

Family relationships may protect early teens from alcohol use

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(Medical Xpress) -- Close family relationships may protect teenagers from alcohol use, according to research by The University of Queensland's Centre for Youth Substance Abuse Research (CYSAR) and the Centre for Adolescent Health in Melbourne.

The research showed that emotional closeness between fathers and daughters and between mothers and sons may protect young [teenagers](#), and that family conflict is more closely linked to girls' drinking than boys' drinking. It also indicated that parents needed to start early with alcohol-related strategies due to the high levels of risk that even pre-teens are exposed to with respect to alcohol.

"These results show that particular relationships within families may be uniquely important in protecting kids," Associate Professor Adrian Kelly said. "Early alcohol use and misuse is the product of many factors, but this research controls for many of the factors that predict teenage drinking, such as involvement with peers who use alcohol". "Close [family relationships](#) provide a foundation on which effective monitoring of riskier situations can be built".

"The protective influence of parents may be strongest in the pre-teen and early teen years. It's critical that parents plan in advance for the almost inevitable exposure of Australia's teens to alcohol."

The research used data from the Healthy Neighbourhoods study, which is based on around 7500 kids living in Victoria, Queensland and Western

Australia.

The research also confirmed that alcohol use by kids younger than 14-18 year olds. It is a significant problem for many pre-teens (9 percent of 11-year-old boys reporting multiple instances of [alcohol](#) use, and 6% of 13 year olds report consuming five or more standard drinks on at least one occasion in the past two weeks)

"Even before kids hit their teens, parents should carefully consider how they are going to manage alcohol-related risks, " Assoc Prof Kelly said.

The Centre for Youth Substance Abuse Research is currently offering a preventative program for parents, that empowers them with practical strategies to reduce the risk of alcohol-related harm to their child.

[Parents](#) of children as young as 13 can participate in Project SHIELD.

Provided by University of Queensland

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