

**The Booze-Less Drinking Game: Exploring Alcohol Consumption Among Australian Nurses**

Dr Adam Searby  
President, DANA  
Institute for Health Transformation,  
School of Nursing and Midwifery,  
Deakin University, Australia



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*[It] definitely wasn't discussed that as a nurse you will definitely be exposed to a high level of stress in almost any job that you have and you should really keep an eye on your alcohol consumption, not that I would say that I didn't actually consume more than recommended before I did my nursing degree.*

(Searby, Burr and Redley, 2022)

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**Previous research**

- Perry et al (2018) found risky drinking habits, defined as more than two standard alcoholic drinks per day on average or more than four standard drinks on a single occasion monthly, in 16.2% of a sample of 5041 nurses in a broader survey of lifestyle habits conducted between June 2014 and February 2015.
- Sheard et al (2014) explored alcohol consumption amongst 44 military nurses from Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, finding 20% consumed more than daily recommend guidelines
- Smith (2007) found a prevalence of medium to high-risk alcohol consumption of 11.2% among nurses (2004-2005 data)

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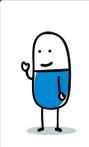
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<p><b>The Booze-less Drinking Game</b></p>  <p><b>The Baseline</b></p>	<p><b>The Booze-less Drinking Game</b></p>  <p><b>The Moderator</b></p>	<p><b>The Booze-less Drinking Game</b></p>  <p><b>The Highliner</b></p>	<p><b>The Booze-less Drinking Game</b></p>  <p><b>The Topper</b></p>
<p><i>The Baseline is as social as anyone but prefers to stay relatively (or totally) dry... even when things get a bit stormy. Not just a designated driver but an obligated observer. The Baseline knows that their unimpeded view means they are best placed to look out for their mates.</i></p>	<p><i>The Moderator knows how to keep up with the gang, but also generally knows when it's time to put the cork back in the bottle. Sometimes the cork finds its way back out... but The Moderator knows that this is the time when the balance could quickly tip from having a good time, to getting blind.</i></p>	<p><i>The Highliner is no stranger to unwinding with a few cold ones... and then maybe a few more. It's not that The Highliner doesn't know when to stop drinking-it's just that sometimes the true level is only noticeable when it's already gone too high.</i></p>	<p><i>The Topper is always up for another round, but the rounds just tend to keep on rolling on when everyone else has gone home. And OK-maybe those rounds keep rolling at home, too. For The Topper, once upon a time drinking may have been fun, but these days it feels more like playing with fire.</i></p>
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### Alcohol consumption

- 1,209 responses after data cleaning
  - 90.8% female
  - Mean age 44.81 (SD 12.07)
  - Mean experience 20.5 years (SD 13.38)
  - 87.3% registered nurses
  - 5.9% enrolled nurses
  - 4.1% midwives
  - 2.7% nurse practitioners

(Searby, Burr, Taylor, Aitken & Redley (in-press) 2022)




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### Alcohol consumption

- Mean AUDIT score across participants: 7.11 (SD 6.08), range 0 to 34
  - Males reported significantly higher mean AUDIT scores (9.82, SD 6.7;  $H^{(2)} = 28.293, p < .001$ )
  - No significant difference between profession/registration status (RN, EN, NP, or midwives)
  - Median weekly alcohol consumption 2-4 times per week
  - Median per occasion consumption of 3-4 standard drinks

(Searby, Burr, Taylor, Aitken & Redley (in-press) 2022)




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### Alcohol consumption

- Score 0: 3.6% (no alcohol consumption)
- Score 1-7: 59.47% (low risk)
- Score 8-15: 26.1% (risky or hazardous)
- Score 16-19: 5.62% (high risk or harmful)
- Score 20+: 5.13% (high risk, almost certainly dependent)

**36.85%**

(Searby, Burr, Taylor, Aitken & Redley (in-press) 2022)




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Setting	N	M	SD	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	Min AUDIT score	Max AUDIT score
Emergency department	160	10.07	7.42	8.83	11.31	0	33
Palliative care	4	9.50	7.23	-2.01	21.01	3	18
Dialysis unit	6	9.33	8.82	0.07	18.59	1	25
Intensive care unit	43	9.26	7.04	7.09	11.42	0	29
Aged care	16	9.00	7.79	4.85	13.15	1	26
Rehabilitation unit	14	8.75	6.78	4.80	12.83	1	25
Paediatric nursing	22	8.59	5.80	6.11	11.08	0	28
General health	12	8.50	1.80	6.08	10.92	1	16
Mental health (inpatient)	31	7.87	7.34	5.10	10.64	0	29
Medical/surgical ward/unit	139	7.81	6.09	6.79	8.83	0	30
Other hospital	6	7.67	4.46	2.99	12.34	3	12
Oncology	23	7.61	7.41	4.40	10.82	0	26
Alcohol and other drug/treatment service	58	7.34	5.80	5.87	8.82	0	28

Work settings with higher AUDIT scores:  
Significantly higher perceived stress ( $F(34, 1171) = 2.441, p < .001$ )




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COVID

- Exploration of long-term impact of COVID-19 on nurse alcohol consumption
- Qualitative interviews (N=42)




