



# Nepal STEPS Survey 2019

## Alcohol Consumption and Policy Fact Sheet

The STEPS survey of noncommunicable disease (NCD) risk factors in Nepal was carried out from February to May 2019. The survey collected socio demographic and behavioral information (tobacco, alcohol, diet, physical activity). Physical measurements such as height, weight and blood pressure were done to estimate obesity and raised BP prevalence. Biochemical measurements were collected to assess blood glucose and cholesterol levels. The survey was a population-based household survey of adults aged 15-69 years. A multistage sample design was used to produce representative data for that age range in Nepal. A total of 5593 adults participated in the survey. The overall response rate was 86.4%. A repeat survey is planned for 2024.

The survey collected data on socio-demographic characteristics and on four major behavioral risk factors (tobacco, alcohol, diet, physical activity) and four physiological risk factors (overweight/obesity, raised blood pressure, raised blood sugar and cholesterol levels). This fact sheet summarizes the main alcohol indicators related to consumption patterns and alcohol policy. Data from periodic STEPS surveys can facilitate evaluation of existing alcohol-control policies and programs and track change over time.

### Highlights

#### Alcohol consumption patterns among adults (15-69 years)

- 72.2% of adults (56% men and 86.5% women) were life-time abstainers, with significant differences between men and women. Only 4% of the adults were former drinkers (drank in past but did not consume in past 12 months).
- 23.9% of adults (38.6% of men, 10.8% of women) were current drinkers (consumed alcohol in the past 12 months). This was equivalent to 4.8 million adults (3.7 million men and 1.1 million women) in 2019.
- Almost 1 in 8 men (11.7%) drink daily or almost daily. This was equivalent to 1.4 million adults (1.1 million men and 0.3 million women).

#### Heavy episodic drinking

- 6.8% of adults (12.4% of men, 1.7% of women) engaged in heavy episodic drinking (consumed 6 standard drinks or 60g of pure alcohol or more drinks on any single occasion in the past 30 days). This was equivalent to 1.1 million adults in Nepal in 2019.
- More than one-fourth (28.4%) of current drinkers (32.2% men, 16.2% women) engaged in heavy episodic drinking.

#### Consumption of unrecorded alcohol

- Among current drinkers (past 30 days), 65.3% of men, 77.3% of women, and 68.5% overall reported consuming unrecorded alcohol in past 7 days.
- Unrecorded alcohol constitutes almost 66.3% of total alcohol consumed in the past 7 days. Majority of the unrecorded alcohol comprises of homebrewed spirits (*Aila/Raksi*) (57.4%) or wines (*Jaad*) (36.7%). Alcohol smuggled over the border constitutes 5.7% of total unrecorded alcohol.

#### Most common types of alcohol consumed

- Raksi*-a traditional homebrewed spirit-was the most consumed alcoholic drink reported by 50.9% of people who consumed alcohol in past 30 days, followed by *Jaad* (home-brewed wine) (24.5%).

#### Access to alcohol

- Only 1 in 10 (11.8%) people who ever consumed alcohol perceived obtaining alcohol for drinking difficult or very difficult.
- Only 1 in 3 ever drinker (27.9%) perceived that alcohol has become less affordable than before.
- None of the underage respondents (15-18 years of age) who tried to buy alcohol reported that they were refused alcoholic beverages due to their age. The legal minimum purchasing age for alcohol is 18 years in Nepal.

## Exposure to advertising and marketing and anti-alcohol messages

- Nearly 1 in 5 respondents (18.7%) noticed advertisements promoting alcohol on the television, print media, radio etc., though a decree issued in 1999 bans alcohol advertising in all electronic media (TV and radio)
- More than 1 in 5 respondents (21.9%) who attended social events such as sports events, fairs, concerts, etc.) saw alcohol advertisements or got free beer/discounted alcohol sometimes/most of the times/always.
- Nearly 1 in 2 (47.9%) reported seeing or hearing any messages that discourage drinking alcohol.

## Drink-driving

- Only 3.9% percent of who drove a vehicle in the past 12 months reported being checked by a traffic police for alcohol while driving.
- Almost 17.2% of reported that they drove vehicle under the influence of alcohol in the past 30 days.

