



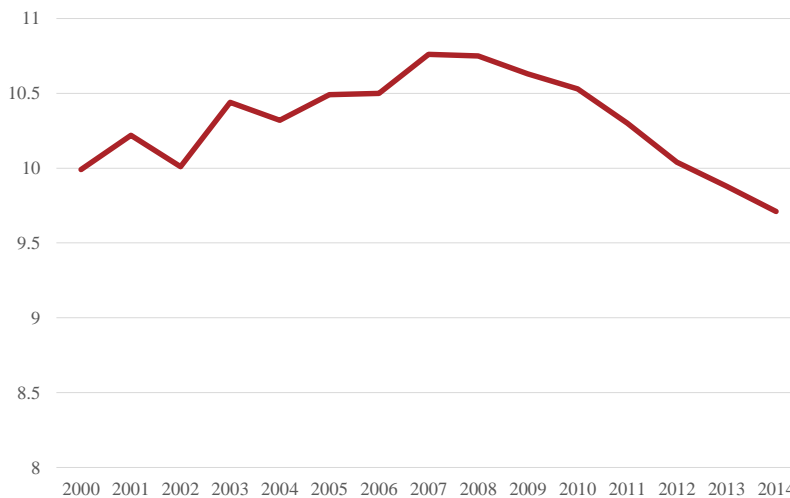
Changes in Attitudes to Alcohol Policy in Australia: An Age, Period, Cohort Analysis

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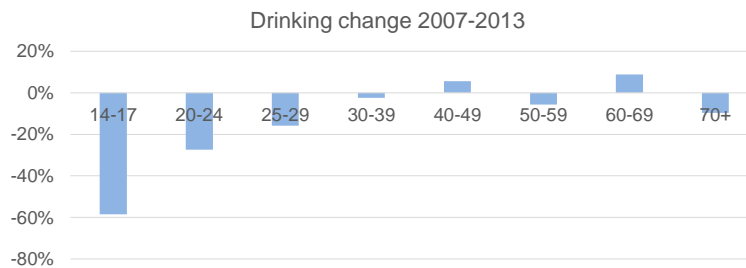
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Recent trends in Australian alcohol consumption



Australian alcohol consumption trends

- Between 2007 and 2013, per-capita alcohol consumption declined by 9%
- This decline is largely due to changes in young people's drinking

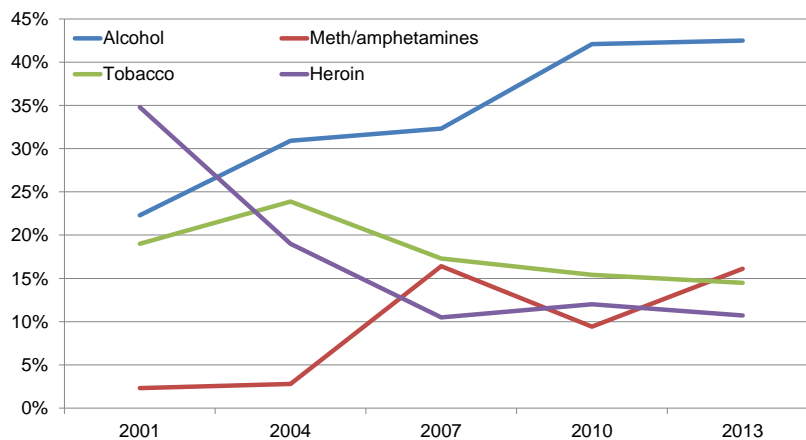


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Attitudes to alcohol appear to be shifting

Drug of most concern



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Australian policy landscape

- Relatively stable since 2000
 - Deregulation of liquor licensing requirements in many jurisdictions
 - Increased alcopops tax in 2008, but generally alcohol is becoming more affordable
 - Growing restrictions on trading hours (Newcastle 2008, Sydney 2014, Queensland 2016)
 - Loosening of some restrictions relating to advertising

Policy attitudes

- Public attitudes to alcohol policy are important
 - Evidence-based policies generally have limited public support
 - Unlikely to be enacted in the face of industry opposition and limited population support.
 - Growing public discussion of alcohol problems over recent decades (Azar et al., 2014)
 - Previous analyses (Callinan et al., 2014) point towards growing support for price and availability policies in Australia

The current study

- Examine whether these shifts in attitudes to alcohol policy have continued
- Explore whether any trends are due to:
 - Age effects (attitudes shifting due to the age structure of the population)
 - Period effects (attitudes shifting over time in the whole population regardless of age, cohort)
 - Cohort effects (attitudes shifting among particular birth cohorts like Gen Y)
 - Data from National Drug Strategy Survey, 1995-2013

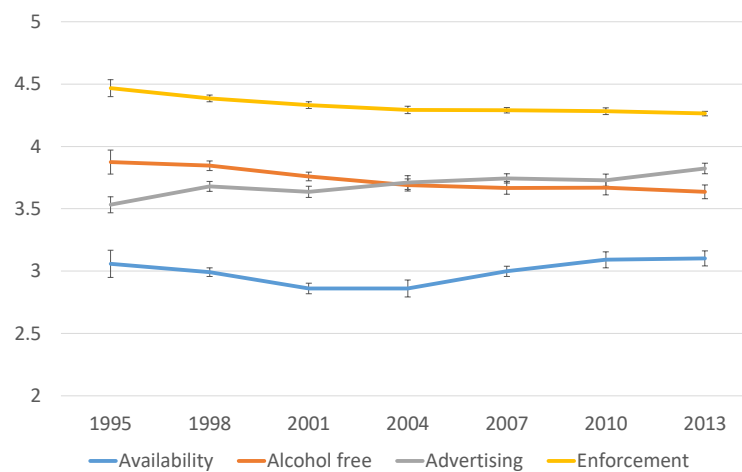
The current study

- N = 136,931
- Survey questions consistent over time
- Response rate ~50% and reasonably steady (i.e. not getting much worse over time)
- Previous analyses have shown that, while alcohol consumption is underestimated, trends are broadly consistent with objective data (Livingston and Dietze, 2016).

