

# PREDICTION OF PERICONCEPTIONAL ALCOHOL USE FROM ADOLESCENCE AND YOUNG ADULTHOOD: FINAL RESULTS FROM A 20-YEAR PROSPECTIVE COHORT STUDY

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**Introduction:** Periconception spans the time preceding, including and immediately following conception. This period represents a critical window of exposure for offspring growth and development. Many women drink alcohol antenatally; less is known about drinking patterns pre-pregnancy awareness, or about prior patterns of use in adolescence and young adulthood that may predict periconceptional drinking. We examined the extent to which alcohol use and disorder pre-conception (in adolescence and young adulthood) predicted periconception drinking.

**Method:** Female participants (N=301) from the Victorian Intergenerational Health Cohort Study (VIHCS) reported on heavy binge drinking ( $\geq 11$  drinks in a day) and alcohol use disorder from adolescence to young adulthood (nine waves across 14-29 years). In pregnancy (between 29-35 years) women were asked how frequently they consumed alcohol pre-pregnancy awareness.

**Results:** Most women reported drinking periconceptionally (77%); 18% drank frequently (3+ times a week). Frequent periconceptional drinking was common among women who reported persistent young adult heavy binge drinking (OR=7.6, 95%CI 3.1-19.0,  $p < 0.001$ ) or alcohol use disorder (OR=12.2, 95%CI 5.2-28.8,  $p < 0.001$ ). Importantly, though, 48% of frequent periconception drinkers reported no problematic pre-conception drinking from their mid-late 20s.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** Final results show that alcohol use is common among women in the periconception window. Women with a history of persistent heavy binge drinking or alcohol use disorder pre-conception are at increased risk for periconceptional drinking. Notably, however, much frequent periconceptional drinking occurs among women with normative drinking patterns pre-conception. Public health initiatives for periconception alcohol use should be widely disseminated and targeted earlier in the pre-conception window (i.e., the mid-20s).

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:** Nil