

Alcohol habits of young people in Denmark in 2014

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Danish title: "Unges alkoholvaner i Danmark 2014 – en kortlægning"

Summary

This report examines the alcohol habits of young people in Denmark in 2014. It is based on data from an online survey carried out among 2,000 young people aged 15-25. The survey was carried out by the research agency Gallup, and the data is nationally representative in terms of gender, age and region (east/west). The report has been created by the Danish Cancer Society and TrygFonden's alcohol campaign with the Danish title, "*Fuld af liv*".

Alcohol debut and consumption

The majority of young people aged 15-25 have tried alcohol, and eight out of ten have been drunk. One out of five young men and one out of four young women aged 15-25 drink more than the recommended safe limits of alcohol outlined by the Danish Health and Medicines Authority¹.

Furthermore, many young people drink more than five units in one session – in particular among men, those aged 21-25 and young people who live in the capital region.

Young people's alcohol culture

To a large degree, young people drink alcohol because it is sociable and fun, and the majority are typically with their friends at a festive social occasion when they get drunk. Almost half of those aged 15-25 who drink alcohol have experienced being pressurised by their friends to drink more than they had wanted. At the same time, two out of three young people believe that other young people of the same age drink *more* alcohol than they do.

Parental involvement in the alcohol consumption of young people

Six out of ten young people aged between 15-25 state that their parents had given them permission to drink alcohol before they were 16 years old. Fewer young people aged 15-20 than those aged 21-25 were allowed to drink alcohol before they were 16 years old.

Among 15-25 year olds living at home, 64% state that their parents think it is okay for them to drink alcohol. However, within the group that is allowed to drink alcohol, there are differences in the parental role. In some cases, the *young people* decide themselves the amount they drink. In other cases, the young people decide *with their parents* how much they are allowed to drink, and at other

¹ 7 units per week for women and 14 units per week for men.

times, the *parents alone* make the decision regarding the amount the young person is allowed to drink.

The majority of young people who live at home do not mind parental involvement in the amount of alcohol they drink or do not drink. Only 16% state that they are against it, or feel very strongly against it, while the rest are either indifferent or actually like it if their parents get involved.

Alcohol habits in families

In general, young people who live at home aged 15-25 state that their fathers drink alcohol more often than their mothers. Very few young people state that there are alcohol problems in their family.

Alcohol purchase

By far the majority of young people aged 15-25 are aware of the age restrictions on the purchase of alcohol in Denmark. 27% of young people aged 15-25 believe that purchasing alcohol should be banned for those aged under 18. Among those aged 15-17, who would personally be affected by an age limit of 18, barely one in four (23%) support an age limit of 18 for the purchase of alcohol.

Young people's attitude to drinking alcohol

In spite of the fact that almost half of all young people aged 15-25 have been pressurised to drink alcohol, 96% acknowledge that they think it is ok to refuse alcohol at parties. In addition, the majority disagree with the statements "you are cool, if you get drunk" and "you are only socially accepted if you get drunk".

Alcohol consumption and health risks

In spite of the fact that 60% of young people aged 15-25 have consumed five or more alcohol units during one session in the previous month and that around one fifth (21%) have done so three or more times, and that the vast majority of young people are aware of the health risks associated with alcohol consumption, 79% do not think they are personally at risk when they drink alcohol.

The respondents were also asked about the illness they believe heavy alcohol consumption can lead to. The majority mention liver disease (85%). One in four believe that heavy alcohol consumption can lead to heart disease, while 16% believe that it can lead to alcohol dependence and alcohol poisoning. Furthermore, 16% believe that heavy alcohol consumption can lead to cancer and finally 15% believe that it can lead to brain and/or nerve damage.