# Pouring practices of 65 to 74 year old current drinkers: Implications for drinking guidelines and estimates of risk

## Researcher

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## Summary

The aims of this study are to identify the pouring practices of older drinkers in relation to standard drinks, how this relates to estimating self-consumption of alcohol, and the implications for drinking guidelines. The study also identifies the differences in pouring practices between men and women.

This study involves a detailed literature search, followed by three studies. The first phase consisted of telephone interviews with 32 key informants from the fields of gerontology, alcohol and other drugs, health, and injury prevention. This was followed by face-to-face interviews with 844 men and women aged 65 - 74 years of age from Perth, Western Australia and then the study undertook a secondary analysis of the 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey data set to determine the prevalence of at-risk consumption of alcohol among men and women aged 65 - 74 years.

## Outcomes

Data for men and women supported the hypothesis that the greater the alcoholic content of the beverage (whether beer, wine, or spirits) the greater the discrepancy of the poured drink from a standard drink. Both men and women poured significantly more standard drinks of wine and spirits compared to beer—but the discrepancy was greater for men and, as a result, men underestimated consumption by 23% and women underestimated consumption by 16%.

Based upon all three methods of assessing alcohol consumption, men reported drinking significantly larger amounts of alcohol than women. Men reported drinking an average of 1.33 standard drinks per day while women reported drinking 0.64 standard drinks per day.

Based upon the 2001 NHMRC alcohol guidelines and using the results of the above studies, 97.1% of men drank at low-risk levels and 2.9% drank at a risky level (six or more standard drinks per day), while 98.7% of women drank at low-risk levels and 1.3% drank at a risky level (4 or more standard drinks per day).

In relation to long-term harm, 10.5% of men and 8.3% of women were drinking at levels that would put them at risk of long-term, alcohol-related harm.

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