

Last call for parents who supply teens with booze

5 July 2017



Credit: University of Queensland

Parents supplying their teens with alcohol are not only fuelling underage drinking but are increasing the risk that their children and their children's friends will drink heavily.

Australia-first research led by Dr Gary Chan from The University of Queensland's Centre for Youth Substance Abuse Research has found [parents](#) who supply alcohol to their children create a flow-on effect.

"We found adolescents living in regions where parental supply of alcohol was high were more likely to engage in [heavy drinking](#), regardless if they obtained alcohol from their own parent," Dr Chan said.

"Parents need to be aware that by providing alcohol to their children, they are not only encouraging their son or daughter's heavy drinking, but their children's peer group as well.

"Teens are likely to share alcohol they receive from their parents with their friends.

"In communities where parental supply is common,

adolescents may also have a heightened perception that alcohol is easily available and [underage drinking](#) is socially endorsed."

The researchers found parental supply of alcohol in general was higher in regional and rural areas than in cities.

The health risks outlined by the NHMRC alcohol guidelines include that heavy drinking can increase risky sexual behaviour, adversely affect brain development, and elevate the risk of [poor mental health](#) and death from unintentional injuries, homicide and suicide.

"Our results strengthen the evidence for communities with a high level of adolescent alcohol use to form a local coalition of key stakeholders, such as parents and school groups, to educate parents about the harmful consequences of supplying alcohol to young people," Dr Chan said.

"Previous studies found parents believed that, by supplying their children with alcohol, they could teach them to drink responsibly and provide a safe place to drink, thereby reducing alcohol-related harm in the long term.

"However, a review of 22 studies has found parental supply of alcohol was associated with more adolescent alcohol use, heavy episodic drinking and alcohol-related problems."

The positive news is overall the percentage of parents who supplied alcohol to their [children](#) has decreased since 2004.

In Queensland, prevalence of parental supply of [alcohol](#) was 18 per cent in 2004 and this decreased in 2013 to 8 per cent.

The study is published in *BMC Public Health* journal.

More information: Gary C. K. Chan et al. Parental supply of alcohol and adolescent drinking: a multilevel analysis of nationally representative data, *BMC Public Health* (2017). DOI: [10.1186/s12889-017-4472-8](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-017-4472-8)

Provided by University of Queensland

APA citation: Last call for parents who supply teens with booze (2017, July 5) retrieved 16 April 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-07-parents-teens-booze.html>

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