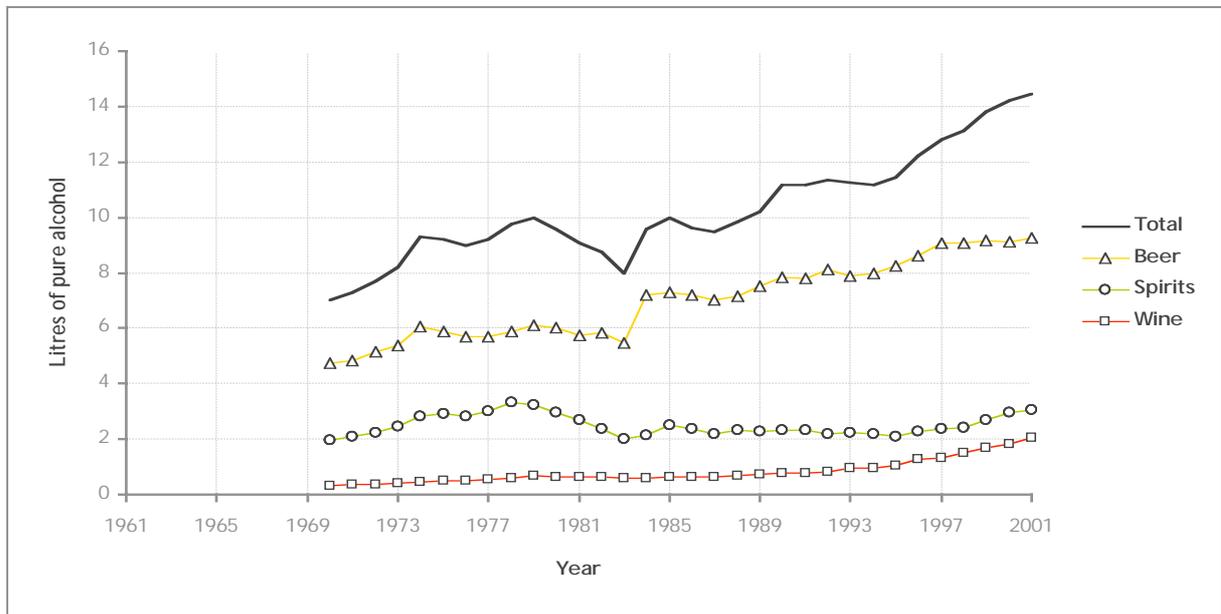


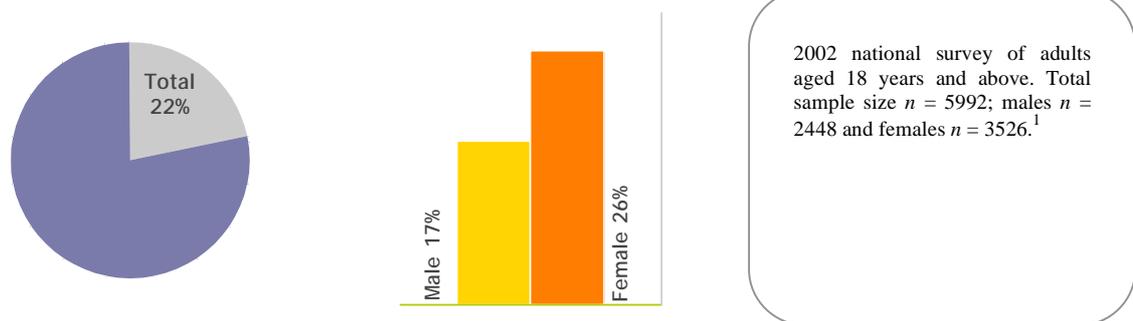
IRELAND

Recorded adult per capita consumption (age 15+)



Sources: FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), World Drink Trends 2003

