

6 Health Prevalence of Smoking

In response to a request from the Niue Department of Health, people were asked whether they smoked cigarettes or drank alcohol. If they answered yes, they were then asked how many cigarettes they smoke per day or per occasion and how many alcoholic drinks they consume per day or per occasion. People were also asked to state at what age they started smoking and drinking.

However reliable these data are, it shows that men smoke and drink more than women, or at least men admit more openly than women to their smoking and drinking habits (Table 6.1).

Among the resident population aged 15 and older, 23% of the population said they smoked, with smoking twice as prevalent among men (31%) than women (16%). Of the 264 people who indicated that they smoked, 189 people (72%) smoke every day; 19% smoke more than 20 cigarettes a day, 47% smoke between 10 and 20 cigarettes a day, and 35% smoke less than 10 cigarettes a day. Of the 28% claiming to be only occasional smokers, the vast majority (76%) smoke less than 10 cigarettes each time, with only 4% smoking more than 20 cigarettes on occasions.

Response	Total	%	Males	%	Females	%
Total	1,127	100.0	560	100.0	567	100.0
Yes	264	23.4	172	30.7	92	16.2
No	863	76.6	388	69.3	475	83.8
Number of tobacco or cigarettes smoked per day						
Total	189	100.0	132	69.8	57	30.2
Less than 10	66	34.9	42	63.6	24	36.4
Between 10–20	88	46.6	63	71.6	25	28.4
More than 20	35	18.5	27	77.1	8	22.9
Number of tobacco or cigarettes smoked per occasion						
Total	75	100.0	40	53.3	35	46.7
Less than 10	57	7.0	26	45.6	31	88.6
Between 10–20	15	20.0	11	73.3	4	11.4
More than 20	3	4.0	3	100.0	0	0.0

Figure 6.1 illustrates males started to smoke earlier than females; 11% of male smokers started smoking when they were between 10 and 14 years of age, compared with 6% of female smokers; 51% had their first smoke between ages 15 and 19, compared with 44% of female smokers.