Results for adults age 15-69 years (incl. 95% CI)	Both Sexes	Males	Females
<b>Alcohol Use</b>			
<b>Abstainers</b>			
Life-time abstainers <sup>1</sup>	72.2 (68.7-75.5)	56.0 (50.9-61.2)	86.5 (83.5-89.1)
Former drinkers <sup>2</sup>	4.0 (2.9-5.1)	5.3 (3.9-6.8)	2.7 (1.5-4.0)
Abstainers in the past 12 months <sup>3</sup>	76.1 (73.0-79.0)	61.4 (56.5-65.9)	89.2 (86.4-91.5)
<b>Current drinkers</b>			
Percentage of persons who consumed alcohol in the past 12 months	23.9 (21.0-27.0)	38.6 (34.0-43.5)	10.8 (8.5-13.6)
Percentage of persons who consumed alcohol in the past 30 days	20.8 (18.3-23.4)	34.4 (30.2-38.6)	8.8 (6.6-11.0)
Percentage of persons who are daily or almost daily drinkers	7.0 (5.7-8.6)	11.7 (9.5-14.3)	2.9 (1.9-4.3)
<b>Heavy episodic drinking<sup>4</sup></b>			
Percentage of people who consumed 6 or more standard drinks on a single drinking occasion	6.8 (5.3-8.2)	12.4 (9.8-15.1)	1.7 (0.8-2.7)
Percentage of heavy episodic drinking among current drinkers (among current drinkers)	28.4 (23.2-34.2)	32.2 (26.7-38.2)	16.2 (9.5-26.4)
<b>Consumption of unrecorded alcohol<sup>5</sup></b>			
Percentage of people who consumed unrecorded alcohol in the past 7 days	14.3 (12.2 – 16.7)	22.6 (19.1-26.6)	6.8 (5.2- 9.0)
Percentage of current drinkers who drank unrecorded alcohol in the past 7 days	68.5 (62.2-73.8)	65.8 (58.6-72.0)	77.7 (70.0 -84.7)
Mean percentage of total unrecorded alcohol out of total alcohol drank in the last 7 days	66.3 (57.7-74.8)	63.0 (54.0-72.0)	77.5 (62.0-93.1)
Mean percentage of specific type of unrecorded alcohol out of the total unrecorded alcohol drinks consumed by current drinkers who drank unrecorded alcohol in the past 7 days			
Homebrewed spirits like <i>Aila, Raksi</i>	57.4 (49.3-65.5)	61.8 (52.8-70.9)	44.6 (34.1-55.0)
Homebrewed beer or wine, like <i>Jaad, Chyang, Tungba</i>	36.7 (28.7-44.8)	30.8 (22.9-38.7)	54.1 (43.5-64.7)
Alcohol brought over the border/from another country	5.7 (-1.9-13.4)	7.3 (-2.7-17.3)	1.1 (-.01-2.4)