Last month abstainers

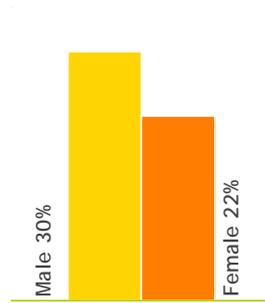


In a 2002 survey among a nationally representative sample of adults aged 18 years and older (total sample size $n = 1069$), it was found that 23% (20% of males and 25% of females aged between 18 and 64 years) had not consumed any alcohol during the past 12 months. The average volume of alcohol consumption reported, expressed in pure alcohol per respondent aged 18 years and over, amounts to 9.3 litres. Further, the combination of high drinking level and high abstention rates suggest that in Ireland reported consumption per drinker is 12.1 litres of alcohol.²

Estimates from key alcohol experts show that the proportion of adult males and females who had been abstaining (last year before the survey) was 9% (males) and 16% (females). Data is for after year 1995.³

According to a national survey conducted in 2003 (total sample size $n = 1007$; aged 15 years and over), the average number of drinks consumed per drinking day was 4.03.⁴

Heavy drinkers

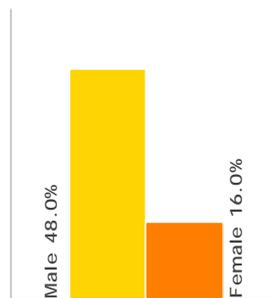


2002 national survey of adults aged 18 years and above. Subsample size $n = 2966$. Heavy drinking was defined as consuming more than 21 units of alcohol a week for men and more than 14 units of alcohol a week for women.¹

Fourteen percent of respondents had an alcoholic drink on five or more days of the week; 15% men and 13% women. Those reporting that they drank more than six drinks on an average drinking day were 41.4% of men and 16.2% of women. The survey also found that of those who regularly drink alcohol, on a typical drinking occasion, male respondents consumed on average 6.6 alcoholic drinks and females on average 3.7 alcoholic drinks.¹

In a 2002 survey among a nationally representative sample of adults aged 18 years and older (subsample for age group 18–64 years old; males $n = 421$ and females $n = 459$), it was found that 28.6% of males and 13.3% of females reported weekly risky drinking. Risky drinking was defined as weekly consumption of greater than 21 standard drinks for men and 14 standard drinks for women (one standard drink is equivalent to $\frac{1}{2}$ pint beer or 10 g of pure alcohol).²

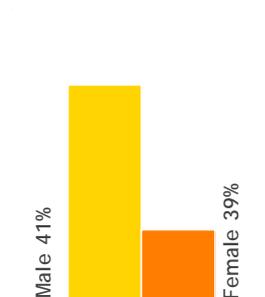
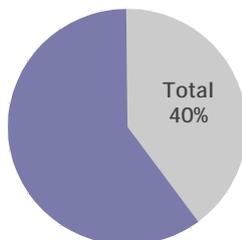
Heavy episodic drinkers (at least weekly)



2002 national survey of adults aged 18–64 years. Subsample size males $n = 421$ and females $n = 459$.²

According to a national survey conducted in 2003 (total sample size $n = 1022$; aged 15 years and over), the average number of times that respondents had consumed the equivalent of one bottle of wine, five pints/bottles of beer or five measures of spirits on one drinking occasion was 0.86.⁴

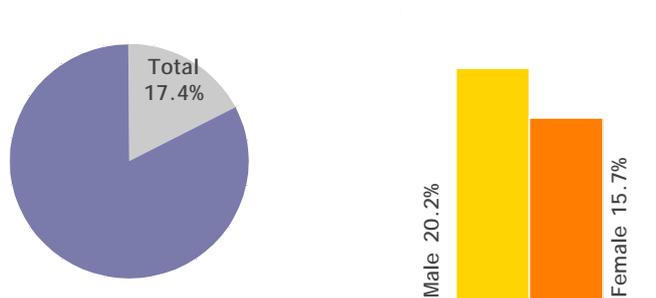
Youth drinking (alcohol consumers)



Data from the 1999 ESPAD survey. Total sample size $n = 2277$; males $n = 1108$ and females $n = 1169$; age group 15 to 16 years. Alcohol consumer was defined as lifetime use of 40 times or more.⁵

In a study of 125 school-going children aged 15–17 years in the Cork city area, it was found that alcohol consumption among females was higher than among males.⁶

