

TOM

DATA SNAPSHOT:

Alcohol use and awareness among men in the ACT



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KEY FINDINGS

Men are twice as likely as women to drink at least four times each week.

One in five men (20 per cent) drink five or more standard drinks on a typical drinking occasion, compared to nine per cent of women.

One in ten men (10 per cent) drink five or more standard drinks two or more times a week, compared to five per cent of women.

Nearly one third of men (31 per cent) surveyed in the ACT want to reduce their alcohol intake over the next 12 months, compared to 21 per cent of women.

Six in ten people (60 per cent) are aware of the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol* (the Guidelines). However, only 23 per cent report being aware of the content of the guidelines. This was similar for men and women.

More men than women overestimate the maximum number of standard drinks per day to minimise the risk of long-term harm (38 per cent of men, 28 per cent of women).

More men than women overestimate the maximum number of standard drinks in a drinking session to minimise the risk of short-term harm (seven per cent of men, three per cent of women).

APPROACH

A survey of people in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) was conducted in February 2020. The survey examined:

- awareness of the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol*
- alcohol use, and
- help seeking relating to alcohol use.

The survey was administered by YouGov Galaxy via Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) among a sample of 500 respondents aged 18 to 65 years currently residing in the ACT. The sample was sourced from Sample Pages.

People were called by telephone interviewers, told the purpose of the research and asked whether they would be willing to participate. All interviews were completed between 24 and 26 February 2020. Survey respondents included 250 men and 250 women.

SAMPLE COMPOSITION BY AGE-GROUP (UNWEIGHTED)

18-24 YEARS	25-34 YEARS	35-49 YEARS	50-65 YEARS	TOTAL
72	135	160	133	500

FINDINGS

FREQUENCY AND VOLUME OF DRINKING

The proportions of men and women who drink alcohol are similar.

Q: DO YOU DRINK ALCOHOL?

	MALE (%)	FEMALE (%)	TOTAL (%)
Yes	82	78	80
No	18	22	20
Totals	100	100	100

Men drink more frequently than women, with more than one in five (22 per cent) drinking on at least four occasions each week. More men than women drink two, three or four times or more each week.

Q: HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU HAVE AN ALCOHOLIC DRINK?

	MALE (%)	FEMALE (%)	TOTAL (%)
Once a month or less	20	26	23
2 to 4 times a month	27	37	32
2 to 3 time every week	31	26	28
4 times or more per week	22	11	17
Total	100	100	100

Men drink a greater quantity of alcohol per drinking occasion than women. Men are more than twice as likely as women to have five or more drinks on a typical drinking occasion. One in five (20 percent) men are drinking alcohol in excess of the Guidelines for short-term harm.

Q: HOW MANY STANDARD DRINKS DO YOU HAVE ON A TYPICAL DRINKING OCCASION?

	MALE (%)	FEMALE (%)	TOTAL (%)
1 to 2	45	61	53
3 to 4	35	30	33
5 to 9	15	7	11
10 or more	5	2	4
	100	100	100

Men (18 per cent) are twice as likely as women (nine per cent) to drink at risky levels for short-term harm (more than four standard drinks on one drinking occasion) two to four times per month.

Q: HOW OFTEN DO YOU DRINK MORE THAN FOUR STANDARD DRINKS ON ONE DRINKING OCCASION?

	MALE (%)	FEMALE (%)	TOTAL (%)
Once a month or less	71	86	78
2 to 4 times a month	18	9	14
2 to 3 time every week	7	4	6
4 times or more per week	3	1	2
Total	100	100	100

Nearly one third of men (31 per cent) intend to reduce their alcohol intake in the next 12 months, compared to 20 per cent of women.

Q: DO YOU INTEND ON REDUCING YOUR ALCOHOL INTAKE IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

	MALE (%)	FEMALE (%)	TOTAL (%)
Yes	31	20	25
No	66	74	70
Don't know	3	6	4
Total	100	100	100

AWARENESS OF THE ALCOHOL GUIDELINES

Overall, six in ten (60 per cent) people surveyed are aware of the National Health and Medical Research Council's Guidelines. However, only 23 per cent report being aware of the content of the Guidelines. There is no significant difference in awareness of the Guidelines and their content between men and women.

Q: ARE YOU AWARE OF OFFICIAL GUIDELINES TO REDUCE HEALTH RISKS FROM DRINKING ALCOHOL?

	MALE (%)	FEMALE (%)	TOTAL (%)
Yes, I know they exist and I'm aware of the content	24	22	23
Yes, but I'm not aware of the content	35	39	37
Net Yes	59	61	60
No	41	39	40

Among those aware of the Guidelines, men are more than twice as likely as women to correctly identify the maximum of four standard drinks in a single session in order to reduce the risk of short-term harm. However, 81 per cent of women underestimated the number of standard drinks (ie. nominated zero to three standard drinks), compared to 65 per cent of men.

Nine per cent of both women and men said they did not know.

Q: WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF STANDARD DRINKS A PERSON CAN HAVE IN A SINGLE SESSION IF THEY WANT TO REDUCE THE RISK OF SHORT-TERM ALCOHOL-RELATED HARM, SUCH AS INJURY?

NUMBER OF STANDARD DRINKS	MALE (%)	FEMALE (%)	TOTAL (%)
0	3	5	4
1	11	16	14
2	34	46	40
3	17	14	15
4	19	7	13
5	3	3	3
6	2	-	1
More than 6	2	-	1
Don't know	9	9	9
Total	100	100	100

Of those aware of the Guidelines, nearly one third (31 per cent) of respondents correctly identify that the maximum number of standard drinks that a person can have in a day if they want to reduce the risk of long-term alcohol-related harm is two. Men are less likely to be aware of this than women (26 per cent versus 35 per cent).

Men are almost twice as likely to overestimate the number of drinks to reduce the risk of long-term harm, with 39 per cent electing that three, four, five, six or more drinks could be consumed in a day before risking long-term harm, compared to 20 per cent of women.

Fifteen per cent of both men and women responded that they didn't know.

Q: WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF STANDARD DRINKS A PERSON CAN CONSUME IN A DAY IF THEY WANT TO REDUCE THE RISK OF LONG-TERM ALCOHOL-RELATED HARM?

NUMBER OF STANDARD DRINKS	MALE (%)	FEMALE (%)	TOTAL (%)
0	9	10	9
1	11	20	16
2	26	35	31
3	12	7	9
4	14	7	11
5	4	3	3
6	5	1	3
More than 6	3	2	2
Don't know	15	15	15
Total	100	100	100

ABOUT FARE

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to stop the harm caused by alcohol.

Alcohol harm in Australia is significant. Nearly 6,000 lives are lost every year and more than 144,000 people are hospitalised making alcohol one of our nation's greatest preventative health challenges.

As a leading advocate of evidence-based research, FARE contributes to policies and programs that support the public good, while holding the alcohol industry to account.

FARE works with leading researchers, communities, governments, health professionals and frontline service providers to bring about change and reduce alcohol harm.

If you would like to contribute to FARE's important work, call us on (02) 6122 8600, email info@fare.org.au, or visit: www.fare.org.au

ABOUT TOM

TOM is a digital health promotion campaign in the ACT that encourages men aged 25 to 55 years who drink at risky levels to reduce their drinking, and aims to increase awareness of the National Health and Medical Research Council's Alcohol Guidelines.

TOM stands for a "Third Of Men", because one in three men surveyed in the ACT would like to reduce their alcohol use.

To find out more about TOM visit: www.fare.org.au/TOM