

Young drinkers more 'selfie-conscious,' research suggests

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Young Australians are less likely to over-indulge in booze and illicit drugs because they like to keep up appearances in their social media-sphere, according to a Flinders University expert on substance abuse and

addiction.

Professor Ann Roche, Director of National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) based at Flinders University's College of Medicine and Public Health, and colleagues are speaking at the [Australian Public Health Conference 2019](#) this week about changing trends in drinking and [illicit drug](#)-taking across all age groups.

Australians' drink and drug intake will be placed under the microscope during three presentations at the conference in the Hilton Adelaide from 17-19 September.

One of the Flinders research team's presentations is on "Reductions in young workers' risky drinking: the role of illicit drug displacement."

Professor Roche notes that while significant decreases in risky alcohol consumption by young people have been documented in Australia, it's unknown whether risky drinking has been displaced by increased illicit drug use.

The research found that the profile of both risky drinkers and [drug](#) users varied by industry of employment, highlighting the need for tailored interventions.

Exploring this in more detail, fellow NCETA researcher Dr. Janine Chapman is speaking on "Alcohol and Drug Use Among Construction Workers: Which Drugs and Which Workers?"

Interestingly, the study notes that cocaine usage, rather than methamphetamine, is currently on the rise.

It's not only young people who are of concern. Baby Boomers are increasingly leading the statistics cataloging risky drinking behavior in

Australia.

Another conference presentation on "Booze and Baby Boomers: the new risk group," based on NCETA research by Professor Roche, Victoria Kostadinov and Dr. Chapman, and raises concern that the issue of risky consumption among older people has been largely overlooked.

"These major changes in older people's alcohol consumption have important implications for health care providers, policy makers and carers," says Professor Roche.

"Tailored strategies to identify indicators of problematic consumption among their older clients, and provide sensitive age-appropriate responses, need to be outlined."

This issue is explored further in the report "Older Australians' alcohol-related risk perceptions, harm and knowledge of drinking guidelines"—authored by Flinders University's Nathan Harrison, Professor Roche, Ms Kostadinov, Dr. Chapman and Dr. Natalie Skinner—which shows that while drinking in the general population has decreased and abstention has increased, proportionally more older Australians are drinking at risky levels.

This research shows that strategies to increase knowledge of low-risk drinking guidelines and associated harms is required for older people.

"It is imperative to address uncertainty and ambiguity around safe [drinking](#) for older Australians and account for risk perceptions within this group for effective harm reduction," says Professor Roche.

Provided by Flinders University

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