

Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia

DASSA Statistical Bulletin

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Health Omnibus Survey 2014:
a summary of the results relating to
alcohol consumption and attitudes
towards public drunkenness



Government
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SA Health



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This Bulletin is the eighth in a series providing the most up-to-date data available on the prevalence of alcohol and other drug use, the harms associated with misuse, and alcohol and other drug treatment services in South Australia.

The Health Omnibus Survey (HOS) is an annual survey of a representative sample of South Australian residents that collects data that can be used to plan, monitor and evaluate health programs and other initiatives in South Australia. Information gathered for Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia (DASSA) focuses on alcohol consumption and attitudes towards public drunkenness¹.

In 2014, survey results were based on 2,732² face-to-face interviews conducted by Harrison Research between September and December 2014 in both metropolitan and regional South Australia. Approximately equal numbers of men ($N=1344$; 49%) and women ($N=1388$; 51%) participated in the survey, and the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents was representative of the wider South Australian population ($N=53$; 2.7%).

A total of 12 alcohol-related questions were included in the 2014 survey: 10 relating to alcohol consumption and two around public drunkenness. Questions on alcohol consumption were adapted from the National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS)³. Questions pertaining to public drunkenness were developed within DASSA. The NDSHS questions were first included in the HOS in 2011; comparisons are therefore made from 2011 to 2014. Information on risky drinking is presented separately for single occasion and lifetime use. Where relevant, NDSHS data from 2010 and 2013 are included; however, due to different methods of data collection and a slightly different age range, statistical significance testing was not carried out between the two surveys.

Key findings

Alcohol consumption: frequency and amount

In 2014, a significantly higher proportion of men (82%) than women (73%) reported they had consumed alcohol in the previous 12 months. Men were significantly more likely to consume alcohol at least once a week (55% compared with 40%) and daily (11% compared with 5.6%) than women.

Between 2013 and 2014 there were significant increases in the proportion of abstainers, overall (from 18% to 22%) and among men (from 13% to 19%). There was a decrease in the proportion that drank at least weekly, from 50% to 22% overall and from 60% to 55% among men.

Among those aged 15-29 years, 29% were abstainers; a significant increase since 2013 (21%). The proportion of abstainers also increased among those aged 20-29 years (from 12% to 20%) with significant decreases in weekly alcohol consumption among both age groups (from 40% to 33% and from 52% to 40%, respectively).

In 2014, a significantly lower proportion of men reported usually drinking between a half and four standard drinks on a day when they consumed alcohol (71% compared with 83%).

Between 2011 and 2014, and 2013 and 2014, there was a significant change in the pattern of quantities consumed among women, with an increase in drinking 5-10 drinks, and a decrease in 3-4 drinks. There was also significant increase between 2011 and 2014 in the proportion of 40-49 year olds (from 17% to 26%) and 50-59 year olds (from 15% to 21%) that had five or more drinks.

Risky drinking

In 2014, 27.2% of South Australians aged 15 years and over drank at levels that put them at risk of injury on a single occasion at least monthly. Although there was no significant trend between 2011 and 2014, there was a significant increase between 2011 (26.4%) and 2013 (28.5%), suggesting that risky drinking has plateaued in 2014.

Between 2011 and 2014 there was a significant increase in the proportion of women who drank at levels that put them at risk of injury on a single occasion at least weekly, from 6.7% to 9.7%, and a significant increase in risky drinking at least weekly between 2013 (7.1%) and 2014 (9.7%).

In 2014, 19.6% of South Australians aged 15 years and over drank at levels that put them at risk of disease or injury over a lifetime. There was a significant increase between 2011 (19%) and both 2012 (23%) and 2013 (22%) followed by a return to 2011 levels in 2014, and no change between 2013 and 2014. There was also a significant decrease for men (from 29.3% in 2011 to 27.5% in 2014).

There was a significant decrease in lifetime risk between 2013 and 2014 among 20-29 year olds (from 31.2% to 22.2%), and an increase since 2011 among 50-59 year olds (from 20.1% to 23.4%).

Public drunkenness

There was a significant increase in the percentage of South Australians who reported that they had been drunk in public in the past year between 2008 and 2013 (19% to 23%), and among women from 2008 to 2014 (13% to 19%).

There was a significant decrease in the acceptability of being drunk in public on certain occasions among all South Australians between 2011 (38%) and 2014 (35%), as well as a significant decrease among women between 2013 (34%) and 2014 (31%).

Quantity and frequency of alcohol consumption

'In the last 12 months, how often did you have an alcoholic drink of any kind?' (N=2732).

In 2014, 78% reported alcohol consumption in the last 12 months. This has decreased slightly since 2013 (82%) but is similar to 2011 (79%). Around 47% drank at least weekly; (39% at least weekly and 8.1% daily: see Figure 1).

A significantly higher proportion of men reported alcohol consumption in the previous 12 months in 2014: 82% compared with 74% of women. This is similar to 2013 (87% of men and 77% of women), although there has been a decrease in consumption among both sexes. The decrease in at least weekly consumption among men was statistically significant.

Men were significantly more likely to consume alcohol at least once a week: 55% compared with 40% of women, and almost twice as likely to drink daily (11% compared with 5.6%). The difference in drinking frequency between the sexes was unchanged from previous years (in 2013, 60% of men consumed alcohol at least once a week compared with 41% of women).

There were no significant differences in the frequency of alcohol consumption over time with the exception of daily drinkers where among those aged 50-59 years there was a significant decrease from 13% in 2011 to 8.3% in 2014.

Between 2013 and 2014 there were significant increases in the proportion of abstainers, both overall (from 18% to 22%) and among men (from 13% to 19%). There was a resultant significant decrease in the proportion who drank at least weekly (from 50% to 47% overall and from 60% to 55% among men).

Almost three-fifths of abstainers in 2014 were female (59%, a decrease from 65% in 2013), and 52% were 40 years and over with a median age of 42 years.

