

Health Status Report

Drinking in Excess of the Canadian Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines in Perth County, 2003-2010

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to:

- examine alcohol consumption in excess of the Canadian Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines (LRADG) among Perth County residents (adults aged 19 years and up) compared to Ontario residents
- compare differences between males and females, various age groups, and education and income levels
- identify trends that can be used for planning and implementing local programming and services.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- A higher percentage of Perth County males drank alcohol in excess of the Canadian LRADG than Perth County females (Fig. 1). There was also no significant change in this behavior over time (from 2003 – 2010) (Fig. 2)
- In Perth County, the percentage of residents who drank alcohol in excess of the Canadian LRADG decreased with age. A higher percentage of residents aged 19-44 years drank in excess of the Canadian LRADG compared to residents aged 45-64 years and residents aged 65 years and over (Fig. 3)
- A higher percentage of Perth County residents with a high school education drank in excess of the Canadian LRADG than residents with less than a high school education or residents with a post-secondary education (Fig. 4)
- In Perth County, the percentage of residents who drank in excess of the Canadian LRADG increased as household income increased (Fig. 5).

BACKGROUND

- Alcohol is the third highest risk factor contributing to the national burden of disease, even after the health protective factors of alcohol for coronary heart disease are subtracted¹
- In 2002, alcohol (a legal substance)²
 - accounted for \$14.6 billion of the health and social costs in Canada
 - cost the Canadian economy \$7.1 billion in lost productivity due to illness and premature death
 - cost \$3.3 billion for direct health care and \$3.1 billion in law enforcement
 - cost every living Canadian \$463
- Average long-term alcohol use (i.e. as low as one or two drinks per day) can lead to eight types of cancers (mouth, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, liver, female breast, colon and rectum). It can also lead to other serious health conditions, such as seizures, pancreatitis, low birth weight, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), stroke, irregular heartbeat, liver cirrhosis and high blood pressure³.

- The short-term risks during or after a specific drinking occasion include an increased risk of injuries associated with motor vehicle crashes, abusive or violent behavior, and other harms such as alcohol poisoning
- The Canadian LRADG – intended for adults who choose to drink – provide information on how to reduce the risk of alcohol-related harms in both the short- and long-term and recommend the following:
 - To reduce long-term risks, women should not exceed more than 10 drinks a week, with no more than two drinks a day most days. Men should not exceed more than 15 drinks a week, with no more than three drinks a day most days. Everyone should plan non-drinking days every week.
 - To reduce short-term risks, women should not consume more than three drinks, and men should not consume more than four drinks on any single occasion
 - Abstinence or only occasional light intake is advised for situations and individual circumstances that are particularly hazardous (e.g. women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, teenagers, persons on medication)
 - A “drink” is defined as 13.6 grams of pure alcohol, which is the amount of alcohol present in:
 - 341 mL (12 oz) of 5% beer/cider/coolers
 - 142 mL (5 oz) of 12% wine
 - 43 mL (1.5 oz) of 40% distilled alcohol/spirits
 - Visit www.ccsa.ca for more information on the Guidelines.
- If all Canadian drinkers consumed alcohol within the LRADG, it is estimated that alcohol-related deaths would be reduced by approximately 4,600 per year⁶.

