# Young Victorians hit hard by the drinking of others

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| **Date** | 2012-11-20 17:19:46 |
| **Categories** | Media releases |

Almost 85 per cent of young Victorians (aged 16-24) have experienced harms from another’s drinking. New research which examines the impact of perceptions on the reporting of harms, has also found young people are more likely to experience harms from people who are drunk rather than on drugs. The study is one of two new research projects to be presented today at the Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol & other Drugs (APSAD) Conference in Melbourne by the Centre for Alcohol Policy Research (CAPR). Using data from the 2009 Victorian Alcohol and Drug Survey, the study, A comparison of harm to others in young Victorians attributable to alcohol or drugs, found the harms experienced by the 5,001 people surveyed fell neatly into two categories – ‘tangible harms’ and ‘amenity harms’. More objective and event-based in nature, tangible harms included verbal and physical assault and car accidents. Amenity harms such as feeling unsafe in public or being annoyed by drinkers were typically subjective and environment-based. CAPR researcher, Dr Sarah Callinan says the issue of subjectivity is one of the problems with survey research into harms to others from alcohol use. “Two people may live through the same experience and only one might consider themselves harmed. Interestingly, it may be that the social acceptance of alcohol is in fact reducing the perception of harms,” Dr Callinan said. Looking at all harms, more young people experienced harms as a result of other people’s drinking (84.9%) than harms from others drug use (75.6%). More young people (80%) experienced amenity alcohol harms than amenity drug harms (73%). The research found that women, those living in metropolitan areas, binge drinkers and those taking drugs other than cannabis were more likely to experience amenity harms, while those aged 18-21, those with a more positive attitude to drinking, and all types of drug users were more likely to experience tangible alcohol and drug harms. CAPR researcher, Mr Jason Jiang will also present research to the APSAD Conference which looks closely at the numbers of Australians caring for harmful drinkers. Drawing from a telephone survey of 2,649 Australian adults, Caring for others because of their drinking, found that two thirds of respondents nominated a male as their most harmful drinker, and that females spend a higher average amount of time caring for males than males caring for females. Respondents were more likely to care for a heavy drinker than a moderate drinker. The two studies were commissioned by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE). Ms Caterina Giorgi, FARE’s Policy and Research Manager, says the research has added further weight to CAPR’s world leading research in this area. “There is a significant impact of people’s drinking on others and this needs to be considered by Governments when developing policies to reduce alcohol-related harms,” Ms Giorgi said.

### Metadata