Placing Regional Students on the Agenda:
A study of attitudes toward alcohol and consumption patterns

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Aim

• Summarise what we already know
  • Three key trends

• Provide a rationale for focus on regional students
Aim (Cont.)

- Provide a comprehensive profile of regional student consumption
  - Contextualised in terms of general population consumption where possible
- Explore regional students’ attitudes toward alcohol
Background

- Student alcohol consumption is a topic of considerable concern internationally
  - Academic and social policy arenas
  - Pertinent in the contemporary Australian context
Effects of consumption

Individual
• Physiological, psychological, academic

University community (on others)
• Sleep, study, relationships

Broader community
• Workplace and traffic accidents
Increasing the representation of regional students

• The student experience is likely to be influenced by geographical location
  • Majority of the empirical literature focuses on metropolitan based students

• Accessibility and richness of social capital
• Rural and regional populations in general are disadvantaged in almost all social and economic aspects

• Access to health, welfare, and psychological services (Cheers, 1998; Cheers & Taylor, 2005; National Rural Health Alliance, 2009).

• Cancer mortality (Coory, Ho & Jordan, 2013)

• Suicide and drug and alcohol related injury (National Rural Health Alliance, 1998, 2009)
• High rates of alcohol and drug dependence, as well as resulting injuries

• Lack of services
• Inadequate services
• Under-staffed
• Under-resourced

(National Rural Health Alliance, 2011)
Regional Vs. Metro Students

• Double the rates of deferral (Polesel, 2009; Rothman & Underwood, 2012; Teese, Clarke & Polesel, 2007)

• Earn less on average (Haberkorn, 2004)

• Less likely to have completed secondary schooling (Haberkorn, 2004)

• Reduced options in fields of study and specialisations
Three Key Trends
1. Students consume more alcohol than those their same age in the general population
Kypri, Cronin and Wright (2005)

- University of Otago students (Dunedin, NZ) (n = 1424) and the general population (n = 1406)
- Aged 17-24
- Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)
Student’s:

• Scored 50-60% higher on average than those of the general population.

• Were almost twice as likely (65%) to participate in hazardous drinking (AUDIT score ≥8) than non-students (36%)

• Were more than three times as likely (31%) to report harmful drinking (AUDIT score ≥15) than non-students (9%)
Similarly:

- **US nation wide surveys**  
  (Dawson, Grant, Stinson & Chou, 2004; Grucza, Norberg, & Bierut, 2009)

- **US longitudinal studies**  
  (Slutske, et al., 2004; Timberlake, et al., 2007)

- **Review of UK studies**  
  (Gill, 2002)
2. Male students consume greater amounts of alcohol than female students
Hallett et al. (2012)

- Western Australia uni students (n = 7,237)
- Aged 17-25
- Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)
Male students:

• Scored significantly higher than female students on AUDIT

• Significantly more likely to be categorised as dependent

• Consumed more alcohol than female students (8.7 and 5.1 standard drinks respectively)
Similarly…

Student samples:

• **US survey** (Dawson, Grant, Stinson & Chou, 2004; Pedersen, 2013)

• **Russian survey** (Lysova & Hines, 2008)

• **UK studies** (Ansari, Stock and Mills, 2013; Bewick et al., 2008; Webb, Ashton, Kelly & Kamali, 1996)
• **Review of literature** (Ham & Hope, 2003, p. 725) —

“Overall, male students tend to drink alcohol more frequently and in larger quantities … are more likely to engage in binge drinking … and/ or risky drinking … and to meet criteria for an alcohol use disorder … than female students.”
Similarly...

General population samples:

• **Russia** (Nemtsov, 2006)
• **Australia** (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2011)

Males students more likely to experience alcohol related problems

(Hallett et al., 2013; Ham & Hope, 2003; McGee & Kypri, 2004; Perkins, 2002)
3. Students in earlier years of study consume more alcohol than those in later years of study

• Longitudinal study from the UK

• Assessed the drinking patterns of 225 students over three years

• Data drawn from the UNIversity Quality of Life and Learning (UNIQoLL) dataset – range of universities
Results:

Found a significant decrease in the amount of alcohol consumed each week by students in their second and third years of study when compared to their first year, in both males and females in the longitudinal study (p < 0.001)
Similarly…

• US survey (Dawson, Grant, Stinson & Chou, 2004)

• NZ Survey (Kypri, Cronin and Wright, 2005)

• Consumption peaks in first few months of study (Bewick et al., 2008; White, Kraus, & Swartzwelder, 2006)
However…

Curvilinear when including first year in work:
• UK dental students (Newbury-Birch, Lowry & Kamali, 2002)

Some studies show increase over years:
• UK medical students (Newbury-Birch, Lowry & Kamali, 2002)
• UK male students (medical and dental) (File, Mabbutt & Shaffer, 1994; Underwood & Fox, 2000)
• US male students (Pedersen 2013)
Method
Instrumentation and Sampling

• 200 respondents – 5 regional NSW campuses

• Aged 18-24

• QNR administered in-person and online

  • Demographics, alcohol consumption patterns, and attitudes toward alcohol
• 136 females (68%) and 63 males (31.5%) – 1 NR
• Wagga Wagga (66%) and Albury (22%)
• Most likely to be in full time study on campus
• First (33%), second (31%), and third year (20.5%), other (15.5%)
• Schools of Science (57%) and Arts (20%)
Consumption Patterns
Standard drinks per session

Year of Study

- **Average**
  - First: 9.67
  - Second: 9.47
  - Third: 8.77

- **Male**
  - First: 8.12
  - Second: 7.16
  - Third: 6.89

- **Female**
  - First: 7.24
  - Second: 6.23
  - Third: 6.06
## Short-term Risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Abstain (%)</th>
<th>Low Risk (%)</th>
<th>High Risk (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSU</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>63.5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>18-19</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>66.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIHW</td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18+</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>40.6</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Males (%)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Females (%)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Overall (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CSU</td>
<td>AIHW</td>
<td>CSU</td>
<td>AIHW</td>
<td>CSU</td>
<td>AIHW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Several times a week</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>39.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than weekly</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>33.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstain*</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Combines ‘ex-drinker’ and ‘never a full glass’ categories for AIHW report
Type of Alcohol

Female
- Wine: 32.3
- Beer: 10.1
- Spirits: 28.6
- Premixed: 26.3

Male
- Wine: 13.7
- Beer: 44.6
- Spirits: 30.9
- Premixed: 9.6

Average
- Wine: 26.6
- Beer: 20.8
- Spirits: 29.3
- Premixed: 21.1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Whole Sample (%)</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed venue on campus</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parties on campus</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parties off campus</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels/Pubs</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Average Weekly Expenditure ($)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54.26</td>
<td>34.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .001 (two-tailed)
Alcohol Related Attitudes
Social contexts encouraging alcohol consumption

(1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = unsure, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree)
Consuming more than four standard drinks in one drinking session can cause...

Health problems*
- Females: 3.84
- Males: 3.23

Social problems*
- Females: 3.71
- Males: 2.97

(1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = unsure, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree)

* p < .001
Uni students drink more than other people

- Female: 3.60
- Male: 3.46
Do you think your consumption is the same as the average CSU student? *

(1 = significantly below, 2 = slightly below, 3 = the same, 4 = slightly above, and 5 = significantly above)

* p < .001
Questions?