

Where pregnant women obtain information about alcohol use in pregnancy

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Introduction and Aims: Many pregnancies in Australia remain exposed to alcohol, despite guideline recommendations to abstain. The study aims were to investigate where pregnant women obtained information about alcohol use in pregnancy, whether this varied according to demographic characteristics and alcohol use, and if information source was associated with women's knowledge of guideline recommendations.

Design and Methods: A cross-sectional survey was conducted with pregnant women attending public maternity services in the Hunter New England region (NSW). Women were asked, "Where did you get information to help you make decisions about alcohol use during pregnancy?". The number and types of information sources used were reported. Relationships between demographic characteristics, information sources, alcohol use, and knowledge of guideline recommendations were assessed using logistic regression and chi-square tests.

Results: Of 4511 women surveyed, 99.9% used at least one type of information source, mostly written/electronic information (45.4%), health providers (37.6%), and family/friends (19.5%). Information sources used was associated with gravidity, education, age, socioeconomic status, and alcohol use before and/or during pregnancy. Almost 20% of women obtained no information: they were older, less educated, had previous pregnancies, and consumed alcohol before pregnancy (R²: 0.023; p<0.0001). Correct knowledge of guideline recommendations was associated with written/electronic information (p=0.008) and number of information source types used (p=0.002).

Discussions and Conclusions: The findings support a multi-faceted approach to information provision, including targeted information for those without knowledge of guidelines and low use of information sources, and the need for strengthening the routine provision of information by antenatal providers.

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