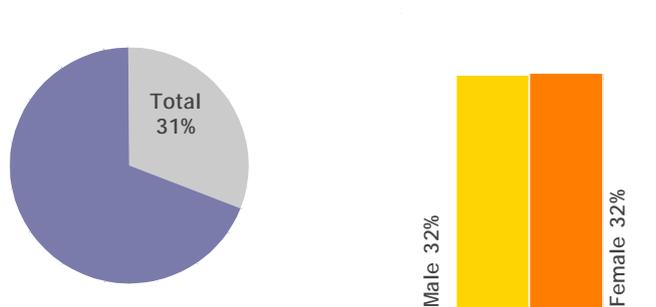
Youth drinking (drink at least weekly)



HBSC survey 2001/2002. Data shows proportion of 15-year-olds who report drinking beer, wine or spirits at least weekly. Total sample size $n = 919$.⁷

According to the 1997/1998 HBSC survey (total sample size $n = 1457$), 27% of 15-year-old boys and 12% of 15-year-old girls reported drinking beer, wine or spirits at least weekly.⁸

Youth drinking (binge drinkers)



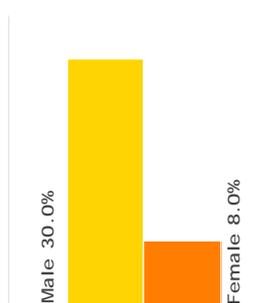
Data from the 1999 ESPAD survey. Total sample size $n = 2277$, males $n = 1108$ and females $n = 1169$; age group 15 to 16 years. Binge drinking was defined as consuming five or more drinks in a row three times or more in the last 30 days.⁵

Youth drinking (drunkenness)

According to the 2001/2002 HBSC survey (total sample size $n = 919$), the proportion of 15-year-olds who reported ever having been drunk two or more times was 32.6% for boys and 31.7% for girls.⁷

In the 2003 ESPAD study of subjects 15 to 16 years old (total sample size $n = 2407$; males $n = 1219$ and females $n = 1188$) the proportion of subjects who reported being drunk three times or more in the last 30 days was 26% (total), 27% (males) and 25% (females).⁵

Alcohol abuse or dependence in a general hospital



A study randomly selected 1133 adult patients from all hospital admissions in a university teaching hospital in Dublin (759 were interviewed; 378 men and 381 women). Data shows proportion who met DSM-IV criteria for alcohol abuse or dependence.⁹

