

How much booze are parents buying for their kids?

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Although 74 per cent of Australian 14-year-olds have tried alcohol, parents have cut down markedly on purchasing booze for their children.

Associate Professor Adrian Kelly of The University of Queensland Centre for Youth Substance Abuse Research analysed survey data across 15 years to make an interesting range of observations.

"Overall there are downward trends on adolescent experimentation, quantity and frequency of alcohol use, with the largest drops occurring

between 2010 and 2013," Dr Kelly said.

"There has been a significant drop of parents being the supplier from 22.4 per cent in 2007 to 11.79 per cent in 2013.

"Despite this, parents remain the second-most common source for alcohol, behind their children's friends.

"They still play an important role in the uptake of consumption and warrant attention when discussing strategies to reduce the harms associated with underage drinking."

Professor Kelly led a report which was co-written by UQ's Dr Gary Chan, Ms Megan Weier, Dr Catherine Quinn, Dr Matthew Gullo, Professor Jason Connor and Professor Wayne Hall.

They identified risks of adolescent alcohol use including injury and assault, early sexual debut, depression, adult alcohol use and dependence, and premature death.

The number of adolescents who identified as non-drinkers (no alcohol in the previous year) rose from around 30 per cent in 2001 to almost 60 per cent in 2013.

Since 1998, the number of adolescents reporting they drink alcohol on a weekly basis has significantly declined from 20.7 per cent to 5.1 per cent in 2013.

"Our findings suggested that decrease in supply by parents was not compensated for by other sources of alcohol," Dr Kelly said.

"It's consistent with the possibility that cultural changes have reduced the pressure on [parents](#) to provide alcohol, at least in the early phases of

alcohol use."

While the vast majority of children aged 14 to 17 surveyed said they had tried alcohol, there was a wide disparity with the number of respondents who had consumed a full serve.

In 2013 the percentage reporting they had consumed a full serve of [alcohol](#) was 44.4 per cent.

The percentage identifying as having consumed more than five standard drinks in a day dropped from 32.1 per cent in 1998 to 14.4 per cent in 2013.

The study has been published in BMC Public Health journal.

More information: Adrian B. Kelly et al. Parental supply of alcohol to Australian minors: an analysis of six nationally representative surveys spanning 15 years, *BMC Public Health* (2016). [DOI: 10.1186/s12889-016-3004-2](#)

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