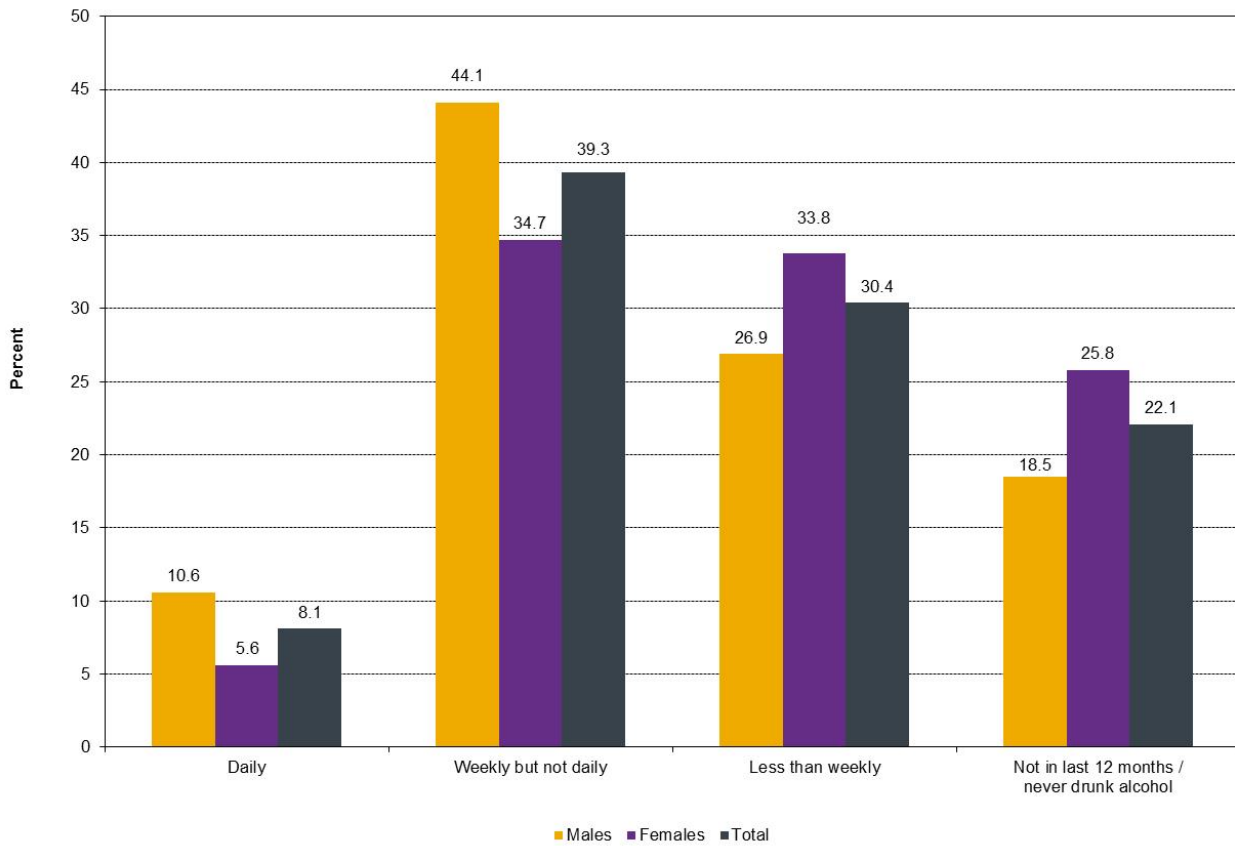
Among those aged 15-29 years, 29% were abstainers, a significant increase since 2013 (21%). In addition, the proportion of abstainers increased significantly among those aged 20-29 years (from 12% to 20%). There were significant decreases in weekly alcohol consumption among both age groups (from 40% to 33% and from 52% to 40%, respectively). Alcohol use in the last 12 months,

and at least weekly, was highest among those aged 40-49 and 50-59 years; abstainers comprised 13% and 19%, respectively.

No 15-19 year olds reported daily drinking, and this group had the lowest level of consumption in the previous 12 months (52% in 2014; 17% at least once a week).

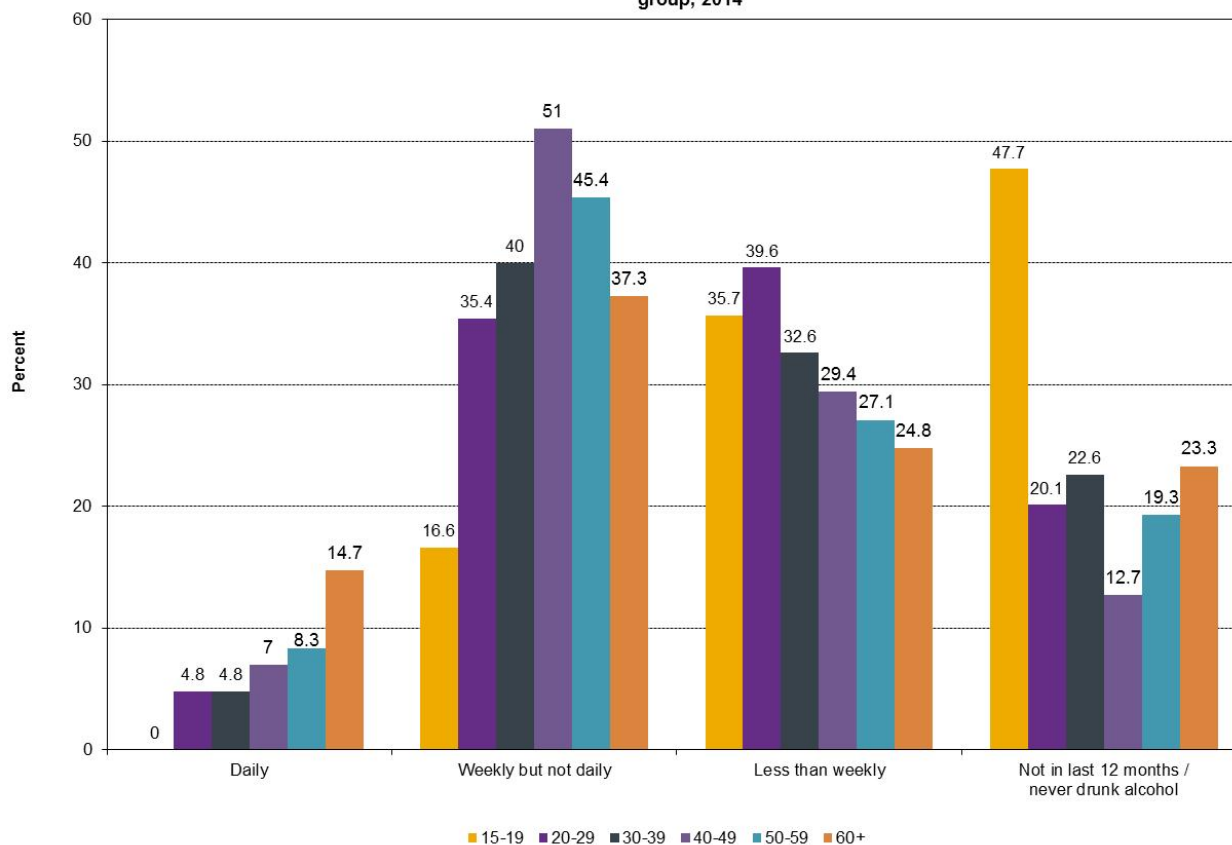
Those aged 40-49 years had the highest proportion who consumed alcohol, with 87% reporting use in the previous 12 months; 58% drank at least once a week. This was followed by those aged 50-59 years (81% had consumed alcohol; 54% at least once a week). This is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1: Alcohol consumption in the previous 12 months among South Australians aged 15 years and over, 2014



Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2014

Figure 2: Alcohol consumption in the previous 12 months among South Australians aged 15 years and over by age group, 2014



Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2014

These results are broadly consistent with NDSHS data. In 2013, 78% of Australians had consumed at least one full serve of alcohol in the last 12 months. Daily drinking among Australians decreased significantly from 7.2% in 2010 to 6.5% in 2013. Weekly (not daily) consumption also decreased significantly, from 40% in 2010 to 37% in 2013.

