



Health Promotion and Protection

Culture of Alcohol Use in Nova Scotia

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HIGHLIGHT REPORT

Prepared by Focal Research Consultants

Principal Investigators: T. Schrans
Dr. T. Schellinck
K. McDonald



Turning Information Into Insight

Focal Research Consultants Ltd.
7071 Bayers Road, Suite 326 • Halifax, Nova Scotia • B3L 2C2
Phone 902.454.8856 • Fax 902.455.0109 • Email focal@focalresearch.com

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SECTION 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

While Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection (NSHPP) has credible information about the scope and prevalence of alcohol use in Nova Scotia, very little can be said of the context of such use and influences that prevent, reduce, or promote alcohol use. In order to move forward in addressing cultural shifts identified previously and to monitor the impact of the Nova Scotia Alcohol Strategy, NSHPP commissioned a random representative benchmark survey with Nova Scotians, 15 years of age or older.

The primary research goal for the study was to compile a reliable database of information for NSHPP to use as a resource for the following purposes:

1. To obtain feedback and information for focused prevention, community education and early intervention strategies to address harmful alcohol use among Nova Scotians;
2. To continue to monitor alcohol consumption and assess drinking patterns among the population at large;
3. To obtain information for on-going development and delivery of policy communication, prevention and early intervention.

During April and May 2008, 1,200 Nova Scotians aged 15 years and older living in 798 randomly selected households throughout the province completed a telephone survey incorporating various standardized and validated instruments to measure:

- alcohol consumption
- harmful and hazardous drinking (AUDIT)
- opinions about alcohol and its effects
- contexts and influences of alcohol use
- drinking and driving
- pregnancy and substance use
- knowledge of support services
- current state of general health
- tobacco use

In total, 71.7% of all eligible residents identified during the screening process successfully completed a survey. Results for total respondents are accurate within $\pm 0.4\%$ at the 95% confidence interval. Only those differences significant at the 95% confidence level ($p < .05$) are noted for consideration unless otherwise specified.

The following report summarizes the background and methodology for the Alcohol Benchmark Study. General survey results are highlighted for total respondents with some reference to findings by key segments of interest including gender, age and risk for alcohol-related harm. This survey data is intended to provide NSHPP with a reliable representative resource for ongoing analysis.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection (NSHPP) has taken a leadership position and, in consultation with partners and stakeholders, developed a provincial alcohol strategy to address alcohol-related harm in the context of best practices, including population health approaches (e.g. prevention programs, social marketing, public policy) and harm reduction interventions targeted at the most harmful patterns and contexts of alcohol consumption (e.g., drinking to the point of intoxication, drinking while pregnant, drinking and driving, etc).

In August 2007, NSHPP launched the provincial alcohol strategy. The primary focus of the strategy is to spearhead change in cultural dynamics surrounding alcohol in the province as identified during the development process for the alcohol strategy. Specifically the Nova Scotia Alcohol Strategy is intended to initiate major cultural shifts “*so that Nova Scotians who choose to drink will do so without harm to themselves, their families and communities*¹”.

The Alcohol Strategy rests on five key pillars or areas for support:

- Community capacity and partnership building
- Communication and social marketing
- Strengthening prevention, early intervention and treatment
- Health public policy
- Research and evaluation

In order to monitor the impact of strategy implementation and to inform on-going development in each of these areas, NSHPP commissioned Focal Research to conduct a benchmark survey with Nova Scotians, 15 years of age and older. The key findings of this survey as well as three sets of data tables outlining the results of the survey are included in this top-line report.

Harmful alcohol use figures significantly in chronic disease, injury, risky sexual behaviour, (e.g. heart, liver disease, some cancers), crime, violence, and other social problems. Harmful alcohol use is also a significant burden on the Nova Scotia economy in terms of both its direct impact on health care and criminal justice costs, and its indirect toll on productivity resulting from disability and premature death. The Cost of Substance Abuse in Canada 2002 (April 2006) examined the scope of alcohol abuse (defined as alcohol use that impacts illness and death). There was an annual cost of approximately \$1317 per capita estimated for all substance abuse in Nova Scotia of which about one-third can be directly attributed to alcohol. In addition, harmful alcohol use is a significant burden on the Nova Scotia economy - \$419 million annually – in terms of both its direct impact on health care and criminal justice costs and its indirect toll on productivity resulting from disability and premature death.

