# Managing licit drug use in later life: Impact on quality of life, cognitive function, and mood

## Researcher

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## Summary

In partnership with the Western Australian Health Promotion Foundation, this project investigates the mental health outcomes of a GP-based health promotion program designed to decrease older adults' consumption of legal substances such as alcohol and benzodiazepines.

The hazardous or harmful consumption of alcohol, smoking, and the chronic use of benzodiazepines all have negative health consequences, such as liver or pancreas disease, cardiovascular disease, stroke, falls and fractures. In addition, there is growing evidence that the acute and chronic use of these substances alters mental health outcomes and may contribute to the development of cognitive impairment and depression in later life. Dementia and depression are the fourth and sixth major causes of DALYs lost in Australia.

The aims of this study are to investigate the impact of health promotion intervention on memory and mood in later life; to increase GP's knowledge of alcohol, sleep problems, and physical activity issues in older adults, and the basic principles of motivational interviewing; and to increase positive attitudes towards the health of older adults.

## Outcomes

This study found that problem drinking is under-recognised in the elderly and that excessive alcohol consumption in the elderly is associated with increased falls and fractures, incontinence, poor nutrition, medication interactions, poorer psychological wellbeing, suicide, impaired activities of daily living, and alcohol-related dementia.

In contrast this study found that moderate alcohol consumption is associated with a decreased risk of heart disease, stroke, dementia and mortality.

## References

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