



**ALCOHOL
AWARENESS
SURVEY 2005**

**Conducted for:
THE SALVATION ARMY**

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SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS FOR 2005

The purpose of the August 2005 Roy Morgan Survey, which interviewed 1296 people throughout Australia, was to examine trends in regular drinking patterns, drinking to excess and for the first time this year we examine drinking during pregnancy.

The proportion of the population who usually do not drink any alcohol is now 37% of all those over 14. For males none-drinkers have risen to 30%, which is the highest figure since our surveys began in 1992. For women as none-drinking for women is 44% which is not as high as it used to be.

For those who drink between 6 and 30 standard drinks a week, the surveys show that 23% women are regularly drinking at this level, compared to 13% in 1992. This compares to 38% of all men who drink at this level, which is a reduction on recent years. (see table 1 for details)

It is frightening that 4.8 million people, 29% of all people over the age of 14, regularly drink more than double the responsible drinking level in one session (up to 10 drinks). This includes more than 750,000 women (9%) who regularly 'binge drink', 9-30 drinks in one evening and more than 1.2 million men (15%) who regularly 'binge drink', 11-30 drinks in one evening (see table 2 for details).

The worst age group are young people aged 14-24. Each week end 24% of all young women will 'binge drink' between 9 and 30 drinks in a session and 25% of all young men will 'binge drink' between 11 and 30 drinks. This is a total of 750,000 young people aged 14-24 drinking up to 30 drinks in a session.

The level for young men binge drinking has dropped from 38% to 25% but drinking by young women has now increased to virtually match them, a dubious level of equality! (see table 3)

Foetal alcohol syndrome

Of women aged 25-49 who are mothers 1,262,000 (23%) continued to drink during pregnancy. The younger mothers aged 25-34 are more likely to have drunk alcohol during pregnancy with 33% saying they drank. 19% of mothers in the over 50 aged group remember drinking during pregnancy. (see table 4)

Those on a lower income were less likely to drink during pregnancy. For those where the income of the main earner in the household was less than \$50,000 21% drank during pregnancy whereas for those in the over \$70,000 bracket 41% drank.

Women said that in 17% of cases men reduced their drinking to accompany them during pregnancy. The rest 83% did not change their drinking habits. (see tables 5a and 5b).

Finally people were asked 'On a scale of 1 to 10 what they thought of 'drinking during pregnancy'. More than 3 million women (37%) are not convinced that it is necessary to totally abstain from drinking during pregnancy. One million strongly disagree with the statement that drinking during pregnancy is dangerous to a baby's health.

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 1296 people 14 years of age and over. They were interviewed by telephone from 27 July until 3rd August 2005.

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

AGE GROUP	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
14 – 17	87	7%
18 – 24	145	12%
25 – 34	216	17%
35 – 49	356	27%
50 – 64	287	22%
65 plus	205	15%
TOTAL (14 AND OVER)	1296	100%

MEN	644	49%
WOMEN	652	51%

SUBJECTS COVERED:

1. Number of standard drinks of alcohol a person has on average each week
2. The greatest number of standard drinks that a person has in one session
3. Alcohol consumed during pregnancy with attitude of both parents to the issue

Number of standard drinks of alcohol people have on average each week

TABLE 1

	<i>NUMBER OF ALCOHOLIC DRINKS</i>	<i>TOTAL %</i>	<i>MEN %</i>	<i>WOMEN %</i>	<i>14-24 %</i>	<i>25-34 %</i>	<i>35-49 %</i>	<i>50+ %</i>
2005	NONE	37	30	44	43	34	34	38
2004	NONE	35	26	45	47	30	31	35
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
2005	6-30 DRINKS	30	38	23	17	28	35	36
2004	6-30 DRINKS	29	40	19	19	24	32	35
2003	6-30 DRINKS	32	46	20	30	30	35	31
2002	6-30 DRINKS	30	44	18	28	29	31	33
1992	6-30 DRINKS	24	34	13	14	25	28	25

(Base All Respondents N= 1296)

This table shows the increase in the number of people who are regularly choosing not to drink although still not as high as in 1992. It is particularly gratifying to see the number of young adults choosing to not drink.

Largest number of drinks consumed in a session (in the last month)

Responsible drinking for women is no more than 2 drinks a day but if they drink up to 4 drinks in a session it is still regarded as responsible drinking as long as it only occurs occasionally.

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

The number of people drinking responsibly has increased significantly to more than two thirds of the population. However the proportion of both men and women who regularly binge drink is changing with women increasingly part of binge drinking and men declining although still outnumbering women in excessive drinking.

It is frightening that we have 4.8 million people (over 14) who regularly drink more than double the responsible drinking level in one session. This includes more than 750,000 women who regularly binge drink , 9-30 drinks in one evening and more than 1.2 million men who regularly binge drink, 11-30 drinks in one evening.

