

## **Prevalence of harm to children from others' drinking – a national survey**

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**Introduction and Aims:** This study examines the frequency and severity of harms experienced by children from others' drinking in Australia, reported by caregivers. It identifies the relationship between the child and the persons whose drinking causes harm.

**Design and Methods:** Data were collected through the Australian Alcohol's Harm to Others 2021 survey, a national sample of 2,574 adults. Analyses are based on 854 adult respondents who reported some parental responsibility for at least one child aged ≤17 years. Children being negatively affected by another's drinking was reported by the adult respondent and covered harm from someone who is a 'fairly heavy drinker' or 'drinks a lot sometimes' that occurred in the last year.

**Results:** Of the 854 caregivers who were asked about harm children experience from others' drinking, 6.1% reported a child experienced verbal abuse from others' drinking, followed by 4.2% reporting there was insufficient money to spend on the child/children because of someone's drinking. Only 0.9% of respondents reported children experiencing physical harm from others' drinking. Overall, 117 of 854 respondents reported that one or more children were negatively affected either 'a little' (9.2%) or 'a lot' (4.4%) by the drinking of others. A child's parent was commonly reported to be the person whose drinking negatively affected the child (56.8%).

**Discussions and Conclusions:** This study found that harms experienced by children from others' drinking extend beyond severe forms of harm. Findings suggest that the drinking of parents is commonly associated with a range of harms from others' drinking experienced by children.

**Implications for Practice or Policy:** Greater attention should be paid to less severe harms experienced by children from others' drinking as, while such harms may not come to the attention of authorities, they are more prevalent and have implications for the health and wellbeing of children.

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