



South Australia: 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 disproportionately 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 295 South Australian based teenagers (80 face-to-face interviews and 215 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 all 14-19 year old drinkers. Our sample represents a minority subset who engage in risky alcohol consumption. 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?

- Friend's home (64%)
- Bar, pub or hotel (24%)
- Nightclub (23%)
- Own home (20%)
- Music festival or concert (7%)

Most (83%) 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 were different for each age and gender group. E.g., it was 5+ standard drinks for those aged 16-17 years.

When did they drink?

- More than half (55%) described their most recent drinking occasion as occurring within the past 7 days and 75% reported that it occurred within the past 14 days
- These drinking occasions were usually on Fridays (28%) or Saturdays (56%)
- The first drink was most commonly consumed in the early evening (35%: 5-6.30pm, 38%: 7-8.30pm), and the last drink around midnight (24%: 10-11.30pm, 29%: midnight-1.30am, 30%: 2-3.30am).
- Drinking sessions ran for an average of 6.1 hours (95% CI: 5.8 hours, 6.5 hours).

Popular beverage types

The most popular drink types were spirits (74%), pre-mixed drinks (34%), cider (36%), beer (34%) and wine (27%). Males commonly drank spirits and beer. Females were more likely to report consuming spirits, pre-mixed drinks and cider.

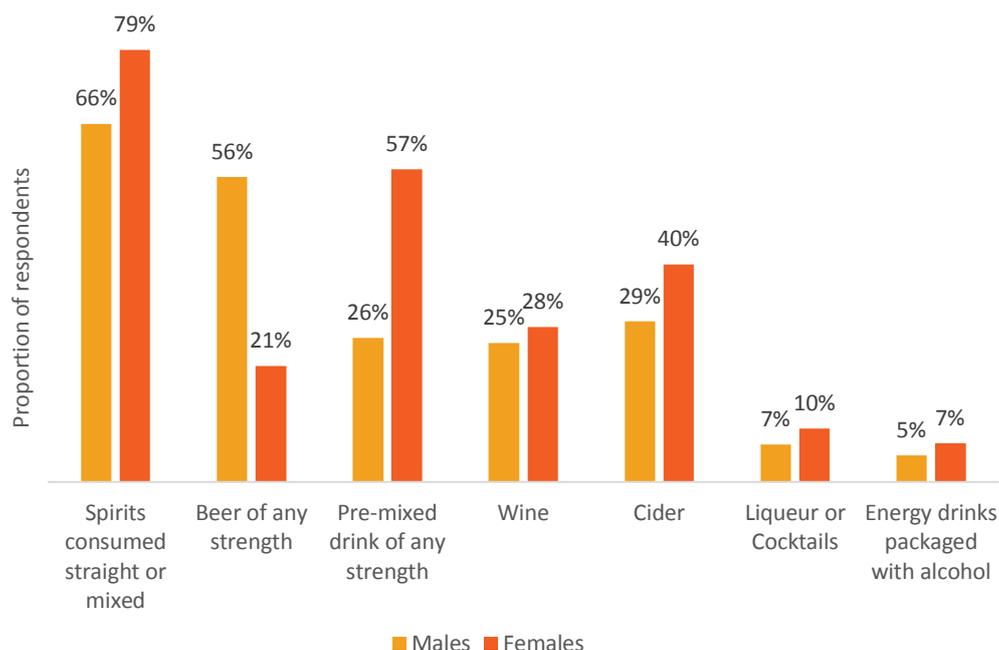


Figure 1. Beverage types consumed at the last risky drinking session

Pre-drinking

Participants aged 18-19 years were more likely to pre-drink than those aged 14-17 years (Figure 2).

