

Young and sober: Drinking on the wane for Australian teens

January 12 2018

Drinking among Australian teenagers has declined sharply in the past two decades, with parents less likely to supply kids with booze and youths increasingly conscious of their health, researchers said Friday.

The study by Deakin University, which surveyed more than 41,000 teenagers between 1999 and 2015, found that the number of adolescents who had consumed alcohol has dropped from close to 70 percent to 45 percent.

Australia, where the [legal drinking age](#) is 18, was among the highest youth consumers of alcohol in the world when the survey began, researchers said.

But minors buying alcohol has declined from 12 percent nearly two decades ago to just one percent today, the study published in the *Drug and Alcohol Review* found, while parents supplying booze to kids had dropped from a peak of 22 percent in 2007 to 12 percent in 2015.

"Parents' attitudes have changed towards alcohol use at home and in adolescents, and this has been a really important trigger for the change we have observed," lead researcher John Toumbourou at Deakin told AFP.

"Also, other adults are far less likely to provide a young person with any alcohol, in the context of other homes or with a licensed alcohol retailer."

Reachers said a mix of tighter laws and [education programs](#) targeted at schools and parents had contributed to sobriety.

"Young people very much understand that the brain is still developing through the [adolescent](#) period into the mid-20s," Toumbourou said.

Parents increasingly recognising the dangers to health is "a game-changer", he added.

"There was once a time where [parents](#) thought if they (teenagers) don't get injured it won't do them any harm, but now they know that the actual alcohol itself is harming their development, which is changing the perception of risk of [alcohol](#)."

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Citation: Young and sober: Drinking on the wane for Australian teens (2018, January 12)
retrieved 17 April 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-01-young-sober-wane-australian-teens.html>

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