

Alcohol and gender

Young males and females have different concerns over alcohol use. Young women see loss of control, unwanted or unsafe sex, travelling with a drunk driver and conflict with parents as the major harms associated with alcohol use. Young males see becoming addicted, suffering injury, getting into fights and conflict with parents as the major harms (NSW Youth Alcohol Action Plan 2001-2005, NSW Health).

When considering the impact of gender and risk, it is important to discuss the concept that perception of risk can differ between males and females. Young males tend to perceive behaviours as being less risky than young females when considering the same situation. The document, 2003 Australia's Young People: their health and well-being 2003 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare), reported on suicide and risk taking death of children and young people and found that 71.1% of risk taking deaths were male.

Being young and male is a significant risk factor for experiencing alcohol related violence.

The 2008 Secondary Students and Sexual Health Survey by La Trobe University indicated that just under one third of the sample reported ever having experienced unwanted sex. This has significantly increased in young women to 38% compared to 19% in 2002. Young women (38%) were more likely than young men (19%) to have experienced sex when they did not want to. There were no differences in rates of unwanted sex by year level. Students cited being too drunk (17%) or pressure from their partner (18%) as the most common reasons for having sex when they did not want to.



Males in Year 10 are becoming increasingly more likely to report being drunk or 'high' at the time of their most recent sexual encounter. Females, especially young females, seem to be increasingly drinking in ways that are similar to what were once characteristically male drinking behaviours.