

RISKY DRINKING AND ILLICIT DRUG DISPLACEMENT AMONG YOUNG EMPLOYEES

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Introduction and Aims: Significant decreases in risky alcohol consumption by young people have been documented in Australia and other developed countries. Contributory factors are unclear. Occupation impacts drinking patterns. However, changes in young workers' alcohol consumption have yet to be examined. It's also unknown whether risky drinking has been displaced by increased illicit drug use.

Design and Methods: Secondary analyses of nationally representative Australian data (NDSHS) from 2007 and 2016 were conducted. Participants were those aged <30 years in paid work (2007 N=2,176; 2016 N=1,911). Frequency analyses examined proportions who drank at risky levels, used 1+ illicit drugs in the past year, and approved of alcohol/cannabis use. Differences over time were assessed with z-scores. Logistic regression examined predictors of risky consumption and drug use.

Results: Young workers' risky drinking decreased significantly ($p < .01$) between 2007 and 2016, while low-risk drinking and abstaining increased. Cocaine and hallucinogen use also increased significantly over the same time period, while methamphetamine and ecstasy decreased. Significant decreases in risky drinking were observed in three industries (construction, retail, and healthcare); illicit drug use significantly increased in hospitality only. The proportion of respondents who approved of alcohol use did not change over time, however approval of cannabis use significantly increased.

Discussions and Conclusions: No strong evidence emerged of young employed risky alcohol users shifting to drug use in a displacement effect. Patterns and predictors of risky alcohol and drug use changed over time and the profile of both risky drinkers and drug users varied by industry of employment, highlighting the need for tailored interventions.

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