



RESEARCH SUMMARY
Date Compiled: March 2023

Key takeaways from included research:

- An Australian study examined online alcohol purchasing and home delivery service and drinking behaviors as a result of these. Researchers found that 1 in 5 participants used delivery services to extend their home drinking sessions. Of these individuals, one-third state they would have stopped drinking if these services were not available. To reduce harmful drinking behavior, it is important to have stronger regulations surrounding these services.
- This study wanted to examine whether high school students' alcohol use is associated with specific events such as prom, graduation, and parties. Researchers found that most students did not drink around these events, however nearly all reported that they perceived typical high school seniors doing so.
- A study looked at riding an e-scooter while under the influence in Norway and riders' perception of a "safe" amount of alcohol to consume. Results showed that 56% of participants reported it was safe to consume one or more alcoholic drinks before riding an e-scooter. Researchers suggests a greater emphasis is needed on risk of riding while under the influence. They also encouraged health warnings and random blood alcohol concentration checks like for motor vehicle drivers.
- This editorial by Dr. Thomas Babor emphasizes the need for accurate scientific research, meaning the alcohol industry should not be influencing or funding the alcohol research. Over the past several years more evidence has surfaced that the alcohol industry's influence has penetrated the highest levels of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) which threatens public health globally. Dr. Babor highlighted a recent study of email correspondence between NIAAA and the alcohol industry which included policy-relevant research development over the period of nine years. It is imperative further research is done to find and eliminate any real or apparent conflicts of interest and that alcohol research is based on public health and safety, without influence from the alcohol industry.

CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY OF A CONVENIENCE SAMPLE OF AUSTRALIANS WHO USE ALCOHOL HOME DELIVERY SERVICES

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Introduction: Online alcohol purchasing and home delivery has increased in recent years, accelerated by the onset of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. This article aims to investigate the purchasing and drinking behaviour of Australians who use online alcohol delivery services.

Method: A cross-sectional self-report survey with a convenience sample of 1158 Australians ≥ 18 years (49.3% female) who used an online alcohol delivery service in the past 3 months, recruited through paid social media advertisements from September to November 2021. Quota sampling was used to obtain a sample with age and gender strata proportional to the Australian adult population. Descriptive statistics were generated and logistic regression used to explore variables that predict hazardous/harmful drinking (Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test score ≥ 8).

Results: One-in-five (20.1%, 95% confidence interval [CI] 17.8–22.5) participants had used an alcohol delivery service to extend a home drinking session because they had run out of alcohol and wanted to continue drinking and, of these, one-third (33.9%, 95% CI 27.9–40.4) indicated that if the service was not available they would have stopped drinking. Using delivery services in this way was associated with six times higher odds of drinking at hazardous/harmful levels (odds ratio 6.26, 95% CI 3.78–10.36). Participants ≤ 25 years were significantly more likely to report never having their identification verified when receiving their alcohol delivery at the door compared with purchasing takeaway alcohol in-person at a bottle shop ($p < 0.001$, McNemar).

Discussion and Conclusion: Given the risks associated with alcohol delivery, regulation of these services should be improved to meet the same standards as bricks-and-mortar bottle shops.

Source: Colbert, S., Wilkinson, C., Thornton, L., Feng, X., Campaign, A., & Richmond, R. (2023). Cross-sectional survey of a convenience sample of Australians who use alcohol home delivery services. *Drug and Alcohol Review*. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 36853829.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/dar.13627>

PROM, GRADUATION AND PARTIES: ALCOHOL USE AND NORMATIVE PERCEPTIONS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS DURING SPECIFIC EVENTS

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Background: Previous research has shown that a majority of adolescents in the United States initiate and drink alcohol prior to graduating high school and nearly twenty percent of high school seniors engage in heavy episodic drinking. Despite anecdotal evidence and media portrayals of alcohol use during high school events (e.g., prom), little is understood about alcohol use surrounding specific events that may be identified as “high-risk” events and addressed in specific interventions. Similarly, normative perceptions exert powerful influence on behaviors but little is understood about normative perceptions of alcohol use at high school events.

