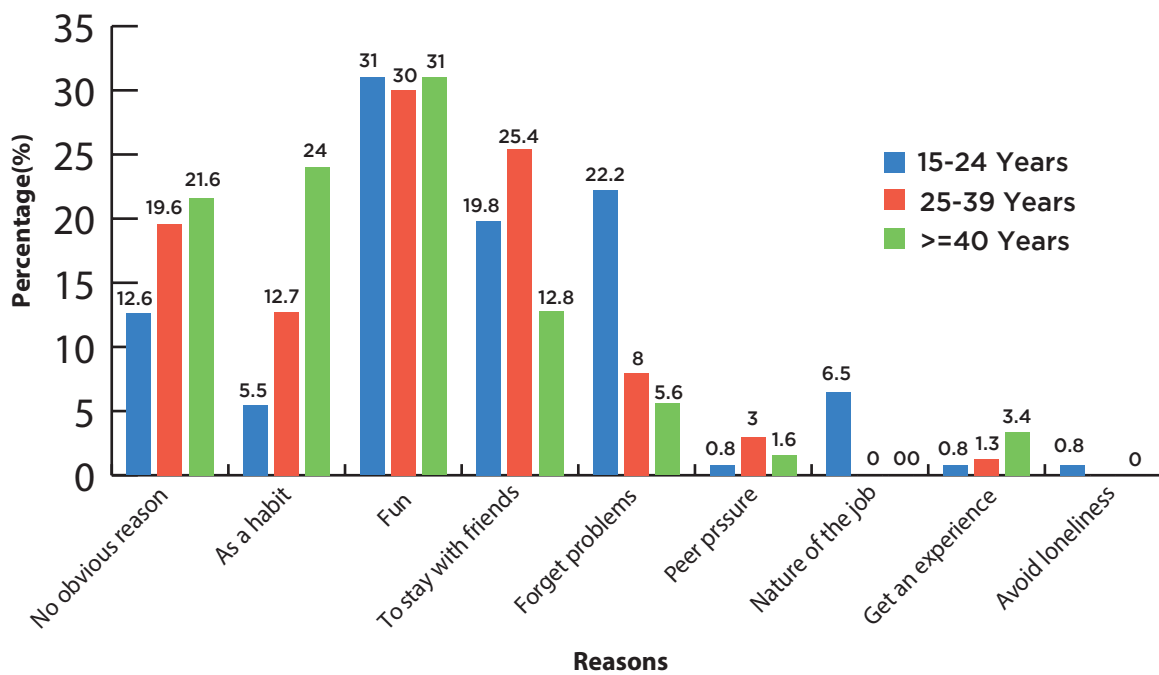


Figure 15: Reasons for alcohol use by age group

5.4.7 Monthly Expenditure on Alcohol

A question was asked regarding the monthly expenditure on alcohol. On average, a daily user spends Rs. 5790.56 per month on alcohol. Maximum expenditure on alcohol per month was Rs.45,000.00

SECTION 5 – ATTEMPT TO QUIT ALCOHOL USE

5.5.1 Attempt to Quit Alcohol Use

In depth questions were asked from current alcohol users who have attempted to quit the use of alcohol. Out of the current alcohol users, 49.9% have tried quitting alcohol use while the rest of 50.1% have not even tried to quit alcohol usage. Therefore, according to the analyzed data, majority of the respondents have not tried quitting the use of alcohol

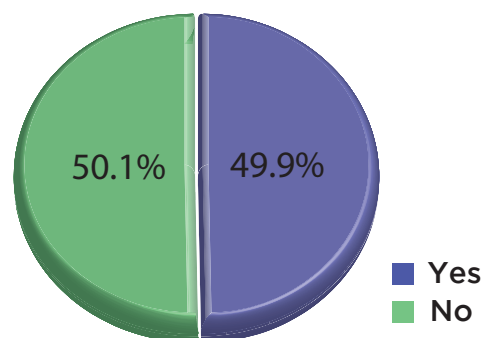


Figure 16: Attempt to quit alcohol use.

5.5.2 Reasons for Attempting to Quit the use of Alcohol

Further questions were asked about the reasons for attempting to quit alcohol. Twenty one percent (28%) of the people have attempted to quit the use of alcohol due to health hazards. Sixteen percent (16%) of have attempted to quit the use of alcohol because of the influence of family, friends or girl friend and financial problems .