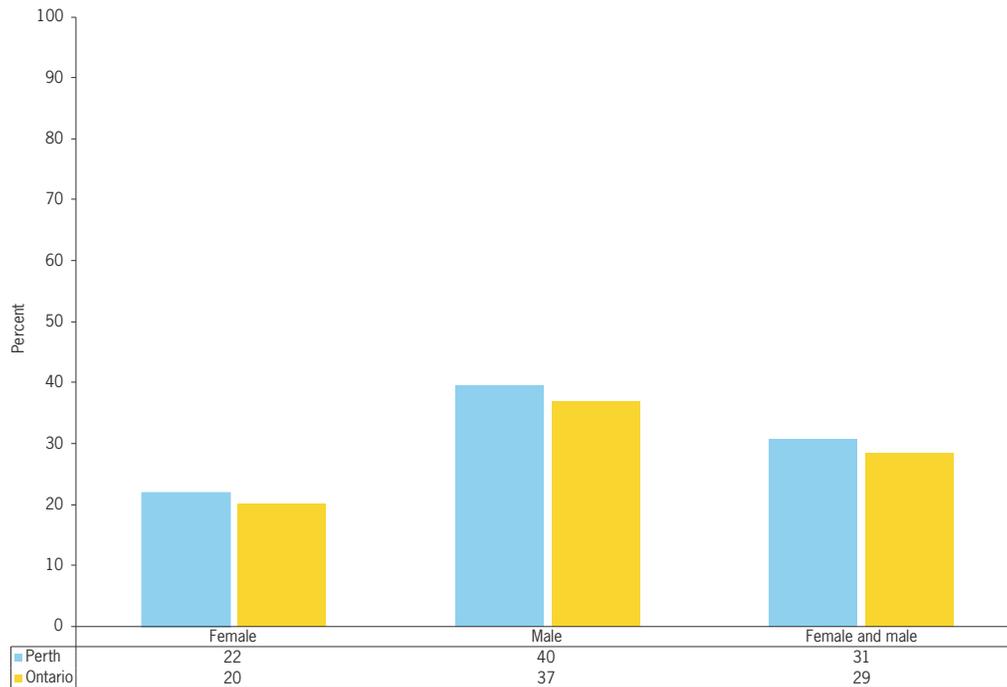
RESULTS

Data from the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) conducted in 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 were combined and analyzed for this report. Perth County is a small area with a small sample size and the survey results obtained may not exactly match the true underlying value, especially when derived from single years.

The results are highlighted in the following figures. The graphs show results from Perth County compared to Ontario. The descriptions note statistically significant differences.

DRINKING IN EXCESS OF THE CANADIAN LOW-RISK ALCOHOL DRINKING GUIDELINES BY FEMALES AND MALES

Figure 1. Percentage of Perth County and Ontario adult females and males who drank in excess of the Canadian LRADG.

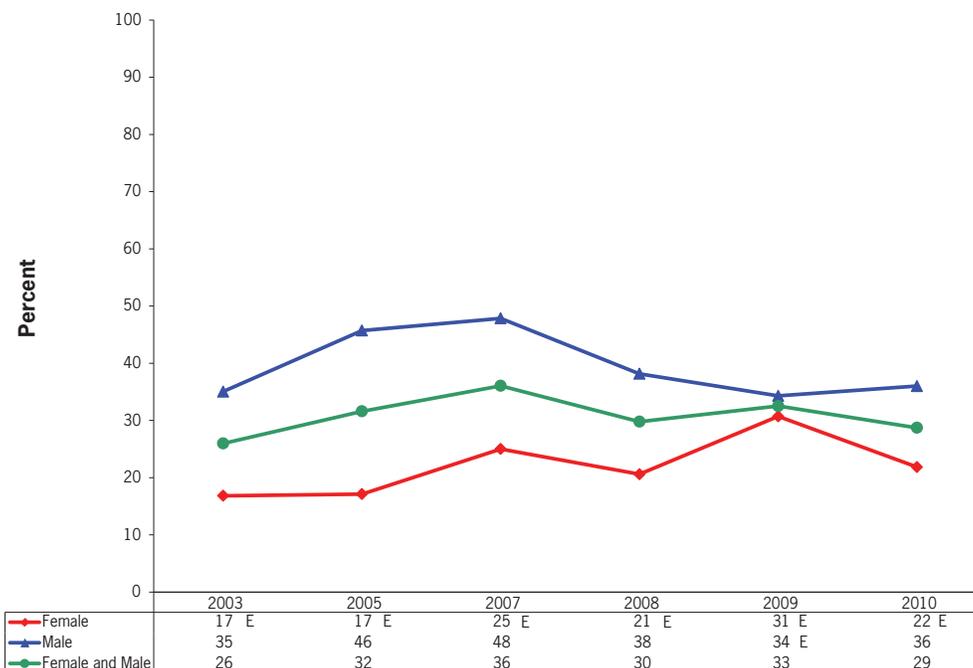


A higher percentage of Perth County males (40%) drank in excess of the Canadian LRADG compared to Perth County females (22%).

The percentage of Perth County residents drinking in excess of the LRADG is similar to their Ontario peers, overall and for the individual sexes.

Source: CCHS 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010

Figure 2. Percentage of Perth County adult females, males and both females and males who drank in excess of the Canadian LRADG by year.



