# Alcohol’s burden of disease

## Researchers

1. Carolina Gao
2. Rowan Ogeil
3. Dr Belinda Lloyd

## Summary

Burden of Disease (BoD) estimates based on current health and alcohol consumption data are integral in conceptualising the impact of alcohol on the Australian community. Such estimates are needed to assess changing trends of harm in the community related to drinking, and enable comparison of the burden of alcohol across different diseases and injuries.

This report utilises the most up to date methodology for estimating alcohol-related harm and beneficial effects and includes data on consumption statistics for Australia in 2010. This includes application of the latest methods to determine alcohol consumption distribution in population and compensation for underreporting of alcohol consumption in national surveys, and for the first time reports jurisdictional differences in both alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harms across all Australian states and territories.

## Outcomes

The main findings include that:

* There were 5,554 deaths attributable to alcohol in 2010, including 3,467 male deaths and 2,087 female deaths.
* There were 157,132 hospitalisations attributable to alcohol in 2010, including 101,425 for males and 55,707 for females.
* In males, injuries were responsible for the highest proportion of alcohol-related deaths (36%), followed by cancers (25%) and digestive diseases (16%). For females the highest proportion of alcohol-attributable deaths was for cardiovascular diseases (34%) followed by cancers (31%) and injuries (12%).
* Injuries and neuropsychiatric diseases were categories responsible for a substantial proportion of alcohol-related hospitalisations, each being greater than 10% of all alcohol attributable hospitalisations for 2010.
* The jurisdiction with the highest proportion of alcohol-related deaths for both males and females was the NT with the proportion approximately three times greater than the national average, while Victoria had the lowest proportion of deaths attributable to alcohol for both men and women.
* Beneficial effects due to alcohol consumption were estimated for cardiovascular disease and diabetes, with the majority of benefit in both males (90%) and females (72%) being in the cardiovascular disease category.
* Alcohol was estimated to be responsible for 136,982 Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) in males and 51,556 DALYs in females during 2010. Injuries were responsible for the greatest number of DALYs in males (38%), while cancers were responsible for the greatest number of DALYs in females.
* Alcohol was estimated to cause 84,945 Years of Life Lost (YLL) in Australian men and 35,223 YLL in Australian women in 2010. Injuries were responsible for the greatest proportion of YLL in males (45%), while cancers were responsible for the greatest proportion of YLL in females (39%).
* Alcohol was estimated to cause 52,036 Years of Life lived with a Disability (YLD) in Australian men and 16,334 YLD in Australian women in 2010. Neuropsychiatric diseases in both males and females were responsible for the greatest proportion of YLD being greater than 60%.

## Recommendations

This report provides a quantification of the burden of disease and injury in Australia for 2010. Such estimates may form the basis for a future cost of illness study to assess how current funding is allocated to tackling alcohol-related burden in the Australian health care system, and how to determine better estimates for future funding.

Given the differences between jurisdictions with respect to alcohol consumption and estimated burden, future work should continue to extend this type of analysis to provide estimates that are relevant to sub-populations, and to support policy responses at jurisdictional and national levels.

[view the report](/wp-content/uploads/Alcohols-burden-of-disease-in-Australia-FINAL.pdf)

[view the media release](https://www.fare.org.au/alcohol-kills-15-australians-every-day-report/)