

Predictors of Changing Patterns in Alcohol Consumption among Australian Men in Midlife: An examination of a national longitudinal cohort

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Introduction: Risky alcohol use is one of the most preventable causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide, particularly among men. There is limited understanding of the factors predicting risky drinking among Australian midlife men specifically. This study addresses this gap by investigating factors associated with risky drinking among midlife-aged men, and how these drinking patterns and associated factors change across two time periods.

Methods: Waves 1 (2013-14) and 4 (2021-22) of the Ten to Men Longitudinal Study on Male Health were examined to explore emerging and current midlife men (25-44 years, n=7,283 wave 1, n=2,622 wave 4). Alcohol consumption was measured with the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test – Consumption (AUDIT-C), with two scoring groups being investigated: Low-Risk and High-Risk drinking. Analyses examined predictors of individuals who from wave 1 to wave 4: 1) Transitioned from low to high-risk drinking, and 2) Remained consistent with high risk drinking patterns over time.

Results: Factors associated with increased drinking trajectories included being married/in relationship, having dependent or independent children, and working in skilled occupations. Stable high-risk drinkers included being previously married, currently smoking, currently using drugs, not completing secondary school, completed a non-university certificate, worked in a managerial position, tech/trade or unskilled occupations, earned more than \$125,000 annually, and lived in regional/remote locations.

Conclusion: Australian midlife men who transitioned to or remained high risk drinkers over time would benefit from increased preventive health and early intervention efforts to reduce risks of experiencing alcohol-related harms over time

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