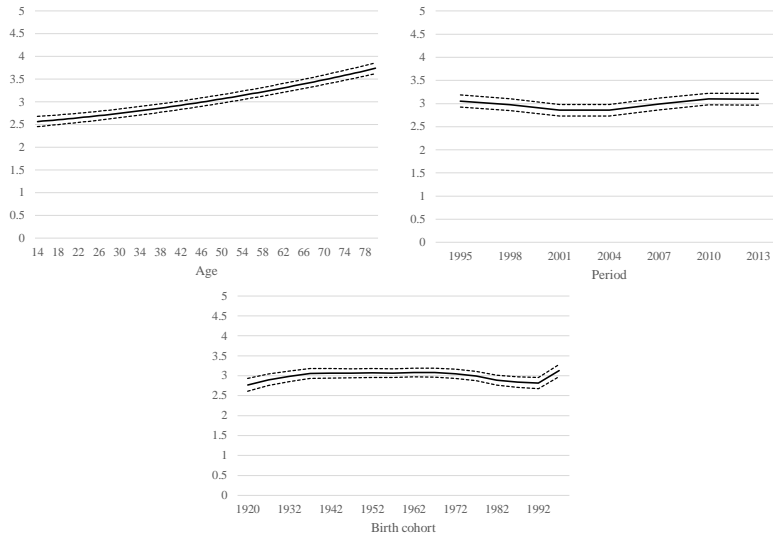
Grouping policy options

Availability	Alcohol free	Advertising	Enforcement
Increasing the price of alcohol	Increasing the number of alcohol-free events	Limiting advertising on TV until after 9:30pm	More severe legal penalties for drink-driving
Raising the legal drinking age	Increasing the number of alcohol-free zones or dry areas	Banning alcohol sponsorship of sporting events	Stricter enforcement of laws against serving customers who are drunk
Reducing the trading hours for all pubs and clubs			
Reducing the number of outlets that sell alcohol			

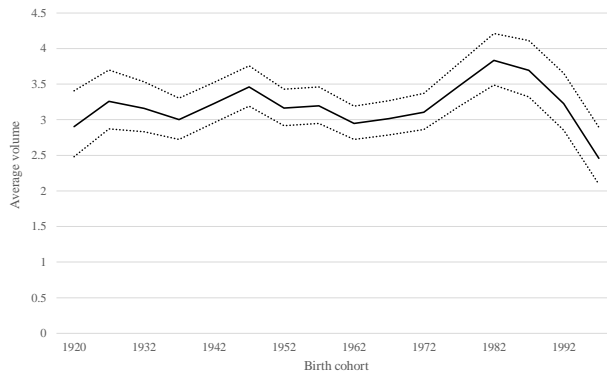
Broad trends



Age, period and cohort effects - availability



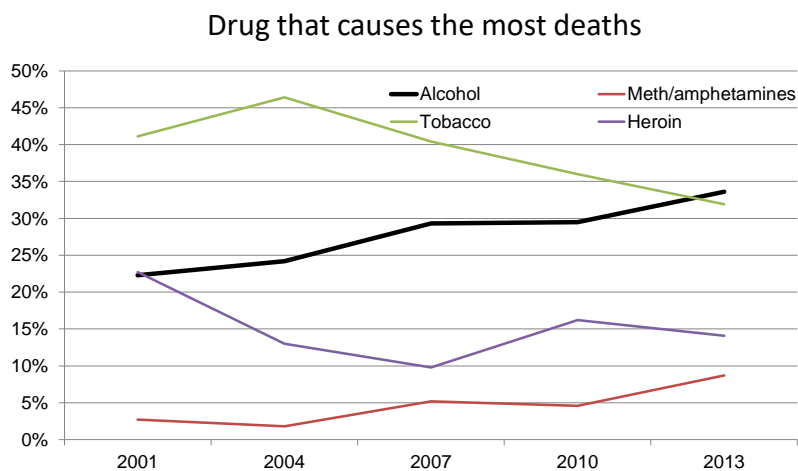
Attitude trends partly mirror consumption trends



Attitude trends partly mirror consumption trends

- Support for restrictive policies increases with age
 - The ageing population has contributed to increasing support for availability restrictions
- Recent cohorts buck the trend
 - Less likely to drink, more likely to support restrictions
 - In contrast to previous cohorts (1970s/80s) who were heaviest drinkers and are least likely to support restrictions
- Period effects show some broader shifts
 - Trends in the population in general have changed direction

Broader shifts in attitudes to alcohol



Broader shifts in attitudes to alcohol

- Have occurred consistently across age groups and other socio-demographic sub-populations
 - Even groups where consumption has increased
- Attitudes to alcohol in general have shifted more quickly than attitudes to policy
 - Closer match between consumption and attitude trends for policy than non-policy measures
 - Respondents may be more self-interested when weighing up support for policies

Conclusions

- Support for evidence-based alcohol policies has increased in recent years
 - Driven by a combination of an ageing population, general attitude shifts in the whole population and more restrictive attitudes among young people
- These trends are part of an ongoing shift in perceptions and use of alcohol in Australia
 - Advocacy for 'difficult' policy options may gradually find more fertile ground (although for policies like price increases support remains relatively low)
 - The development of attitudes among the youngest cohorts as they age will be critical

Acknowledgements

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Thank you

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