



Risky drinking among undergraduate university students: A social norms-based approach

BASELINE DATA SNAPSHOT

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PREPARED BY THE FOUNDATION FOR ALCOHOL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

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About the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education

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. More than 5,500 lives are lost every year and more than 157,000 people are hospitalised making alcohol one of our nation's greatest preventive health challenges.

FARE has been working since 2001 with communities, governments, health professionals and police across the country to stop alcohol harms by supporting world-leading research, raising public awareness and advocating for changes to alcohol policy.

FARE is guided by the World Health Organization's (2010) Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol for stopping alcohol harms through population-based strategies, problem directed policies, and direct interventions.

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

Summary

This report provides an overview of the findings of a baseline survey undertaken as part of the project *Risky drinking among undergraduate university students: a social norms-based approach*. This overview combines the results of surveys undertaken at both the Australian National University and the University of Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

Results from the survey align with previous evidence that university students tend to over-estimate the drinking behaviour of others. On analysis, significant differences were found in the following three areas:

Respondents' perceptions of their own drinking differed significantly from their perception of the frequency of alcohol consumption by close friends and students in their year. Respondents overestimated the frequency with which others drank at frequencies of 2-3 times per week and more than four times per week, but underestimated the frequency with which others drank for 2-4 times per month, monthly or less, and never.

Respondents' perception of their own propensity to drink to get drunk was significantly different from their perception of this in other students in their year, but not significantly different from that for their closest friends.

Respondents' individually held beliefs that it is okay to get drunk, differed significantly from perceptions of this belief in other students in their year, but did not differ significantly from their perception of the belief of close friends in this respect.

About the project

This project aims to reduce risky drinking among undergraduate university students in the ACT. The three-year project will involve the development of a campaign that addresses misperceptions of social norms around drinking.

The project is a collaboration between the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), the Australian National University (ANU) and the University of Canberra (UC). FARE is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that works with Australian communities and governments to stop alcohol harm. The project is funded by an ACT Health grant and received Human Research Ethics Committee approval from both ANU and UC.¹

The project has three objectives:

- Identify existing norms about alcohol use.
- Address common misperceptions through implementation of a campaign.
- Increase students' confidence in discussing risky drinking behaviours with their peers.

While alcohol misuse extends across all age groups, patterns of risky alcohol consumption are most evident in younger cohorts, particularly 18-24 year olds.² Undergraduate students are one sub-set of this group. This project takes a social norms-based approach to facilitate attitudinal and behavioural change, because:

- University students tend to overestimate both the frequency and the amount of drinking among peers³.
- University students generally believe that their peers are more permissive in their personal attitudes about substance use than is in fact the case⁴. Fear-based approaches and those which promote abstinence have not been shown to be successful⁴.

The project consists of three phases:

1. The baseline survey (completed) and focus groups to assess social norms and their influence on drinking patterns and attitudes.
2. The development and implementation of a campaign to address any misperceptions of social norms about drinking alcohol.
3. A follow-up survey and project evaluation to assess any change in attitudes and behaviour.

¹ANU Asia & Pacific Delegated Ethics Review Committee ERC-Protocol 2017/101; Canberra University Human Research Ethics Committee – Project REC 17-50.

²National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS). (2016). Key Findings. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017

³Stock, C., McAlaney, J., Pischke, C., Vriesacker, B., Van Hal, G., Akvardar, Y., Orosova, O., Kalina, O., Guillen-Grima, F., and Bewick, B. (2014). Student estimations of peer alcohol consumption: Links between the Social Norms Approach and the Health Promoting University concept *Scand J Public Health* November 2014 42: 52-59, doi:10.1177/1403494814545107

⁴McAlaney, J., Bewick, B., & Hughes, C. (2011). The international development of the "Social Norms" approach to drug education and prevention. *Drugs: Education, Prevention & Policy*, 18(2), 81-89.

Approach

The baseline survey was undertaken to assess social norms and how these influence first-year undergraduate students' consumption behaviours, attitudes towards alcohol, and perception of their cohorts' consumption behaviours and attitudes towards alcohol. Data were assessed to determine any differences between actual and perceived consumption behaviours and attitudes. Also included in the survey were questions about students' confidence and readiness to discuss risky drinking behaviours with peers. A follow up survey will be undertaken with third-year undergraduate students in 2019 after completion of the campaigns.

The survey consisted of 30 multiple choice questions informed by a rapid review of literature and validated surveys. Students were asked questions about their own alcohol use, their attitudes towards alcohol, and their perception of the alcohol consumption behaviours and attitudes towards alcohol of two other groups: their close friends and other students in their year at university.

The survey was conducted online using Qualtrics survey software. Survey respondents were offered a free coffee voucher for participating in the survey and were also invited to participate in focus groups to be held after the survey closed as a way of further exploring the survey findings.

FARE worked in partnership with both universities to plan and implement the baseline survey. The Planning and Performance Measurement Division at ANU and the Strategy, Planning and Performance Division at UC provided the necessary advice and assistance to the project team. As both universities had different requirements, the approach and timing of the surveys varied and are described below separately.

SPSS statistical software was used to produce frequency tables for all responses. These results are provided in the tables that follow. Further analysis was undertaken on a number of questions to assess the social norms aspects of the survey, that is, whether actual and perceived alcohol consumption behaviours and attitudes differed significantly.

A series of ordinal logistic regressions were used to examine these relationships across four areas, including frequency of alcohol consumption, frequency of drinking to get drunk, belief in such behaviour being acceptable, and number of alcoholic drinks in a standard session. R Statistical software, including the MASS package was used to conduct these analyses. Results relating to each of the four main areas are presented in results section.

It should be noted that the data obtained separately from surveys at ANU and UC have been combined as one sample for analysis and presentation. This may mask any individual differences in responses between the university campuses.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY:

FARE is partnering with the Australian National University Student Association (ANUSA) and the Division of Student Life – Access, Inclusion and Wellbeing to undertake the project. Permission to conduct the survey was provided by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience). The Planning and Performance Measurement Division randomly selected 250 first-year students over age 18, and emailed an invitation containing the survey link to selected students. Reminder emails were sent to these students during the survey period.