Objectives: The purpose of the present study was to understand whether high school alcohol use is associated with specific events by describing behaviors and normative perceptions.

Methods: Participants were 386 U.S. college students age 18 to 19 (60.4 % female, mean age = 18.4) who provided retrospective accounts of their alcohol use surrounding senior year high school events (either before, which is relevant to pre-gaming addressed in this special issue, during, or after).

Results: Most students did not drink surrounding high school events but nearly all reported that they perceived that the typical high school senior did. Those who did drink alcohol tended to drink heavily,

particularly during prom. Alcohol use was associated with other high school events ranging from the beginning of senior year (e.g., Homecoming) though the end (e.g., graduation parties)

Conclusions: Results indicate the importance of future research efforts tailoring intervention efforts around specific events and the applicability of personalized normative feedback approaches.

Source: Gilson, M. S., Kilmer, J. R., Lee, C. M., & Larimer, M. E. (2023). Prom, graduation and parties: alcohol use and normative perceptions among high school seniors during specific events. *Addictive behaviors*, 138, 107569. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2022.107569>

DRUNK OR SOBER? NUMBER OF ALCOHOL UNITS PERCEIVED TO BE SAFE BEFORE RIDING E-SCOOTER **March 2023**

Abstract

Riding an e-scooter under the influence of alcohol is one of the most frequently reported risky behaviours among riders in various countries, especially in the Nordic countries. What is the Number of Alcohol Units perceived to be Safe (NAUS) before riding an e-scooter? Who is more likely to report higher perceived alcohol tolerance before riding an e-scooter? What is the level of risk perception in this transport domain? The current study advances the literature by aiming to address these questions. Using a cross-sectional survey (n = 395) in Trondheim, Norway we developed an integrated model combining a path analysis with negative binomial regression to predict NAUS before riding an e-scooter. Results show that (i) around 56 % of participants reported that it is safe to consume one or more units of alcohol prior to riding an e-scooter, (ii) younger people, frequent users of e-scooters, individuals with low education, and people with lower perceived risks of an accident were more likely to report higher NAUS. Alcohol health warnings and random blood alcohol concentration tests on e-scooter sites could be prioritised among these segments of the population, and (iii) there is a rather high risk perception in this transport domain. We found that there are strong connections between higher risk perception, worry and fewer NAUS. Policymakers could highlight risks of accidents by e-scooters under the influence of alcohol.

Source: Mehdizadeh, M., Nordfjaern, T., & Klöckner, C. A. (2023). Drunk or sober? Number of alcohol units perceived to be safe before riding e-scooter. *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, 181, 106930. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aap.2022.106930>

BIG ALCOHOL MEETS BIG SCIENCE AT NIAAA: WHAT COULD GO WRONG? **February 2023**

Effective public health policy often relies on accurate information generated from scientific research. The last three decades have seen an increase in the alcohol industry's scientific activities conducted by trade associations, social aspect organizations, and the large global producers under the umbrella of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives such as funding research projects, interpreting scientific findings for the public, and consulting in the development of alcohol control policies (Babor & Robaina, 2013). As illustrated by the Mitchell and McCambridge (2023) article in this issue of the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, the industry's scientific activities should be carefully monitored to ensure that the integrity of the research is maintained, appropriate ethical procedures are followed, and industry CSR activities connected with research do not promote commercial interests at the expense of public health. What is described in the Mitchell and Mc-Cambridge article, and related evaluations (Mitchell et. al., 2020; National Institutes of Health [NIH] Advisory Committee, 2018; Rabin, 2018) of the Moderate Alcohol and Cardiovascular Health Trial (MACH 15), provides strong evidence that alcohol industry influence has penetrated the highest levels of the U.S. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) in ways that threaten public health at both national and global levels. The aim of this editorial is to describe what went wrong and how to put it right.

Source: Babor, T. F. (2023). Big Alcohol Meets Big Science at NIAAA: What Could Go Wrong?. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 84(1), 5-10. <https://doi.org/10.15288/jsad.22-00434>