



ALCOHOL AWARENESS SURVEY

CONDUCTED FOR THE SALVATION ARMY

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20th / 21st AUGUST 2003

EMBARGOED UNTIL TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 9th 2003

MAIN FINDINGS

22% of girls, 14-17 regularly 'binge drink' between 13 and 30 drinks a session. By comparison 19% of boys 14-17 binge drink.

84% of girls have drunk alcohol. The majority started with a premixed drink like Cola and Southern Comfort or Kahlua and milk. None of them drink beer and only 40% were aware that premixed drinks were more alcoholic than beer.

Over 21% of girls after drinking had experienced unwanted sexual activity, 12% violence and 35% unwanted attention.

The age at which people start drinking is getting younger. 58% of 14-17's started drinking before 14 compared to their parents,(over 40's) of whom only 25% started before they were 14.

The good news is that 41% of girls drink responsibly 4 drinks or less in a four hour session and 75% of boys drink responsibly i.e. 5 drinks or less.

There is an increase in the proportion of young people 14-24 choosing not to drink other than on special occasions. For females 26% do not drink compared to 17% who did not drink this time last year. For males the none drinkers have increased from 12% last year to 18% this year.

The reason young people drink is 'to fit in at social activities' and 'to relax'

Finally the employed drink twice as much as the unemployed, the higher the income the greater the alcohol consumption and City drinkers drink 50% less than Country drinkers. Northern Territory drinkers average double the rate of City drinkers.

TABLE 1

Maximum drinks in a four hour session

The question asked was: "During the last month, what is the greatest number of drinks that you have had in one session."

The number of females (14-24) binge drinking has increased in the past year from 21% to 28% compared to a reduction in the males from 42% down to 38%. This means that one third of all 14-24 year olds regularly binge drink.

| FEMALES AGED 14-24 | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| | 2003 % | 2002 % |
| NONE | 26 | 17 |
| 1-4 DRINKS | 24 | 33 |
| TOTAL DRINK RESPONSIBLY | 50 | 50 |
| <hr/> | | |
| 5-8 DRINKS DOUBLE RESPONSIBLE LEVEL | 20 | 26 |
| <hr/> | | |
| 9-12 DRINKS DRUNK | 12 | 6 |
| 13-30 DRINKS BLOTTO | 16 | 15 |
| <hr/> | | |
| TOTAL BINGE DRINKING | 28 | 21 |

| MALES AGED 14-24 | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| | 2003 % | 2002 % |
| NONE | 18 | 12 |
| 1-5 DRINKS | 21 | 22 |
| TOTAL DRINK RESPONSIBLY | 39 | 33 |
| <hr/> | | |
| 6-10 DRINKS DOUBLE RESPONSIBLE LEVEL | 21 | 21 |
| <hr/> | | |
| 11-16 DRINKS DRUNK | 19 | 22 |
| 17-30 DRINKS BLOTTO | 19 | 20 |
| <hr/> | | |
| TOTAL BINGE DRINKING | 38 | 42 |

For females to drink responsibly is to have no more than 2 drinks on an average day but if they drunk up to 4 drinks in a four hour period once a week it is still regarded as responsible drinking.

For males 4 drinks a day are responsible and up to 5 in a four hour session.

TABLE 2

This chart shows the maximum consumption in one session in the last month. It shows that 14-17 year old girls 56% drunk above the responsible limit compared to 25% of 14-17 year old boys. It also shows that while 26% of girls do not drink in the average month, 34% of boys do not drink.

| | FEMALES AGED 14-17 2003 | MALES AGED 14-17 2003 | FEMALES AGED 50+ | MALES AGED 50+ |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| NONE | 26 | 34 | 31 | 22 |
| RESPONSIBLE DRINKING (INCL. NONE) | 41 | 75 | 96 | 77 |
| DOUBLE RESPONSIBLE LEVEL | 34 | 6 | 4 | 13 |
| BINGE DRINKING | 22 | 19 | - | 7 |

The most alarming trend is the number of girls (22%) who regularly drink between 13 and 30 drinks in one session. This compares to boys where 19% binge drink (17-30 drinks).

This comparison with adults 50+ shows that 96% of females and 77% males drink responsibly and that no women 50+ binge drink compared to 7% of males.