The survey was deployed at ANU on 14 August 2017 and was open for two weeks initially. To maximise the response rate, and with appropriate approval, the survey was extended for another two weeks from 5 September and an additional 250 first-year students over age 18 were invited to participate.

The survey was promoted by ANUSA on its website and social media. Posters were displayed around campus, including in the residential halls.

At ANU, survey responses were received and collated by the ANU-based Project Advisor, and were made available to the FARE project team as Qualtrics output tables.

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA:

FARE is partnering with the UC Medical and Counselling Centre for the project. Approval to conduct the survey was given by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education). The Strategy, Planning and Performance Division randomly selected 500 first-year students and emailed them an invitation containing the survey link.

The survey opened at UC on 4 October 2017, initially for a period of two weeks. To maximise the response rate, the survey period was extended for a third week, with reminder emails sent to students at regular intervals before the survey closed on 22 October.

Additionally, the Medical and Counselling Centre directly recruited a small number of volunteers within the target population to complete the survey. This occurred during the second week of the survey period that coincided with the university's Sexual Health and Guidance (SHAG) week.

The survey was promoted on the Medical and Counselling Centre website and social media, and posters were displayed around campus.

The UC results were received and collated by the FARE project team as Qualtrics output tables.

Limitations

A number of challenges were encountered in planning and implementing the baseline survey.

TIME DELAYS IN GAINING APPROVAL TO RUN THE SURVEY

Unforeseen delays were experienced in securing human research ethics approval and engaging the appropriate university personnel and departments, thus delaying the implementation of the survey. Once the project team had established the relevant relationships, a suitable date for deployment of the survey had to be agreed with university management.

The 1 August 2017 release of the Australian Human Rights Commission report *Change the Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities (2017)* caused a further delay to deployment of the survey.

DEPLOYMENT OF THE SURVEY LATE IN THE YEAR

The survey was deployed during semester two following deployment of a number of annual national surveys. As university students are a highly surveyed population, the timing of FARE's survey may have affected the willingness of students to participate.

INELIGIBILITY OF STUDENTS TO COMPLETE SURVEY

More than a quarter of respondents who attempted the survey (28.5 per cent) were not eligible to complete the survey because they were either not first year students or were not aged 18 or over. This likely indicates a difficulty with the sampling process that may be partly explained by the way university systems and students themselves interpret the term "first year students". This aspect of the sampling procedure needs to be further explored in order to improve the rate of valid responses for similar surveys in the future.

SMALL SAMPLE SIZE

The limitations described above impacted the sample size. The overall response rate of 20.7 per cent (N=207) is anecdotally a good response for a survey of university students. However, invalid responses reduced the sample size to 14.8 per cent (N=148), which limits the ability to generalise survey findings for the first-year student population.

POPULATION DATA AND DEMOGRAPHICS

As the project team was unable to obtain raw data on the first-year population from both universities, the statistical power of the survey data obtained could not be calculated.

First-year student population demographics were received from both universities and compared to the surveyed sample. This comparison demonstrates that the survey sample is not representative of the first-year student population in terms of gender and domestic/international status.

Demographics

The number of valid responses to the survey across both universities was 148, equating to a 14.8 per cent valid response rate. The sample comprised of 69.2 per cent females and 30.8 per cent males. A very small percentage of respondents preferred a different gender term and have been excluded due to the small sample. Domestic students made up 84.2 per cent of the sample, with international students being only 15.8 per cent of respondents.

	FEMALE (%)	MALE (%)	TOTAL (%)
Domestic	60.3	24.0	84.3
International	8.9	6.8	15.7
TOTAL	69.2	30.8	100

Nearly half the sample (48.6 per cent) reside at university residences, with one third living at home with family, 14.2 per cent living in a share house and a small number living alone or in other arrangements.

	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
At home with family	33.8	31.7	35.6	39.2	4.3
University residence	48.6	51.5	44.4	45.6	65.2
Share house accommodation	14.2	13.9	15.6	12.0	26.1
Live alone	0.7	-	2.2	-	4.3
Other (please specify)	2.7	3.0	2.2	3.2	-
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Results

Survey questions have been grouped into six categories:

- Alcohol consumption behaviour
- Attitudes towards alcohol
- Perception of the alcohol consumption behaviour and attitudes of closest friends
- Perception of the alcohol consumption behaviour and attitudes of students in year at university
- Confidence in discussing risky drinking and readiness for change
- Other

A table is presented for each of the survey questions. Each table includes columns indicating response for the total sample, and for female, male, domestic and international students respectively.

A. ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR

1. Just under half (43.9 per cent) of respondents identified as an occasional drinker, followed by a light drinker (25.0 per cent), and a heavy drinker (7.4 per cent). Nearly one quarter of respondents (23.7 per cent) identified as a nondrinker. The following table provides an overview of the type of drinker respondents perceive themselves to be, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: At the present time do you consider yourself:					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
A non-drinker	23.6	21.8	26.7	21.6	34.8
An occasional drinker	43.9	46.5	37.8	40.8	60.9
A light drinker	25.0	25.7	24.4	28.8	4.3
A heavy drinker	7.4	5.9	11.1	8.8	-
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

2. Almost half (49.1 per cent) of drinkers reported they consume alcohol 2–4 times per month, with a further quarter (24.1 per cent) reporting they consume alcohol monthly or less. Just over one fifth (21.4 per cent) consume alcohol 2 – 3 times per week, with smaller proportions drinking more than four times per week (3.6 per cent) and daily (1.8 per cent). The following table provides an overview of how often respondents consume a drink containing alcohol, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
Monthly or less	24.1	24.1	21.9	15.5	80.0
2-4 times per month	49.1	50.6	46.9	54.6	13.3
2-3 times per week	21.4	22.8	18.8	23.7	6.7
4+ times per week	3.6	1.3	9.4	4.1	-
Daily	1.8	1.3	3.1	2.1	-
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

