

YOUNG AUSTRALIANS ALCOHOL REPORTING SYSTEM (YAARS)

(BULLETIN 1: PRE DRINKING 1)



THE 'WHO' 'WHERE' AND 'WHY' OF PRE-DRINKING AMONG 16-19 YEAR OLD AUSTRALIANS

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Pre-drinking, also known as having 'pre's' or 'pre-loading', is consuming alcohol before going out to another venue. Previous literature has identified some of the reasons that pre-drinking is undertaken, including: to reduce the costs associated with purchasing alcohol in a venue; to hasten drunkenness; to socialise with friends; and to reduce social anxiety (1).

Evidence suggests that pre-drinking contributes to alcohol related harm and the UK government's recent alcohol strategy stated that 'pre-drinking' needs to be addressed in the context of addressing 'binge episodes' or periods of heavy episodic drinking (2).

The majority of studies that have addressed pre-drinking have

been undertaken in US college student populations (e.g. 3), or in European studies that have focused on the impact of pre-drinking on people entering night-time economies (e.g. pubs and clubs) (4).

Pre-drinking in the Australian context may have distinguishing features. For example, the minimum legal purchase age in the US is higher than in Australia.

This first pre-drinking bulletin focuses on who was pre-drinking, where they chose to pre-drink, and why they pre-drink.

The second bulletin addresses how much alcohol and time was spent pre-drinking, what types of drinks were consumed and how much money was spent by participants.

The participants recruited for YAARS represent the riskiest drinkers within their age-bracket. Of these, almost half reported pre-drinking

How were the data collected?

This study, the Young Australians Alcohol Reporting System (YAARS) surveyed young risky drinkers in Perth, Melbourne, Sydney and the regional city of Bunbury in Western Australia. Face-to-face interviews and online surveys were conducted with 958 young people aged 16-19.

The participants represented the riskiest drinking 20-25% of their age-bracket (they drank 7 or more standard drinks twice a month; or 11 or more standard drinks twice a month if the participant was male and aged 18-19).

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 16-19 year old risky drinkers. However, this sample reported similar rates of high risk drinking (11+ standard drinks at least twice monthly) to age-matched risky drinkers recruited using representative sampling techniques (5-6).

The participants represented the riskiest drinking 20-25% of their age-bracket



Did you pre-drink the last time you consumed 7+ drinks in a single session?

149 of the 351 completed face-to-face participants (43% of sample) reported pre-drinking last time they consumed 7+ drinks. There was a similar distribution across the different study sites with 119 of the 282 metro (Sydney, Melbourne, Perth) participants (42%) and 30 of 64 of rural (Bunbury) participants (47%) who took part in the face-to-face interviews pre-drinking on their last 7+ drinking occasion.

A slightly higher proportion of respondents in the online sample reported pre-drinking (n=337, 59%) on their most recent 7+ drinking occasion compared to those who had not (n=234, 41%).

In the face-to-face quantitative surveys, pre-drinking was more commonly reported by older participants with more than 50% of 18-19 year old males and females responding that they had pre-drunk as opposed to <30% of males aged 16-17 and <40% of females aged 16-17.

In the online sample, a greater proportion of participants in each demographic reported pre-drinking compared with the face-to-face interviewees.

A similar trend was evident with pre-drinking more common in the older 18-19 year old demographics as opposed to the younger 16-17 year old demographic (see Figure 1).

A slightly higher proportion of respondents in the online sample reported pre-drinking (n=337, 59%) on their most recent 7+ drinking occasion compared to those who had not (n=234, 41%).

Pre-drinking was more commonly reported by the 18-19 year olds compared to the 16-17 year old participants

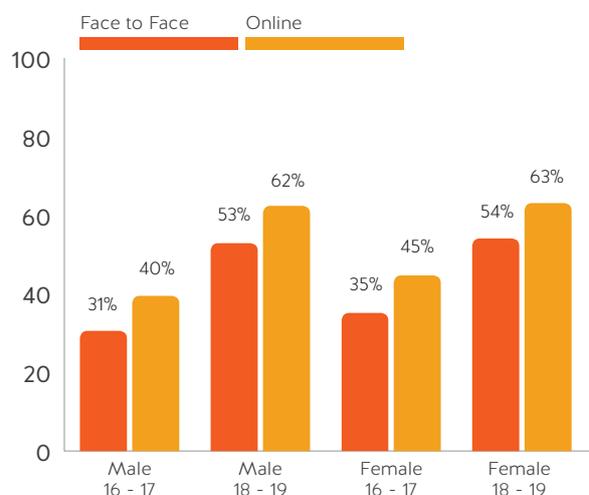


Figure 1. Proportion of face-to-face and online participants who had pre-drunk on their past 7+ occasion.

Where did you have these pre-drinks?

Participants were asked about the last drinking session where they had seven or more standard drinks. The most commonly reported pre-drinking locations were a friend's or acquaintance's house (see Figure 2).

Pre-drinking at a participant's own home was the second most common location for all groups except the 16-17 year old males, who nominated a public place (e.g. a park, beach).

