

The alcohol habits of young people in Denmark 2015

The Danish Cancer Society and TrygFonden smba (TryghedsGruppen smba) October 2016.

Danish title: "Unges alkoholvaner i Danmark 2015 – en kortlægning"

Summary

This report outlines the alcohol habits of young people in Denmark in 2015. The report is based on data from an online survey carried out among 1,023 young people aged 15-25. The survey was carried out by the research agency Epinion and it is nationally representative with regard to gender, age and region. The report has been created by the Danish Cancer Society and TrygFonden's preventative alcohol campaign with the Danish name "*Fuld af liv*".

Alcohol debut and consumption

93% of Danish young people aged 15 to 25 have drunk alcohol and 87% have been drunk. Over one sixth of young men and almost a quarter of young women aged 15-25 drink more than the recommended safe limits for alcohol outlined by the Danish Health Authority¹. Furthermore, 64% of 15-25-year-olds state that they have drunk five units or more on the same occasion at least once within the past month.

Alcohol culture among young people

The most stated reason for young people drinking alcohol is that it is social to meet and drink alcohol. In spite of this, around three quarters (73%) of young people have done something they regret while under the influence of alcohol. At the same time, almost half of those aged 15-25 who drink alcohol have experienced being pressurised by their friends to drink alcohol. This applies in particular to young men, who to a greater degree than young women, have themselves pressurised others to drink alcohol.

In addition, 64% of young people estimate that they drink *less* alcohol than their peers.

Parental involvement in young people's alcohol consumption

One third of young people aged 15-25 state that they are/were allowed by their parents to drink alcohol before they turn/turned 16. Fewer men than women are/were allowed to drink alcohol before they turned 16.

Among young people aged 15-25 who live at home, 56% state that their parents allow them to drink. However, there is a difference in the degree to which parents are involved in young people's alcohol habits. In most cases, young people make decisions on their alcohol consumption by themselves. In some cases, the young person makes the decision on how much they can drink *together with their*

¹ The Danish Health Authority recommends an upper limit for alcohol consumption of 7 units per week for women and 14 units per week for men.

parents, and in a few cases the *parents* make the decision on how much the young person can drink. Young women decide to a greater degree more than young men on how much and when they drink alcohol.

The majority of young people aged 15-25 who live at home state that their parents' attitude to how much alcohol they drink does not affect their alcohol habits. In spite of this, the majority of young people who live at home and have an alcohol agreement with their parents (n=83), are very satisfied with their parents' involvement. By contrast, young people aged 15-25 who live at home and who do *not* have an alcohol agreement with their parents are less happy with their parents getting involved in their drinking habits.

Alcohol purchase

The majority of young people aged 15-25 know the age limits for purchasing alcohol in Denmark. The majority of young people consume alcohol before they turn 18, just as the majority (55%) are against an age limit of 18 for the purchase of alcohol. Among those aged 15-17 who would be personally affected by an age limit of 18, around one in five (22%) believe that there should be an age limit of 18 on the purchase of alcohol.

Young people's attitude to drinking alcohol

In spite of the fact that almost nine out of ten young people aged 15-25 have been drunk, two thirds admit that it is uncool to get very drunk. Furthermore, the majority of young people believe that you do not need to drink alcohol to have fun at parties or to be part of the group (almost 60%). In addition, 61% of young people aged 15-25 believe that Danish young people consume too much alcohol. Women in particular think this.

Alcohol in public spaces

Half of all young people aged 15-25 estimate that it is generally easy to find alternatives to alcohol² for occasions that take place outside private homes. By contrast, young people who do *not* find it easy to find alcohol-free alternatives (28%) state that they would drink alcohol-free alternatives if there were more of them. In particular, women are interested in drinking alternatives to alcohol.

Alcohol consumption and health risks

In spite of the fact that nine out of ten young people are aware of the health risks caused by alcohol, less than half estimate that they are personally exposed to a risk by drinking alcohol.

² Different types of alcohol-free drinks.