3. When asked what type of alcohol they consume most often, drinkers reported they mainly consume bottled spirits and

liqueurs (31.3 per cent), bottled wine (19.6 per cent), and regular strength beer (13.4 per cent). Smaller proportions prefer cider (11.6 per cent) and pre-mixed packaged spirits (11.6 per cent). The following table provides an overview of the types of alcohol drinkers consume most often, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: What type of alcohol do you drink most often?					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
Bottled spirits and liqueurs	31.3	35.4	21.9	30.9	33.3
Bottled wine	19.6	26.6	3.1	20.6	13.3
Regular strength beer	13.4	1.3	43.8	14.4	6.7
Cider	11.6	12.7	9.4	12.4	6.7
Pre-mixed spirits in a can/bottle	11.6	12.7	6.3	12.4	6.7
Cask wine	4.5	5.1	3.1	3.1	13.3
Mid strength beer	4.5	2.5	9.4	4.1	6.7
Premixed alcoholic energy drinks	1.8	2.5	-	1.0	6.7
Low alcohol beer	0.9	-	3.1	-	6.7
Other	0.9	1.3	-	1.0	-
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

4. On a typical day when drinking, more than 60 per cent of drinkers report they consume five or more standard drinks of alcohol, 23.2 per cent consume one or two standard drinks and a further 16.1 per cent consume three or four standard drinks. The following table provides an overview of the number of standard drinks consumed on a typical day when drinking, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: How many standard drinks do you have on a typical day when you are drinking? (A standard drink is about one shot of spirits, ¾ can of full strength beer or a small glass of wine).					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
1 or 2 standard drinks	23.2	19.0	34.4	15.5	73.3
3 or 4 standard drinks	16.1	19.0	9.4	17.5	6.7
5 or 6 standard drinks	26.8	31.6	12.5	28.9	13.3
7-9 standard drinks	17.9	16.5	21.9	19.6	6.7
10 or more standard drinks	16.1	13.9	21.9	18.6	-
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

5. The majority (79.5 per cent) of drinkers consume alcohol to get drunk, with more than 20 per cent consuming alcohol to get drunk once a week or more. The following table provides an overview of students' propensity to drink to get drunk, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: Do you drink alcohol to get drunk?					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
Yes, at least once a week	8.9	11.4	3.1	9.3	6.7
Yes, once a week	13.4	15.2	9.4	15.5	-
Yes, at least once a month	29.5	26.6	37.5	34.0	33.3
Yes, less than once a month	27.7	25.3	31.3	26.8	-
<i>Subtotal</i>	79.5	78.5	81.3	85.6	40
No, never	20.5	21.5	18.8	14.4	60
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

6. Half of drinkers (51.9 per cent) consider themselves to be drunk when they start to slur their speech or lose balance, 34 per cent when they start to feel relaxed, 11.3 per cent when they are over the legal blood alcohol limit to drive, and small proportions when they vomit or pass out from drinking alcohol. The following table provides an overview of when drinkers consider themselves to be drunk, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: When do you consider yourself to be drunk?					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
When you start to slur your speech or lose balance	51.9	50.7	53.3	50.5	61.5
When you start to feel relaxed	34.0	37.3	26.7	34.4	30.8
When you are over the legal blood alcohol limit to drive	11.3	10.7	13.3	12.9	-
When you vomit from drinking alcohol	1.9	1.3	3.3	2.2	7.7
When you pass out from drinking alcohol	0.9	-	3.3	-	-
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

7. Four in ten drinkers (40.2 per cent) consume alcohol most often at pubs, bars or clubs, 23.2 per cent at home, and 15.2 per cent at a party at someone's house. A total of 11.6 per cent of drinkers consume alcohol most often at university social events. The following table provides an overview of where drinkers consume alcohol most often, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: Where do you most often drink alcohol?					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
At pubs, bars or clubs	40.2	40.5	37.5	44.3	13.3
At home where I live	23.2	25.3	18.8	20.6	40.0
At a party at someone's house	15.2	13.9	18.8	14.4	20.0
Other university social events	9.8	8.9	12.5	10.3	6.7
At a friend's/ partner's house	6.3	7.6	3.1	6.2	6.7
At restaurants/cafes	1.8	1.3	3.1	1.0	6.7
Formal university social events	1.8	1.3	3.1	1.0	6.7
At sporting events	0.9	-	3.1	1.0	-
Other (please specify)	0.9	1.3	-	1.0	-
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

8. The main reasons drinkers consume alcohol are to socialise with others (67 per cent), have a good time (63.4 per cent), to get drunk (35.7 per cent) and because they enjoy the taste (33 per cent). The following table provides an overview of the reasons drinkers consume alcohol, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: Why do you drink alcohol? (Select all that apply).					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
To socialise with others	67.0	64.6	71.9	66.0	73.3
To have a good time	63.4	57.0	78.1	64.9	53.3
To get drunk	35.7	32.9	40.6	39.2	13.3
Enjoy the taste	33.0	26.6	50.0	34.0	26.7
To relax	29.5	27.8	34.4	30.9	20.0
To make me feel happier	17.9	20.3	12.5	15.5	33.3
To manage stress	14.3	15.2	12.5	12.4	26.7
Awkward to be not drinking while others are	12.5	12.7	12.5	13.4	6.7
To facilitate hook-ups	10.7	8.9	12.5	11.3	6.7

* Note: respondents were able to select more than one option, therefore the total may exceed 100%.

B. ATTITUDES TOWARDS ALCOHOL

9. Of all respondents, 40.9 per cent disagree or strongly disagree with the statement “It is OK to drink with the intention of getting drunk”, 31.7 per cent neither agree nor disagree, and 27.5 per cent agree or strongly agree with the statement. The following table provides an overview of the degree to which respondents agree with the statement “It is OK to drink with the intention of getting drunk”, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: Rate the statement “It is OK to drink with the intention of getting drunk” on a scale of 1 – 5 where 1 = strongly agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree and 5 = strongly disagree.					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
Strongly agree	8.5	4.0	19.5	9.2	4.3
Agree	19.0	22.2	12.2	20.2	13.0
Neither agree nor disagree	31.7	37.4	19.5	29.4	43.5
Disagree	26.1	25.3	26.8	25.2	30.4
Strongly disagree	14.8	11.1	22.0	16.0	8.7
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

