

The Young Adults and Alcohol Study – Alcohol related harms

The Young Adults and Alcohol Study examines patterns of drinking and drinking related harms among young Melburnians. A sample of 802 young (18-25) Melburnians was recruited through telephone interviews conducted between July 30 and October 2, 2012. Around half of the sample was female and half were aged under 21. Other key characteristics of the sample are shown in the following Table that we sent to you previously.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>% sample</i>	<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>% sample</i>
Country of birth		Sexual orientation	
Australia	90	Heterosexual	92
other	10	other	8
Recreational spending money per week		Living circumstances	
\$0-80	21	With both parents	67
\$80-160	32	One parent	25
\$160+	47	Not with parents	8
Highest level of education		Currently studying	
< Year 12	13	Full-time	51
Year 12	52	Part-time	12
Tertiary	19	Not studying	37
Diploma	8		
Trade	8		

A particular focus of the study is on recent heavy drinking occasions reported by participants, 'the big night out'. We previously sent you a summary of the main findings around the 'Big Night Out'. These have now been published in the scientific journal called *Drug and Alcohol Review* (2014, pages 346-353). In our previous summary we highlighted that people reported consuming around 13 standard drinks on average on the big night out. This level of consumption was accompanied by a range of harms that are summarised below.

Harms on the big night out

Overall, very few people reported experiencing alcohol-related or other harms during their big night out. Only 7% reported getting into a verbal argument or fight and 6% reported having an intoxication-related accident. However, more (17%) people reported that they had failed to do what they had intended to in the days following the big night out and 22% reported that their consumption had had negative effects on their health and well-being. We were not able to determine how severe these effects were.

We also looked at different factors that might be associated with experiencing harm on a night out, such as how much was drunk, number of venues attended during the course of the night, gender and age. The only factor consistently related to harm was the amount drunk. We found that, for every extra drink consumed, there was around 5-10% more chance of experiencing harms. This association was consistent, even when we accounted for age and gender, as well as length of drinking session and number of drinking locations.

The next phase of the study involves recontacting participants to interview them again about their experiences since they were last interviewed. Interviewers from the Social Research Centre will be getting in touch over the next few weeks.

Thanks to everyone who participated – your assistance is very much appreciated!!