

Last drinking occasion among 15 to 17-year-olds: ABAS 2014/15

Background

In 2014/15, 57% of 15 to 17-year-olds reported consuming alcohol within the last 12 months, and of those who consumed alcohol, 19% had a potentially hazardous drinking pattern (Ministry of Health, 2015). HPA's Attitudes and Behaviour towards Alcohol Survey (ABAS) monitors New Zealanders' behaviour and attitudes toward alcohol, including drinking behaviour and the type of alcohol consumed. This fact sheet examines 15 to 17-year-olds' alcohol consumption during their last drinking occasion.

Methodology

Participants in the 2014/15 Attitudes and Behaviour towards Alcohol Survey (ABAS 2014/15) were asked about the last occasion they consumed two or more alcoholic drinks. Respondents were restricted to those who did so within the last three months, of which there were 193 respondents 15 to 17-years old. The type of alcoholic drink consumed and number of drinks¹ consumed were examined by gender. Risky alcohol consumption was defined as consuming five or more alcoholic drinks in one occasion². Multiple responses were permitted when respondents were asked about the type of alcohol they consumed on their last drinking occasion. Only those group differences that were statistically significant ($p < .05$) are reported.

Last occasion of two or more alcoholic drinks

Respondents who had consumed an alcoholic drink in the past year were asked "How long ago did you have two or more drinks of alcohol on any one occasion?" ($n=77$). Nearly eight out of ten (79%, 69-87%) reported consuming two or more alcoholic drinks on an occasion within the past three months, 14% (7-23%) more than three months ago and the remaining 7% (3-15%) reported they had not consumed more than one alcoholic drink on an occasion.

Type of alcohol consumed at last drinking occasion

Respondents who consumed two or more drinks of alcohol on an occasion within the last three months were asked what alcoholic drink types they consumed ($n=60$) (multiple responses were permitted). Overall, one-half (54%, 41-66%) of 15 to 17-year-olds consumed ready-to-drinks (RTDs), a similar proportion (52%, 40-65%) consumed beer, just over one-quarter (26%, 17-39%) consumed spirits, 13% (6-26%) consumed wine or sparkling wine, 10% (5-21%) cider, and smaller proportions for liqueurs, port or sherry or other alcohol types (see Figure 1).

¹ For this analysis, it is the number of drinks that is being assessed rather than the number of standard drinks.

² Risky drinking was defined as being consumption of a number of drinks of alcohol above the low risk drinking advice for adult females on a single drinking occasion (which is no more than four standard drinks). HPA's advice for parents for people under 18 years of age is that not drinking alcohol is the safest option (Health Promotion Agency, 2016).

Differences by gender were examined for the three most common alcoholic drink types (RTDs, beer and spirits) (see Figure 2):

- Males (78%) were more likely to have consumed beer than females (21%)³.
- Females (70%) were more likely to have consumed RTDs than males (40%).
- No significant gender differences were observed for spirits.

Number of drinks consumed at last drinking occasion involving more than one drink

Respondents were asked to report the number of drinks they had consumed on the last occasion they had consumed two or more drinks of alcohol within the last three months. Of those who had consumed two or more drinks of alcohol, under one-half (45%, 33-58%) reported consuming between two and four drinks on their last

drinking occasion. The remainder reported consuming alcohol at a risky level (five or more drinks of alcohol) with 28% (18-42%) reporting consuming between five and seven drinks, and a similar proportion (27%, 17-39%) reporting consuming eight or more drinks of alcohol.

Key points

- Of 15 to 17-year-olds who reported consuming two or more alcoholic drinks on an occasion, eight out of ten (79%) did so within the last three months.
- RTDs, beer and spirits were the three most common alcoholic drink types consumed by 15 to 17-year-olds on the last drinking occasion they consumed two or more alcoholic drinks. Males were more likely to report consuming beer, and females were more likely to report consuming RTDs.
- On the last drinking occasion where two or more alcoholic drinks were consumed, over one-half (55%) of 15 to 17-year-olds reported consuming five more alcoholic drinks on that drinking occasion.

