

Under-reporting of ALCOHOL USE in phone surveys

CANADIANS ARE ONLY REPORTING ABOUT

1/3

OF THEIR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

8.2 LITRES

of pure alcohol were sold per person age 15+ in Canada annually (avg. 2008-2010)

That's equivalent to:

480 BOTTLES OF BEER 5% OR 91 BOTTLES OF WINE 12% OR 27 BOTTLES OF SPIRITS 40%

But

2.8 LITRES

was the amount of pure alcohol people age 15+ REPORTED drinking annually (avg. 2008-2010)

That's equivalent to:

163 BOTTLES OF BEER 5% OR 31 BOTTLES OF WINE 12% OR 9 BOTTLES OF SPIRITS 40%

Why is under-reporting happening?

Information about alcohol use has often been collected using the "Quantity-Frequency" Method where respondents are asked how much and how often they drank in the past 12 months.

"HOW MANY DRINKS DID YOU HAVE IN THE PAST YEAR?"



How can we get a better picture?

The "Yesterday" Method asks respondents their alcohol consumption the day before which is much easier to remember accurately!

"HOW MUCH DID YOU DRINK YESTERDAY?"



We can get a more accurate picture of the drinking habits of Canadians and better account for the amount of alcohol sold by combining the quantity-frequency method with the yesterday question.

QUANTITY-FREQUENCY METHOD + YESTERDAY METHOD = ↑ ACCURACY

After crunching the numbers, what did we find?

People greatly underestimated how often they drink.



IF SOMEONE REPORTED DRINKING ON AVERAGE:

< 1 MONTH

1X WEEK

7X WEEK

THEY ACTUALLY DRANK ABOUT:

2X MONTH

2X WEEK

6X WEEK



Which type of alcohol was most likely to be under-reported?
SPIRITS!



MEN AND WOMEN EQUALLY LIKELY TO UNDER-REPORT THEIR ALCOHOL USE

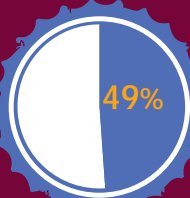
Who was most likely to under-report their alcohol use?

"LOW RISK" DRINKERS & PEOPLE <24 YEARS OLD

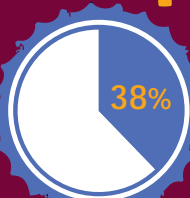


How much of each type of alcohol is under-reported by drinkers compared to actual alcohol sales?

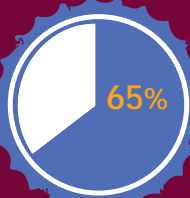
BEER



WINE



SPIRITS



By how much do different types of drinkers under-report their alcohol use?

"LOW RISK" DRINKERS:



"MEDIUM RISK" DRINKERS:



"HIGH RISK" DRINKERS:



"Low risk" = up to 15 drinks for men & 10 for women, "medium risk" = up to 30 for men & 20 for women, "high risk" = 30+ for men & 20+ for women per week

Why does this matter?



THE HARM FROM ALCOHOL IS BEING UNDERESTIMATED



THE NUMBER OF CANADIANS DRINKING ABOVE THE LOW-RISK DRINKING GUIDELINES IS HIGHER THAN WE THOUGHT

CANADA'S NATIONAL DRUG USE SURVEY SHOULD ALWAYS INCLUDE "YESTERDAY" QUESTIONS TO HELP CORRECT FOR UNDER-REPORTING OF ALCOHOL USE



University of Victoria

Centre for Addictions Research of BC



facebook.com/carbc.uvic



@carbc_uvic



carbc2300.wordpress.com



www.carbc.ca

Who under-reports their alcohol consumption in telephone surveys and by how much? An application of the Yesterday Method in a national Canadian substance use survey <http://bit.ly/alcoholphone> email carbc@uvic.ca for a pdf copy * Canadian Alcohol and Other Drug Use Monitoring Survey (CADUMS) <http://bit.ly/CADUMS> * Canadian Low Risk Drinking Guidelines: <http://bit.ly/lowriskdrinking>