

What happens when your drinking mate stops drinking?

May 26 2016, by David Ellis

As the song goes, you might love to have a beer with Duncan – but what happens when Duncan, Carol, Kevin or Pam decide to give up drinking?

Researchers at the University of Adelaide are looking to speak with people whose loved ones or close friends have recently stopped or reduced their alcohol consumption.

Their stories will form part of a bigger study into the social experiences of people who decide to change their [drinking](#) habits.

"There are a number of compelling reasons for people to limit or abstain from alcohol, especially health reasons, and yet alcohol is ingrained in Australian cultural and social practices. This can make ceasing or reducing alcohol consumption a difficult behaviour to perform," says Ashlea Bartram, a PhD student with the University of Adelaide's School of Public Health.

The first part of Ms Bartram's study sought the views of people who have stopped or reduced their drinking, "but it's also important to capture the experiences of significant others", she says.

"How do they perceive their friend's or loved one's change in [alcohol consumption](#), how does it affect them in social situations, how do they support or not support this change? These and many other questions will be key to better understanding the social shifts – both subtle and unsubtle – that occur when someone stops drinking," Ms Bartram says.

Ms Bartram says her study will help to fill a gap in current research.

"To date, there have been no studies that explore what [close friends](#) and family think when their significant other decides to turn down a drink, and how it might affect their own [social situations](#) involving [alcohol](#).

"Our ultimate aim is to develop strategies to better support people who are making a change or hoping to make a change to their drinking habits," Ms Bartram says.

More information: South Australians aged 18 years and over who have had a close friend or family member stop drinking, or cut back significantly, for at least three months in the past two years are invited to participate in this interview study. All personal information will be kept strictly confidential.

For more information, contact ashlea.bartram@adelaide.edu.au or phone 08 8313 6880.

Provided by University of Adelaide

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