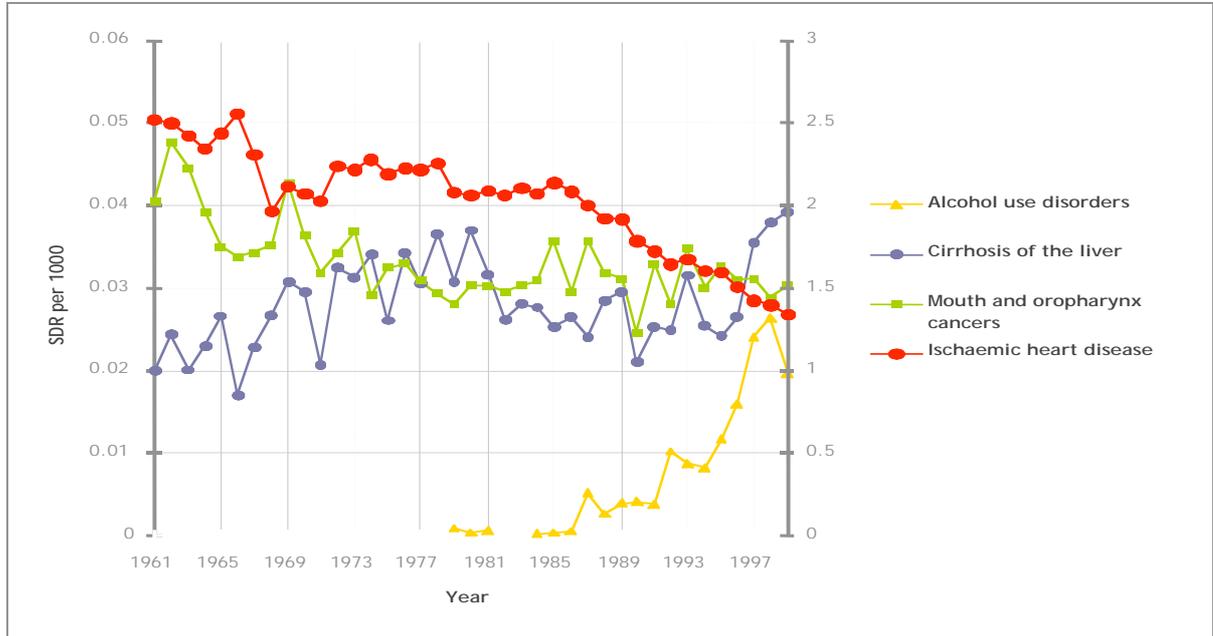
Unrecorded alcohol consumption

The unrecorded alcohol consumption in Ireland is estimated to be 1.0 litre pure alcohol per capita for population older than 15 for the years after 1995 (estimated by a group of key alcohol experts).³

Mortality rates from selected death causes where alcohol is one of the underlying risk factors

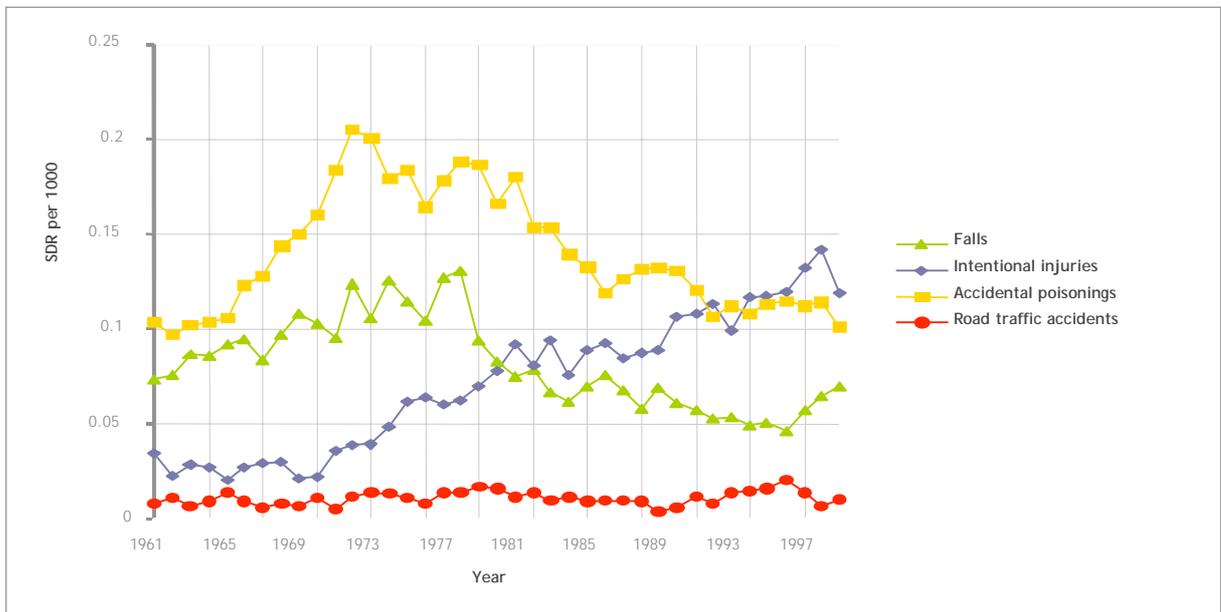
The data represent all the deaths occurring in a country irrespective of whether alcohol was a direct or indirect contributor.

Chronic mortality



Note: Chronic mortality time-series measured on two axes, ischaemic heart disease on right axis and the other causes on the left.

