

KNOWLEDGE

Young people aged 15–25 years were asked to rank a number of different drugs – alcohol, prescribed drugs used for non-medical purposes, tobacco, marijuana/cannabis and illegal drugs other than marijuana – according to the number of hospitalisations they believe each to cause among people of their own age, with the drug they believe to cause the most hospitalisations ranked first. The proportion within each age group ranking each drug first is displayed in Figure 41 (below) and the ranking (from first place to fifth place) given by each age group to alcohol as a cause of hospitalisations when compared with other drugs is shown in Figure 42 (overleaf).

Figure 41. Knowledge of the primary cause of hospitalisations (15–25 year-olds)

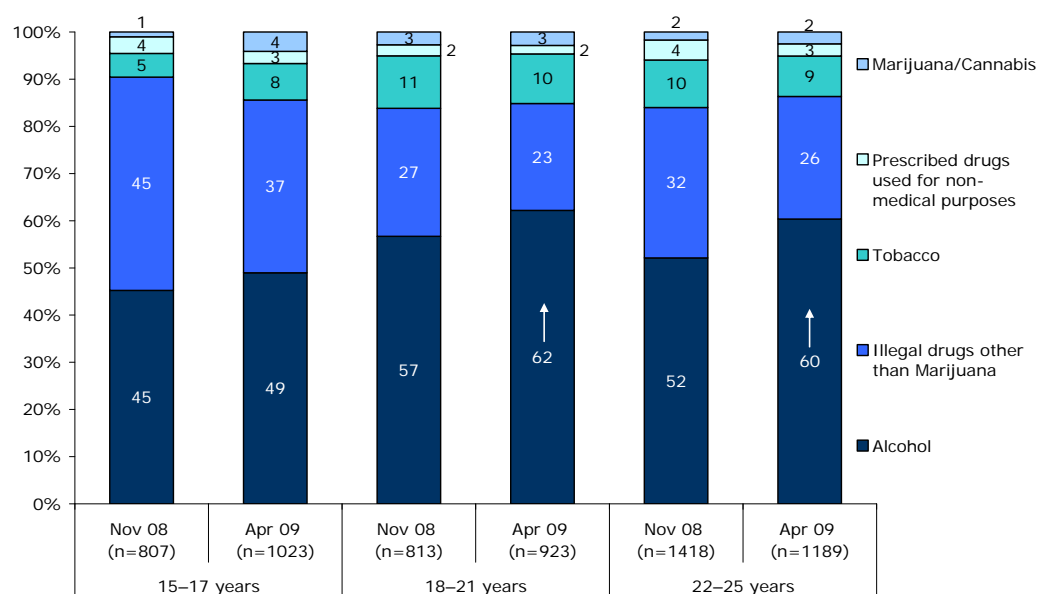


Figure 41 shows that in April 2009 alcohol continued to be considered the primary cause of hospitalisations among young people, with 49% of 15–17 year-olds, 62% of 18–21 year-olds and 60% of 22–25 year-olds ranking alcohol first of all the drugs listed according to the number of hospitalisations it causes among people their own age.

The proportions of 18–21 year-olds and 22–25 year-olds indicating alcohol as the primary cause of hospitalisations among young people increased significantly from November 2008 to April 2009 (from 57% to 62% among 18–21 year-olds, chi-square, $p=0.040$, and from 52% to 60% among 22–25 year-olds, chi-square, $p=0.002$).

Figure 42. Knowledge of alcohol as a cause of hospitalisations (15–25 year-olds)

