



Queensland: Young Risky Drinkers' Most Recent Risky Drinking Session



We asked what a drinking session looked like

One in five Australian 14-19 year olds drink at levels considered to be putting them at risk of injury at least once a month (1).

The heaviest teenage drinkers tend to disproportionally experience more alcohol related harms while being underrepresented in many health surveys which examine the Australian population as a whole.

This study, the Young Australians Alcohol Reporting System (YAARS), aimed to investigate the drinking occasions that were associated with a risk of harm.

We were interested in the most recent occasion when a teenager drank more than what the national guidelines describe as lower-risk. We asked questions such as how much they drank, where they drank, the types of beverages they had, and about some of the outcomes of this drinking.

We asked about these experiences to determine which factors contribute to, or protect young people from alcohol related harms.

The 14-19 year old participants were amongst the riskiest drinking 25% of their age-bracket

Risky drinking teenagers were surveyed all over Australia

In 2016 and 2017 we conducted over 3,400 face-to-face interviews and online surveys with young people aged 14-19. This bulletin presents the findings from our 172 Queensland based teenagers (91 face-to-face interviews and 81 online surveys).

The participants represented the riskiest drinking 20-25% of their age-bracket (most were consuming 5+ standard drinks in a single session, at least twice a month).

Participants were recruited through social media advertising, peer-referral, and posters at educational facilities and services frequented by young people.

This study is not representative of 14-19 year old drinkers. Our sample are, by definition, a minority subset who engage in the riskiest drinking. Please refer to our other publications for further information on the project's methods, and comparisons with age-matched groups recruited using representative sampling techniques (2).

Where did they drink?

- A friend's home (67%)
- Their own home (21%)
- A bar or pub (15%)
- Club (12%)
- Music festival or concert (2%)

- Most (87%) drank in at least one non-licensed location such as a home, car, park or beach during their session

Young risky drinkers described the most recent occasion when they drank beyond national guideline quantities*

* These quantities differed for each age and gender group, e.g. 5+ standard drinks for those aged 16-17 years.

When did they drink?

- Two-thirds of participants (65%) described this drinking session as occurring 7 or fewer days ago and 83% reported it occurred 14 or fewer days ago
- Two thirds of the drinking sessions were held on Fridays (27%) or Saturdays (43%).
- The first drink was most commonly consumed in the early evening (27% from 6-6.30pm, 37% from 7-8.30pm), and the last drink around midnight (32% 10-11.30pm, 32% midnight-1.30am, 20% 2-3.30am).
- The drinking session ran for an average of 5.7 hours (CI₉₅: 5.2, 6.2).

Popular beverage types

The most popular drink types were spirits (73%), beer (45%), pre-mixed drinks (33%), wine (28%) and cider (18%). Females were more likely to report drinking pre-mixed drinks, wine, cider and liqueurs or cocktails than males. Males were more likely to report drinking beer.

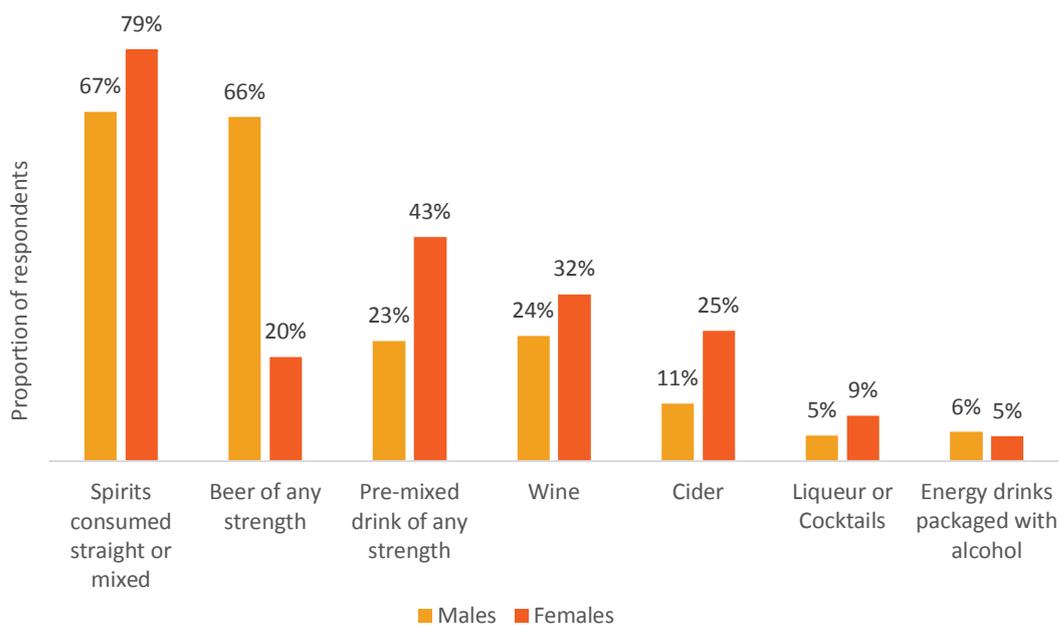


Figure 1: Beverage types consumed at the last risky drinking session for Queensland YAARS participants

One-third were involved in “pre-drinking”

Older participants were more likely to pre-drink ($p < 0.01$) and 18-19 year old girls were more likely to pre-drink than boys of the same age ($p < 0.05$). For younger participants, there were no significant gender differences in pre-drinking.

