

New report: First compilation of global addictions

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Credit: Susan Buck Ms/Public Domain

The world's first comprehensive report on global addictions has revealed Australians smoke less tobacco and drink less alcohol than the British,

but Aussies take more illicit drugs.

The Global Statistics on Addictive Behaviours: 2014 Status Report, led by researchers at the University of Adelaide, is the first time that [global data](#) on the prevalence of [alcohol](#) and other drug use, and gambling, has been presented in a single compilation. A paper on the report was published today in the journal *Addiction*.

The paper's lead author Associate Professor Linda Gowing, from the University of Adelaide's School of Medical Sciences, says alcohol and tobacco use are by far the most prevalent addictive behaviours worldwide and cause the most harm.

"Approximately 84% of Australians drink alcohol at least once in a 12-month period, compared to 83.9% in the United Kingdom and 68.9% in the United States; however, 3.7% of Australians are considered to have an alcohol use disorder, compared to 12.1% in the UK and 7.8% in the US," says Associate Professor Gowing.

"Australians are also slightly lighter smokers compared to the British, but smoking is still relatively common - 20% of Australians smoke tobacco at least once in a 12-month period, in comparison to 22% of the British.

"The report found alcohol and tobacco are the most common addictions in most countries and they are also the most harmful. 11% of deaths in males and 6% of deaths in females are linked to tobacco each year globally. Alcoholism is associated with a range of health issues and takes years off someone's life," she says.

Associate Professor Gowing says the data revealed the impact of [illicit drugs](#) is significant in Australia.

"10.3% of Australians smoke cannabis at least once in a 12-month period, compared to 5-7% in the UK ; 3% use ecstasy, compared to 1.1-1.7% of people in the UK; and 2.1% of Australians use amphetamine-type drugs at least once in a 12-month period, compared to 0.7-1.2% in the UK," says Associate Professor Gowing.

Associate Professor Gowing says it is important that this data is used to further reduce the impact of alcohol abuse and tobacco smoking.

"This data is highly valuable and can be used to guide policy-makers and researchers in planning responses to addictions world-wide," says Associate Professor Gowing.

"It's encouraging that less Australians use tobacco and abuse alcohol than other developed countries like the US and the UK; however it's important that we continue to work towards reducing the impact of alcohol and [tobacco](#) on the Australian community," she says.

Provided by University of Adelaide

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