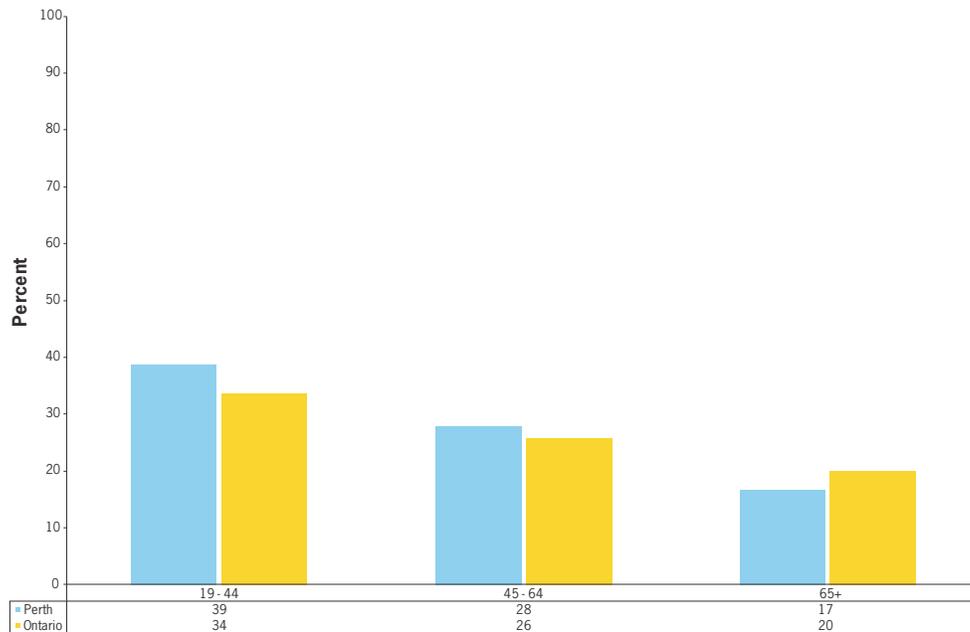
The percentage of Perth County or Ontario residents who drank in excess of the Canadian LRADG did not change significantly over time. Also, no changes were identified when males and females were examined separately.

E High sampling variability, interpret with caution.

Source: CCHS 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010

DRINKING IN EXCESS OF THE CANADIAN LOW-RISK ALCOHOL DRINKING GUIDELINES BY AGE

Figure 3. Percentage of Perth County and Ontario adult residents who drank in excess of the Canadian LRADG by age group.



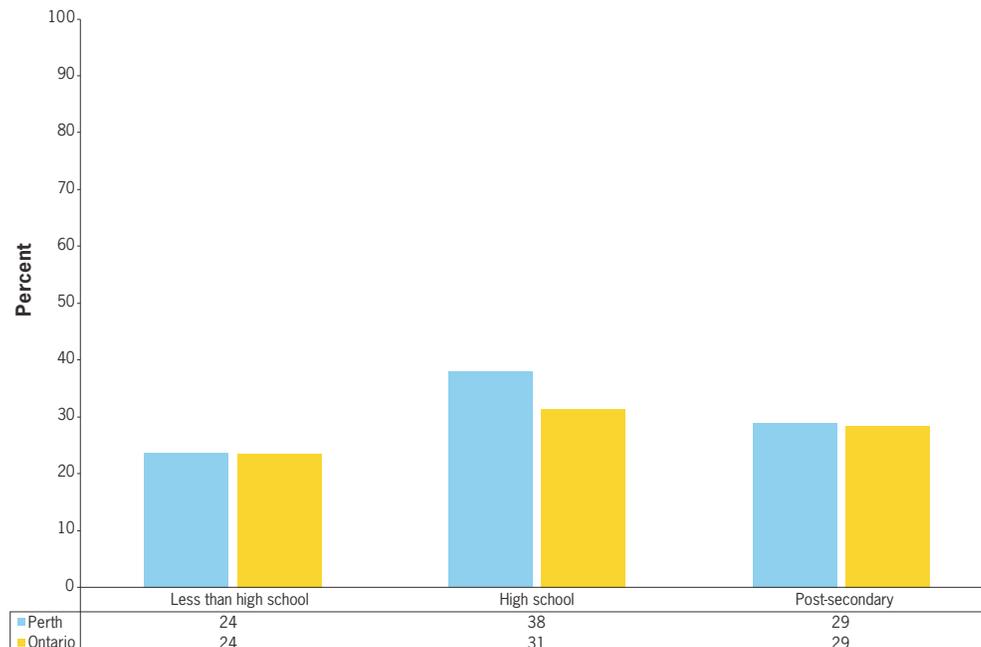
In Perth County, the percentage of residents who drank in excess of the Canadian LRADG decreased with age. A higher percentage of residents aged 19-44 years (39%) drank in excess of the Canadian LRADG compared to residents aged 45-64 years (28%) and residents aged 65 years and over (17%).

The percentage of Perth County residents drinking in excess of the LRADG is similar to their Ontario peers in every age grouping.

Source: CCHS 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010

DRINKING IN EXCESS OF THE CANADIAN LOW-RISK ALCOHOL DRINKING GUIDELINES BY EDUCATION

Figure 4. Percentage of Perth County and Ontario adult residents who drank in excess of the Canadian LRADG by education.