‘On a day that you drink, how many standard drinks do you usually have?’ (N= 2124)¹

The majority of South Australians (78%) in 2014 reported that they usually consumed between a half and four standard drinks on a drinking day (Figure 3); this has not changed since 2011.

On a day in which alcohol was consumed, 69% of men and 87% of women reported usually having between a half and four standard drinks (Figure 3). This difference was statistically significant, and women were also more likely to consume two drinks or less (58% compared with 37% of men).

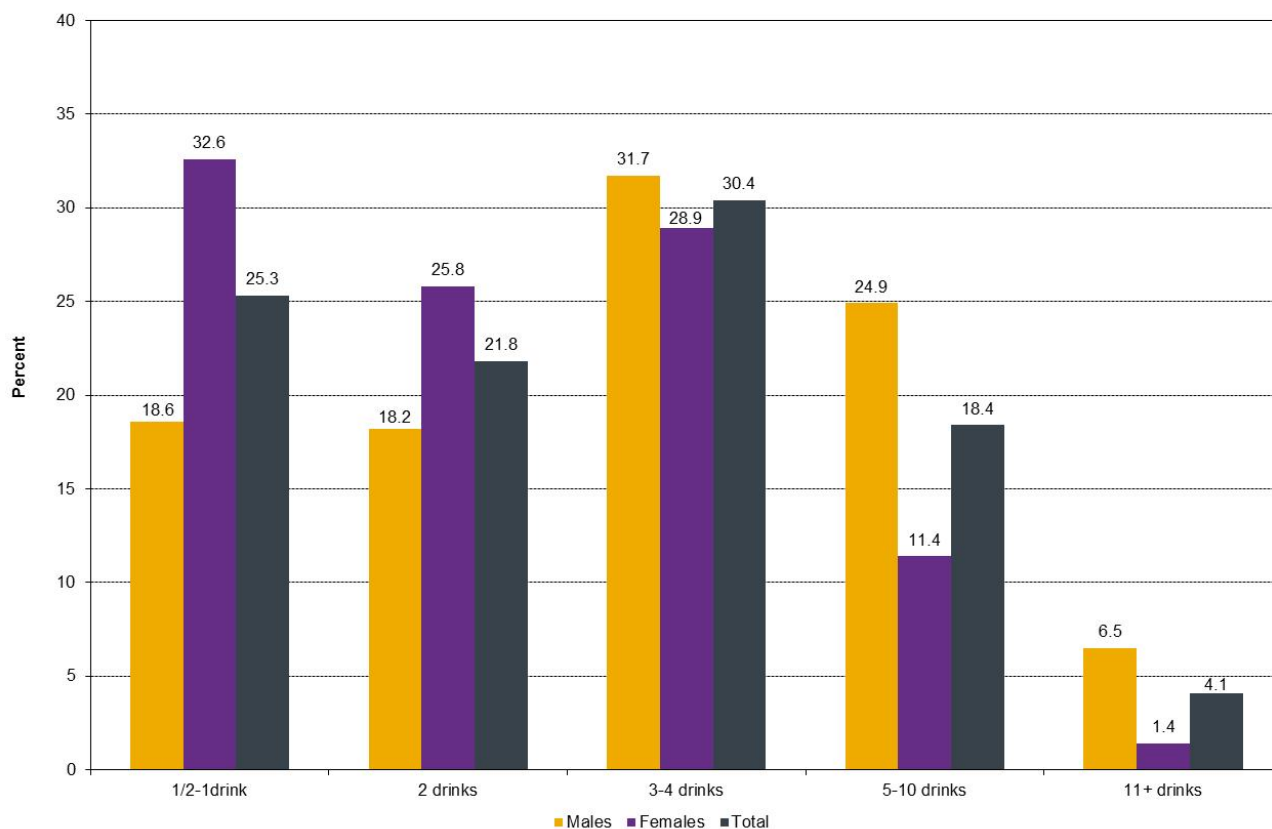
This is similar to previous years, except that between 2011 and 2014 and between 2013 and 2014, there was a significant change in the pattern of quantities consumed among women, with an increase in 5-10 drinks, and a decrease in 3-4 drinks. However, in relation to four drinks or less compared with five or more, quantities consumed by women did not change over time.

Of those who drank, the majority (90%) reported having at least one alcohol-free day per week in the previous 12 months; 87% of men and 92% of women. This is similar to 2013 (91%; 88% of men and 94% of women).

The 2013 NDSHS found that a slightly lower proportion of Australians (76%) aged 14 years and over reported that they usually consumed four drinks or less (84% of women and 67% of men). Almost 51% of those aged 14-19 years usually consumed four drinks or less, up to 91% of those aged 60 years and over.

¹ This section excludes participants who reported that they had not consumed alcohol in last 12 months, no longer drank alcohol or had never consumed alcohol in their lifetime

