

EXPERIENCE OF ALCOHOL-RELATED HARMS AMONG 15–24 YEAR OLDS IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

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Introduction:

Few studies have investigated alcohol and other substance use in Solomon Islands and other Pacific Island countries, with information available on consumption patterns and adverse outcomes among youth being especially limited. We aimed to investigate the prevalence of alcohol-related harms among young people in Solomon Islands, with a focus on alcohol-related violence.

Design and Methods:

Young people (15-24 years; N=400) participated in a structured, face-to-face survey, administered by trained fieldworkers in four provinces in Solomon Islands, including in urban and rural communities. Survey measures included alcohol and other substance use, alcohol-related harms, and sociodemographic items.

Results:

Most participants reported consuming alcohol in the past year (69%). The median number of alcoholic drinks consumed in a typical drinking session was 12. Of participants reporting past-year alcohol consumption, most (84%) reported experiencing financial problems as a result of alcohol use during that period and three-quarters (76%) reported that their use of alcohol had caused a relationship or social problem with family members, a partner and/or friends during that time. Over half (n=173, 58%) of past-year alcohol consumers reported that they had become violent or aggressive at least once during a drinking episode. Males were significantly more likely to report violent/aggressive behaviour than females (63% vs. 39%, p=0.001).

Conclusions:

We found high levels of alcohol consumption among young Solomon Islanders which exceeded previous reports on this population. Young people also reported concerning rates of alcohol-related harms. Levels of reported aggression and violence warrant further investigation, and a commensurate public health response.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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