

The extent of the problem: alcohol-related harm to children

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Harm from other people's drinking

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graph LR; A[Harm from other people's drinking] --- B[Physical violence]; A --- C[Sexual violence]; A --- D[Traffic injuries, fires]; A --- E[Child abuse and neglect]; A --- F[Wellbeing of drinkers families]; A --- G[Effects on co-workers]; A --- H[Property damage, neighbourhood amenity];
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Physical violence

Sexual violence

Traffic injuries, fires

Child abuse and neglect

Wellbeing of drinkers families

Effects on co-workers

Property damage,
neighbourhood amenity

Measuring alcohol harm to children in NZ

Car crash injuries and Fires

Under 15 year olds:

- 12% of all traffic crash injuries were alcohol related
- Average of 5 children killed and 376 others injured each year
- 90% of children killed and 75% of those injured were in the same car as the drinking driver

Connor et al. *Accid Anal Prev* 2009;49:1099-1103

Table 6. Secondary victims of alcohol-related unintentional residential fires, by ethnicity (July 1996-Dec 2006)

	Adult		Child	
	NZ Maori	NZ European	NZ Maori	NZ European
Male	6	3	5	1
Female	2	1	4	0
Total	8	4	9	1

Child abuse or maltreatment

2006 CFYS

- 50,301 care and protection notifications
- 12,453 found to have been sexually, physically or emotionally abused or neglected (one in four)
- 21 per 1000 NZers 0-16 years
- In Australia 33% alcohol use is associated with the seriousness of the outcome. (42% of protection orders) (Laslett 2010)
- In NZ this would be 4109 cases in a year

2006 Police data

- 15% of victims in family violence incidents were children
- Alcohol was a contributing factor to 29% of all family violence incidents – not reported separately for children

2002-2006 Family homicides 38/141 were children

- Half of child homicides had alcohol +/- drug involvement (Martin & Prtichard 2010)

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder

- No reliable data on prevalence or severity in NZ
- No organised screening of children
- Surveys of drinking in pregnancy suggest >1/4 babies exposed to some alcohol
- US data: 1% FASD (May and Gossage 2001); 2-5% (May et al 2009) 600-3000 per year in NZ
- Much more drinking in pregnancy in NZ than US
- 12% of NZ pregnancies at high risk of heavy alcohol exposure in early gestation (Mallard 2012)

Evidence not found

- No reliable data on harm to children reported, including FASD
- Child, Youth and Family Service
 - Unable to access any data because it was not “accurate or reliable” enough for our purposes
- Some data extracted on crashes and fires
- No accessible data on alcohol and domestic violence incidents where children were present
- Emergency Departments
 - Alcohol data not systematically collected even for patients

Harm to Others survey

Table 4. Harms experienced by under-18 year old children living in the household of the respondent (n=334)

Harms	percentages		
	Female	Male	Total
<i>Because of someone else's drinking how many times in the last 12 months:</i>			
Were children yelled at, criticised or verbally abused?	13	9	11
Did children witness serious violence in the home?	6	7	7
Were children left in an unsupervised or unsafe situation?	6	5	5
Were children physically hurt?	4	1	2
Was a protection agency or family services called?	2	2	2
Was there not enough money for the things the children needed?	4	5	5
Total respondents with children reporting at least one impact	18	15	17

Alcohol related victimisation

New Zealand adults

	Alcohol-involved cases per year	% of total cases
Police records		
All offences	118,829	31-46%
Violent offences	20,447	33%
Homicides	23 (mean)	44%
Family violence homicides		37%
“Use of force” incidents		59%
Taser incidents		35%
Self- reported physical assault (HBS)	62,832	54%
Self- reported sexual assault (HBS)	10,053	57%
Self-reported all violence (NZCASS)		41%
Self-reported partner aggression (Gen07)		21% women 37% men

What children are growing up with

- Aggression aggravated by alcohol use
- Physical and sexual assault involving alcohol in their homes
- Neglect
- Lost social and educational opportunities
- Mental health problems
- Increased likelihood of drinking problems

Implications of gaps in knowledge

- Biased perceptions
 - Emphasis on measurable, visible harm
 - Poor recognition of extent of harm - to children and women in particular
- Inadequate evidence
 - reduces the agencies' ability to improve their services, to monitor change, to advocate for resources
 - weakens advocacy for better alcohol policy



Public Health Surveillance

Ongoing systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of health-related data essential to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of public health practice, closely integrated with the timely dissemination of these data to those responsible for prevention and control.



Societal cost of drinking

- Police
- Courts
- Prisons
- Health services
- Child Protection
- ACC
- Special education
- Loss of productivity
- Loss of life opportunities

Lost opportunities for societal provision of other amenities and services due to the diversion of resources

Harm to Others (H₂O)

- Neglected area of research
- Hidden cost – esp. harm to children
- Very relevant to alcohol policy
- International interest is growing