

THE PATTERN OF ALCHOL CONSUMPTION
IN RURAL SRI LANKA

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One third of physical illnesses in Sri Lankan adult males are due to alcohol consumption.

This study had the objective of studying the drinking habits of Sri Lankan males. Trained volunteers carried out a house to house survey of drinking patterns of the males, in the Gampola Project Area. A structured questionnaire was used for this purpose.

675 males consumed alcohol either daily or more than 3 times a week. 1226 were classified as occasional drinkers. These constitute 6.5% of the total adult male population. Of these frequent users 458 (4.37%) consumed more than 1/4 bottle of arrack per day. 98 (0.94%) males had definite and major problems owing to their drinking. Only 72 of these heavy drinkers had ever made any effort to stop drinking.

The findings are an understatement with regard to the amounts consumed by these individuals as is expected of a survey of this nature. Despite such under-reporting 675 or 6.5% adult male population were identified drinking almost daily and their drinking was of concern to their families.

It is worthy of note that while 1226 were classified social drinkers the rest 8574 (81.2%) were abstainers.

An easily recognised core group of heavy drinkers exist in rural Sri Lanka who are in need of help. Most of the alcohol consumption in rural Sri Lanka is by this core group of excessive drinkers while social drinking contributes little to such rural consumption.

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