

Natural health products in alcohol, tobacco, and other ‘recreational’ substance use: pre-testing a data collection tool

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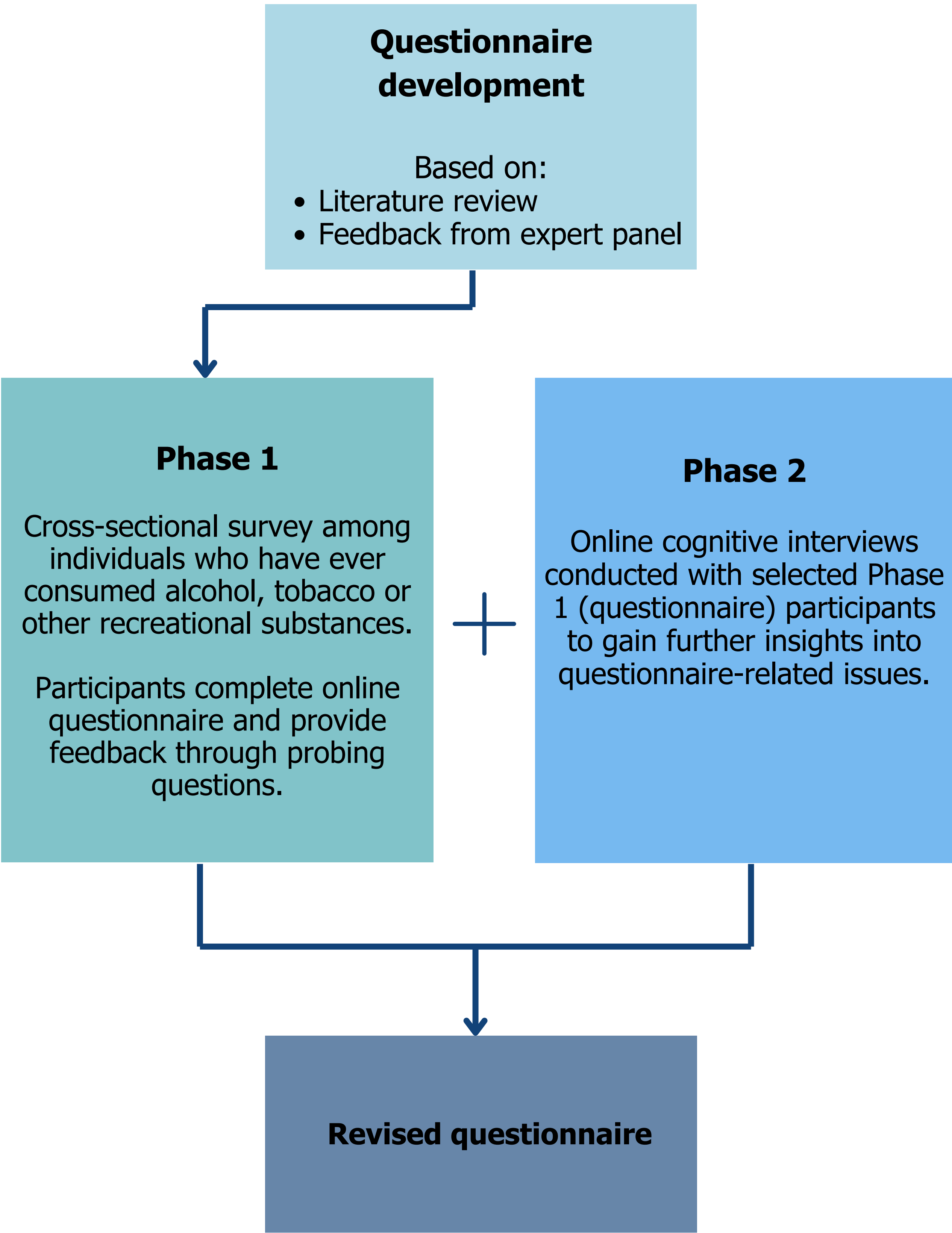
Introduction

- Natural health products (NHPs) are products or preparations derived from natural sources, such as plants, animals, fungi and minerals.
- NHPs include dietary supplements, traditional medicines (e.g. rongoā Māori, traditional Chinese medicines), vitamins and others.
- Some NHPs are promoted to **alleviate symptoms related to substance use**, while others are marketed to **manage or prevent** associated **harms**. Historically, certain natural substances have been used for their **psychoactive effects**.

Study aim

To **design, test and evaluate** a **data collection tool** collecting information on the use of NHPs for prevention or treatment of symptoms related to alcohol, tobacco, and other recreational substances, or as recreational substances themselves.

