

HIGH-RISK DRINKING AND USE OF ILLICIT DRUGS AND ATTITUDES TO DRINK- AND DRUG-DRIVING IN A LARGE SAMPLE OF MUSIC FESTIVAL ATTENDEES.

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Introduction and Aims: There are few studies of patterns of alcohol and other drug (AOD) use at music festivals in Australia, nor available harm minimization services. The Vanessa service runs at a range of Victorian music festivals, providing a range of services including breath alcohol testing. We examined patterns of AOD use in a sample of Vanessa clients.

Design and Methods: A convenience sample of 2455 festival attendees was recruited over the 2018/19 summer. We examined alcohol consumption using the AUDIT-C and past-year peak drinking, recent use of illicit drugs (in a randomly-selected half of the sample) and attitudes towards AOD use and driving.

Results: The mean age of the sample was 22.7 (SD=3.9) years, 60% identified as female. Few (2.4%) respondents reported past-year alcohol abstinence, most (64%) reporting consuming 6+ standard drinks in a single session at least monthly, with 19% reporting drinking 20+ standard drinks in a single session in the previous year. Most (62%) reported lifetime illicit drug use, of whom 57% reported past month use of cannabis, 48% reported past month use of ecstasy and 39% reported intending to take an illicit drug at the festival. A small majority reported believing that it was never acceptable to drive after taking illegal drugs and 63% reported believing that it was only acceptable to consume none or <3 standard drinks in the six hours prior to driving.

Discussions and Conclusions: High risk drinking was common and rates of illicit drug use were comparable to those found in previous studies of festival attendees. Attitudes towards alcohol or other drug consumption before driving were largely consistent with messages contained in drink- and drug-driving health promotion material.

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