¹ Department of Health Promotion and Protection (September, 2007). Changing the Culture of Alcohol Use in Nova Scotia. http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/repPub/Alcohol_Strategy.pdf

In recognition of these factors, a vision of broad cultural change is entrenched in the Nova Scotia strategy for alcohol. Nova Scotia is positioned as a society in which individuals, families, and neighborhoods are motivated to support responsibility and risk reduction in alcohol use. It is envisioned that alcohol-related harm will be eradicated through effective prevention and targeted interventions and that if or when Nova Scotians choose to drink, they do so without harm to themselves, their families, or their communities, reflecting a culture of moderation.

1.2.1 The Need for Cultural Shifts

During the stakeholder consultations in the development of the alcohol strategy, several cultural shifts were identified that are of particular relevance to the current study. These include:

- **Normalize help-seeking** - Currently there is a stigma associated with help-seeking that appears to be embedded in a belief that Addiction Services is only for those who are alcohol- and/or drug-dependent. There is a need to reduce this stigma and encourage individuals and families to seek help for alcohol-related issues. This also includes awareness that easily accessible and confidential services offer both early intervention and treatment options. Having Nova Scotians recognize that it is normal to seek help for alcohol-related issues is critical to removing the cultural barriers that keep many from accessing the programs and resources available through Addiction Services.
- **De-normalize underage drinking** - Shifting from a culture that views underage alcohol use as a normal and accepted rite of passage among adolescents to a culture that has meaningful rites of passage for youth that do not involve alcohol.
- **De-normalize binge drinking and drinking to intoxication** - A shift to a culture where binge drinking and intoxication are no longer socially acceptable is desired. Research commissioned by the Department of Health Promotion and Protection indicated that alcohol consumption among young adults (under 30 years of age) in Nova Scotia is supported by a sub-culture that normalizes and glamorizes drinking, intoxication, and alcohol-related consequences (Focal Research Consultants Ltd. April 2005; June 2005).
- **Position Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) as a community responsibility** – There needs to be a shared understanding that inappropriate alcohol use crosses all social systems and the impacts of that use are a community concern and responsibility.
- **Approaches to awareness and educational resources** - Alcohol-related educational resources are a necessary component of the collective initiatives to reduce alcohol-related harm. Resources should reflect balanced, factual information developed in collaboration with particular audiences. There must also be a shift from one-way communication to a model of sharing information and meaningful exchange to facilitate healthy action. This means shifting from “telling” people to meeting people where they are, and motivating them to take control of the message for themselves. To be effective in motivating

positive action (including changing knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours), alcohol-education resources must incorporate factual and interactive messages developed for the target audiences.

- **A balanced approach to alcohol policy** - A policy process that better balances the interests of health protection, harm prevention, the health benefits of moderation, and the Nova Scotia economy is essential to encourage a cultural change in alcohol-related social norms.

1.2.2 Alcohol Use in Canada

According to the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (2007), international comparisons of alcohol use indicate that Canada ranks among the leading countries for rates of prevalence and frequency, especially among young adults, with alcohol being by far the most common substance used by youth and adults in the country. Binge drinking (typically defined as consuming five or more drinks on a single occasion) is common in adolescence and young adulthood. Nationally, over a third of students in grades 7–9 have binged on alcohol (Health Canada, 2006). Other surveys showed that more than a third of young drinkers drank at a hazardous level (Flight, J., in press; Adlaf, Begin, & Sawka, 2005). These trends underscore the implications of the cultural dynamics for alcohol consumption and the need for shifting such dynamics to fall in line with the alcohol strategy.

Risk factors

Experts agree that a cumulative number of risk factors, rather than any one specific risk factor, increases the likelihood of substance use or abuse.

Individual characteristics associated with a greater risk of use and abuse include age (with use increasing during adolescence and peaking in mid to late 20's); gender (with males more likely to use substances, but with a narrowing gender gap according to recent surveys); attitudes and beliefs about the risks of use; impulsivity and sensation seeking (see Comeau, Stewart and Loba, 2001); and other childhood psychological disorders (i.e., conduct disorder).