Methods



Acknowledgements

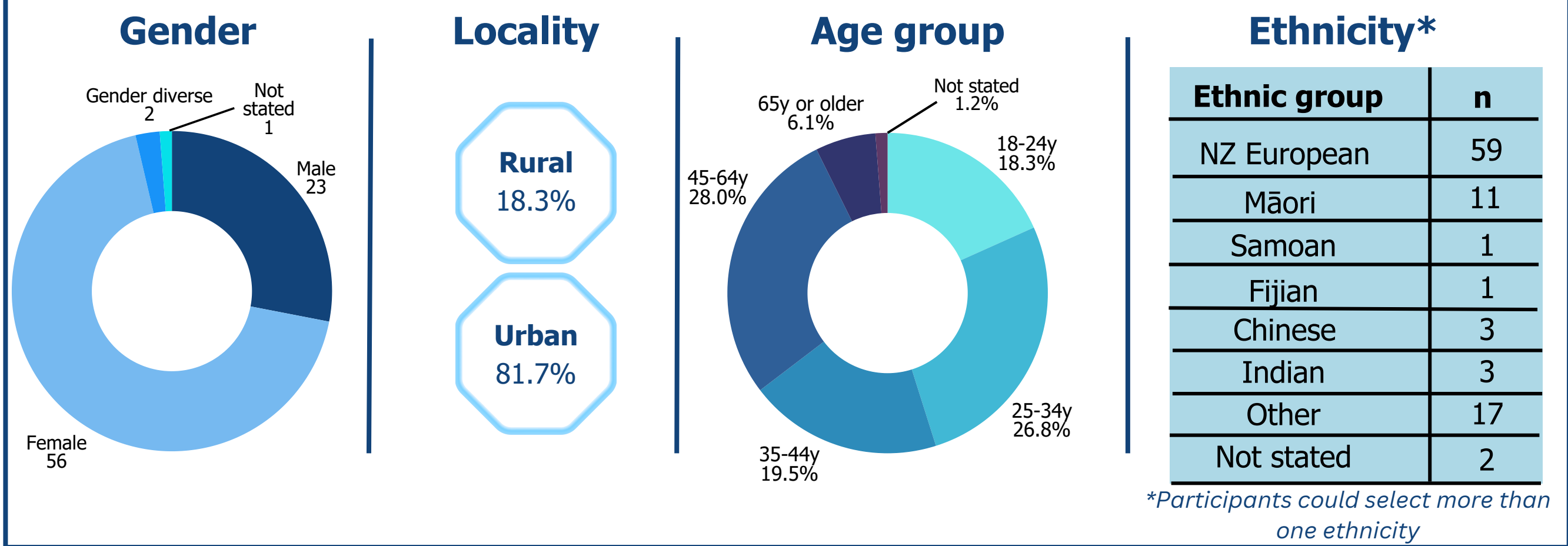
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Results

Phase 1 participant demographics (N=82)



- Median time taken to complete the questionnaire: 11 minutes (IQR 7-16 minutes).
- Interviews ranged between 9 and 42 minutes long.

Of the 82 participants, 20 (24.4%) provided suggestions for improvements to the questionnaire, and 12 (14.6%) identified questionnaire-related issues. These were explored further in the Phase 2 interviews. Key issues included:

- Calculating the number of standard drinks** consumed on a typical day when drinking in the past month

“Calculating a standard drink [was difficult]... because the standard level may not be the same I’m pouring out into my wine glass.”
(Participant 50, Female, 45-64 years old)

- The **definition of NHPs** was unclear for many participants

“I’d say things plant-based would be natural, but then, even chemicals [are natural], you know? Like, water is a chemical, so that’s natural... it’s quite hard, I think, to draw a line between what’s natural and what’s not.”
(Participant 63, Female, 45-64 years old)

- The term **‘psychoactive effects’** was difficult for some participants to understand

“[Psychoactive effects refer to] when you’re not in control. You don’t know what you’re doing, I think?”
(Participant 38, Male, 65 years and older)

- The **inclusion of e-cigarettes and vaping**

“I have had a vape...but it was just like a few puffs... there’s not any room for [reporting] that there.”
(Participant 7, Female, 25-34 years old)

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the feedback received from participants in Phases 1 and 2, some aspects of the questionnaire were revised.

Some changes made to the questionnaire included:

- Definition of ‘NHPs’ revised.
- Simplified definition of ‘psychoactive effects’
- Revised wording of standard drinks question.
- Added section on the use of electronic cigarettes/vaping devices.

Overall, the questionnaire was generally well accepted by participants. The findings highlighted some areas for improvement in the questionnaire. The data collected were mostly complete and also provided some preliminary prevalence of use results to inform a future, larger study.

Key references

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