

Australian-born parents more likely to supply their teens with alcohol

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A Deakin University study has found that Australian-born parents living in areas with a high number of bottle shops are the most likely to buy alcohol for their teenage children.

The study of more than 10,000 Victorian secondary students aged 12 to 17 years (conducted in 2009) looked at whether living near [alcohol](#) outlets influenced parental supply of alcohol to teenagers and if there were differences between Australian-born and migrant [parents](#). The [alcohol outlets](#) were categorised as general (public bars), packaged liquor outlets (bottle shops), on premise outlets (licensed restaurants and cafes) and licensed clubs.

The results show that when both parents are born in Australia every bottle shop in their area doubles the likelihood that they will supply alcohol for their teens and, while families with two migrant parents were generally less likely to supply alcohol to their teens, this was not the case when they lived near areas with many restaurants and licensed cafes. The study also revealed that 55 per cent of the teenagers had consumed alcohol in the 12 month period studied, with 34 per cent reporting that the alcohol was supplied by their parents.

"Underage drinking continues to be a problem in Australia, with many parents still finding it difficult to set firm rules around not providing or condoning [alcohol consumption](#) before their children turn 18," said Dr Bosco Rowland, lead author of the study and an Alfred Deakin Postdoctoral Research Fellow with Deakin's School of Psychology.

"The study findings raise the question of why licensed restaurants and cafes in Victoria allow parents to supply alcohol to underage children. This is not the case in NSW."

Dr Rowland said the different findings for Australian born and migrant families align with the different cultural conventions toward youth alcohol use.

"Australian born parents tend to be more aware that youth alcohol use is common, so living near lots of bottle shops may make them more pessimistic that they can prevent their adolescent obtaining alcohol. This may lead them to supply alcohol at home in the hope this will encourage moderate youth alcohol use," he said.

"The migrant families tend to be more successful at discouraging adolescent alcohol use. However when they live near licensed restaurants and cafes they are likely to witness other children being served alcohol by their parents and this role modelling may lead them to adopt similar practices."

Whatever the setting, The National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines are consistent and recommend that children not drink before the age of 18.

"These guidelines need to be promoted, as many parents believe that providing alcohol to their child to take to parties or drink at a meal is more responsible than restricting them from consuming alcohol. This is not the case," Dr Rowland said.

"The evidence in which these guidelines are based upon show that the earlier a young person starts drinking alcohol the more likely they are to experience injuries and harms, poor academic outcomes, and possibly impaired brain development. In the long-term there are also links with a

variety of cancers and diseases and a greater chance the child will drink at harmful levels in adulthood. These are good reasons for children to avoid alcohol before the age of 18."

Recent Deakin University studies also found that teens are more likely to drink alcohol if they live near bottle shops and that rates of teen binge drinking were reduced by 25 per cent when parents set rules not to supply or allow adolescent alcohol use.

The current study, 'The relationship between the density of alcohol outlets and parental supply of alcohol to adolescents', is published in the journal Addictive Behaviors.

More information: B. Rowland, J.W. Toumbourou, L. Satyen, M. Livingston, J. Williams, "The relationship between the density of alcohol outlets and parental supply of alcohol to adolescents, Addictive Behaviors," Volume 39, Issue 12, December 2014, Pages 1898-1903, ISSN 0306-4603, [dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2014.07.025](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2014.07.025).

Provided by Deakin University

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