Hazardous patterns of alcohol use are relatively common in smokers: ITC Project (New Zealand).

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Abstract
Aims: To describe patterns of alcohol use in a nationally-representative sample of New Zealand smokers.
Methods: The New Zealand (NZ) arm of the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Survey (ITC Project) derives its sample from a national survey: the NZ Health Survey (NZHS). From this sample we surveyed adult smokers (n=1376).
Results: A third (33.1%) of these smokers had a drinking pattern that was considered hazardous (i.e., AUDIT scores greater than and equal to 8). These figures were much higher than for non-smokers in the NZHS (at 13.1%). In both the univariate and multivariate analyses, hazardous drinking patterns were significantly more common among: younger smokers, male smokers, and Māori smokers (e.g., adjusted odds ratio for the latter: 1.43, 95%CI: 1.05-1.95). The same pattern of more hazardous drinking was also seen (but in the univariate analysis only), for smokers with financial stress and for moderate individual-level deprivation.
Conclusions: These findings provide additional evidence that hazardous drinking patterns are elevated in New Zealand smokers overall and particularly in some groups of smokers. Given the international evidence that hazardous drinking may impede quitting, policy makers could consider the potential benefits of improved alcohol control as part of the national strategy to curtail the tobacco epidemic and achieve the government's "Smokefree Nation 2025" goal. Such an approach could also reduce this country's high levels of alcohol-related harm and reduce gender and ethnic health inequalities.

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