

In fact: parental knowledge about alcohol consumption, 2012-14

Background

Parental attitudes and behaviour towards alcohol are important factors that influence adolescent attitudes and decisions about alcohol use (Hingson & White, 2014). Parental monitoring and involvement is strongly associated with protective effects on adolescent alcohol use (Hayes, Smart, Toumbourou & Sanson, 2004; White, Walton & Walker, 2015). In New Zealand in 2012, over half (54%) of secondary school student drinkers reported "parents give it to me" as a source of obtaining alcohol to drink (Ameratunga et al, 2011).

The Health Promotion Agency's (HPA's) Youth Insights Survey (YIS) monitors Year 10 students' behaviours, attitudes, and knowledge on a range of health-related topics, including alcohol consumption. Year 10 students are predominantly aged between 14 and 15 years.

This fact sheet reports on alcohol consumption without parental knowledge and changes in this from 2012 for Year 10 respondents in the YIS.

Methodology

Respondents in the 2014 YIS were asked whether they had consumed alcohol without their parents or caregivers knowing about it. Responses were examined by gender and ethnicity (Māori, compared with non-Māori). This question was also asked in the 2012 YIS. Further analyses were therefore undertaken to assess any change over time.

In addition, parental knowledge about alcohol consumption and high-risk alcohol consumption¹ by

respondents was examined for any association. Only statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) between groups are reported here. Further methodological detail can be found in the 'About the Youth Insights Survey' section of this fact sheet.

Alcohol consumption without parental knowledge

Respondents were asked, "Thinking about all the times you have ever drunk alcohol, how often has this happened without your parents/caregivers knowing about it?" Ten percent (9-11%) of all respondents said this had happened on "all occasions", 23% (21-25%) on "some occasions", and 25% (23-27%) on "no occasions". The remaining 42% (40-45%) said they had "never had any alcohol".

Of those who reported they had ever consumed alcohol, the majority (57%) had consumed alcohol on some or all occasions without their parents or caregivers knowing about it.

Of those who reported they had ever consumed alcohol, Māori (67%) were more likely than non-Māori (53%) to have consumed it on some or all occasions without their parents or caregivers knowing about it. There was no difference between males and females who had ever consumed alcohol in likelihood of having consumed alcohol without parental knowledge.

The proportion of respondents who reported consuming alcohol on some or all occasions without their parents or caregivers knowing about it was unchanged between 2012 and 2014.

¹ High-risk drinking is defined as consuming five or more alcoholic drinks in one session. The YIS assesses high-risk drinking using the question "During the past 30 days (one month), how often did you have 5 or more alcohol drinks in one session?".

Association between high-risk alcohol consumption and parental knowledge

HPA advice to those aged under 18 years (and their parents) is that not drinking is the safest option. Up to five drinks in one session is the adult male limit for risk of injury given in low-risk alcohol drinking advice (Health Promotion Agency, 2014). Five or more drinks is therefore used for the purposes of these analyses as

a conservative estimate of risk of alcohol-related harm among Year 10 students.

Among respondents who had ever consumed alcohol, the rate of high-risk drinking (ever having consumed five or more alcohol drinks in one session) was 51% for those who had ever consumed alcohol without their parents or caregivers knowing about it, compared with 21% for those who had never consumed alcohol without parental knowledge.

Key points

- In 2014, more than half (57%) of Year 10 students who had ever consumed alcohol consumed it on some or all occasions without their parents or caregivers knowing about it.
- The proportion of Year 10 students who reported consuming alcohol on some or all occasions without their parents or caregivers knowing about it was unchanged from 2012 to 2014.
- Year 10 students who consumed alcohol without their parents' or caregivers' knowledge were more likely to have ever consumed five or more alcohol drinks in one session than students who had not consumed alcohol without parental knowledge.

About the Youth Insights Survey

- The YIS forms part of the New Zealand Youth Tobacco Monitor (NZYTM), a collaborative effort by the Health Promotion Agency (HPA) and Action on Smoking and Health (ASH).
- The YIS is a nationwide paper-based survey conducted in schools every two years, first carried out in its current form in 2006 and dating back to 1995 in different formats.
- The YIS collects data on smoking, alcohol consumption and other health-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour, as well as data on students' interests, lifestyles, activities, and media use. It monitors a broad spectrum of risk and protective factors that relate to smoking uptake, alcohol consumption and other health issues among young people.
- The 2014 YIS was conducted with a sample of 2,919 Year 10 students (14 to 15-year-olds). The school-level response rate was 76%, the student level response rate 84%, and the overall response rate was 64%. The sample included 1,352 NZ European, 700 Māori, 321 Pacific, 353 Asian, and 193 people of 'Other' ethnicity (defined using prioritised ethnicity). The data have been adjusted (weighted) to ensure they are representative of the population of New Zealand Year 10 school students.
- For this analysis, jack-knife proportions and 95% confidence intervals were calculated first. Odds ratios were then used to compare responses between groups and over time. 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).
 - Ethnicity (Māori, compared with non-Māori).
- A full description of the 2014 YIS methodology and further YIS publications can be found at <http://www.hpa.org.nz/research-library/research-publications>.

References

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Citation

- Cook, S. & White, J. (2016). *Parental knowledge about alcohol consumption, 2012-14 [In Fact, Volume 5 Issue 9]*. Wellington: Health Promotion Agency Research and Evaluation Unit.

About the HPA

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May 2016

ISSN 2350-2991