10. When asked about situations where it is acceptable to be drunk, respondents indicated that the most acceptable situation is at home (64.1 per cent), followed by at pubs, bars or clubs (62.7 per cent) and at a party at someone’s house (62.7 per cent). Half of respondents (50 per cent) believe it is acceptable to be drunk at informal university events, and 28.9 per cent at formal university events. The following table provides an overview of the situations respondents believe it is acceptable to be drunk, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: In which of the following situations is it acceptable to be drunk? (Select all that apply).					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
At home where I live	64.1	64.6	63.4	65.5	56.5
At pubs, bars or clubs	62.7	63.6	61.0	68.9	30.4
At a party at someone’s house	62.7	63.6	61.0	71.4	17.4
At a friend's/ partner's house	55.6	61.6	43.9	58.8	39.1
Other university social events	50.0	51.5	48.8	56.3	17.4
Formal university social events	28.9	29.3	29.3	31.1	17.4
It is not acceptable to be drunk	17.6	15.2	22.0	15.1	30.4
At sporting events	12.0	10.1	17.1	12.6	8.7
At restaurants/cafes	7.7	6.1	12.2	6.7	13.0
In public places (e.g. parks, beaches)	7.0	6.1	9.8	7.6	4.3

* Note: respondents were able to select more than one option, therefore the total may exceed 100%.

C. PERCEPTION OF THE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES OF CLOSEST FRIENDS

11. When asked how often they believe their closest friends drink alcohol, the majority of respondents (44.5 per cent) selected 2-4 times per month. Nearly one third (32.9 per cent) of respondents selected 2-3 times per week, 9.6 per cent selected monthly or less, and 5.5 per cent selected more than four times per week. A small proportion of respondents (6.8 per cent) said that their close friends do not drink. The following table provides an overview of how often respondents believe their closest friends drink alcohol, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: Thinking of your closest friends, how often do you think they drink alcohol?					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
Monthly or less	9.6	8.0	9.1	6.5	26.1
2-4 times per month	44.5	42.0	52.3	46.3	34.8
2-3 times per week	32.9	37.0	25.0	35.8	17.4
4+ times per week	5.5	4.0	9.1	5.7	4.3
Daily	0.7	1.0	-	0.8	-
They don't drink	6.8	8.0	4.5	4.9	17.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

12. A majority (82.1 per cent) of respondents believe their closest friends drink alcohol to get drunk, with almost one third (33.5 per cent) of respondents believing their closest friends drink alcohol to get drunk once a week or more. The following table provides an overview of how often respondents believe their closest friends drink alcohol to get drunk, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: Thinking of your closest friends, do you think they drink alcohol to get drunk?					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
Yes, at least twice a week	6.8	7.0	6.8	7.3	4.3
Yes, once a week	26.7	31.0	18.2	28.5	17.4
Yes, at least once a month	31.5	34.0	27.3	35.0	13.0
Yes, less than once a month	17.1	12.0	27.3	15.4	26.1
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>82.1</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>79.6</i>	<i>86.2</i>	<i>60.8</i>
No, never	17.8	16.0	20.5	13.8	39.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

13. When asked to rate on a scale of one to five whether their closest friends would agree with the statement "It is OK to drink with the intention of getting drunk", 45.1 per cent of respondents believed their closest friends would agree or strongly

agree, 30.3 per cent believed they would disagree or strongly disagree, and 24.6 per cent believed they would neither agree nor disagree. The following table provides an overview of the degree to which respondents believe their closest friends would agree with the statement “It is okay to drink with the intention of getting drunk”, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: Thinking about your closest friends, do you think that they would agree with the statement “It is okay to drink with the intention of getting drunk”. Please rate on a scale of 1-5 where 1 = strongly agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree and 5 = strongly disagree.

	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
Strongly agree	18.3	19.2	17.1	21.8	-
Agree	26.8	26.3	29.3	25.2	34.8
Neither agree nor disagree	24.6	27.3	17.1	26.1	17.4
Disagree	21.8	21.2	22.0	21.0	26.1
Strongly disagree	8.5	6.1	14.6	5.9	21.7
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

D. PERCEPTION OF THE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS IN YEAR AT UNIVERSITY

14. When asked how often they believe the majority of students in their year at university drink alcohol, more than half (56.8 per cent) of respondents believe they drink alcohol 2-3 times per week, with close to one third (32.2 per cent) of respondents believing they drink alcohol 2-4 times per month. The following table provides an overview of how often respondents believe the majority of students in their year at university drink alcohol, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: Thinking of the majority of students in your year at university, how often do you think they drink alcohol?

	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
Monthly or less	2.7	2.0	2.3	1.6	8.7
2-4 times per month	32.2	32.0	34.1	32.5	30.4
2-3 times per week	56.8	59.0	52.3	56.9	56.5
4+ times per week	6.2	5.0	9.1	7.3	-
Daily	1.4	2.0	-	0.8	4.3
They don't drink	0.7	-	2.3	0.8	-
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

15. Nearly all (97.2 per cent) respondents believe the majority of students in their year at university drink alcohol to get drunk, with nearly half (46.6%) drinking to get drunk weekly. The following table provides an overview of how often respondents believe the majority of students in their year at university to drink to get drunk, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: Thinking of the majority of students in your year at university, do you think they drink alcohol to get drunk?

	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
Yes, at least twice a week	13.0	10.0	20.5	13.0	13.0
Yes, once a week	46.6	52.0	36.4	48.0	39.1
Yes, at least once a month	30.1	31.0	29.5	32.5	17.4
Yes, less than once a month	7.5	6.0	6.8	5.7	17.4
<i>Subtotal</i>	97.2	99.0	93.2	99.2	86.9
No, never	2.7	1.0	6.8	0.8	13.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

16. When asked how many standard drinks of alcohol they believe the majority of students in their year at university consume on a single drinking occasion, 29.5 per cent believe they consume five or six standard drinks of alcohol, 28.8 per cent believe they consume seven to nine, and 23.3 per cent believe they consume three or four. The following table provides an overview of how many standard drinks of alcohol respondents believe other students in their year at university consume on a single drinking occasion, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: Thinking of the majority of students in your year at university, how many standard drinks do you think they drink on a single drinking occasion? (A standard drink is about one shot of spirits, $\frac{3}{4}$ can of full strength beer or a small glass of wine).

