

Monthly Variation in Self-Reports of Drinking and Driving in Ontario

Research shows that there is seasonal variation in alcohol consumption over the calendar year, with reported past month drinking highest during January, whereas reported heavy drinking is highest during the summer months.¹ On the other hand, little is known about the variability of drinking and driving behaviour throughout the year. This *eBulletin* presents findings on monthly variation in drinking and driving behaviour among Ontario adults. The data are from the combined 2000, 2001 and 2002 *CAMH Monitor (CM)*, which is an on-going health survey of adults in Ontario.

that occurred during the prior month. For example, the April estimate includes reported behaviour during March.

This pattern of monthly variation holds true regardless of year of survey, gender, or age group. However, as seen in the figure, past month drinking and driving is significantly more likely to be reported by males and younger drivers (ages 18-29), compared to their respective counterparts.

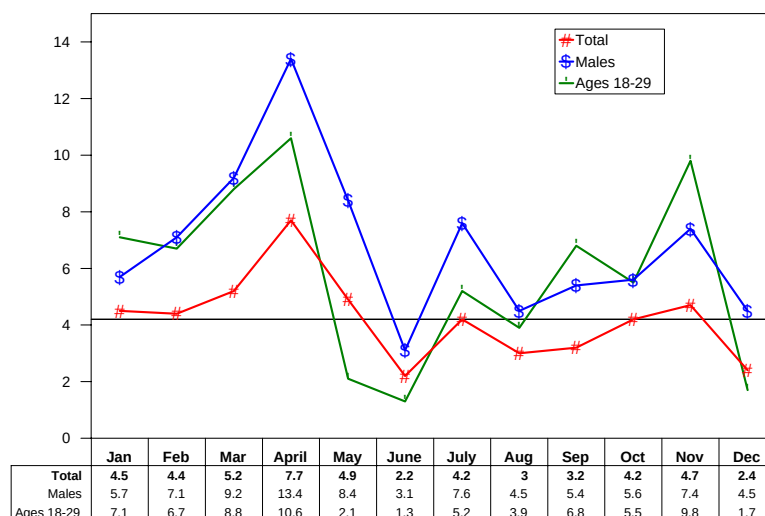
Drinking and Driving in 2002

In 2002, 3.6% (95% confidence interval: 2.8%-4.6%) of adult drivers across Ontario reported drinking and driving at least once during the month before the survey. The past year prevalence was 7.8% (95% CI: 6.6%-9.2%). Males and younger drivers are more likely to drink and drive compared to females and older drivers.²

Monthly Variation

The monthly design of the *CM* allows us to examine whether or not there is variation in drinking and driving throughout the year. Figure 1 presents the monthly estimates of drinking and driving among Ontario drivers. The average for the entire 12 months, among the total sample of drivers, is 4.2%. There are significant monthly differences, with an elevated rate during April (7.7%) and a decline in June (2.2%) and again in December (2.4%). It is important to note that each of the monthly estimates is based on reported behaviour during the past 30 days. Therefore, each estimate is not limited to that month, per se, as it would include recalled behaviour

Figure 1. Percentage of Ontario Adults (Aged 18+) with a Valid Driver's Licence Reporting Drinking and Driving During the Past Month, CM 2000-2002 (N=6,506)



Note: Findings are based on merged data from 2000, 2001, and 2002; horizontal line represents the average for the total sample (4.2%).

Methods:

The *CAMH Monitor (CM)* is an addiction and mental health random, anonymous telephone survey of the Ontario population aged 18 and older, administered by the Institute for Social Research, York University. The *CM* is an on-going monthly survey that employs a stratified (region) two-stage (household, respondent) probability sample design. The following 6 regional strata are used: Toronto, Central East, East, Central West, West, and North. The 2002 data are based on 12 cycles from January to December 2002. The total sample size was 2,421, and 2,132 had a valid driver's licence.

The 2001 and 2000 *CM* surveys share the same design and procedure as the 2002 survey. In 2000, 2,066 survey respondents had a valid driver's licence, and in 2001, 2,308 respondents had a valid licence. The data used for this analysis contained the merged data from the 3 complete surveys, providing a total of 6,506 drivers.

All survey estimates were weighted, and variance and statistical tests were corrected for the sampling design.

Terminology:

- **Drinking and Driving** was measured with the question: "How many times in the past 30 days have you driven a motor vehicle after having two or more drinks in the previous hour?" Past month prevalence is defined as having done so at least once in the past 30 days. Past year prevalence is defined as having done so at least once during the past 12 months.
- **95% Confidence Interval (CI)** can be crudely interpreted as being 95% likely to include the "true" percentage value if every adult in Ontario was surveyed.
- **Significant Difference** refers to a difference between two percentages that is not likely due to chance. For example, a difference found at the $p < .05$ level of statistical significance is one that is less than 5% likely to occur by chance alone.

Source:

The results are based on unpublished data analyses of the 2000, 2001, and 2002 *CAMH Monitor*.

References:

1. Cho, Y., Johnson, T.P., & Fendrich, M. (2001). Monthly variations in self-reports of alcohol consumption. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 62, 268-272.
2. Adlaf, E.M., & Ialomiteanu, A. (2002). *CAMH Monitor eReport: Addiction and Mental Health Indicators among Ontario Adults in 2001, and Changes Since 1977*. CAMH Research Document Series No. 12. Toronto: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. [electronic document]; available:
http://www.camh.net/research/population_life_course.html

Suggested Citation:

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Monthly Variation in Self-Reports of Drinking and Driving in Ontario. *CAMH Population Studies eBulletin*, July/Aug 2003, No. 21. Toronto, Ontario: CAMH.

To receive future issues of the *eBulletin*, please contact Maureen Kothare at maureen_kothare@camh.net.

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Media Enquiries: Tel: 416-595-6015