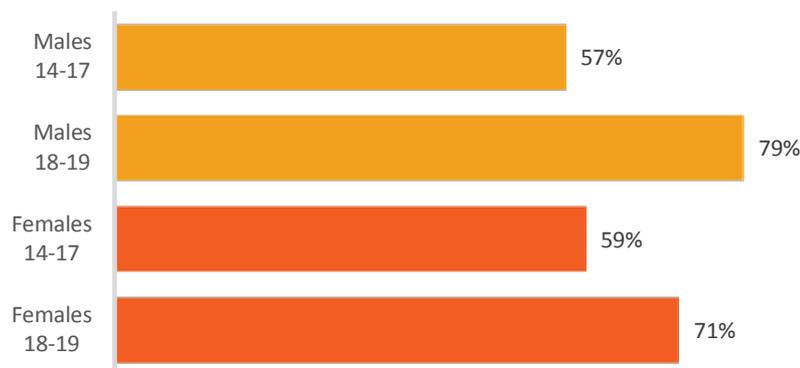


Figure 2. Proportion of participants who had pre-drunk on their last risky drinking session

How much did they drink?

Males aged 18-19 years drank more than their female counterparts. This was in contrast to the younger age cohort where females drank slightly more.

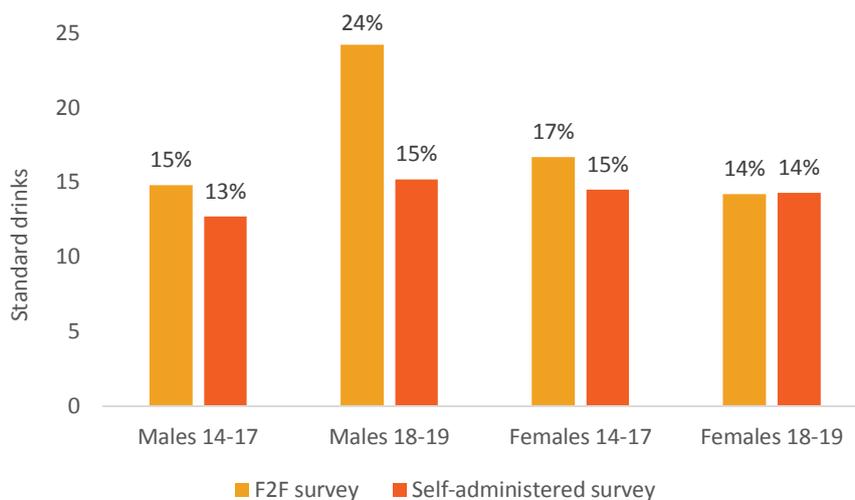


Figure 3. Average alcohol use at the last risky drinking session by age, gender and survey administration modality

Alcohol-related outcomes from this drinking session

Harms reported to have occurred from the latest drinking occasion included:

- Hangover (35%)
- Saying or doing embarrassing things (35%)
- Having less energy or feeling tired (29%)
- Feeling very sick or throwing up after drinking (19%)
- Needing larger amounts of alcohol to feel any effect, or to get drunk (20%)
- Loss of memory while drinking heavily (21%)
- Finding it difficult to limit how much was drunk (18%)

- Being injured, including cuts and bruises (20%)
- Doing impulsive things and regretting it later (16%).

How did they try to keep safe?

Teenagers use various protective strategies to limit alcohol consumption and/or alcohol-related harms. These behaviours can minimise alcohol-related problems even after controlling for the quantity of alcohol consumed (3). The two most common strategies used by both males and females were knowing the location of their drink at all times (M: 71%; F: 78%) and going home with a friend (M: 62%; F: 71%). Other strategies included drinking water (M: 49%; F: 41%) and using a designated driver (M: 46%; F: 54%).

Table 1. Safety strategies participants 'always' or 'usually' engaged in while drinking in the past 12 months

Safety Strategy	Male %	Female %
Determine not to exceed a set number of drinks	12	18
Alternate alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks	28	23
Have a friend let you know when you have had enough to drink	18	24
Leave the bar or party at a predetermined time	35	23
Stop drinking at a predetermined time	12	15
Drink water while drinking alcohol	49	41
Put extra ice in your drink	12	19
Avoid drinking games	15	9
Drink shots of spirits (risk behaviour)	50	59
Avoid mixing different types of alcohol	15	19
Drink slowly, rather than gulp or scull	26	18
Avoided trying to "keep up" or out-drink others	28	35
Use a designated driver	46	54
Made sure that you go home with a friend	62	71
Know where your drink has been at all times	71	78
N	92	172

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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).