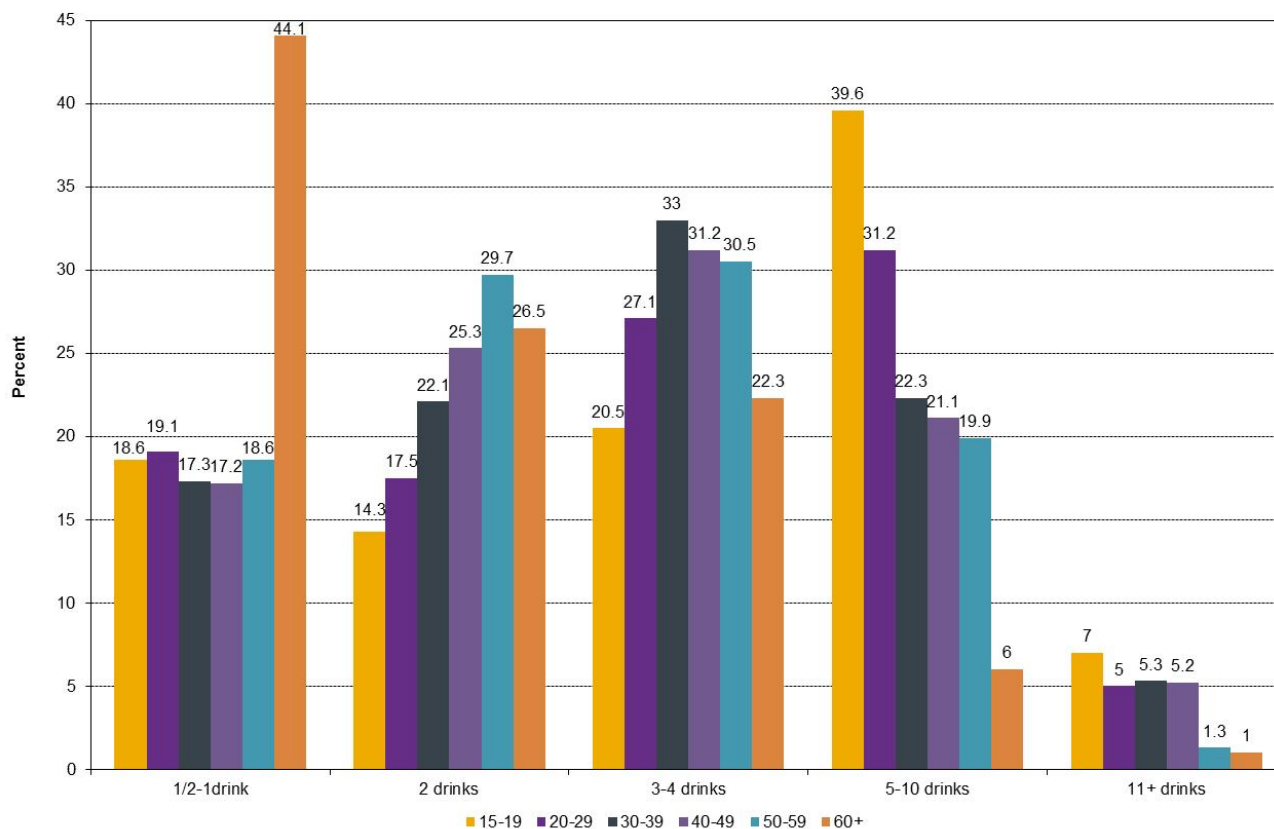
Figure 3: Number of standard drinks usually consumed by South Australians aged 15 years and over on a drinking day, by sex, 2014



Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2014

The proportion that usually consumed four drinks or less on a drinking day generally increased with age (see Figure 4). Just over 53% of those aged 15-19 years consumed four drinks or less, followed by 64% of those aged 20-29 years, and 72% of those aged 30-39 years. Although 74% of those aged 40-49 years and 79% of those aged 50-59 years usually consumed four drinks or less, there was a significant increase between 2011 and 2014 in the proportion that consumed five or more drinks, from 17% to 26% for 40-49 year olds, and from 15% to 21% for 50-59 year olds. Only 7% of those aged 60 years and over usually consumed five or more drinks.

Figure 4: Number of standard drinks usually consumed by South Australians aged 15 years and over on a drinking day, by age group, 2014



Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2014

Alcohol consumption at risky levels

Single occasion risk

Figure 5 shows that in 2014, 27% of South Australians aged 15 years and over drank at levels that put them at risk of injury on a single occasion at least monthly. Although there was no significant trend over time (2011 to 2014) among all South Australians, there was a significant increase between 2011 (26%) and 2013 (29%), suggesting that risky drinking at least monthly has plateaued in 2014.

While there was no significant change between 2011 and 2014 in the proportion of South Australians that reported drinking at levels that increased their risk of injury from a single occasion at least once in the previous 12 months (44% vs. 42%), there was a significant decrease between 2013 (46%) and 2014.

There was no change over time in the proportion of men who reported drinking at levels that increased their risk of injury on a single occasion at least monthly (36% in both 2011 and 2014), although the proportion who drank at these levels at least yearly decreased significantly (from 58% in 2013 to 52% in 2014).

For women, there was also no change over time in the proportion who reported drinking at levels that increased their risk of injury on a single occasion at least monthly (from 17% in 2011 to 18% in 2014). However, when comparing 2011 with 2014, there was a significant increase among women in the proportion who drank at levels that put them at risk of injury on a single occasion at least weekly, from 6.7% to 9.7%. Similarly, there was a significant increase among women in risky drinking at least weekly between 2013 (7.1%) and 2014 (9.7%).

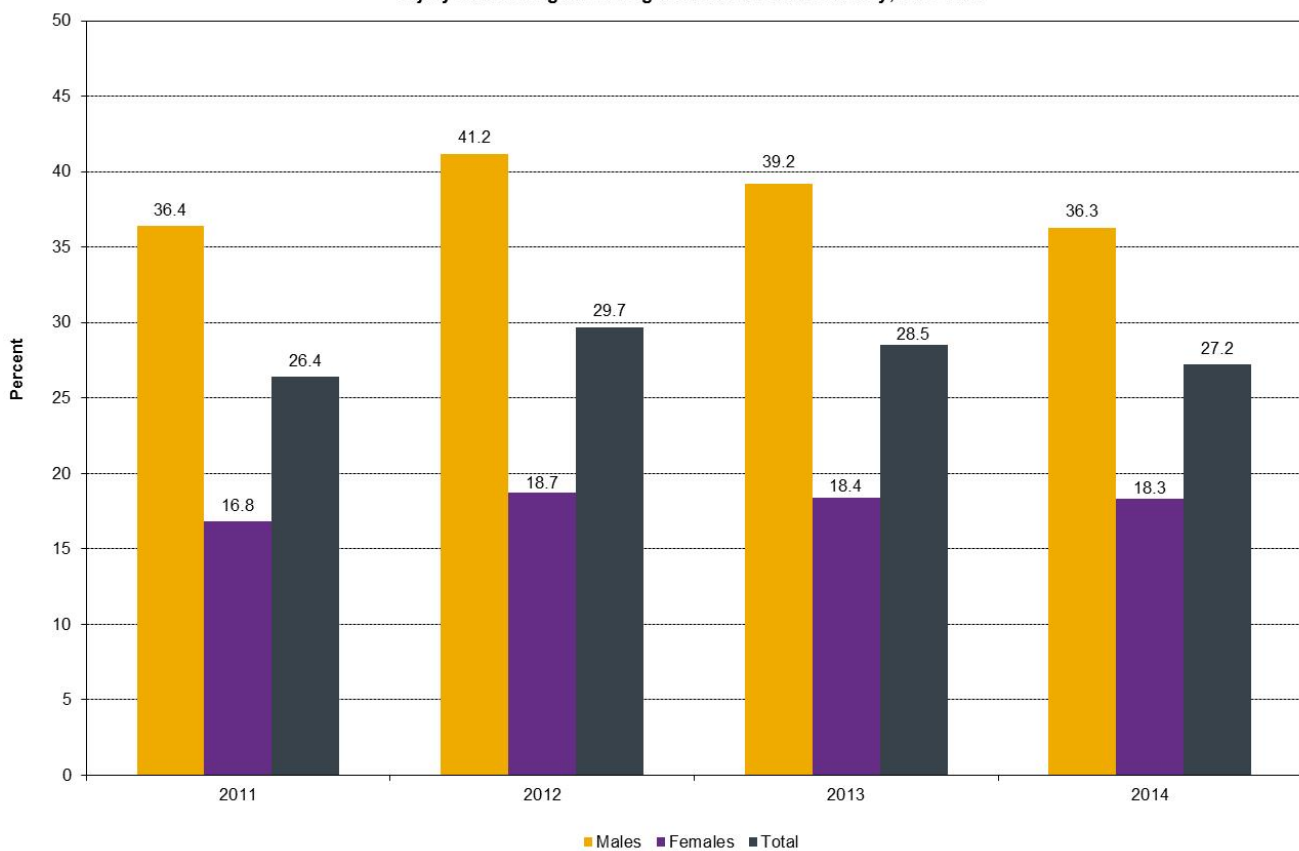
Figure 6 shows that in all four years, the group with the highest proportion drinking at levels that put them at risk of injury on a single occasion at least monthly was aged 20-29 years (ranging from 45% in 2011 to 39% in 2014).