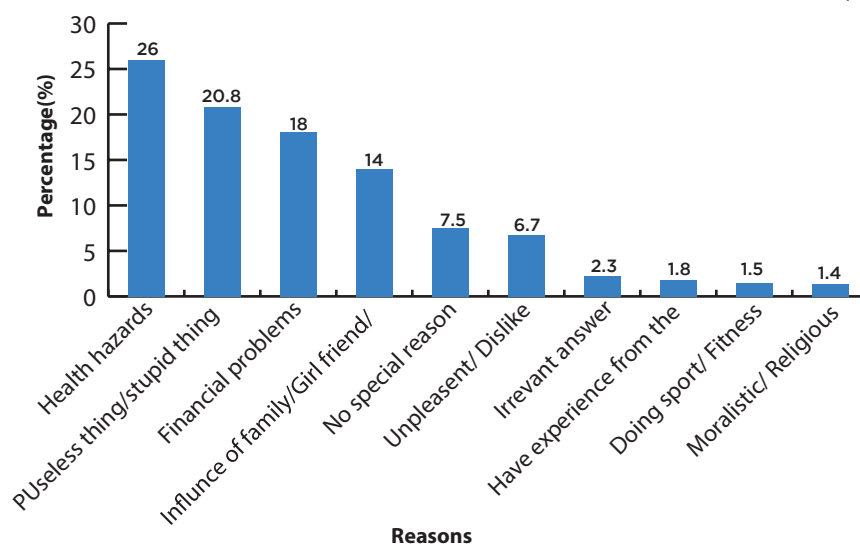


Figure 17: Reasons for attempt to quit alcohol use.

5.5.3 Reasons for Not Attempting to quit the use of alcohol

Respondents were asked about the reasons for not attempting to quit. Among the respondents, 38.8% of the people have not attempted to quit alcohol use because they thought they are not addicted to it and 17.4% of them thought they are addicted and can't stop it.

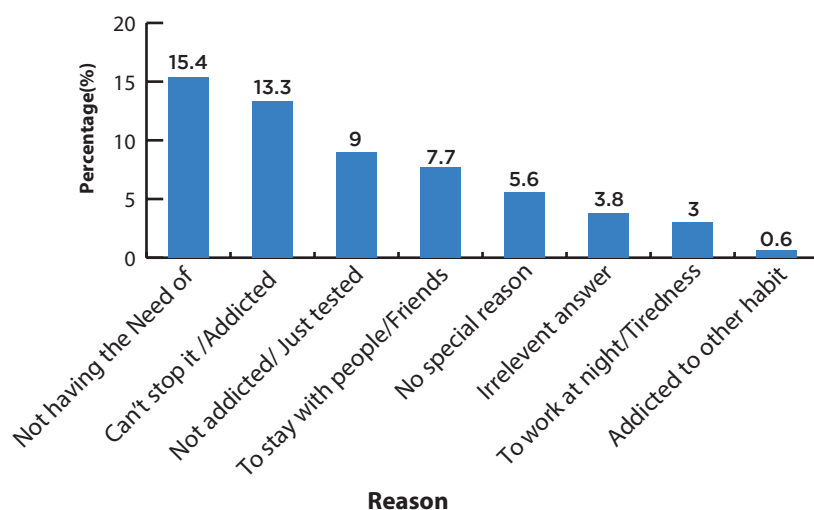


Figure 18: Reasons for attempt to quit alcohol use

5.5.4 Prevailing Drinking Status of Ever Users

A question was asked about the prevailing drinking status of ever drinkers. Among the respondents who ever drank, 85.8% still continues to drink. Only 14.2% of ever drinkers have stopped the usage. This chart illustrates that only few ever drinkers (14.2%) have the tendency to stop their usage as yet.

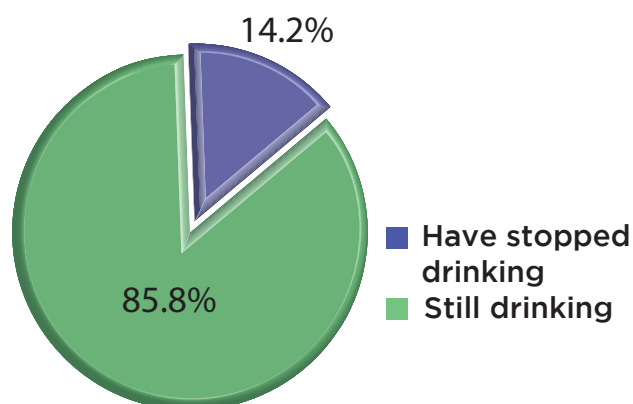


Figure 19: Prevailing drinking status of ever users.

5.5.5 Prevailing Drinking Status of Current Users

A further question was asked to find out the prevailing drinking status of current users. Majority (78.2%) of current users stated that they are still consuming alcohol. Only 21.8% of current drinkers have stopped the usage. This shows that the majority of the current users are still drinking alcohol while only a small percentage of current users have stopped.