Results for adults age 15-69 years (incl. 95% CI)	Both Sexes	Males	Females
Alcohol not intended for drinking, like alcohol-based medicines, like cough syrup, perfumes, after shaves	0.1 (0-0.2)	0.1 (-0.03-0.2)	0.1 (-0.06-0.3)
Others untaxed alcohol in the country Specify	0	0	0
<b>Type of alcohol most often consumed among those who reported consuming alcohol in past 30 days</b>			
Beer	16.8 (12.5-22.1)	20.7 (15.6-26.9)	3.0 (1.6-5.7)
Wine	1.7 (0.6-4.5)	1.9 (0.6-5.7)	0.9 (0.3-3.2)
Spirit (whiskey, vodka, gin)	5.3 (2.6-10.4)	6.6 (3.3-13.0)	0.7 (0.15-3.4)
<i>Jaad</i> (a traditional alcohol beverages-wine))	24.5 (18.4-31.9)	17.0 (12.1-23.2)	50.8 (39.9-61.6)
<i>Raksi</i> (a traditional alcohol beverage-spirit)	50.9 (44.2-57.6)	53.2 (45.9-60.3)	43.1 (33.3-53.4)
Other traditional ( <i>Aila/Tungba</i> )	0.8 (0.3-2.3)	0.6 (0.2-2.3)	1.4 (0.4-4.7)
<b>Alcohol dependence or problem drinking (past 12 months)</b>			
Percentage of current drinkers (past 12 months) who were not able to stop drinking once they started (daily or almost daily or weekly)	9.1 (6.7-12.4)	10.4 (7.4-14.3)	5.2 (3.0-8.8)
Percentage of current drinkers (past 12 months) who failed to do what was normally expected because of drinking (daily or almost daily or weekly)	4.3 (3.0-6.1)	4.9 (3.3-7.1)	2.4 (1.0-5.4)
Percentage of current drinkers (past 12 months) who needed a first drink in the morning to get going after a heavy drinking session (daily or almost daily or weekly)	4.4 (3.2-6.0)	4.7 (3.4-6.5)	3.3 (1.7-6.5)
<b>Harm from someone else drinking</b>			
Percentage of people who had family problems or problems with their partner due to someone else drinking in the past 12 months (daily or almost daily or weekly)	10.3 (8.5-12.4)	13.1 (10.4-16.4)	7.7 (6.1-9.7)
<b>Access to alcohol</b>			
Percentage of ever drinker who perceived obtaining alcohol for drinking difficult or very difficult	11.8 (8.4-16.2)	11.6 (7.8-16.7)	12.3 (7.3-20.1)
Percentage of ever drinker who perceived alcohol has become less affordable than before	27.9 (21.5-35.3)	28.9 (22.1-36.8)	24.8 (16.8-34.9)
Percentage of respondents 18 year or younger who were refused alcoholic beverages due to their age.	0	0	0
<b>Exposure to advertisements and marketing of alcohol</b>			
Percentage of persons who noticed any advertisements or signs promoting any alcoholic beverage on TV, newspaper/ magazines, radio, billboards, point of sale or local cinema/films	18.7 (14.3-24.1)	23.7 (18.0-30.5)	14.1 (10.5-18.7)
Percentage of persons who sometimes/most of the times/always see advertisements/free beer/alcohol or discounted sale at social events, fairs, concerts, community events	21.9 (17.4-27.3)	25.7 (20.4-31.8)	18.5 (14.1-24.0)
<b>Exposure to anti-alcohol messages</b>			
Percentage of persons who saw or heard any messages to discourage drinking alcohol on TV, radio, billboard, posters, newspapers, magazines, or movies, internet or social media	47.9 (42.0-53.9)	53.4 (46.9-59.8)	43.0 (37.0-49.2)

Results for adults age 15-69 years (incl. 95% CI)	Both Sexes	Males	Females
<b>Drunk-driving</b>			
Percentage of persons stopped/checked by traffic police for alcohol while driving (among all population who drive)	3.9 (2.4-6.2)	5.8 (3.7-9.0)	0.7 (0.2-1.7)
Percentage of people who drove a vehicle after intake/under the influence of alcohol in past 30 days (among those who ever drank alcohol and who drive)	17.2 (11.9-24.3)	19.1 (13.3-26.7)	1.7 (0.4-6.5)
Percentage of people who had rode in a motorized vehicle where the driver had had 2 or more alcoholic drinks	8.9 (6.0-13.0)	13.8 (9.4-19.8)	4.3 (2.3-8.1)

<sup>1</sup> who have never consumed alcohol; <sup>2</sup> persons who ever drank alcoholic beverages but have not done so in the past 12 months; <sup>3</sup> includes both the lifetime abstainers and former drinkers. <sup>4</sup> Heavy episodic drinking is defined as consumption of 60 or more grams of pure alcohol (6+ standard drinks in most countries) on at least one single occasion in the 30 days prior to survey; <sup>5</sup> refers to alcohol that is not taxed in the country because it is usually produced, distributed and sold outside the formal channels under government control.

Data have been weighted to be nationally representative of all men and women age 15-69 years. \* The sample size "n" is less 50. Technical assistance for the survey was provided by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Data presented in this fact sheet relate only to selected alcohol indicators. Additional information on alcohol or other NCD risk factors from the survey is available from sources listed below.

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