Acute mortality



Source: WHO Mortality Database

Morbidity, health and social problems from alcohol use

In Ireland, alcohol is estimated to be associated with at least 30% of all road accidents and 40% of all fatal accidents. In 2002 approximately 13,441 detections for drink driving were made¹⁴. The majority (93%) of detections were over the blood alcohol concentration legal limit and 62% of those were over twice the limit.¹⁰

A pilot study of alcohol-related attendance in the emergency room showed that alcohol was a factor in 25% of those in attendance at the hospital Accident and Emergency Department and 13% were clinically intoxicated. The vast majority of patients where alcohol was involved were in attendance between 18:00 and 08:00.¹⁰

In a 1997 study of 111 patients admitted to one hospital following drug overdose, it was found that alcohol was consumed synchronously by 51% and 17% fulfilled criteria for alcohol dependency. Six patients who required ventilation had consumed a combination of tricyclic antidepressants and alcohol.¹¹

A 2002 national study found that 39% of male drinkers and 24% of female drinkers have experienced at least 1 of 8 adverse consequences during the last 12 months as a result of their drinking. Furthermore, men who binge at least once a month have an almost three times higher risk (271%) of experiencing adverse effects compared with those who binge less often. The corresponding figure for women is almost twice as likely (180%). Thus, both a high level of drinking and regular binge drinking is associated with a higher risk of problems in Ireland.²

Problem drinking is an important contributory factor to marital difficulties in Ireland. Marriage counselling services reported that alcohol abuse was the primary presenting problem in up to 25% of cases. Services dealing with the legal aspect of marital breakdown reported that up to 34% of clients cited alcohol abuse as the main cause of their marital problems.¹⁰

A study among 2754 pupils (15–18 years) in Galway City and County reported that 35% of the sexually active respondents said that alcohol was an influencing factor for them engaging in sex.¹² Alcohol use has also been identified as one of the main risk factors in relation to teenage pregnancy. Among a group of 32 teenage girls attending a sexually transmitted disease clinic, nearly half reported that they had unprotected intercourse on at least one occasion when drunk.¹⁰

Between 1996 and 2001, public order offences increased by 161%.¹⁴ In 2000 there were 62 000 incidents of public order offences of which 38 000 people were charged and the remaining 24 000 were cautioned. The vast majority of public order cases are alcohol-related. Between 1996 and 2000, there has been a 370% increase in 'intoxication in public places' among teenagers.¹⁰ The number of offences relating to intoxication in a public place in 2002 was 22,701 - an increase of 27% from the previous year.¹⁴

Alcohol-related disorders continue to be a main cause of admissions to psychiatric hospitals, especially for males. In 1999, out of all psychiatric hospital admissions, alcohol-related disorders accounted for 26% of male admissions and 11% of female admissions.¹⁰

A comparison of alcohol-related mortality and alcohol consumption in Ireland over the last thirty years show increases in cancers related to alcohol consumption, cirrhosis and other conditions specifically related to alcohol – alcohol poisoning, alcohol psychosis, alcohol dependence, toxic effect of alcohol and alcohol abuse. During the last decade, the increase in consumption mirrors the increases in cancers relating to alcohol and in particular alcohol poisoning and alcohol dependence.¹⁰

The SDR per 100 000 population for chronic liver disease and cirrhosis was 4.37 in 2000 and 5.78 in 2001.¹³

Economic and social costs

A paper commissioned as part of the European Comparative Alcohol Study (ECAS) estimated that alcohol-related problems cost Irish society approximately €2.65 billion (£1.9 billion?) per year. These include healthcare costs (€433 million), costs of road accidents (€322 million), costs of alcohol-related crime (€147.5 million), loss of output due to alcohol-related work absences (€1050 million), alcohol-related transfer payments (€523.3 million) and taxes not received on lost output (€210 million).¹⁴

Country background information

Total population 2003	3 956 000	Life expectancy at birth (2002)	Male	74.4
Adult (15+)	3 125 240		Female	79.8
% under 15	21	Probability of dying under age 5 per 1000 (2002)	Male	8
Population distribution 2001 (%)			Female	6
Urban	59	Gross National Income per capita 2002	US\$	23 870
Rural	41			

Sources: Population and Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat, World Bank World Development Indicators database, The World Health Report 2004

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