

## Factors associated with tobacco use, risky alcohol consumption, and concurrent tobacco and risky alcohol use among vocational education students

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**Background:** Little is known about whether socio-demographic factors and the type of vocational training are associated with tobacco use, risky alcohol consumption, or concurrent use among vocational students. This study examined tobacco use, risky alcohol consumption, and concurrent use by type of vocational training and identify the factors associated with tobacco use, risky alcohol consumption, and concurrent use.

**Method:** A cross-sectional online survey was conducted among 1057 students attending Technical and Further Education campuses in New South Wales, Australia.

**Results:** Tobacco use (40%) and risky alcohol consumption (68%), were highest among those completing courses relating to craft and related trades work and plant and machine operations. Concurrent use was highest among those completing courses in services and sales (32%). The type of vocational training was not associated with tobacco use, risky alcohol consumption, or concurrent use. Participants who were married/living with a partner, and unemployed had significantly lower odds of tobacco use. Students who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and experienced symptoms of depression had significantly higher odds of tobacco use. Participants who were 25 years or older, female, and unemployed had significantly lower odds of risky alcohol consumption. Unemployed participants had significantly lower odds of concurrent use, while those who experienced symptoms of anxiety had significantly higher odds of concurrent use.

**Conclusion:** Subgroups of vocational students that tobacco and alcohol interventions could target include employed people and those experiencing anxiety or depression.

**Implications for Practice or Policy:** This study provides an opportunity to influence the smoking and drinking behaviours of vocational students. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to address the gaps in the literature and investigate whether socio-demographic factors and the type of vocational training are associated with tobacco use, risky alcohol consumption, or concurrent use among Australian vocational students.

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