In all four years, the group with the lowest proportion who drank levels that increased their risk of injury on a single occasion at least monthly was aged 60 years or over (12% in 2014) and 15-19

years (26% in 2014). However, there have been very few statistically significant changes over time among any age group since 2011:

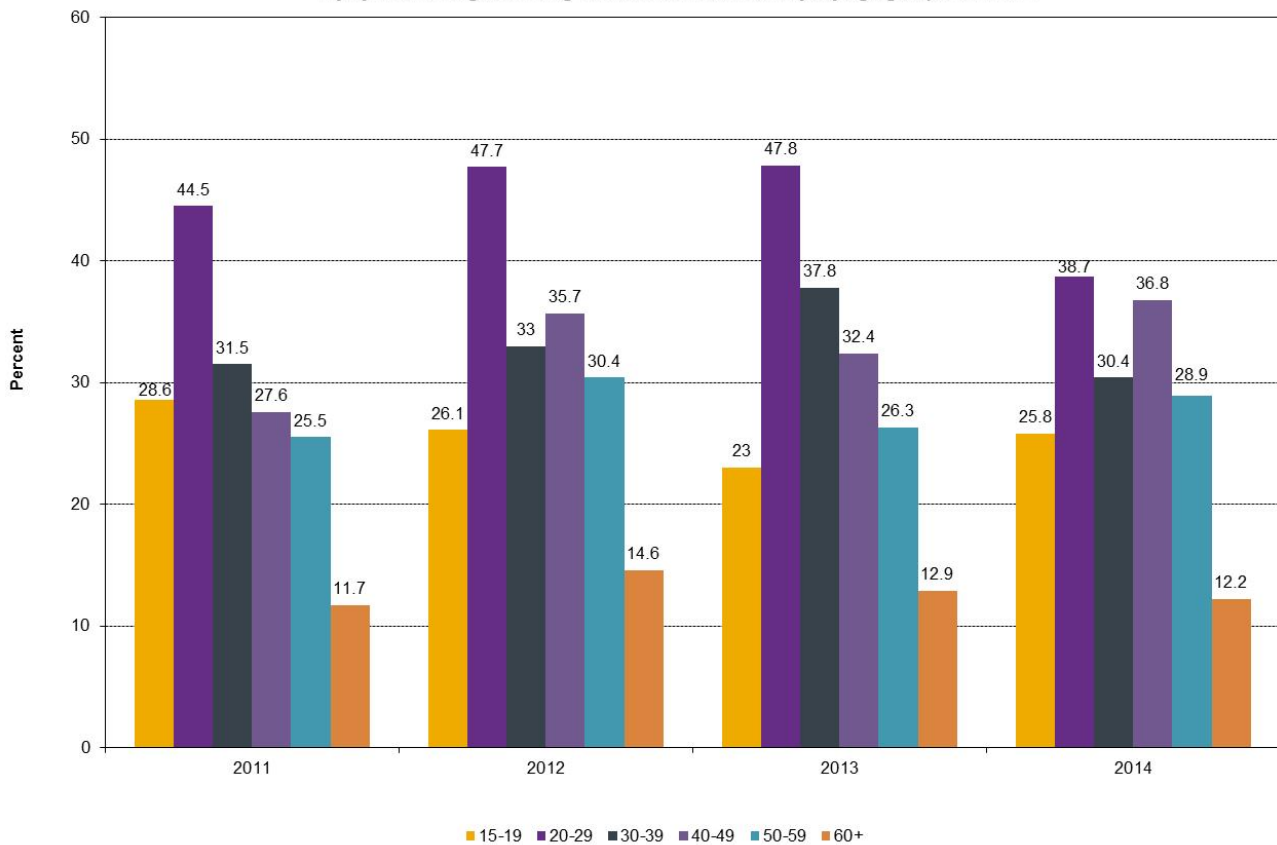
- There was a significant trend over time (2011-2014) in the proportion of South Australians aged 20-29 years who drank at levels that put them at risk of injury on a single occasion at least monthly, with a **decrease** from 45% to 39%.
- The decrease in the proportion of 20-29 year olds who drank at levels that put them at risk of injury on a single occasion at least monthly was significant between 2013 (48%) and 2014 (39%).
- There was a significant trend over time (2011-2014) in the proportion of South Australians aged 40-49 years who drank at levels that put them at risk of injury on a single occasion at least monthly, with an **increase** from 28% to 37%. There was a significant increase when only comparing 2011 with 2014.