According to the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse's *Youth in Focus* report (CCSA, 2007), certain interpersonal factors also serve as risk factors for substance use and abuse. Poor parental practices such as inadequate monitoring and family conflict have been associated with children's use, but peer substance use is one of the strongest predictors of substance use by young people. Academic failure (beginning late in the elementary levels), lack of commitment to school, and low bonding with peers and teachers is also a risk factor.

A significant amount of research in the environmental and cultural spheres shows that increased availability of a substance increases the likelihood of its use, especially among young people. Social norms and the way alcohol use is portrayed in the media also play an influential role

(CCSA, 2007). Based on self reports of Canadian Addiction Survey respondents from Nova Scotia, it is estimated that 40% of the alcohol sold in Nova Scotia is consumed by those under 30 years of age.

The influence of such cultural norms for alcohol use is reflected in the findings for alcohol consumption among youth. The latest Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey (2007) reports that currently, 70% percent of students reported they had consumed alcohol at some time during their lifetime, with the average age at first consumption being 13 years of age. When it comes to heavy or binge drinking, 28% of students reported they had had 5 or more drinks at a sitting in the month prior to completing the survey. The percentages of students who engaged in this drinking pattern ranged from 4% in grade 7 to 52% in grade 12. The majority of underage drinkers purchased their alcohol from friends (57%) or parents (20%), or take it from home without permission (13%).²

1.3 METHOD

The framework for the 2008 Culture of Alcohol Use Study was based on a two-phase telephone survey with 1,200 people, 15 years of age or older, living in randomly selected households throughout the province of Nova Scotia. Participation was restricted to permanent residents.

To address the overall goals and objectives for the study, the research design consisted of the following methodology:

- Generation of a sampling frame of randomly selected households throughout Nova Scotia (Total valid numbers = 1,061; Total cooperative contacts = 798; Household Response Rate =75.2%)
- Administration of a Household Screen to obtain the age and gender for all people (permanent residents of Nova Scotia) living in each randomly selected household (n=798),
- Generation of a sampling frame for all qualified respondents (15 years of age or older) identified as living in each randomly selected household (n=1,673);
- Administration of the study questionnaire to respondents identified in each household (census sampling for all respondents identified in randomly selected households: n=1,200, response rate = 71.7%);
- Overall measure of hazardous drinking by using the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) to identify drinking risk segments;

²Nova Scotia Student Drug Use 2007 Highlights Report (2007). Poulin, C and McDonald, W. Halifax:NS

- Pre-test and preliminary analysis of both household screen (n=119) and respondent questionnaire (n=37);
- 25 hour (5 day) mandatory training course for all project interviewers including; sensitivity training, interviewer protocols, sampling, screener, and questionnaire briefing, addiction services referrals and services;
- Specialized training for administering surveys to youth provided in conjunction with the IWK CHOICES Program;
- Maximization of study response rates through sample control, interviewer training and protocols, and quality control procedures;
- Data entry, monitoring, and analysis of household screen data;
- Tracking and management of study response rates by age and gender throughout the study;
- 100% editing of completed questionnaires by senior supervisory personnel;
- Re-contact of survey respondents for independent validation of survey responses and/or remedial action (quality control procedures; n=185; 15.4%);

1.3.1 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire used for the 2008 Culture of Alcohol Use Study was based on the use of various validated measures and items drawn from other national studies on alcohol, incorporating some customized questions. Focal worked in cooperation with an independent senior researcher (L. Graham) and NSHPP management to develop and test the questionnaire.

Two survey instruments were produced under for the study:

- **Household Screen (FOCAL)**

⇒ To determine household composition, including the total number of people living in a household; the number of children (males/females) under 15 years of age and age 15-18 years; number of adults age 19 years of age or older by gender and age category (19-24 years, 25-34 years, 35-44 years, 45-54 years and 55-64 years and 65 years or older).

- **2008 Culture of Alcohol Use Survey (NSHPP)**

⇒ The questionnaire was mostly developed using items previously tested for reliability and validity. As needed, some new items were devised and/or adapted from existing questions in order to evaluate future initiatives addressing the cultural shifts identified in the 2007 Alcohol Strategy. In total 18 drafts of the questionnaire were produced during the development process. Formal pre-testing

for the Alcohol Benchmark Survey commenced with Revision 11 through 17 and was conducted from March 26 - April 2, 2008 (Household Screen: n=119 Participant Surveys: n=37).