	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
1 or 2 standard drinks	9.6	8.0	11.4	6.5	26.1
3 or 4 standard drinks	23.3	21.0	27.3	19.5	43.5
5 or 6 standard drinks	29.5	32.0	25.0	30.9	21.7
7 – 9 standard drinks	28.8	31.0	25.0	32.5	8.7
10 or more standard drinks	8.9	8.0	11.4	10.6	-
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

17. When asked to rate on a scale of one to five whether students in their year at university agree with the statement “It is okay to drink with the intention of getting drunk”, more than half (52.1 per cent) of respondents agree or strongly agree, 27.4 per cent disagree or strongly disagree, and 20.4 per cent neither agree nor disagree. The following table provides an overview of the degree to which respondents believe students in their year at university agree with the statement “it is okay to drink with the intention of getting drunk, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: Thinking about students in your year at university, do you think that they would agree with the statement “It is okay to drink with the intention of getting drunk”?					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
Strongly agree	21.1	18.2	29.3	23.5	8.7
Agree	31.0	32.3	26.8	31.1	30.4
Neither agree nor disagree	20.4	23.2	12.2	18.5	30.4
Disagree	19.7	17.2	26.8	18.5	26.1
Strongly disagree	7.7	9.1	4.9	8.4	4.3
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

E. CONFIDENCE IN DISCUSSING RISKY DRINKING AND READINESS FOR CHANGE

18. The majority of respondents (72.1 per cent) reported that they had not been in a situation where they had been concerned about a friend’s drinking but had not felt confident discussing this with them, with nearly one third (27.9 per cent) of respondents reporting they had been in this situation. The following table provides an overview of whether respondents have been in a situation where they had been concerned about a friend’s drinking but had not felt confident discussing this with them, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: Thinking about your friends, have you ever been in a situation where you’ve been concerned about a friend’s drinking but have not felt confident discussing this with them?					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
No	72.1	70.4	75.0	72.6	69.6
Yes	27.9	29.6	25.0	27.4	30.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

19. The majority (76.5 per cent) of respondents who were concerned about a friend’s drinking, feel confident or somewhat confident discussing this with them, 19.2 per cent feel not very confident or not confident at all, and 4.3 per cent don’t know. The following table provides an overview of how confident respondents who were concerned about a friend’s drinking feel to discuss this with their friend, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: If you were concerned about a friends drinking, how confident would you feel discussing this with them?					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
Confident	33.6	27.6	45.0	32.5	39.1
Somewhat confident	42.9	46.9	35.0	45.3	30.4
Not very confident	17.1	19.4	12.5	14.5	30.4
Not confident at all	2.1	2.0	2.5	2.6	-
Don't know	4.3	4.1	5.0	5.1	-
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

20. The majority of respondents (63.6 per cent) feel comfortable with how much alcohol they consume, 25.0 per cent feel they sometimes drink too much, 7.9 per cent think they probably drink too much and 3.6 per cent are not sure how they feel. The following table provides an overview of how comfortable respondents are with how much alcohol they consume, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: In general, are you comfortable with how much alcohol you consume?					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
Yes - I am comfortable	63.6	55.1	82.5	61.5	73.9
Sometimes I feel I have too much to drink but that's rare	25.0	30.6	12.5	28.2	8.7
I probably drink too much	7.9	10.2	2.5	7.7	8.7
I am not sure how I feel	3.6	4.1	2.5	2.6	8.7
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

21. Respondents who indicated in the previous question that they probably drink too much were asked to rate on a scale of one to ten how important they believe it is to reduce their drinking. Results were mixed. All (100 per cent) male respondents rated reducing their drinking as of high importance (10 on a scale of 1 – 10), whereas overall, greater numbers of respondents (18.2 per cent) selected importance of 3, 6 and 7. The following table provides an overview of how important it is to respondents to reduce their drinking, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: How important is it to you that you reduce your drinking? Please rate on a scale of 1-10, where 1 = not at all important and 10 = very important					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
1	-	-	-	-	-
2	9.1	10.0	-	11.1	-
3	18.2	20.0	-	11.1	50.0
4	-	-	-	-	-
5	9.1	10.0	-	11.1	-
6	18.2	20.0	-	22.2	-
7	18.2	20.0	-	22.2	-
8	9.1	10.0	-	11.1	-
9	9.1	10.0	-	11.1	-
10	9.1	-	100.0	-	50.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

22. The top sources of information respondents reported they would be most likely to listen to on alcohol consumption are a health professional (63.6 per cent), friends (54.5 per cent), media reports (36.4 per cent), police officers (27.3 per cent), social media articles (27.3 per cent) and a social marketing campaign (27.3 per cent). The following table provides an overview of the sources of information on alcohol consumption that respondents would be most likely to listen to, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: Which of the following sources of information on alcohol consumption would you be most likely to listen to? (Select all that apply)					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
A health professional	63.6	60.0	100.0	66.7	50.0
Friends	54.5	60.0	-	55.6	50.0
Media reports	36.4	30.0	100.0	22.2	100.0
A social marketing campaign	27.3	30.0	-	22.2	50.0
A police officer	27.3	30.0	-	33.3	-
An article on social media	27.3	20.0	100.0	11.1	100.0
A university information session	18.2	10.0	100.0	11.1	50.0
A health organisation's website	18.2	10.0	100.0	11.1	50.0
A poster or a pamphlet	9.1	-	100.0	-	50.0
A blog post	9.1	10.0	-	11.1	-
A work-related information session	9.1	10.0	-	11.1	-

* Note: respondents were able to select more than one option, therefore the total may exceed 100%.

