

Last drinking occasion: 15 to 17-year-olds

Background

In 2013/2014 three in five (59%) New Zealanders aged 15 to 17-years-old drank alcohol in the last year, with that number falling from 75% in 2006/07 (Ministry of Health, 2014; Ministry of Health, 2013). The Health Promotion Agency (HPA) advises that for young people aged 15 to 17 years, the safest option is to delay drinking for as long as possible (Health Promotion Agency, 2014). HPA's Attitudes and Behaviour towards Alcohol Survey (ABAS) monitors New Zealanders' behaviour and attitudes towards alcohol, including those related to the last drinking occasion. This factsheet reports on the last drinking occasion among those aged 15 to 17 years.

Methodology

Participants in the 2013 ABAS were asked about the last occasion they had two or more alcoholic drinks in the last three months. There were 180 respondents aged 15 to 17 years in the ABAS. Alcohol type consumed and risky alcohol consumption (defined as five or more alcoholic drinks consumed on one occasion) were examined by gender. 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

Of the respondents who reported having had an alcoholic drink in the last year ($n = 79$), four in five (82%, 72-89%) 15 to 17-year-olds had consumed two or more alcoholic drinks in the last three months, with more than one-third (36%, 26-47%) having done so in the last week.

Alcohol type consumed

When asked about their last drinking occasion (of two or more alcoholic drinks in the last three months) around one-half (52%, 40-64%) of 15 to 17-year-olds consumed beer, one-half (50%, 38-62%) consumed ready-to-drinks (RTDs), and nearly one-half (46%, 34-58%) consumed spirits. Nineteen percent (11-31%)¹ of respondents consumed cider and 18% (10-30%)¹ consumed wine on the last occasion. Figure 1 shows the alcohol types that had greater than 15% response. Of the three most commonly consumed alcohol types (beer, RTDs and spirits)², there were gender differences in the consumption of beer and RTDs (Figure 2):

- Males (64%, 48-77%) were more likely than females (34%, 18-55%)¹ to consume beer on the last drinking occasion.
- Females (73%, 53-87%) were more likely than males (34%, 21-50%) to consume RTDs on the last drinking occasion.

¹ Caution should be exercised when interpreting this estimate as the relative standard error (RSE) of the estimate is $> 25\%$.

² Cider and wine were not examined by gender as the sample was not large enough to enable breakdown by subgroups.

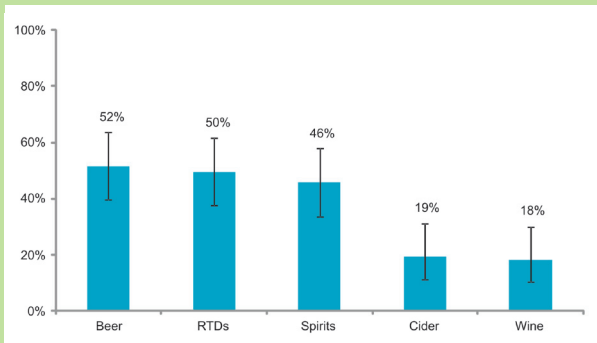


Figure 1: Type of alcohol consumed by 15 to 17-year-olds on the last drinking occasion (multiple response)

Base: Respondents who had consumed two or more drinks of alcohol in the last three months (n = 64)

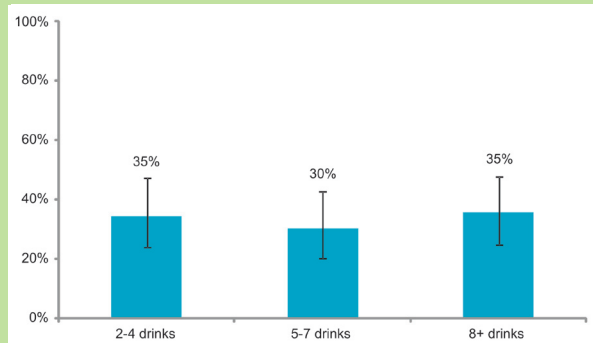


Figure 3: Number of alcoholic drinks consumed by 15 to 17-year-olds on the last drinking occasion

Base: Respondents who had consumed two or more drinks of alcohol in the last three months (n = 64)

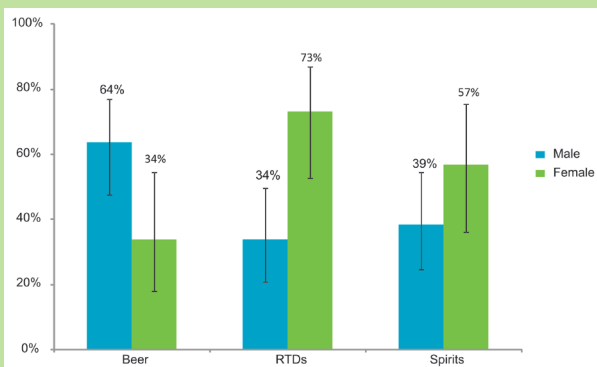


Figure 2: Three most common types of alcohol consumed by 15 to 17-year-olds on the last drinking occasion, by gender (multiple response)

Base: Respondents who had consumed two or more drinks of alcohol in the last three months (n = 64)

Key points

- Thirty-six percent of 15 to 17-year-olds had consumed two or more alcoholic drinks in the last week.
- Beer, RTDs and spirits were the three most common types of alcohol consumed on the last drinking occasion. Males were more likely to consume beer, and females more likely to consume RTDs.
- Sixty-five percent of respondents consumed alcohol at a risky level (five or more alcoholic drinks on one occasion) on the last drinking occasion.

Number of alcoholic drinks consumed over the last drinking occasion

On their last drinking occasion, two-thirds (65%, 53-76%) of 15 to 17-year-olds consumed alcohol at a risky level ie, they consumed five or more alcoholic drinks on one occasion, 30% (20-42%) consumed five to seven alcoholic drinks, and 35% (25-48%) consumed eight or more (Figure 3). Thirty-five percent (24-47%) of respondents consumed two to four alcoholic drinks on the last occasion.

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 2013 ABAS consisted of a sample of 4,001 New Zealanders aged 15 years and over. The survey was conducted between November 2013 and February 2014.
- The main sample, with a response rate of 22%, included 662 Māori, 245 Pacific peoples, 314 Asian people and 2,780 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 2013 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. (2014). *Alcohol – the body and health effects*. Wellington: Health Promotion Agency.
- Ministry of Health. (2014). *2013/2014 New Zealand Health Survey: Results* [Adult data tables: Health status, health behaviours and risk factors]. Retrieved from <http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/annual-update-key-results-2013-14-new-zealand-health-survey>
- Ministry of Health. (2013). *Hazardous drinking in 2011/12: Findings from the New Zealand Health Survey*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

Citation

- Holland, K. (2015). *Last drinking occasion: 15 to 17-year-olds. [In Fact]*. Wellington: Health Promotion Agency Research and Evaluation Unit.

About HPA

HPA is a crown entity that leads and delivers innovative, high quality and cost-effective programmes and activities that promote health, wellbeing and healthy lifestyles, prevent disease, illness and injury. HPA enables environments that support health and wellbeing and healthy lifestyles, and reduce personal, social and economic harm. HPA also undertakes functions specific to providing advice and research on alcohol issues.

Research and Evaluation Unit

Health Promotion Agency, PO Box 2142, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

<http://www.hpa.org.nz/research-library/research-publications>

research@hpa.org.nz

March 2015

ISSN 2350-2991

