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Research reveals one in six children harmed by alcohol

New research undertaken by La Trobe University's Centre for Alcohol Policy Research shows one in six children (17.1%) have experienced harm from the alcohol use of adults around them, with two-thirds of harm being attributed to an adult in their home.

The research, which has been published in the *Addiction* journal, found that various harms were reported, as disclosed by their caregiver, including verbal abuse (6.2%), financial harm (4.3%), children witnessing serious violence in the home (2.0%), children left unsupervised (2.3%) and physical harm (1.0%).

The research also found that women were more than twice as likely as men to indicate that a child had been affected.

Children were also seven times more likely to be harmed when the caregiver also reported that they had been harmed, compared to where children whose caregivers did not report such harm.

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) CEO, Caterina Giorgi said the research highlighted the often-overlooked impact of alcohol on children.

"Children should be safe in their own homes, and often it's the experiences of children that are missing in conversations about the way that alcohol impacts on families and communities, and the actions that need to be taken by governments."

Kym Valentine, a Survivor Advocate and experienced television/theatre actor, said while she has seen governments act swiftly in other areas when there is clear evidence of harm to children, the same urgency has not been applied to addressing alcohol-related harm.

"The kids who have hidden in closets and bathrooms – know that when drinking is involved, it's like pouring petrol on a bonfire.

"Children living in fear in their own homes deserve a sense of urgency to help keep them safe."

Lead Researcher Cass Hopkins said, "Our findings highlight that the effects of adults' alcohol consumption on children are broad ranging."

"The opportunities to address this harm include public health initiatives to reduce higher-risk alcohol consumption in our communities, including addressing the availability of alcohol and targeted health promotion campaigns," she said.

Ms Giorgi added, "There is increasing acknowledgement by governments across Australia of the need to include measures on alcohol when implementing approaches to the prevention

of violence against women and children. We need to ensure that this is translated into meaningful action”.

The research titled *Harm to children from others' drinking: A survey of caregivers in Australia* is available to read here <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/add.16637>.

It is part of a broader project studying alcohol's harm to others, part of which is being presented this week at the [World Congress on Alcohol and Addictions](#) in Melbourne.

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Interviews are available with: FARE CEO Caterina Giorgi, Survivor Advocate Kym Valentine and La Trobe University Researcher Cass Hopkins.

Media outlets are requested to promote help-seeking information when reporting on alcohol and other drugs, in line with the [Mindframe National Guidelines](#).

Suggested wording relating this this media story: *If you or someone you know needs support, please call Lifeline 13 11 14, the National 24/7 Alcohol and Other Drugs Hotline 1800 250 015 or 1800RESPECT 1800 737 732.*

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The **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)** is the leading not-for-profit organisation working towards an Australia free from alcohol harms. We do this through developing evidence-informed policy, enabling people-powered advocacy and delivering health promotion campaigns.

FARE has been working with communities across the country to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians for 20 years. To learn more about us and our work visit www.fare.org.au.