

MEDIA RELEASE

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ALCOHOL PUTTING DISADVANTAGED AT RISK

A new Turning Point and VicHealth study has revealed men and the middle aged are among those most likely to suffer from wholly alcohol-caused chronic diseases.

The *Inequities in alcohol-related chronic disease in Victoria* report found men accounted for seven out of ten wholly alcohol-attributable chronic disease (WACD) hospital patients and deaths in Victoria.

Chronic diseases can include cardiovascular, digestive and neurological conditions as well as a range of cancers.

People with WACD have a hospitalisation median age range from 47 to 49 years and a median age of death range from 58 to 62 years.

The research examined a range of factors that influence alcohol consumption and vulnerability to alcohol-related harms in Victoria, including age, gender, residential location and social disadvantage.

It found that regional Victorians were at greater risk of hospitalisation and death from alcohol than those in metropolitan areas.

It also found that people from socioeconomically disadvantaged groups were significantly more likely to experience hospitalisation and death due to alcohol-related chronic disease.

Turning Point researcher Dr Belinda Lloyd said Victorians needed to challenge the widespread acceptance of intoxication in Victoria. Those that are drinking heavily in their 20s now are increasing their risk of developing alcohol related chronic conditions later in life.

“We should aim to foster a culture that reduces risky drinking and prevents alcohol-related harm,” Dr Lloyd said.

She pointed to regulating the price and availability of alcohol as ways in which people’s drinking behaviours can be changed.

Dr Lloyd said with the level of risky drinking in the Victorian population, and the rise in hospitalisations for alcohol-related chronic diseases, it was important to increase awareness among drinkers about the long-term health risks of drinking alcohol.

“While our research indicates certain demographics may be more represented than others, it is important everyone realises that alcohol-related issues affect all of us, either as individuals or through friends and family. It is a drug that doesn’t discriminate.”

For media inquiries, please call Winston Tan from Eastern Health Communications 0407 785 706