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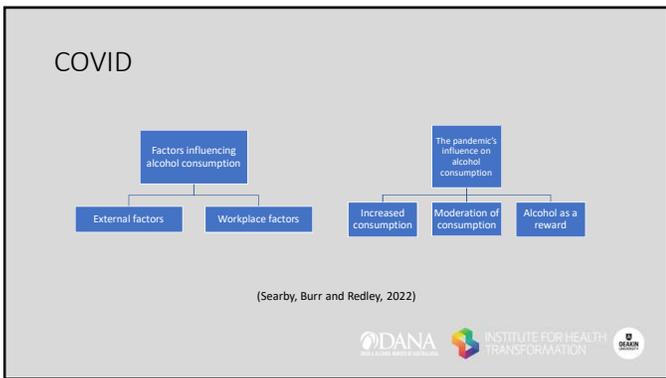
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### COVID: influencing factors

- Workplace influencing factors:
  - Staff redeployment
  - Overtime, staff shortages
  - Uncertainty
- External influencing factors:
  - Isolation/lockdowns
  - Inability to participate in previous activities (i.e. exercise)
  - Home schooling

(Searby, Burr and Redley, 2022)




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### COVID: pandemic influences

- Increased consumption
  - *At the start we were so quiet because people stopped presenting to hospital. [Work was] dead and everyone was getting time off, so we were drinking a bit more. And then when we started getting slammed, because they'd put a pause on all the elective surgery, so when all they started coming in as emergencies was when it picked up as well. And then you have a really bad shift and then you come home and just take the edge off. (Participant 39)*
- Moderation of consumption

(Searby, Burr and Redley, 2022)




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### COVID: pandemic influences

- Alcohol as a reward
  - *I didn't have lunch, didn't have time, you know, what are you taking for lunch, oh I'm not I don't have time to eat it. What do you mean, you've got to have a lunch break, you know? I think resentment made me think oh I've got to have a drink, yeah ... so there's the reward. I'll pat myself on the back ... nearly everyone I've spoken with from nursing to any other profession have been drinking more during COVID ... it's incredible, yeah. (Participant 33)*

(Searby, Burr and Redley, 2022)




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**How much can I drink?**  
For more information visit [nhmrc.gov.au/alcohol](http://nhmrc.gov.au/alcohol)





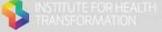
**Healthy adults**  
No more than 10 standard drinks per week, with no more than 4 on a single day





**Children and people under 18 years of age, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers**  
None, zero, zip, zilch!




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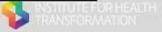
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What are the guidelines?

- Survey of 1,159 nurses

Response	n (%)
Yes; no more than two standard drinks per day and four on any one occasion	434 (37.8%)
Yes; no more than ten standard drinks per week and four per day	101 (8.8%)
Yes; no more than 28 standard drinks per week for men, and 14 standard drinks per week for women	11 (1.1%)
I am not sure what the guidelines state	602 (52.4%)

(Searby, Burr and Redley, 2022, in press)


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What are the guidelines?

- Unaware/uncertain:
  - "Not really. I don't look at all the details. Not really." (Participant 7)
  - "... not that I could tell you exactly how many now ... I would imagine that the recommendation is that no more than four standard drinks in one sitting, maybe even three." (Participant 2)
  - I have no idea but I would imagine that, I know that you shouldn't have, you should have two alcohol-free days a week and I think for us, for women, it may be one glass of wine a night. (Participant 41)

(Searby, Burr and Redley, 2022, in press)





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### What are the guidelines?

• Beliefs:

- *It's just very sterile. A lot of it's not real life, and it's almost like your parents telling you not to drink. (Participant 39)*
- *I can have three or four standard drinks and sometimes not feel inebriated or tipsy at all, and like I said sometimes I can have 10 standard drinks in a night and dance around and have fun with my friends and be totally fine if it's within a lengthy timeframe... So, I feel like those recommendations are just made by someone that just doesn't understand. (Participant 2)*
- *I don't know if I'm allowed to say it, but it really pisses me off because we all know that the really, the only safe amount is no alcohol at all. (Participant 38)*

(Searby, Burr and Redley, 2022, in press)




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### Will nurses accept an app?

• Secondary analysis of 42 interviews

- Yes, with caveats
- 'Meaningful'
- Targeting younger nurses
- Privacy and confidentiality considerations
- Considered design involving nurses (co-design)

(Searby, Burr and Redley, 2022, under review)




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### What would an app look like?

• Modified Delphi study with 13 addiction nurses, with experience in alcohol treatment with nurses (in progress)

- Presented with 15 popular behaviour change techniques contained in apps
- Interviews conducted to determine acceptability and applicability to nurses




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### Where to next?

- Prototyping – co-design
  - Abandonment
  - Considered launch campaign
  - ‘Fit’ with traditional health promotion and treatment campaigns
  - Targeting – across the spectrum or new nurses?



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### Thank you

[a.searby@deakin.edu.au](mailto:a.searby@deakin.edu.au)  
[president@danaonline.org](mailto:president@danaonline.org)



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