# Popularity of heavy, mid-strength and light beer in Australia from 2001-2013

## Researchers

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## Summary

Market research indicates that mid-strength beer is gaining in popularity, possibly indicating that beer drinkers may be trying to moderate their consumption. ABS statistics indicate that the increase in popularity of mid-strength beer may be at the expense of both low-alcohol beer and heavy beer.

The aim of this study was to use survey data from the National Drug Strategy Household Survey to examine shifts in popularity of low, mid and regular strength beer from 2001 to 2013.

## Outcomes

Heavy beer and mid-strength beer appeared to have fairly stable popularity over time while the popularity of light beer decreased. Between 2001 and 2013 mid-strength beer became more popular than light beer. This pattern seemed to hold for men and women except for a slight increase in popularity in mid-strength beer in women.

In older drinkers, light beer was the most popular beer choice in 2001, but by 2013 it was heavy beer, while mid-strength beer rose to be as popular as light beer.

The demographic make-up of drinkers of mid-strength and light beer changed little over time.  Older drinkers were consistently more likely than younger drinkers to drink both mid-strength and light beer, but the strength of this relationship decreased over time for light beer.

The decrease in light beer consumption may be due to older Australians not switching to light beer at the same rate as the generations before them.

Those who switched to mid-strength or low alcohol beers were most likely to have switched from heavy beer, and those who drink mid-strength and light beer are less likely than other drinkers to participate in high-risk episodic drinking.

It was found the most common reasons for switching to lower-alcohol drinks among mid-strength and low alcohol beer drinkers were health, lifestyle and social reasons. Drink driving laws were also a popular reason for switching.

## Recommendations

The health benefits of reducing the strength of beer should be promoted to older Australians.  There is evidence to suggest that older drinkers are not decreasing their consumption at the same rate as cohorts before them, so this could be a worthy avenue of health promotion.

[view the report](https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Popularity-of-heavy-mid-strength-and-light-beer-in-Australia-from-2001-2013.pdf)