Data collection for the project was conducted from April 5, 2008 through to May 14, 2008 (n=1,200). Final questionnaire length ranged from 18 minutes to 56 minutes with an average length of 24.2 minutes per completed survey and approximately 4.5 minutes per completed household screen. Given the complexity of the design, random quality control checks were conducted throughout the study on 15.4% of all participant surveys (n=185) to ensure established protocols were effective in obtaining the desired information.

1.3.2 Sampling

Population Estimates – Nova Scotia Adults and Households³

According to the most recent population estimates, there are approximately 940,700 people living in the province of Nova Scotia; 745,000 adults 19 years or older ($\approx 80\%$), 49,000 aged 15-18 years ($\approx 5\%$) and about 15% or 145,000 children under age 15 years. The following population characteristics are relevant for household sampling considerations.

- Approximately 98% of people in Nova Scotia ($\approx 940,000$) are living in private households in the province.
- On average, there are approximately 2.4 people per private household representing a total of 390,000 households in the province.
- The majority of Nova Scotians are living in family households (68%), with on average 1.1 children per census family and 1.8 adults.
- The primary language spoken in the home is English (96%), with only 2% of the population identified as francophone and 2% using other languages.
- Average household incomes are estimated at approximately \$60,000.00 although there are regional variations in income across the province.

The initial sampling frame for the Nova Scotia Alcohol Benchmark Study included all residential telephone numbers in Nova Scotia. Focal Research currently uses customized software from ASDE Inc. of Hull, Quebec for sampling purposes. This software, Canada Survey Sampler, is a geographically stratified random sampling program incorporating both listed and unlisted telephone numbers. The software has been further customized to accommodate Focal's strict sampling procedures.

³ FP Markets: Canadian Demographics 2007 Population Estimates. Toronto: Financial Post. DataGroup, National Post Company.

The sampling was conducted over two phases:

1) Household Screen

A random sample of households was first generated in order to create a sampling frame for all adults in each household. The parameters for generating the Household Sample were based on Nova Scotia population statistics (presented above), assuming a minimum response rate of 70%. The data for each household screen was entered into a database identifying all qualified respondents in the household. Each household was assigned a household ID number for tracking purposes and the listing was used to create the sampling frame for the survey of all adults living in the households randomly selected across Nova Scotia.

2) Respondent Survey

Data collection for the 2008 Culture of Alcohol Use Study was conducted concurrently with the Household Screen. The databases were updated daily to reflect current sample characteristics and completion rates. All eligible respondents identified in the household screen were directly contacted to complete a questionnaire. Respondent status was tracked for each qualified individual identified in the household screen.

1.3.3 Project Response Rates

Project response rates were calculated using the Marketing Research Intelligence Association of Canada's (MRIA) Standard Record of Contact for telephone studies.

Household Response Rates

Table 1: 2008 Household Screen Call Disposition Report – Sampling Frame

Total Random Numbers Selected for Sample		(n) 1366
Invalid Sample	Total (Disconnected, Not-in-Service, Changed Number)	305
Total Valid Numbers	Total (Eligible Household Numbers)	1061
Non-Contacts	Total (No answer and refusals)	263
	No Answer (unlimited attempts)	40
	Household Refusals	223
Co-operative Contacts	Total	798

Response Results for Household Contacts:

Total Unique Numbers Attempted = 1,366 Households

Total Eligible Numbers = Total Unique Numbers - Invalid Sample = 1,061 Households

Response Rate (Households) = Co-operative Contacts ÷ Total Eligible Numbers
 $= 798 \div 1,061 = 75.2\%$

Refusal Rate (Households) = Refusals ÷ Total Asked = 223 ÷ 1,061 = 21.0%

Respondent Response Rates

Table 2: 2008 Respondent Sampling Frame Call Disposition Report – Respondents

Total Respondents Identified on Household Screen	n=1,673	%
<i>Non-Contacts (7+ Attempts)</i>	249	14.9%
<i>Refusals (Declined Participation)</i>	224	13.4%
<i>Co-operative Contacts (Completed Interviews)</i>	1,200	71.7%

