ARE AUSTRALIAN TEENS WITH PARENTAL PERMISSION TO DRINK AT HOME ENGAGING IN RISKIER ALCOHOL USE BEHAVIOURS? RESULTS FROM A NATIONAL SAMPLE

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Introduction and Aims: Parents might allow their underage teens to drink at home to promote responsible drinking practices. This study aimed to determine: 1) What proportion of Australian teens aged 16–17 years were allowed to drink at home in 2016; 2) Whether teens allowed to drink at home were engaging in different alcohol use behaviours and experiencing more related harm vs those without permission; 3) The individual and familial characteristics of teens allowed to drink at home.

Design and Methods: Data were from Wave 7 of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children. A multivariable logistic regression model was developed to identify factors associated with teens having permission to drink at home.

Results: In 2016, 28% of teens aged 16–17 were allowed to drink alcohol at home; 18% were allowed to take alcohol to parties/social events. Around three-quarters (77%) of teens allowed to drink at home had drunk alcohol in the past month, compared to 63% of those without permission (p<0.05); however, there was no difference in quantity of use between groups. Teens allowed to drink at home were significantly more likely to have experienced any alcohol-related harm compared to those without permission (23% vs 17%). More frequent alcohol consumption by parents was associated with an increased likelihood of allowing teens to drink at home.

Discussions and Conclusions: Young people should be encouraged to delay alcohol use initiation. Parents should avoid permitting alcohol use among adolescents even in environments or circumstances that might be considered ‘low risk’.

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