TABLE 2

	ALL FEMALES			ALL MALES			ALL PEOPLE		
	2003 %	2004 %	2005 %	2003 %	2004 %	2005 %	2003 %	2004 %	2005 %
NONE	28	30	29	20	21	21	24	24	25
RESPONSIBLE DRINKERS (INCL. NONE)	77	78	76	58	58	63	67	68	69
DOUBLE RESPONSIBLE LEVEL	15	14	14	21	25	20	18	20	17
BINGE DRINKERS	8	6	9	20	17	15	14	11	12
TOTAL IRRESPONSIBLE DRINKERS	23	20	23	41	42	35	32	31	29

(Base All Drinkers N=1249)

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

Maximum drinks by 14-24's

One of the problems of a survey that looks just at a small segment of the population is that the number of people involved in the sample is small. In this section only a total of 272 young people aged 24-24 were interviewed. Over three years this increases the total interviewed to more than 800 and hence trends are more reliable. These tables show that the trend is for young women to now match young men in binge drinking.

Over the last three years the number of young men drinking responsibly has increased to 54% and the number binge drinking, consuming more than 11 drinks in a session, has decreased to 25%. At the same time the number of young women drinking responsibly has increased to 62% but the number of young women binge drinking i.e. drinking more than 9 drinks in a session, has increased to 24%.

This means that regularly a quarter of all young people aged 14-24 (750,000) are binge drinking.

TABLE 3

YOUNG WOMEN AGED 14-24			
	2003 %	2004 %	2005
NONE	26	21	27
1-4 DRINKS	24	41	35
TOTAL DRINK RESPONSIBLY	50	62	62
5-8 DRINKS DOUBLE RESPONSIBLE LEVEL	20	25	12
9-12 DRINKS DRUNK	12	7	13
13-30 DRINKS BLOTTO	16	5	11
TOTAL BINGE DRINKING	28	12	24

(Base all females aged 14-24 N= 134)

YOUNG MEN AGED 14-24			
	2003 %	2004 %	2005
NONE	18	18	30
1-5 DRINKS	21	33	24
TOTAL DRINK RESPONSIBLY	39	51	54
6-10 DRINKS DOUBLE RESPONSIBLE LEVEL	21	21	20
11-16 DRINKS DRUNK	19	14	17
17-30 DRINKS BLOTTO	19	13	8
TOTAL BINGE DRINKING	38	27	25

(Base all males 14-24 N= 138)

Drinking and Pregnancy

Women were first asked if they were the parent of a child; then for those who were mothers if they drank alcohol when they were pregnant.

TABLE 4

WOMEN'S AGE	HAVE GIVEN BIRTH	DRANK WHEN PREGNANT
14-17		
18-24	18%	NIL
25-34	58%	33%
35-49	80%	27%
50+	83%	19%
TOTAL	65%	23%

Of women aged 25-49 who are mothers 1,262,000 (23%) continued to drink during pregnancy. The younger mothers aged 25-34 are more likely to have drunk alcohol during pregnancy with 33% saying they drank. 19% of mothers in the over 50 aged group remember drinking during pregnancy.

Those on a lower income were less likely to drink during pregnancy. For those where the income of the main earner in the household was less than \$50,000 21% drank during pregnancy whereas for those in the over \$70,000 bracket 41% drank.

We also asked males about the drinking habits of the partners during their pregnancy and they suggested that 29% of pregnant women drank compared to the female figure of 23%

Men were asked if they changed their drinking behaviour to support their partners during pregnancy.

Table 5a

Age of men	18-24	25-34	35-49	50+	Total
Drank more	N/A	2	3	1	2
Drank same	17	40	51	50	49
Drank less	49	29	26	24	25
Didn't drink	34	29	20	25	24

Women were asked if their partners changed their drinking habits to support them

Table 5b

Age of women	18-24	25-34	35-49	50+	Total
Drank more	8	14	3	4	5
Drank Same	21	48	61	56	55
Drank Less	44	15	21	15	17
Didn't drink	12	17	13	21	17

While men have a different perception of their change in drinking habits while their partner is pregnant to the women. It is true to say that both partners agree that the younger men support their partners more than the older men. However the majority do not stop drinking to support the women while they are pregnant. This must make it more difficult for pregnant women to stop drinking.

On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is strongly disagree and 10 strongly agree please rate the following question:- Drinking alcohol during pregnancy is dangerous to a baby's health.

Table 6

	Rating	Men	Women	Total
Strongly Agree	10	54%	63%	59%
Disagree	6-9	27%	23%	25%
Disagree strongly	1-5	19%	14%	16%

This table suggests that 37% of women (more than three million women) are not convinced that it is necessary to totally abstain from drinking during pregnancy. More than one million women (14%) of women disagree strongly that drinking during pregnancy is dangerous to a baby's health