

## The most harmful drinker in focus: A dyadic and relational exploration of alcohol's harms to others

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**Introduction:** To gain further insights into alcohol's harm to others (AHTO), this study explored characteristics of the most harmful drinker in individuals' social environments in Australia in 2021. Additionally, we aimed to understand whether alcohol-related harms varied by relationship type and by dyadic relationships.

**Methods:** The study focused on cross-sectional national probability samples of Australian adults who indicated having one harmful drinker in their life. Descriptive statistics from 2008 (n=491) and 2021 (n=362) were compared. Logistic regressions were conducted on 2021 data, to investigate the likelihood of harm (physical, harassment, and annoyance) by gender, age, and relationship type (e.g., family, and friends), and on dyads between the participant and the drinker causing harm (e.g., male-female and female-male).

**Results:** Analyses revealed that men and 35-64 year olds were most often identified as the harmful drinker, and that these characteristics remained relatively stable between 2008 and 2021. Dyadic analysis provided moderate evidence that specific relationship types (i.e. partners and ex-partners) were associated with physical harms ( $OR=3.47$ ,  $p=.027$ ) and harassment ( $OR=4.97$ ,  $p<.001$ ), whereas specific dyads appeared unrelated to AHTO.

**Conclusions:** The current study showed that specific individuals are at higher risk of perpetrating harm, and that the current and ex-partners were more likely to cause physical harm and harassment. Since the current study was based on participants who identified only one harmful drinker, future research should aim to provide a more complete picture of all the harmful drinkers in one's environment.

**Implications for Practice or Policy:** The findings of the study highlight the necessity for developing tailored interventions for groups of individuals that are more at risk. The outcomes support targeted interventions that provide support to both the drinker and the victim, while further enhancing the overall comprehension of AHTO.

### Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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