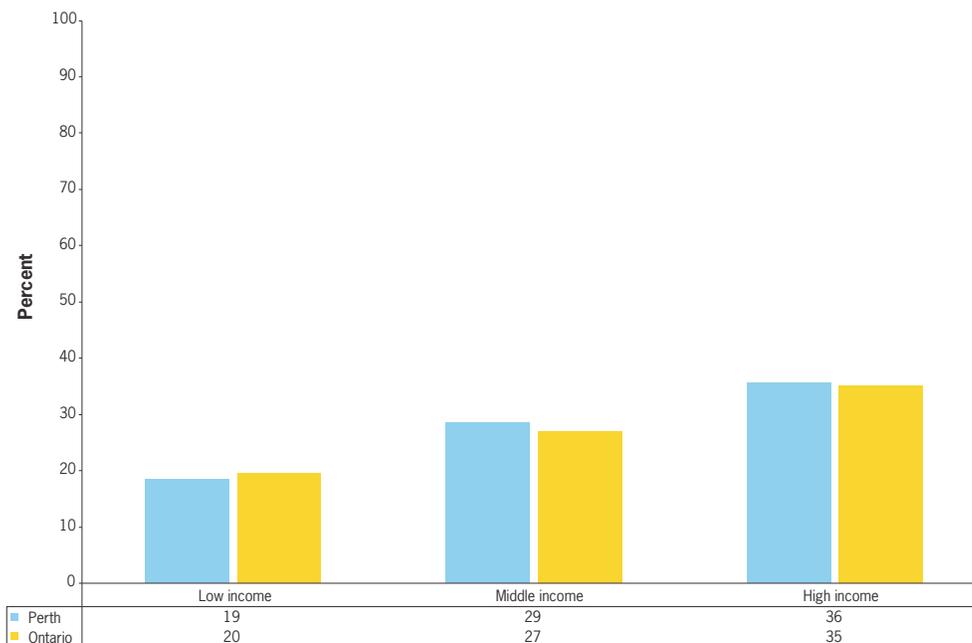
A higher percentage of Perth County residents with a high school education (38%) drank in excess of the Canadian LRADG compared to the percentage of Perth County residents who did not complete a high school education (24%) or who have a post-secondary education (29%).

When comparing by level of education, the percentage of Perth County residents drinking in excess of the LRADG is similar to that for all Ontarians.

Source: CCHS 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010

DRINKING IN EXCESS OF THE CANADIAN LOW-RISK ALCOHOL DRINKING GUIDELINES BY INCOME

Figure 5. Percentage of Perth County and Ontario adult residents who drank in excess of the Canadian LRADG by household income.



In Perth County, the percentage of residents who drank in excess of the Canadian LRADG increased as household income increased. A lower percentage of those living in low income (19%) drank in excess of the Canadian LRADG compared to the percentage of those living in middle income (29%) and those living in high income (36%).

When comparing by level of income, the percentage of Perth County residents drinking in excess of the LRADG is similar to that for all Ontarians.

Source: CCHS 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010

DATA SOURCES AND LIMITATIONS

The Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) is a general, cross-sectional health survey that covers the household population aged 12 years or older, excluding institutionalized persons, the homeless, military personnel, and individuals living on reserve or very remotely. The main limitation is that the CCHS uses self-reported data, which can be subject to response bias. For more information on the CCHS, visit www.statcan.gc.ca⁸.

REFERENCES

¹Babor, T., Caetano, R., Casswell, S., Griffiths, E., Giesbrecht, N., Graham, K., Grube, J., Gruenewald, P., Hill, L., Holder, H., Homel, R., Osterberg, E., Rehm, J., Room, R., Rossow, I. (2003). *Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity – Research and Public Policy*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

²Rehm, J., Baliunas, D., Brochu, S., Fischer, B., Gnam, W., Patra, J., Popova, S., Sarnocinska-Hart, A., Taylor, B. (2006). *The Costs of Substance Abuse in Canada 2002*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.

³Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. (2012). *Canada's low-risk alcohol drinking guidelines: Frequently asked questions*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.

⁴ibid

⁵ibid

⁶Butt, P., Beirness, D., Gliksman, L., Paradis, C., & Stockwell, T. (2011). *Alcohol and health in Canada: A summary of evidence and guidelines for low risk drinking*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.

⁷Statistics Canada. Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 – Share Files.

⁸Statistics Canada. 2011. Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) – Annual Component User Guide 2010 and 2009-2010 Microdata Files, June 2011.