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The Drinking of Earlier and More Recent Russian Immigrants to Israel: Comparison to Other Israelis

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Abstract

Objectives. Russia has a high level of per capita alcohol consumption, while the level in Israel is low. Since 1989, over 820,000 Russian Jews immigrated to Israel. In the 1970's and early 1980's, a smaller wave of immigration from Russia to Israel occurred (approximately 170,000). The drinking of earlier immigrants was compared to recent immigrants and other Israelis. **Methods:** Data came from a 1995 national survey of Israeli household residents. Of 4984 Israeli respondents, 292 were Russian immigrants who arrived since 1989 and 131 were Russians who immigrated earlier. Groups were compared with logistic regression. **Results:** Recent Russian immigrants were more likely to drink in the last 12 months, to drink frequently and to get drunk than other Israelis. The earlier Russian immigrants were not more likely than other Israelis to report drinking in the last 12 months or frequent drinking, but were more likely to report 30-day drinking

and getting drunk. In direct comparison of recent and earlier Russians, recent immigrants reported more frequent drinking than earlier immigrants. Conclusions: The results for drinking and frequency of drinking are consistent with acculturation effects as well as other explanations. Further investigation in studies with appropriate designs will be necessary to clarify the meaning of these results.



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