TABLE 3

The number of people drinking responsibly has increased significantly to more than two thirds of the population.

| | ALL FEMALES | | ALL MALES | | ALL PEOPLE | |
|---|-------------|------|-----------|------|------------|------|
| | 2003 | 2002 | 2003 | 2002 | 2003 | 2002 |
| NONE | 23 | 22 | 18 | 15 | 21 | 19 |
| RESPONSIBLE DRINKERS (INCL NONE) ¹ | 77 | 67 | 58 | 51 | 67 | 59 |
| DOUBLE RESPONSIBLE LEVEL ² | 15 | 18 | 21 | 24 | 18 | 21 |
| BINGE DRINKERS ³ | 8 | 9 | 20 | 21 | 14 | 15 |

1. Responsible drinkers males 0-5 drinks in 4 hours females 0-4 drinks in 4 hours
 2. Double responsible level males 6-10 drinks in 4 hours females 5-8 drinks in 4 hours
 3. Binge drinking males 11-30 drinks in 4 hours females 9-30 drinks in 4 hours

TABLE 5

During the last month what is the greatest number of drinks that you have had in one day?

| GREATEST DRINKS IN ONE DAY BY ALL PEOPLE OVER 14 (AVERAGE SESSION 4 HOURS) | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | NON E % | 2 DRINK S % | 4 DRINK S % | 6 DRINK S % | 8 DRINK S % | 10 DRINK S % | 10 + DRINK S % | 20 + DRINK S % |
| MEN | 15 | 16 | 16 | 14 | 8 | 6 | 27 | 7 |
| WOME N | 22 | 28 | 17 | 13 | 5 | 4 | 7 | - |

| 10 DRINKS OR MORE IN ONE DAY | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|------------|----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| | TOTAL % | MEN % | WOMEN % | 14-17 % | 14-24 % | 25-34 % | 35-49 % | 50 + % |
| 2003 | 16 | 27 | 7 | 18 | 39 | 24 | 11 | 4 |
| 2002 | 18 | 27 | 7 | | 45 | 32 | 16 | 6 |
| 2001 | 14 | 22 | 10 | | 33 | 29 | 11 | 5 |
| 1997 | 9 | 16 | 3 | | 18 | 14 | 9 | 6 |

TABLE 6

How many glasses of alcohol do you have on average each week?

| | NUMBER OF ALCOHOLIC DRINKS | TOTAL % | MEN % | WOMEN % | 14-24 % | 25-34 % | 35-49 % | 50+ % |
|------|----------------------------------|------------|----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|
| 2003 | NONE | 30 | 24 | 36 | 36 | 28 | 22 | 34 |
| 2002 | NONE | 32 | 23 | 39 | 30 | 23 | 26 | 40 |
| 1992 | NONE | 39 | 28 | 50 | 54 | 29 | 30 | 43 |
| 2003 | 6 PLUS | 32 | 46 | 20 | 30 | 30 | 35 | 31 |
| 2002 | 6 PLUS | 30 | 44 | 18 | 28 | 29 | 31 | 33 |
| 1992 | 6 PLUS | 24 | 34 | 13 | 14 | 25 | 28 | 25 |

TABLE 7

How old were you when you had your first alcoholic drink?

| | | | | | AGE AT PRESENT | | | | | |
|---------------------|------|---------|-------|---------|----------------|---------|---------|-------|---------|--------|
| AGE HAD FIRST DRINK | | TOTAL % | MEN % | WOMEN % | 14-17 % | 14-24 % | 25-34 % | 35-49 | 50-64 % | 65 + % |
| 10 OR YOUNGER | 2003 | 10 | 11 | 8 | 9 | 13 | 6 | 10 | 9 | 1 |
| | 2002 | 8 | 10 | 8 | | 11 | 11 | 8 | | 2 |
| 14 OR YOUNGER | 2003 | 31 | 34 | 27 | 58 | 50 | 36 | 34 | 21 | 10 |
| | 2002 | 29 | 34 | 26 | | 53 | 32 | 27 | 14 | 9 |
| | 2001 | 29 | 34 | 25 | | 52 | 30 | 30 | 14 | 8 |
| | 1995 | 21 | 24 | 17 | | 36 | 25 | 19 | 10 | NA |
| NEVER DRANK | 2003 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 14 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 8 |
| | 2002 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 2 | | 10 |
| | 2001 | 6 | 3 | 9 | | 8 | 2 | 2 | 10 | |
| | 1995 | 7 | 6 | 8 | | 15 | 3 | 4 | 8 | |

→ **84% of 14-17 year old girls have drunk alcohol**

Their first drink was a premixed drink 60% of the time with cola and southern comfort, cola and bourbon, stoli ruski, lemonade and miduri, kahlua and milk the favorite drinks.