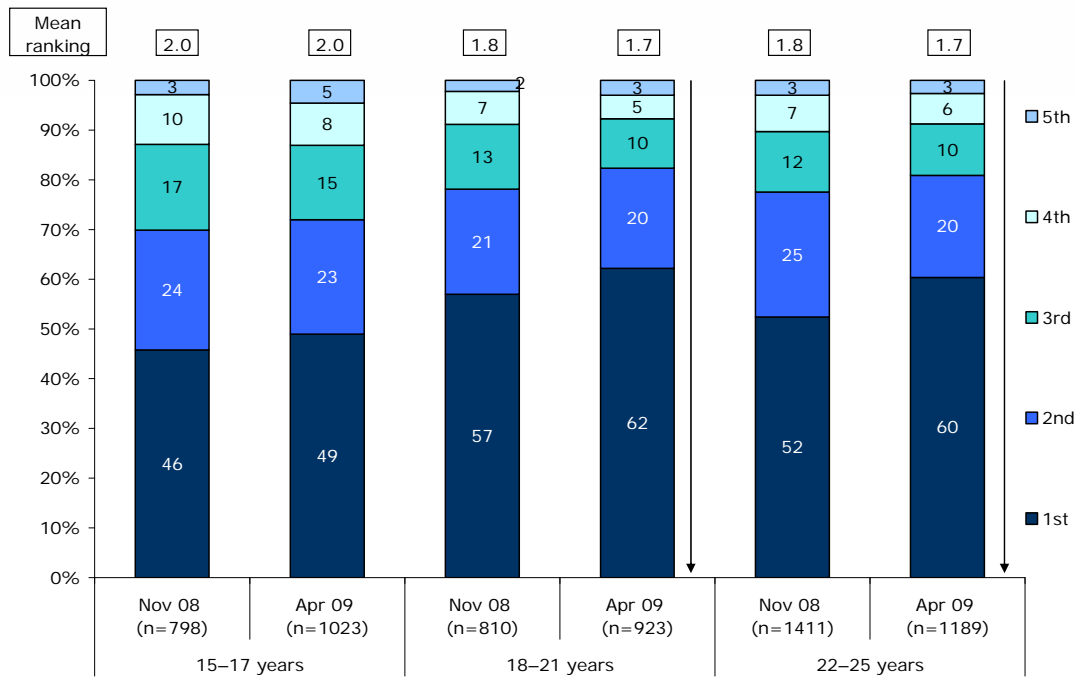


Figure 42 shows the ranking (from first place to fifth place) given by each age group to alcohol as a cause of hospitalisations, when compared with other drugs. As in November 2008, approximately half (49%) of 15–17 year-olds ranked alcohol as the primary cause of hospitalisations among young people of their own age. There was a significant overall trend towards 18–21 year-olds (Kendall's tau-b, $p=0.040$) and 22–25 year-olds (Kendall's tau-b, $p=0.002$) ranking alcohol higher in April 2009 than in November 2008.

The mean ranking of alcohol as a cause of hospitalisations among young people was calculated for each age group and is shown in Figure 42 (above). On average, 15–25 year-olds ranked alcohol as the second leading cause of hospitalisations, after illegal drugs other than marijuana. The mean ranking was slightly lower among 15–17 year-olds (mean ranking of 2.0), than among 18–21 year-olds and 21–25 year-olds (mean ranking of 1.7 for each age group) and did not change significantly from November 2008 to April 2009.

Parents of 13–17 year-olds were asked to estimate the proportion of young Australians of their child's age that got drunk in the previous two weeks. Similarly, 15–25 year-olds were asked to

estimate the proportion of Australians of their own age that got drunk over this period. The results for parents and 15–25 year-olds are displayed together in Figure 43, overleaf.

Figure 43. Estimated incidence of youth drunkenness (15–25 year-olds and parents)

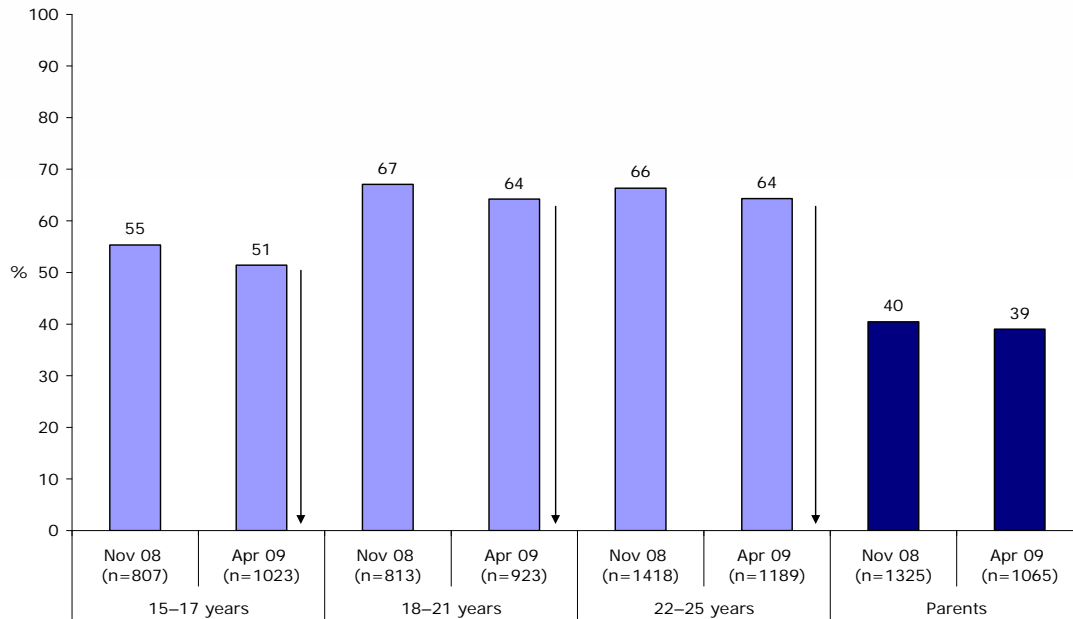


Figure 43 shows that, while 15–17, 18–21 and 22–25 year-olds surveyed in April 2009 thought more than half of people their age had been drunk in the previous two weeks (51% for 15–17 year-olds, 64% for 18–21 year-olds and 64% for 22–25 year-olds), these estimated proportions were significantly smaller than in November 2008. The proportion of young people that 15–17 year-olds believed were drunk in the last two weeks decreased from 55% in November 2008 to 51% in April 2009 (ANOVA, $p < 0.001$). Similarly 18–21 year-olds in November 2008 estimated that 67% of people their age had been drunk in the past two weeks, compared to 64% in April 2009 (ANOVA, $p = 0.003$) and 22–25 year-olds estimated that 66% of people their own age had been drunk in the past two weeks in November 2008, compared with 64% in April 2009 (ANOVA, $p = 0.010$).

Parents of 13–17 year-olds surveyed in April 2009 estimated that an average of 39% of people their child’s age were drunk in the previous two weeks.