Figure 5: The proportion of South Australians aged 15 years and over who drank at levels that put them at risk of injury from a single drinking occasion at least monthly, 2011-2014



Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2011-2014

Figure 6: The proportion of South Australians aged 15 years and over who drank at levels that put them at risk of injury from a single drinking occasion at least monthly, by age group, 2011-2014



Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2011-2014

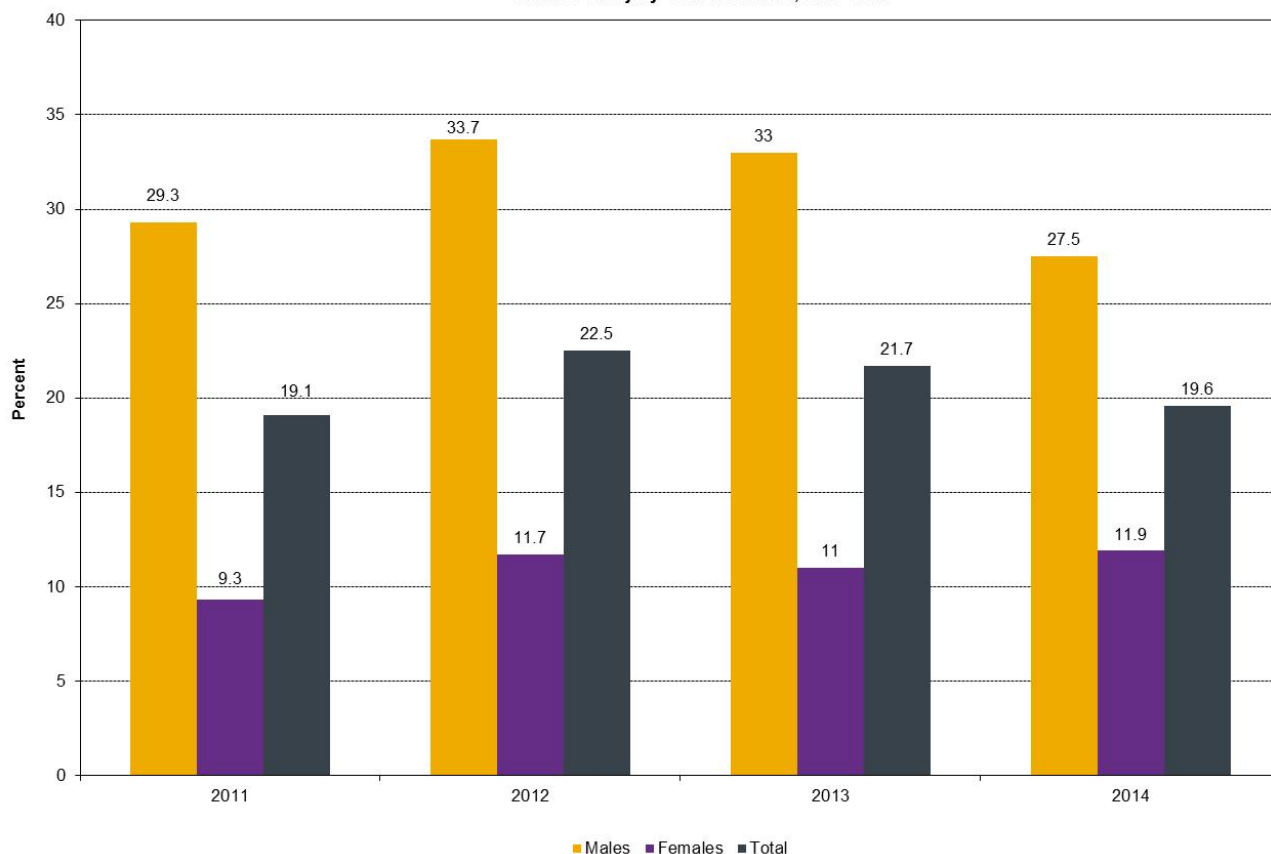
Between 2010 and 2013 the NDSHS found that in Australia, there were significant decreases in the proportion of men (39% to 36%), women (19% to 17%) and persons 14 years and over (29% to 26%) who drank at risky levels at least once in the last month. There were also significant increases in the proportion of male (17% to 19%) and female abstainers (23% to 25%).

Lifetime risk

Figure 7 shows that in 2014, 20% of South Australians aged 15 years and over drank at levels that put them at risk of disease or injury over a lifetime. There was a significant increase between 2011 (19%) and both 2012 (23%) and 2013 (22%) followed by a return to 2011 levels in 2014.

A significant increase in the proportions of those drinking at levels that put them at risk of disease or injury over a lifetime occurred between 2011 and 2012 for both men and women (from 29% to 34% and from 9.3% to 12%, respectively). While the proportions remained stable in 2013 (33% of men and 11% of women), there was a significant decrease between 2011 and 2014 for men (from 29% to 28%).

Figure 7: The proportion of South Australians aged 15 years and over who drank at levels that put them at risk of disease or injury over a lifetime, 2011-2014



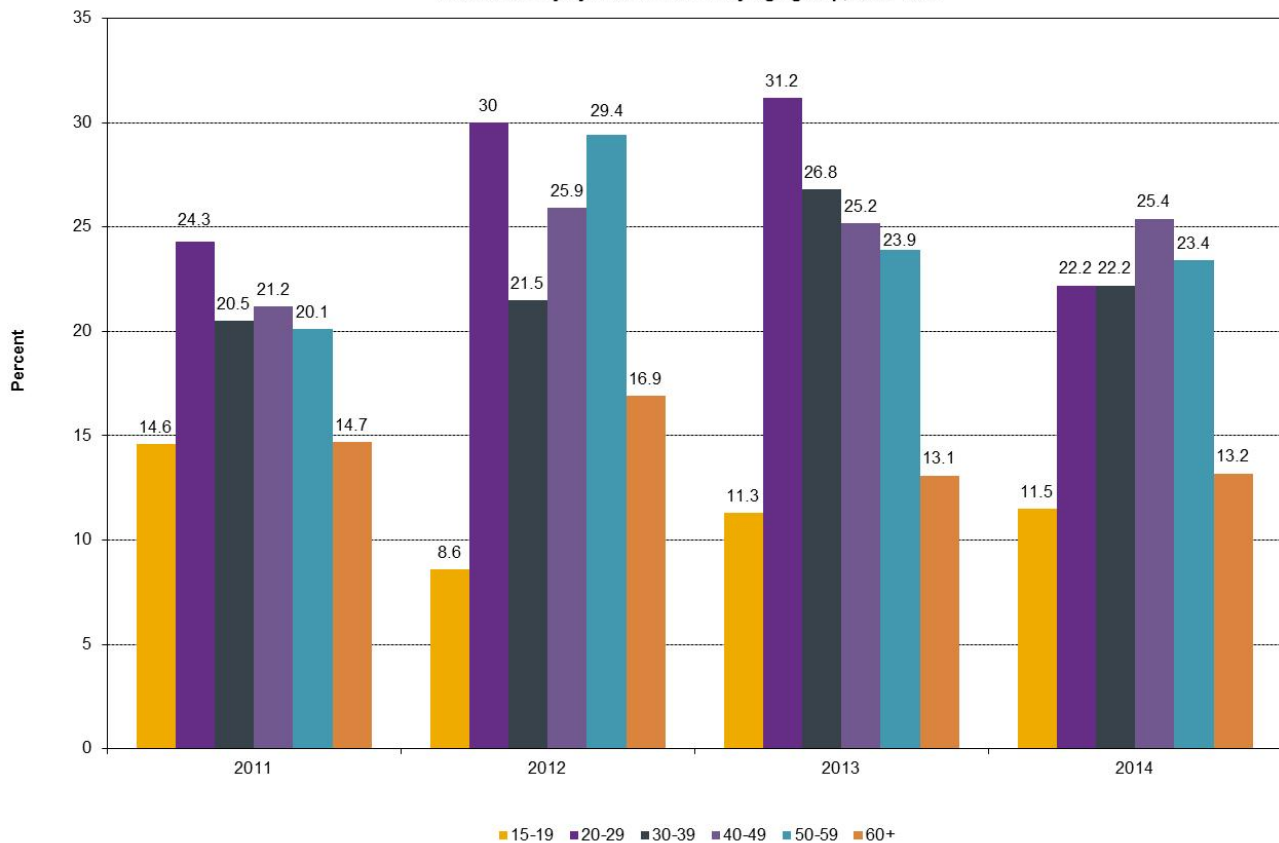
Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2011-2014

