The prevalence of high-risk alcohol consumption among Australian nurses: a national study

ADAM SEARBY[1], DIANNA BURR[1], BERNICE REDLEY[1]

[1] *Institute for Health Transformation, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria, Australia.*

Presenter's email: a.searby@deakin.edu.au

Introduction / Issues OR Introduction and Aims: Nurses are the largest profession within the health workforce. Limited literature suggests high rates of alcohol consumption may occur amongst Australian nurses, however prevalence data for the Australian nursing workforce is scant. The aim of this project was to determine the prevalence of high-risk alcohol consumption among Australian nurses.

Method / Approach OR Design and Methods: We used a cross-sectional national survey to administer the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) and a modified Perceptions of Work Stress Scale to Australian nurses drawn from a wide variety of clinical and geographic settings.

Key Findings OR Results: 1,209 participants responded to the survey, with a mean AUDIT score of 7.11 (SD 6.08). The overall prevalence of risky drinking was 36.9% among participants; 26.1% at risky or hazardous levels, 5.6% at high-risk or harmful level and 5.1% at high-risk, almost certainly dependent level. Correlations between work setting, stress and high-risk alcohol consumption show nurses working in Emergency Departments were most likely to report higher perceived stress and AUDIT scores.

Discussions and Conclusions: The prevalence of risky alcohol consumption among Australian nurses and midwives was higher than previously reported. The COVID-19 pandemic emerged as a potential factor contributing to increased stress and alcohol consumption among Australian nurses and midwives. Given current vulnerability in the nursing workforce, tailored and innovative interventions are urgently required to address high-risk alcohol consumption.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: None to report.