Pre-drinking most commonly occurred at a friend's or acquaintance's house

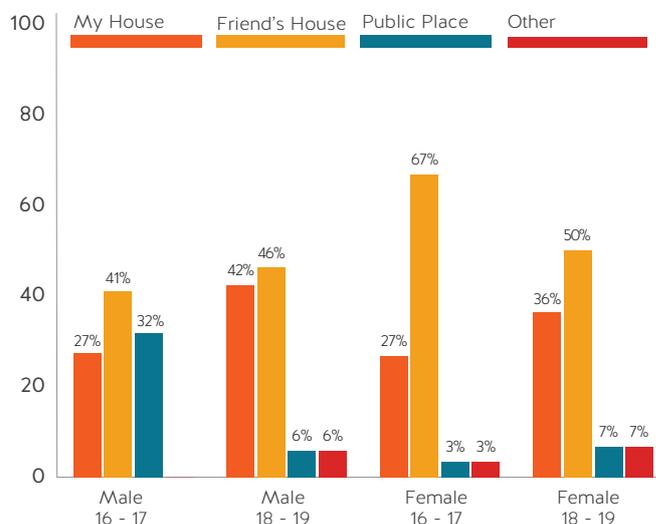


Figure 2. Location of pre-drinking by location for face-to-face sample.

Why did you drink before going out?

Table 1 shows that older participants were more likely to nominate 'price' as a reason for pre-drinking, while younger participants were more likely to nominate pre-drinking for fun, or to catch up with a friend.

There was more variability in responses provided by the online sample, however price, convenience fun, the chance to catch up with friends and to get intoxicated were all nominated as common reasons for pre-drinking (see Table 2).

Table 1. Reasons for pre-drinking in face-to-face sample.	Male 16-17 (%)	Male 18-19 (%)	Female 16-17 (%)	Female 18-19 (%)
Price	0.0%	48.1%	6.5%	57.8%
More convenient	9.5%	17.3%	9.7%	8.9%
Don't want to go out too early	4.8%	9.6%	19.4%	11.1%
Change to catch up with friends before	57.1%	38.5%	29.0%	37.8%
To get intoxicated before going out	23.8%	30.8%	51.6%	28.9%
For fun	38.1%	26.9%	54.8%	24.4%
To get my self-confidence up before I go out	0.0%	3.8%	22.6%	8.9%
So I wouldn't have to share my alcohol with others at the next destination	4.8%	1.9%	6.5%	0.0%
To 'load up' before going somewhere where alcohol isn't allowed/where I can't obtain alcohol	9.5%	0.0%	6.5%	0.0%
Other	33.3%	9.6%	9.7%	6.7%
Total	21	52	31	54

The main reasons provided by participants in the face-to-face interviews for pre-drinking were: price, to catch up with friends, to get intoxicated and to have fun

Table 2. Reasons for pre-drinking in online sample.	Male 16-17 (%)	Male 18-19 (%)	Female 16-17 (%)	Female 18-19 (%)
Price	27.3%	76.6%	26.4%	83.3%
More convenient	32.5%	53.1%	38.5%	48.0%
Don't want to go out too early	28.6%	48.4%	39.6%	43.1%
Change to catch up with friends before	46.8%	54.7%	50.5%	50.0%
To get intoxicated before going out	45.5%	60.9%	48.4%	52.0%
For fun	50.6%	65.6%	51.6%	51.0%
To get my self-confidence up before I go out	32.5%	29.7%	39.6%	24.5%
So I wouldn't have to share my alcohol with others at the next destination	18.2%	3.1%	15.4%	4.9%
To 'load up' before going somewhere where alcohol isn't allowed/where I can't obtain alcohol	22.1%	12.5%	23.1%	6.9%
Other	2.6%	6.3%	1.1%	1.0%
Total	77	64	91	102

Suggested citation for this bulletin:

Ogeil R, Lam T, Lloyd B, Lenton S, Burns, L, Aiken A, Gilmore W, Chikritzhs T, Mattick R, Lubman D, Allsop S (2016). 'The 'who', 'where', and 'why' of pre-drinking among 16-19 year old Australians'. National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University, Perth, Western Australia.

Available from: <http://ndri.curtin.edu.au/research/yaars/bulletins>.

See ndri.curtin.edu.au/research/yaars/bulletins for this bulletin's reference list.

This bulletin is based on:

Ogeil R P, Lloyd B, Lam T, Lenton S, Burns L, Aiken A, Gilmore W, Chikritzhs T, Mattick R, Allsop S, Lubman D (2016) Pre-drinking behaviour of young heavy drinkers. Substance Use and Misuse. DOI:10.3109/10826084.2016.1168443

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The Young Australians Alcohol Reporting System is a project led by the National Drug Research Institute (NDRI; Curtin University), in collaboration with their partners the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC; University of New South Wales), Eastern Health Clinical School (Monash University and Turning Point) and St John of God Hospital (Bunbury). The project is funded by the Australian National Preventative Health Agency. NDRI and NDARC are supported by funding from the Australian Government under the Substance Misuse Prevention and Service Improvement Grants Fund.

