UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA (THE)

Recorded adult per capita consumption (age 15+)

Sources: FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), World Drink Trends 2003

Abstainers in Dar es Salaam

In the above-mentioned survey, 22.5% of drinking males comprised 6.5% who drank occasionally, 9.8% who drank on weekends, and 6.2% who drank daily. The proportion of females who drank was much less: 5.7% drank occasionally, 3.8% on weekends, and 1.7% daily. The Dar es Salaam region has relatively low drinking rates for the United Republic of Tanzania. The figures up-country are much higher (daily male drinkers were 14.7% in Morongo and 47.3% in Hai). Corresponding figures for females were 9% in Morogoro and 34.6% in Hai.¹

WHO focal point data show that the rate of last year abstainers was 42.5% (total), 35% (males) and 50% (females).²
Frequent drinkers (focal point data)

WHO focal point data. Frequent drinking was defined as drinking on five or more days each week.²

Youth drinking in Dar es Salaam (last year prevalence)

An urban survey of 2491 students aged 13–14 years old from Dar es Salaam. The same survey also found the rate of lifetime prevalence of alcohol use to be 8.7% among males and 9.9% among females.³

Traditional alcoholic beverages

There is a lot of making, and drinking of ‘homemade’ or ‘informal-sector’ drinks: around 2.4 billion litres a year or more. This accounts for 90% of the alcohol consumed in the United Republic of Tanzania.⁴ Bottled beer is expensive here – about six times the price of maize beer. A 1997 survey of rural drinking among the Nyakyusa showed that bottled beer accounted for less than 0.5% of alcohol consumption.⁵ Among the urban poor, and in rural areas, domestically produced drinks continue to dominate the market and local drinking habits.⁶

In the central highland section of Ulanga District, in the south-west of the United Republic of Tanzania, during the long wet season and its aftermath, when the smaller streams transecting the highlands are brimming with water, ulanzi, a drink of fermented bamboo sap, is both plentiful and cheap. Sap is extracted from the canes through a cut in the stem and collected in bamboo tubes which are left hanging on the tree. The alcohol content of the sap increases the longer it is out of the plant.⁶ During the dry season, when the ulanzi is finished, beer is made from maize, known specifically as tekawina, or more generically as ‘beer’, pombe in Kiswahili or ujimbi in Kipogoro.⁶

Kimpumu is a porridge-like millet beer of the Nyakyusa (of what is now the south-west of the United Republic of Tanzania) that was usually drunk through a straw, hot water being added to make it sufficiently liquid to suck up.⁴

Banana wine (2–11% alcohol content by volume) is only used to a significant degree in particular geographical areas of the United Republic of Tanzania (notably, around Lake Victoria) and palm wine is largely confined to the Tanzanian coast.

Traditional alcoholic beverages of the United Republic of Tanzania play an important role in the daily social, economic, nutritional and cultural life of the people. Traditional Tanzanian beers include mbege and komoni and traditional wines include mnanasi, wanzuki and mofru.⁷

Orubisi/amarwa is an opaque beer commonly consumed in Kagera region in the north-western part of the United Republic of Tanzania. It has an alcohol content of around 2.5%.⁸

A study that collected and analysed 15 homemade but commercially available alcoholic beverages in Dar es Salaam found that ethanol concentrations of the brewed samples ranged from 2.2 to 8.5% w/v whilst the two
distilled samples contained 24.2 and 29.3% ethanol w/v. Aflatoxin B1 was found in nine brewed beverages, suggesting the use of contaminated grains or fruit for their production. The amount of zinc in four samples was double the World Health Organization recommended maximum for drinking water (5 mg/litre). One brewed beverage contained toxic amounts of manganese (12.8 mg/litre). Both distilled spirits were rich in fusel alcohols and one was fortified by caffeine. The results suggested that impurities and contaminants possibly associated with severe health risks, including carcinogens, are often found in traditional alcoholic beverages. Continuous daily drinking of these beverages is certain to increase health risks.9

Unrecorded alcohol consumption

The unrecorded alcohol consumption in the United Republic of Tanzania is estimated to be 2.0 litres pure alcohol per capita for population older than 15 for the years after 1995 (estimated by a group of key alcohol experts).10

In 1997, Tanzania Breweries Limited commissioned a survey on individual alcohol consumption in the United Republic of Tanzania. The report indicated a weekly consumption of 11 million litres of opaque beer which would suggest in terms of absolute alcohol a figure of around 10.1 litres per capita annual consumption for the population aged 16 and over.11

A 1997–1998 survey sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council and the British Institute in Eastern Africa examined the informal sector of alcohol in the United Republic of Tanzania. In the Tanzanian field area, the estimated total consumption would be 6.5 litres of absolute alcohol per capita of the adult population. Amongst drinking males, the estimated mean annual consumption would be 18 litres of absolute alcohol.11

Country background information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total population 2003</th>
<th>36 977 000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy at birth (2002)</td>
<td>Male 45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult (15+)</td>
<td>20 337 350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% under 15</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probability of dying under age 5 per 1000 (2002)</td>
<td>Male 163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population distribution 2001 (%)</td>
<td>Female 47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross National Income per capita 2002</td>
<td>US$ 280*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data refer to mainland Tanzania only


References