The remaining 40% drank wine, rum, vodka and brandy.

None drank beer.

Only 40% knew mixers had a higher alcohol content than beer.

→ **97% of 18-24 year old women have drunk alcohol**

Their first drink was a premixed drink in 60% of cases using similar mixers as the younger women.

Beer and champagne were amongst the other starting drinks only 50% knew its alcohol content was higher than beer.

TABLE 8**Which line best describes why you usually drink?**

| | | TOTAL % | MEN % | WOMEN % | 14-24 % | 25-34 % | 35-49 % | 50+ % |
|--|------|------------|----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Because I like the taste | 2003 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 18 | 23 | 19 | 17 |
| | 2002 | 14 | 15 | 13 | 17 | 21 | 13 | 11 |
| | 2001 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 18 | 16 | 21 | 15 |
| To fit in at social activities | 2003 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 36 | 25 | 25 | 23 |
| | 2002 | 31 | 27 | 35 | 42 | 33 | 33 | 22 |
| | 2001 | 27 | 29 | 25 | 30 | 26 | 26 | 30 |
| To help me relax | 2003 | 27 | 30 | 25 | 21 | 35 | 36 | 21 |
| | 2002 | 28 | 34 | 23 | 16 | 28 | 34 | 30 |
| | 2001 | 26 | 33 | 19 | 18 | 35 | 28 | 26 |
| To get drunk | 2003 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 1 | - |
| | 2002 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 1 | - |
| | 2001 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 1 | - |
| Two glasses a day are good for my health | 2003 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 11 |
| | 2002 | 5 | 5 | 4 | - | - | 6 | 8 |
| | 2001 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 |

The importance of fitting in at social occasions and the low incidence of drinking to get drunk do not agree with the drinking behaviour previously detailed in this report unless people start out drinking to 'fit in' and end up drinking more than they had intended.

THE SALVATION ARMY COMMENTS

Binge drinking is very dangerous and is far higher today than ever before. Currently 3,700 people a year die from complications related to alcohol abuse. This kind of binge drinking will greatly increase the death rate from alcohol related diseases as the effects of a life time of excessive drinking become evident. The health effects of excessive drinking does not influence the drinking habits of young people but unintended sex, violence and other injuries from falls and uncontrolled behaviour have immediate effects.

The Governments of Australia are all concerned and have instituted educational campaigns to reach young people and parents. The Salvation Army sees the terrible effects on all age groups though our rehabilitation programs that saw 35,000 people last year trying to get off alcohol and drugs. We also see the victims in our homeless crisis centres were sadly the average age is 30.

The massive change in the drinking habits of young people in recent years is even more worrying than the taking of illegal drugs as it effects so many more people. There is a community acceptance of alcohol. The positive health findings of responsible drinking in recent years has caused many people to forget the dreadful effects of excessive drinking.

We call on all those who drink to consider their consumption in objective terms. Binge drinking will cause immediate and long term consequences that will almost inevitably ruin your life in one way or another.

Please if you drink then drink responsibly.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The survey was conducted by CATI (A Division of Roy Morgan Research Pty.Ltd)

The sample was an Australia wide random sample of 609 men and women 14 years of age and over. They were interviewed by telephone on the 20th and 21st of August 2003.

Number of people interviewed by age group was as follows:-

| AGE GROUP | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------------|--------|------------|
| 14 – 17 | 44 | 7% |
| 18 – 24 | 74 | 12% |
| 25 – 34 | 114 | 18% |
| 35 – 49 | 171 | 27% |
| 50 – 64 | 124 | 22% |
| 65 plus | 82 | 14% |
| TOTAL (14 AND OVER) | 609 | 100% |

| | | |
|-------|-----|-----|
| MEN | 302 | 49% |
| WOMEN | 309 | 51% |

QUESTIONS ASKED:

1. How many glasses of alcohol do you have on average each week?
2. How old were you when you had your first alcoholic drink?
3. During the last month, what is the greatest number of drinks that you have had in one day?
4. Which one of the following best describes why you usually drink?
 - A To fit in at social activities
 - B To relax
 - C Like the taste
 - D No longer drinks alcohol
 - E One or two glasses a day are good for you
 - F To get drunk

If respondent is female aged 14-24 and drinks alcohol they were asked:

- What was the first drink you ever tried?
- To the best of your knowledge is the alcoholic content of premixed drinks higher or lower than regular beer?
- Which of the following have you ever experienced after consuming alcohol?

- unwanted attention
- unwanted sexual activity
- violence towards you