Figure 8 shows that in all four years, the group with the highest proportion drinking at levels that put them at risk of disease or injury over a lifetime was aged 20-29 years (from 24% in 2011 to 22% in 2014); the decrease over time was statistically significant. In addition, the proportion of 20-29 year olds drinking at levels that put them at risk of disease or injury over a lifetime decreased significantly between 2013 (31%) and 2014 (22%).

There was also a significant trend over time (2011-2014) in the proportion of lifetime risky drinkers among those aged 50-59 years (increasing from 20% in 2011 to 23% in 2014), and a decrease among those aged 60 years and over (from 15% in 2011 to 13% in 2014).

The NDSHS found that in Australia, there were significant decreases in lifetime risk between 2010 and 2013 for men (30% to 27%), women (12% to 10%) and persons 14 years and over (21% to 18%).

Figure 8: The proportion of South Australians aged 15 years and over who drank at levels that put them at risk of disease or injury over a lifetime by age group, 2011-2014



Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2011-2014

Prevalence of public drunkenness in the past 12 months⁴

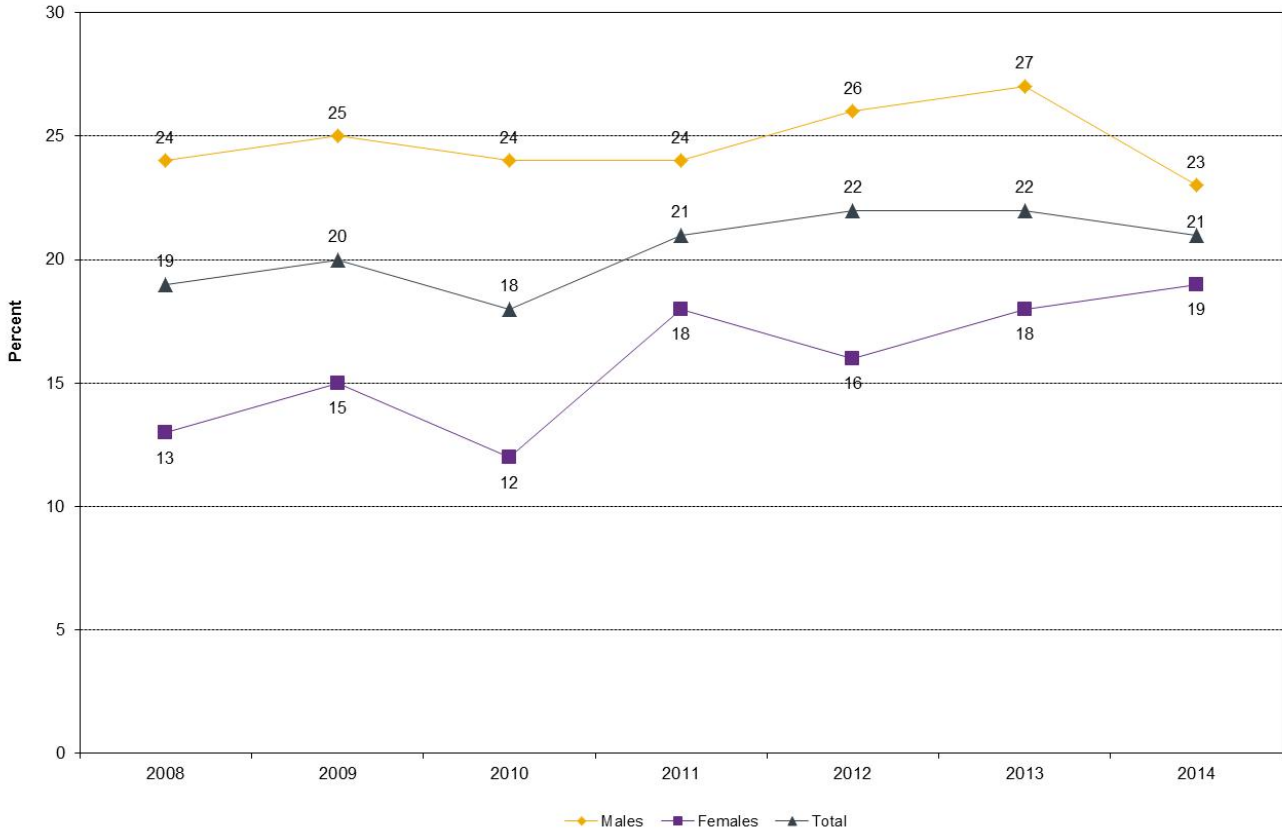
Survey respondents who had consumed alcohol in the past 12 months ($N=2124$) were asked whether or not they had been drunk in a public place during that time). Figure 9 shows that in 2014, 21% reported being drunk in public in the last 12 months (23% of men and 19% of women). Of those who reported being drunk in public, 57% were male, and two-thirds were aged less than 35 years. This was a non-significant decrease since 2013, where 62% were male.

There was a significant increase in the proportion of South Australians who reported that they had been drunk in public between 2008 and 2013 among all (19% to 22%) and among women (13% to 18%). Between 2013 and 2014, there was a small decrease overall (to 21%) and for men (to 23%), while for women, there was a further increase to 19%. The increase for women from 13% in 2008 to 19% in 2014 was significant.

The prevalence of being drunk in public was highest amongst 20-29 year olds (50%), followed by 15-19 year olds (40%). Prevalence declined with increasing age and was lowest amongst those aged 60 years and over: 2.8%.

The prevalence of public drunkenness was significantly lower for South Australians residing in regional areas (18%) than in metropolitan Adelaide (22%).

Figure 9: The proportion of South Australians that have been drunk in a public place in the last 12 months, 2008-2014



Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2008-2014

Acceptability of public drunkenness⁵

Survey respondents were asked whether or not they believe it acceptable for a person to get drunk in public on certain occasions (N=2732). Note that this question was asked of everyone, irrespective of whether or not they had consumed alcohol in the previous 12 months.