23. The most common sources of information respondents have seen or heard information about the health impacts of alcohol are the media (68.6%), from parents or guardians (67.9%) and via social media (61.4%). The following table provides an overview of where respondents have seen or heard information about the health impacts of alcohol, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: Where have you seen or heard information about the health impacts of alcohol? (Select all that apply).					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
In the media	68.6	67.3	70.0	71.8	52.2
From a parent/ guardian	67.9	63.3	80.0	66.7	73.9
Via social media e.g. article	61.4	64.3	55.0	63.2	52.2
From a health professional	47.9	42.9	60.0	50.4	34.8
On a health organisation's website	45.7	46.9	42.5	49.6	26.1
On a poster or in a pamphlet	42.9	39.8	47.5	43.6	39.1
From friends	41.4	40.8	45.0	42.7	34.8
At a university information session	32.1	34.7	27.5	33.3	26.1
A social marketing campaign	30.0	29.6	30.0	35.0	4.3
From a police officer	20.0	22.4	15.0	23.1	4.3
On a blog post	13.6	14.3	12.5	14.5	8.7
At work e.g. a work induction/ information session	10.7	10.2	12.5	12.8	-
Other (please specify)	8.6	10.2	5.0	9.4	4.3

* Note: respondents were able to select more than one option, therefore the total may exceed 100%.

F. OTHER

24. When asked how they would likely spend money left over after paying basic living and education expenses, 58.6 per cent of respondents indicated they would very likely go to a café or restaurant to eat a meal, 55.7 per cent would very likely save for a holiday, 45.7 per cent buy clothes accessories or technology. Lower proportions would be very likely to go to a club, bar or pub (16.4 per cent) or buy alcohol from a bottle shop (11.4 per cent). The following table provides an overview of how likely respondents would be to spend left over money each week on a range of items.

Question: Thinking about the money you have leftover each week after paying basic living and education expenses, how likely are you to spend this left-over money on the following items?					
	NOT LIKELY (%)	SOMEWHAT LIKELY (%)	VERY LIKELY (%)	UNSURE (%)	TOTAL (%)
Gym membership or fitness activity	42.9	22.9	32.9	1.4	100
Cigarettes or other tobacco product	89.3	4.3	5.7	0.7	100
Going to café or restaurant to eat a meal	6.4	34.3	58.6	0.7	100
Purchasing alcohol from a bottle shop	40	47.1	11.4	1.4	100
Going out to a club, bar or pub	43.6	36.4	16.4	3.6	100
Going to live music, music festivals etc.	44.3	30.7	21.4	3.6	100
Saving for a holiday	15.7	22.9	55.7	5.7	100
Shopping for clothes, accessories, technology	14.3	37.9	45.7	2.1	100
I have no leftover money	55	21.4	15.7	7.9	100

25. When asked to select what they had done after drinking in the past twelve months, the majority (82.7 per cent) of respondents indicated that they had vomited. A significant proportion (41.3 per cent) had missed school or work, and one third (33.3 per cent) had passed out. Nearly one fifth (17.3 per cent) had been in a verbal or physical argument and 10.7 per cent reported they had driven a car after drinking alcohol. The following table provides an overview of what respondents have done in the past twelve months after drinking alcohol, split by gender and domestic/international status.

Question: In the past twelve months which of these have you done after drinking alcohol? (Select all that apply).					
	TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	FEMALES (%)	MALES (%)	DOMESTIC (%)	INTERNATIONAL (%)
Vomited	82.7	87.0	71.4	84.3	60.0
Missed work or school	41.3	40.7	42.9	42.9	20.0
Passed out	33.3	33.3	33.3	30.0	80.0
Been involved in a verbal or physical argument	17.3	18.5	14.3	17.1	20.0
Gotten an injury	12.0	16.7	-	11.4	20.0
Driven a car	10.7	11.1	9.5	11.4	-
Had to see a doctor or other health professional	8.0	9.3	4.8	8.6	-
Been in trouble with the police	4.0	5.6	-	4.3	-
Other (please specify)	4.0	-	14.3	4.3	-

* Note: respondents were able to select more than one option, therefore the total may exceed 100%.

Results of analysis of perceptions of alcohol behaviour and attitudes

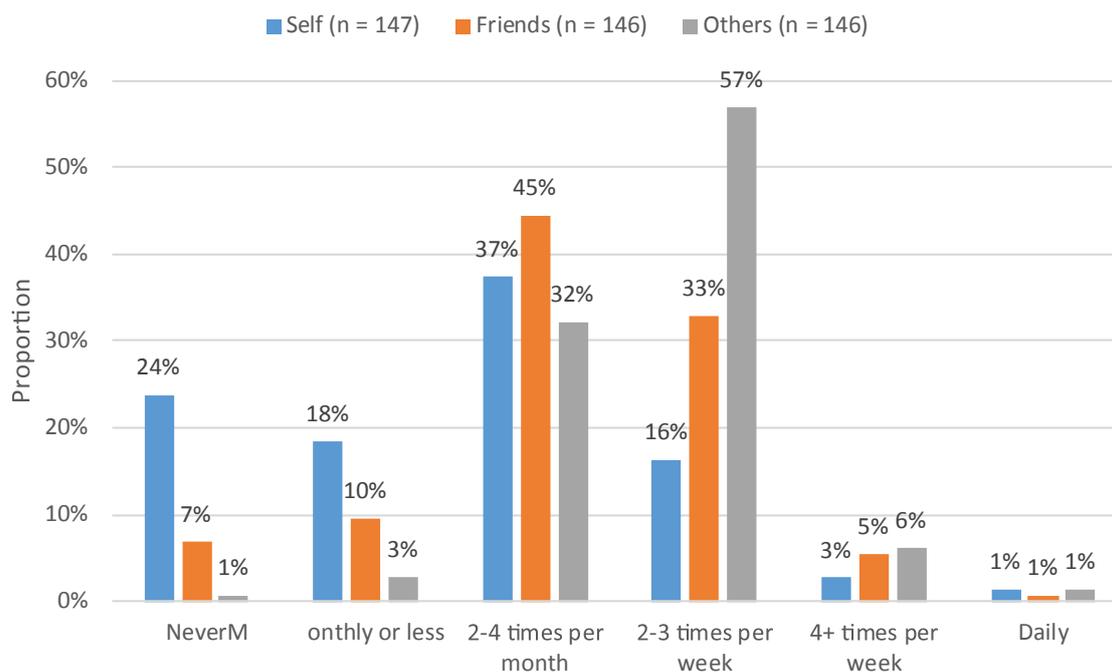
Results from several of the survey questions were analysed to assess how the perception of individuals regarding their drinking behaviour differed from their perception of alcohol consumption by close friends and other students in their year.