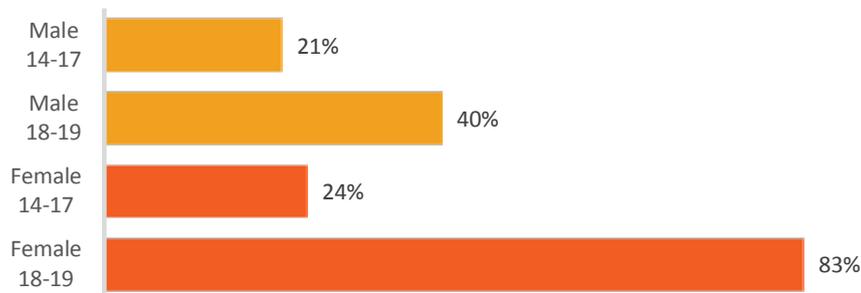


Figure 2: Proportion of Queensland participants who pre-drank on their last risky drinking occasion

How much did they drink?

Males drank more than females and older respondents drank more than younger respondents.

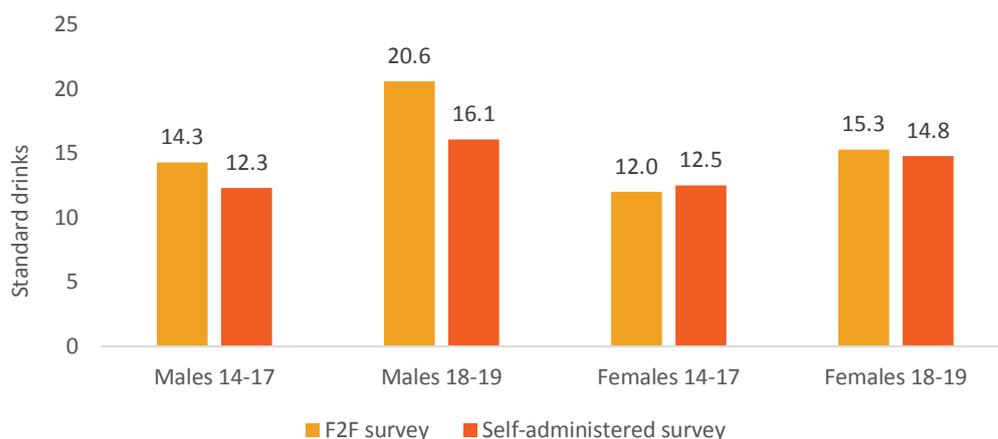


Figure 3: Average alcohol consumption at the last risky drinking session by age, gender and survey administration modality

Alcohol-related outcomes from this drinking session

Harms reported to have occurred as a result of this drinking session included:

- Having a hangover (40%)
- Having less energy or feeling tired because of my drinking (30%)
- Saying or doing embarrassing things (28%)
- Feeling very sick to my stomach or throwing up after drinking (18%)
- Being injured due to my drinking (including cuts & bruises; 18%)
- Needing larger amounts of alcohol to feel any effect (16%)
- Finding it difficult to limit how much I drank (14%)
- Not being able to remember large stretches of time while drinking heavily (12%)
- Doing impulsive things I regretted later (10%)

How did they try to keep safe?

We asked about protective strategies used to reduce alcohol consumption or to limit alcohol-related problems. These behaviours can limit alcohol-related problems even after controlling for the quantity of alcohol consumed (3). The safety strategies most closely related to limiting experience of alcohol-related problems were those related to quantity reduction - when the individual was 'determined not to exceed a set number of drinks' (17% always or usually did this) or when they 'avoided trying to keep up with or out-drink others' (27% always or usually did this).

Table 1: Safety strategies 'always' or 'usually' used while drinking during the past 12 months

	Male	Female
Determine not to exceed a set number of drinks	18%	15%
Alternate alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks	25%	20%
Have a friend let you know when you have had enough to drink	17%	29%
Leave the bar or party at a predetermined time	17%	18%
Stop drinking at a predetermined time	12%	9%
Drink water while drinking alcohol	48%	43%
Put extra ice in your drink	18%	15%
Avoid drinking games	8%	15%
Avoid mixing different types of alcohol	14%	21%
Drink slowly, rather than gulp or scull	14%	16%
Avoided trying to "keep up" or out-drink others	23%	32%
Use a designated driver	38%	38%
Made sure that you go home with a friend	50%	72%
Know where your drink has been at all times	67%	75%
Drink shots of spirits (risk behaviour)	46%	63%
Total	1157	1643

Citation for bulletin: Salom CL, Alati R, Allsop S, Lenton S, Chikritzhs T, Gilmore W, Liang W, Pandzic I, Aiken A, Burns L, Mattick RP, Ogeil R, Lloyd B, Lubman D, Bruno R, Roche A, ACT Health, Olsen A, Midford R, Lam T (2017) Queensland: Young Risky Drinkers' Most Recent Risky Drinking Session. National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University, Perth, Western Australia. Available from: <http://ndri.curtin.edu.au/research/yaars/bulletins>.

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References (1) Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2016 key findings. 2017. (2) Lam T, Lenton S, Ogeil R, Burns L, Aiken A, Chikritzhs T, Gilmore W, Lloyd B, Wilson J, Lubman D, Mattick R, Allsop S. Most recent risky drinking session with Australian teenagers. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health. 2017;41(1). (3) Martens MP, Ferrier AG, Cimini M. Do Protective Behavioral Strategies Mediate the Relationship Between Drinking Motives and Alcohol Use in College Students? Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs. 2007;68(1).