

## ALCOHOL, BETEL AND TOBACCO CONSUMING HABITS IN MALES

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With the help of a standard questionnaire 10 trained interviewers interviewed 6636 males 17 to 69 years of age (mean 33.5, SD 11.8) at the 1990 Gam Udana Celebration held at Pallekale. They were volunteers from urban, sub-urban and rural environments (35.6%, 21.4% and 42.8% respectively).

47.9% (3183) gave a history of consuming alcohol. Only 5.8% (382) consumed alcohol daily, 7% (466) consumed alcohol once a week and the rest, less frequently. The mean age at which regular consumption of alcohol was commenced was 22.5 years (SD 5.4). Among those who consumed alcohol arrack was the most popular (51.5%). Beer, toddy and kassippu were consumed by 23%, 10.6% and 9% respectively. Among daily drinkers the mean consumption of arrack, beer, toddy and kassippu was 0.4 (SD 0.27), 1.5 (SD 1.3), 1.4 (SD 1.1) and 0.4 (SD 0.2) bottles respectively.

32.8% gave a history of chewing betel. Less than half of them (36.9%) chewed tobacco with betel.

The overall prevalence of smoking was 48.9% and the highest prevalence was seen in the 30-39 age group (56.6%). There were 651 (9.8%) ex smokers in the sample. Among current smokers, the main type of smoke, was cigarettes in 85.8%, bidies in 9.6% and cigars in 0.4%. Out of 3250 current smokers 2811 (86.5%) smoked daily, 169 (5.2%) smoked weekly and the rest smoked infrequently. 40.5% of individuals felt that social influences were a main factor that encouraged them to smoke. 92% and 91.9% respectively agreed that smoking is harmful to self and others. However only 48.7% of smokers were concerned of the illeffects of smoking on health.