As described, a series of ordinal logistic regressions were used to examine these relationships, using R Statistical software, including the MASS package.

FREQUENCY OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

A series of questions asked respondents to indicate how often they drink, how often they think their close friends drink, and how often they think other students in their year drink alcohol. The proportions endorsing each level of the multiple choice response criteria to these questions are provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Self-reported frequency of alcohol consumption, by self, close friends and other students

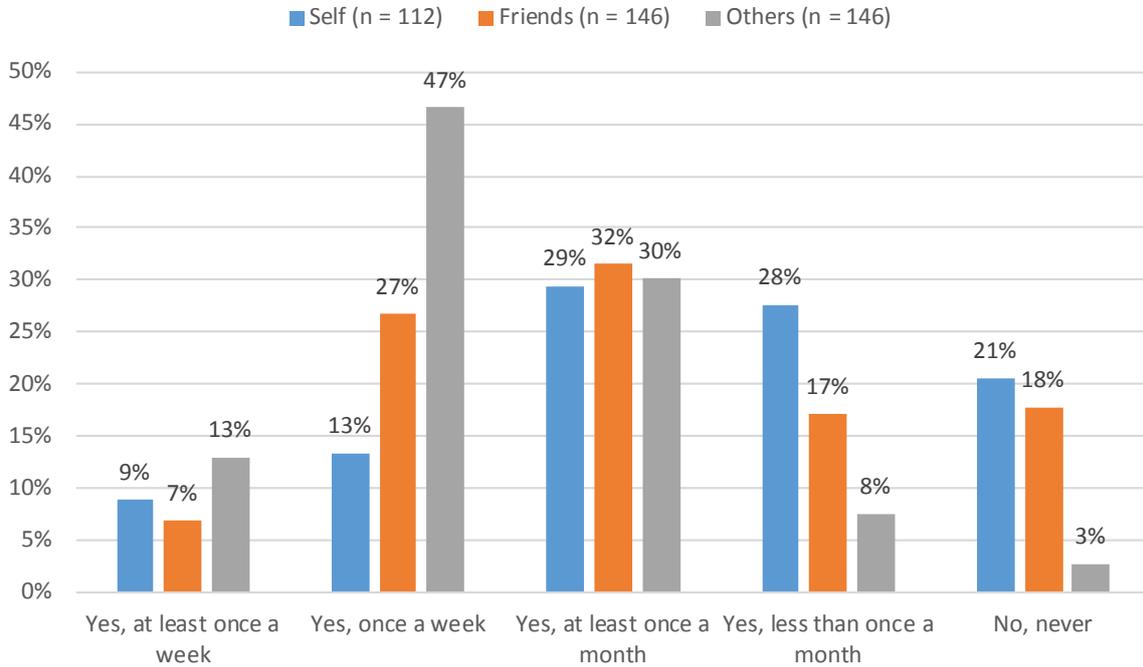


Results from the ordinal logistic regression indicated that respondents' perception of their own drinking differed significantly from their perception of alcohol consumption by close friends, $t = 2.17, p < .05$, and by other students in their year, $t = 6.27, p < .001$. Odds ratios suggested that respondents were 1.7 times more likely to report higher levels of consumption among close friends. Similarly, they were 4.8 times more likely to report higher levels of consumption among other students in their year. These odds ratios represent the increased likelihood of endorsing higher levels when reporting consumption by other students, compared with the respondents themselves. For example, if choosing between the ranges spanning from a) 'Monthly or less' and 'Never' and b) '2-4 times per month' and 'Daily', respondents are 4.8 times more likely to have indicated the higher levels of consumption if speaking about other students in their year, compared with themselves. Intercept values indicated that the difference between individual beliefs regarding their own drinking frequency and that of others was significant across each threshold level.

DRINKING TO GET DRUNK

Respondents were also presented with questions to assess their perceptions of drinking to get drunk. In particular, they were asked “Do you drink to get drunk?” and were required to indicate how frequently. Similar questions were presented to assess whether participants believed their close friends and other students drink to get drunk. Results from these questions are summarised in Figure 2, below.

Figure 2 – Self-reported frequency of drinking to get drunk, by self, close friends and other students

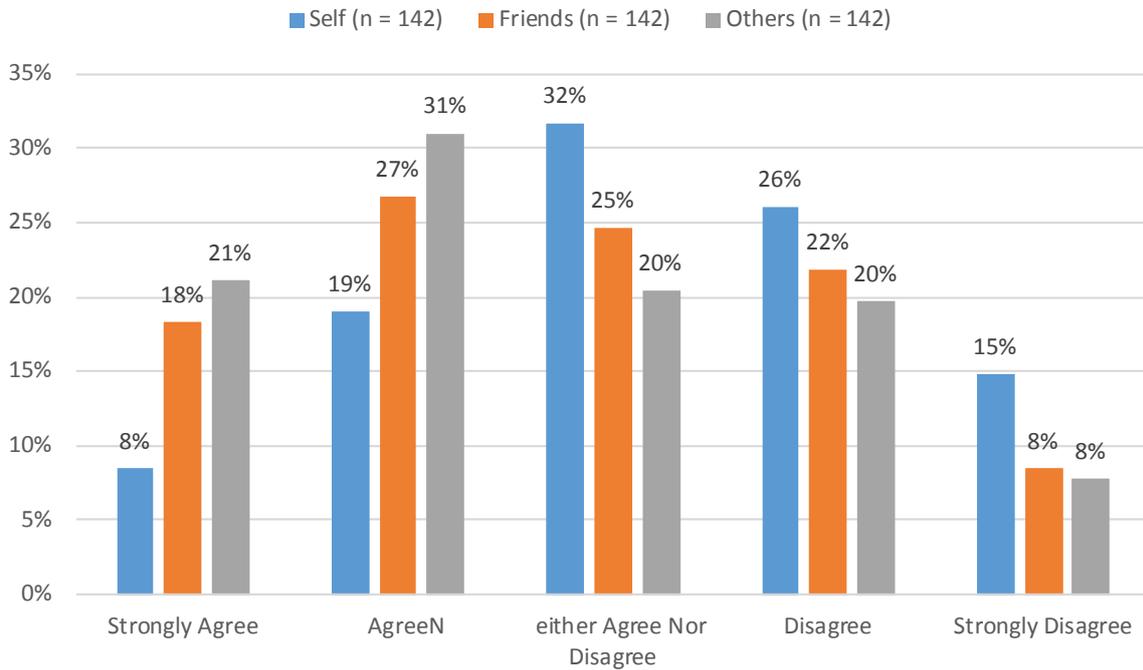


Respondents’ perception of their own propensity to drink to get drunk was found to differ significantly from their perception of this propensity in other students in their year, $t = -6.63, p < .001$. However, their perception of their own behaviour did not differ significantly from that of their closest friends, $t = -1.87, p = .06$. Compared with respondents’ perceptions of their own drinking, they reported believing that frequency of drinking to get drunk among other students in the year was 4.9 times higher than their own.