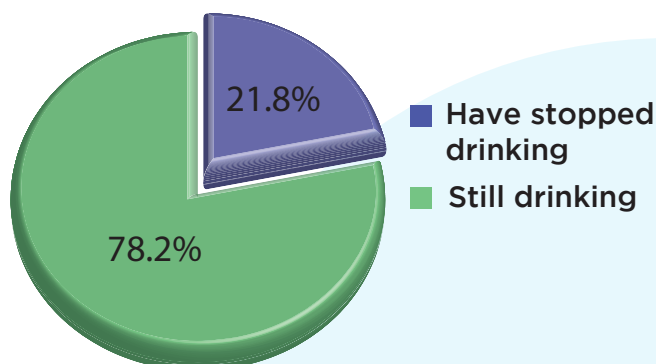


Figure 20: Prevailing drinking status of current users.

6. COMPARISON AND THE TREND

6.1 COMPARISON OF RESULTS WITH THE 2014 SPOT SURVEY

When comparing the results of the July 2015 and July 2016 spot surveys, the alcohol use has decreased by 0.4% this year. This is shown in Figure 21.

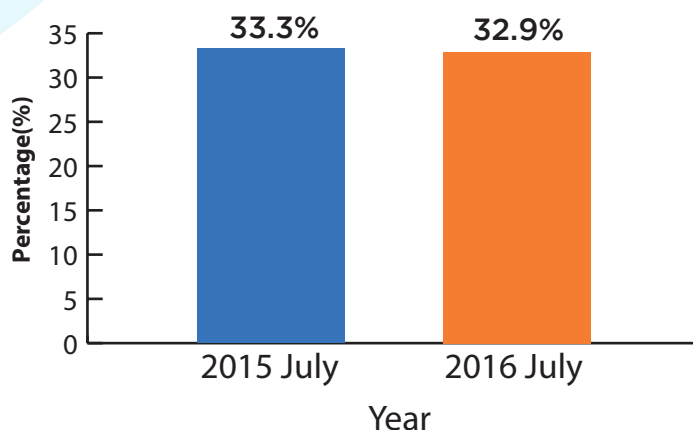


Figure 21: Comparison of alcohol use.

6.2 THE TREND OF ALCOHOL USE IN THE YEARS 2005– 2016

The percentages of alcohol users from year 2005 to 2016 obtained from biannual spot surveys are depicted in the Figure 22

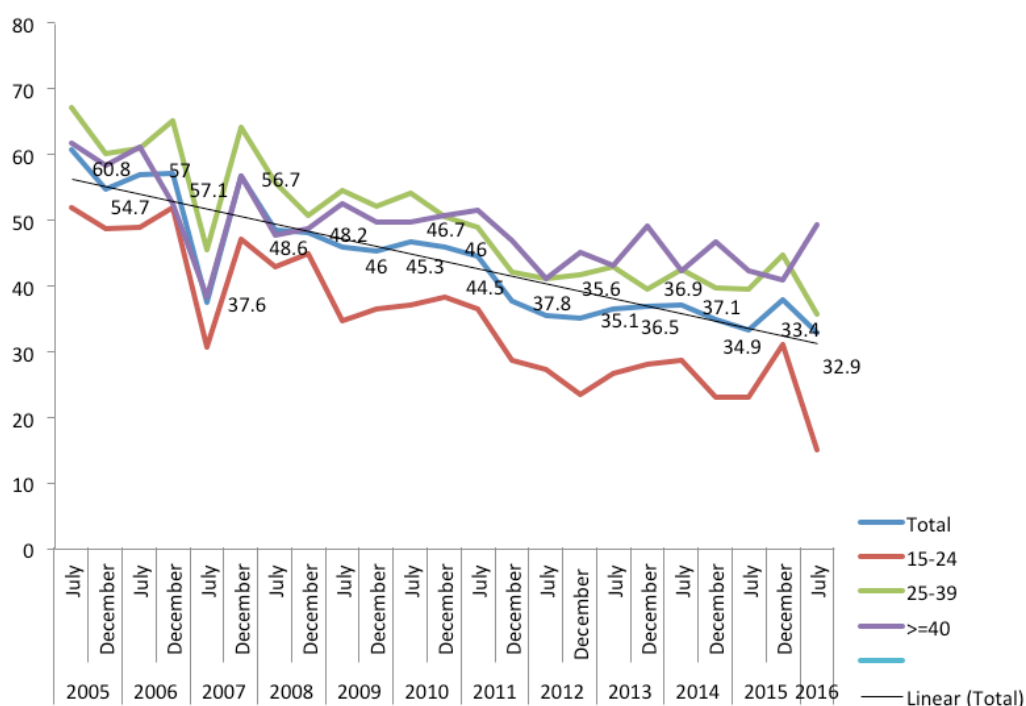


Figure 22: The trend of Alcohol use 2005 – 2016.



Research and Evaluation Programme
Alcohol and Drug Information Centre
No: 40/18, Park Road, Colombo 05.
Tel : +94 112 584416, +94 112 592515
Fax : +94 112 508484
e mail : adicc@slt.net.lk
www.adicsrilanka.org