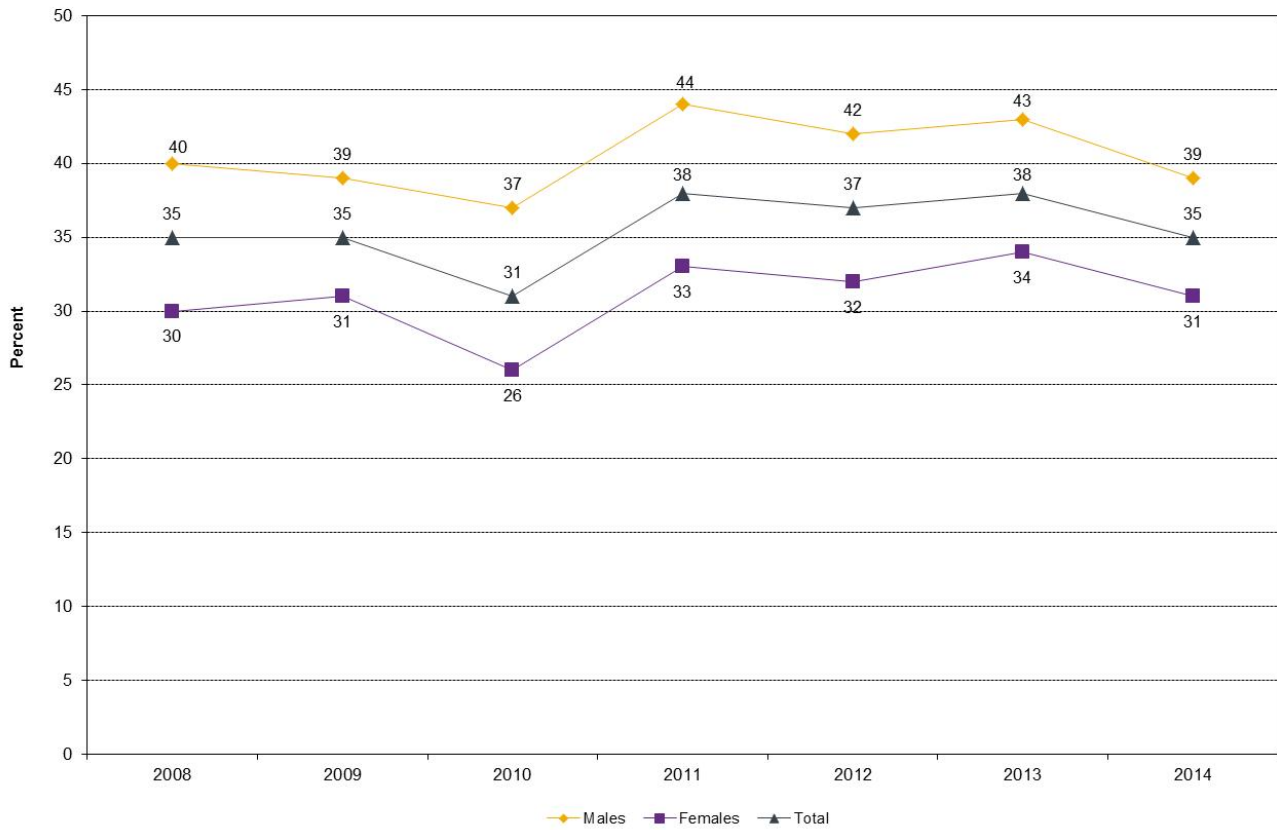
Figure 10 shows the proportion of men and women between 2008 and 2014 who believed it was acceptable to get drunk in public on certain occasions. There was a decrease in proportions between 2010 and 2011, followed by an increase in 2012, but by 2014 the proportions had returned to those reported in 2008. However, there was a statistically significant decrease in the acceptability of public drunkenness among all South Australians between 2011 (38%) and 2014 (35%), as well as a significant decrease among women between 2013 (34%) and 2014 (31%).

A higher proportion of men (39%) than women (31%) in 2014 believed that getting drunk in public on certain occasions was acceptable, and this has remained stable since 2008.

Acceptability of public drunkenness was more prevalent among those aged 15-34 years (50% deemed it acceptable) and declined with increasing age (13% of those aged 55 years and over). This has remained unchanged since 2011.

The proportion of those in 2014 who accepted public drunkenness was similar among respondents residing in metropolitan Adelaide (34%) and in regional areas (32%), and has remained stable over time.

Figure 10: The proportion of South Australians who believe it acceptable to get drunk in public on certain occasions, 2008-2014



Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2008-2014

For more information

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Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia acknowledges the contribution of Kamalesh Venugopal, Health Statistics Unit, Epidemiology Branch, SA Department of Health and Ageing, for his statistical assistance and advice.

1 Statistical tests include: The Pearson chi-squared statistic and linear regression. The Pearson chi-squared is corrected for the survey design with the second-order correction of Rao & Scott (1984: On chi-squared tests for multi-way contingency tables with cell proportions estimated from survey data. *Annals of Statistics* 12: 46-60) and is converted into an F statistic. Statistical significance was accepted at $p < 0.05$. All figures presented in this report are rounded to one decimal place in graphs and except for risky drinking, to zero decimal places in the text unless values fall below 10%. Two types of analyses are carried out on the risky drinking data: (1) Two-level ordinal variable: 'not risky at least monthly' and 'risky at least monthly' for single occasion risk, and 'no risk' 'risk' for lifetime risk; (2) Multi-level ordinal variables that include all levels of risk, including abstainers. Analyses on alcohol quantity and frequency are based on both multi-level ordinal variables: five for quantity and 11 for frequency, as well as more specific comparisons ('four drinks or less' vs 'five drinks or more' for quantity and 'abstainers' vs 'less than weekly' vs 'at least weekly' for frequency). For age and sex breakdowns, unless otherwise stated, comparisons are as stated above for the total sample.

2 This is lower than in previous years due to an increase in refusals, difficulties accessing households due to locked gates/security systems, as well as concerns among interviewers as to their safety when calling on randomly selected households. The sample was weighted in line with the 2011 Census to provide a demographic description of the population by age and sex. A 'person weight' was also applied, which adjusts the data to better align each individual with the age, sex and geographic location distribution in the total population, It also adjusts the data to address the probability of being selected within each household, based on the possibility of being selected from the total number of people residing in each household.

3 Data in this bulletin are taken from the NDSHS, which is conducted triennially by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) since 1995. The survey provides information on drug use patterns, attitudes and behaviours among South Australians aged 12 years and over. <http://www.aihw.gov.au/alcohol-and-other-drugs/ndshs-2013/>

4,5 Some proportions are slightly different from those reported elsewhere due to a recalculation of the data, which excludes 'don't know' or 'not stated'