BELIEF IN IT BEING ACCEPTABLE TO DRINK TO GET DRUNK

On a rating scale between 1 “Strongly Agree” and 5 “Strongly Disagree”, respondents were asked to indicate how much they agree, and how much they think their friends and other students agree, with the statement “It is okay to drink with the intention of getting drunk”.

Figure 3 – Belief in it being okay to drink to get drunk, by self, close friends and other students

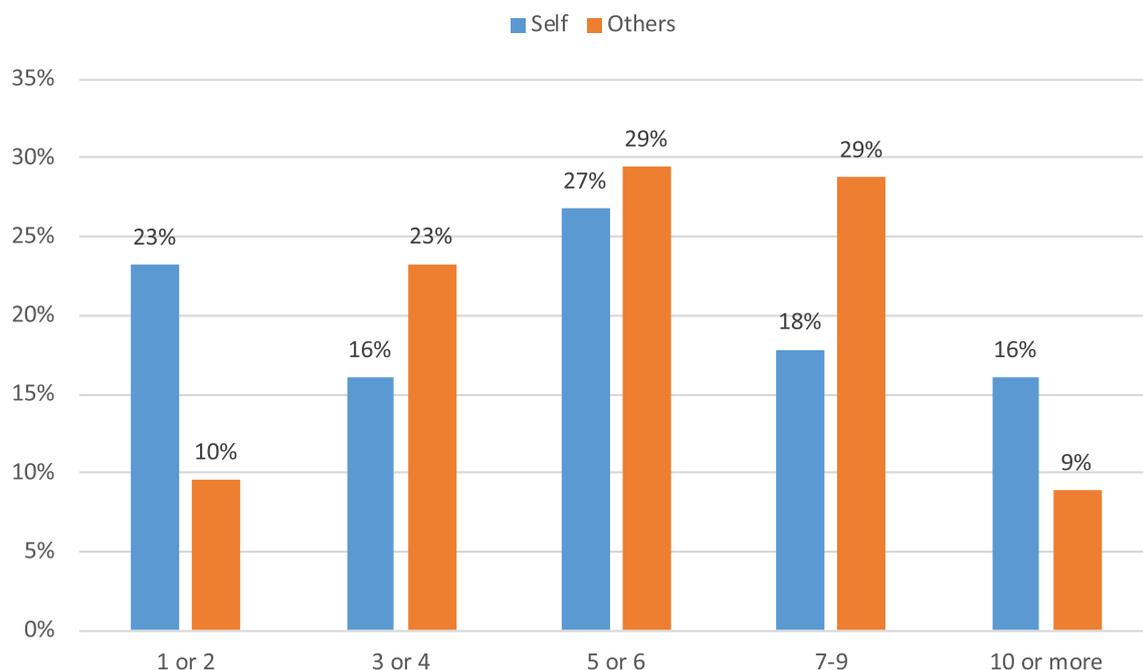


Individually-held beliefs that it is okay to get drunk were found to differ significantly from perceptions of beliefs among other students, $t = -2.54, p < .05$. However, no significant difference was observed between the beliefs held by individuals and their perceptions held regarding the belief of close friends in this respect, $t = -1.61, p = .11$. Odds ratios suggested that participants were 30.4 per cent less likely to support the statement for themselves relative to their perception of attitudes held by close friends. As stated, however, this result was not statistically significant. It was found that respondents were 43.8 per cent less likely to support the statement relative to their perception of attitudes held by other students in their years. Intercept values identified statistically significant differences between self and both close friends and other students at the first and final thresholds.

NUMBER OF STANDARD DRINKS ON A TYPICAL DAY WHEN DRINKING

Participants were asked to indicate the number of standard drinks they consume on a typical day when they are drinking. Similarly, they were asked to indicate the number of standard drinks consumed by other students on a typical day when they are drinking. A summary of these results, by the response categories provided to respondents, is provided in Figure 4.

Figure 4 – Number of standard drinks on an average drinking day, by self and other students



The ordinal logistic regression did not identify a significant difference between the number of drinks that individuals reported drinking and the number they believe other students drink on a typical day, $t = .92, p = .36$. This may be attributable to observed higher reporting over both very low consumption and very high consumption in self, relative to other students. Based on intercept values, individuals were significantly more likely to indicate that they consume one or two standard drinks on a typical day of drinking than their perception of the frequency with which other students drink at this level, $t = -7.27, p < .001$. Interestingly, they were also significantly more likely to identify drinking 10 or more standard drinks than identify believing that others consume this on a typical drinking day, $t = 8.81, p < .001$. Again, intercept values identified statistically significant differences between self and both close friends and other students at the first and final thresholds.

Conclusion

Analysis of selected data indicates that there is some degree of misperception around social norms around drinking among survey respondents. This finding supports the social norms approach of the project. However, because the sample size was small and not representative of the first year student population, generalisations cannot be made about these results.

FARE will use these results and collaborate with university and student representatives to design a health promotion campaign for implementation at ANU and UC during the first semester of 2018. To ensure the target population has an opportunity to provide input to the campaign, up to four campaign concepts will be developed in early 2018 and 'focus tested' among the target population at Orientation Week 2018.

The campaign will aim to address misperceptions evident in these results, the confidence of students to discuss risky drinking with their friends and likely other aspects of alcohol behaviour that are identified during the consultation process.



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