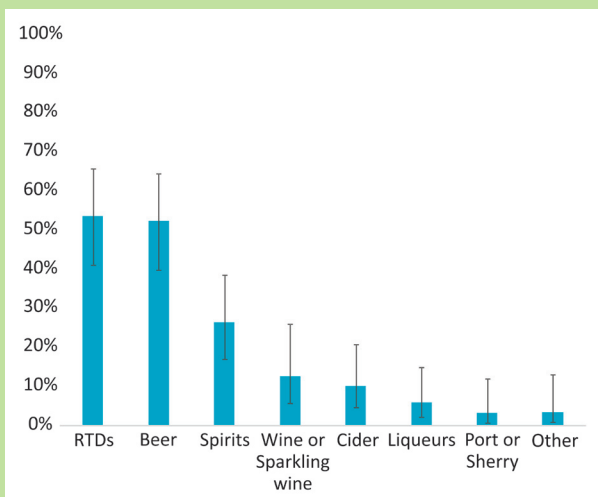


Figure 1: Alcoholic drink types consumed by 15 to 17-year-olds on the last drinking occasion involving two or more alcoholic drinks (multiple response possible)

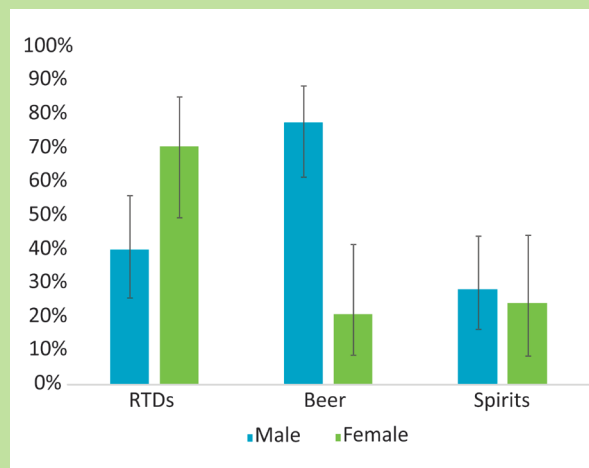


Figure 2: Three most common alcoholic drink types consumed by 15 to 17-year-olds on the last drinking occasion involving two or more alcoholic drinks by gender (multiple response possible)

³ Caution should be exercised when interpreting this estimate as the relative standard error (RSE) is greater than 25%.

About the Attitudes and Behaviour towards Alcohol Survey

- The ABAS is a nationwide telephone survey conducted annually. The survey focuses on behaviour related to the previous month and last drinking occasion, and a range of attitudes/opinions towards alcohol. The 2014/15 ABAS consisted of a sample of 4,005 New Zealanders aged 15-years-and-over. The survey was conducted between November 2014 and February 2015.
- The main sample, with a response rate of 21%, included 610 Māori, 215 Pacific people, 316 Asian people and 2,864 people of European or other ethnicities (prioritised ethnicity).
- The data have been adjusted (weighted) to ensure they are representative of the New Zealand population.
- For this analysis, proportions and 95% confidence intervals were produced. Odds ratios were used to compare responses between groups. The significance level used for statistical analyses was set to $\alpha=0.05$.
- Comparison groups for these analyses were as follows:
 - Gender (males, compared with females).
- A full description of the 2014/15 ABAS survey methodology and further ABAS publications can be found online at <http://www.hpa.org.nz/research-library/research-publications>.

References

- Health Promotion Agency. (2016). *Alcohol – the body and health effects*. Wellington: Health Promotion Agency.
- Ministry of Health. (2015). *Annual update of key results 2014/15: New Zealand Health Survey. Information from Adult data tables: Health status, health behaviours and risk factors*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

Citation

- Nelson, S., Holland, K., & Gordon., C. (2016). *Last drinking occasion among 15 to 17-year-olds: ABAS 2014/15*. [In Fact, Volume 5, Issue 15]. Wellington: Health Promotion Agency Research and Evaluation Unit.

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