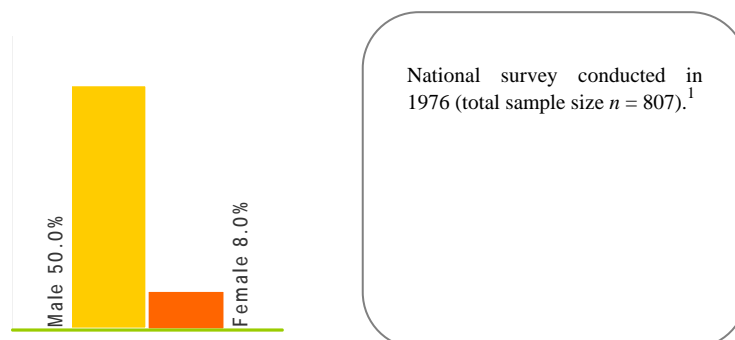


TOKELAU

Current drinkers



A corresponding survey conducted in 1968–1971 found that among males, the age-standardised prevalence of current drinking was 34% and for females it was 0%. The mean number of days per month on which alcohol was consumed by drinkers rose from 2.2 in 1968–1971 to 3.8 in 1976. What this meant was that a concurrent rise in the prevalence of drinking resulted in a 3.5-fold increase in mean days on which alcohol was consumed for the whole population.¹

In Tokelau, according to the same studies, 5.4% of the population consumed *toddy* in 1968–1971, and this rose to 21.2% in 1976. In 1968–1971, few persons consumed both *toddy* and imported liquor, but in 1976 there was almost complete overlap between the two kinds of liquor consumption. Traditionally, there have been strong social and religious restrictions on the use of alcohol in Tokelauan society. The brewing of *toddy* was a post-European introduction, and was not widespread as it was opposed by one of the two churches. Cost and infrequent transport were additional factors limiting availability. Up until 1971 little imported liquor was available in Tokelau. By 1976 it was clear that changes were taking place. More money was available to import liquor and on one island, Nukunonu, alcoholic beverages were considered appropriate and necessary for the entertainment of visiting officials. This did not apply on the other two islands. Nevertheless opposition from the protestant church was diminished both in strictness and in influence. *Toddy* and beer became complementary rather than alternative choices, as more young men commenced drinking.¹

Traditional alcoholic beverages

The fermented sap of the palm tree (*kalaeve* or *fa'amafu*) which Tokelauan people, especially males, have made and drunk for at least several generations does not appear to have been an important ceremonial drink (unlike, for example, kava in Tonga, Fiji and Western Samoa).²

Country background information

Total population 2003	1418	Life expectancy at birth (2000–2005)	Male	68
Adult (15+)	822		Female	70
% under 15	42	Infant mortality rate (2000–2005)		
Population distribution 2001 (%)		per 1000 live births		38
Urban	0	Gross National Income per capita 2002	US\$	890
Rural	100			

Sources: Population and Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat, World Bank World Development Indicators database

Note: Tokelau is an Associate Member of WHO.

References

1. Stanhope J, Prior I. The Tokelau Island migrant study: alcohol consumption in two environments. *New Zealand Medical Journal*, 1979, 90(648):419–421.
2. *Inu Pia: The place of alcohol in the lives of Tokelauan people living in Aotearoa New Zealand*. ALAC Research Monograph Series: No. 3. Wellington, Sector Analysis, Ministry of Health for the Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand, 1997.