Response Results for Respondent Contacts:

Total Eligible Respondents on Sampling Frame = 1,673 qualified respondents
Total Asked = Refusals + Completed Surveys = 224 + 1,200= 1,424 qualified respondents
Response Rate = Co-operative Contacts ÷ Total Eligible Respondents = 1,200 ÷ 1,673 = 71.7%
Refusal Rate = Refusals ÷ Total Asked = 224 ÷ 1,424 = 15.7%

Table 3: Response Rates for All Respondents by Gender & Age Categories

	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL ADULTS
15 – 18 years	76.0%	70.4%	73.1%
19 – 24 years	78.0%	59.7%	67.6%
25 – 34 years	74.5%	82.9%	78.9%
35 – 44 years	74.3%	71.1%	72.7%
45 – 54 years	69.9%	62.4%	66.0%
55 - 64 years	58.6%	79.4%	69.5%
65+ years	75.2%	77.1%	76.2%
TOTAL	70.7%	72.4%	71.6%

1.3.4 Data Collection

The survey was conducted from April 5 to May 14, 2008. Data collection was fully supervised from Focal Research Consultants' centralized data collection facility in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Each survey was 100% edited for accuracy and completeness. Supervisory staff randomly contacted a minimum of 10% to 15% of each interviewer's surveys to verify responses and ensure that the respondent was comfortable participating in the study. Response rates were maximized by controlling the release of phone numbers to the interviewers and requiring unlimited callbacks to be made on the numbers released, over various days of the week and times of day.

Data entry occurred concurrently with data collection to maximize turn around and allow for preliminary data checks/reviews. A minimum 15% manual quality control check was performed

on the entered surveys. In addition, the data were submitted to customized data cleaning programs, which incorporated logic checks as well as out-of-range value checks.

1.4 Analysis

NSHPP indicated that for the purpose of the current study basic segmentation analysis and summary of key findings for benchmarking purposes was required. However, NSHPP has also noted potential for on-going analysis and exploration of the data set.

Analysis for the study was conducted using SPSS 11.0 and 13.0.

Conventional scoring or summary statistics are produced for any validated screens used in the survey (e.g. AUDIT).

A set of detailed data tables were produced for all adults and for past-year drinkers segmented by gender (males versus females), age category (15-18 years; 19-24 years; 25-34 years; 35-44 years; 45-54 years; 55-64 years and 65 years+), by drinking status (Non Drinkers; Non-Heavy Drinking, Infrequent Heavy Drinking; Monthly Heavy Drinking and Weekly Heavy Drinking) and by AUDIT risk level (Non Drinkers; Low-Risk Drinkers; and Hazardous Drinkers).

In the Highlight Report the analysis was descriptive primarily summarizing general responses for Nova Scotians age 15 years or older and for Past Year drinkers. Any differences discussed among key segments (e.g. age, gender, hazardous drinking) were based on use of the following analysis when appropriate:

- Cross tabulations and frequency response for creation of data tables,
- Two-tailed Z-tests, of proportions to identify significant differences among specified segments,
- Chi Square tests for distribution comparison between groups,
- Z-tests and/or T-tests for mean comparisons,
- Mann-U-Whitney tests for median comparison.

Focal Research adopted a minimum significance level of 95% for the Alcohol Benchmark Study.

1.4.1 AUDIT: Harmful and Hazardous Drinking⁴

The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1989 and updated in 1992 to screen for individuals who are engaging in excessive drinking. The AUDIT is a simple assessment tool that consists of ten questions.

These questions pertain to three domains of alcohol use:

1. Hazardous (or risky) Alcohol Use (frequency of drinking, typical quantity and frequency of heavy drinking)

⁴ Babor, T.F., Higgins-Biddle, J.C., Saunders, J.B., & Monteiro, M.G. (2001) AUDIT: The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test, Guidelines for Use in Primary Care, 2nd ed., World Health Organization, Geneva.

2. Harmful Alcohol Use (guilt after drinking, blackouts, alcohol-related injuries and others concerned about drinking)
3. Dependence Symptoms (impaired control over drinking, increased salience of drinking and morning drinking).

Individuals who consume alcohol at hazardous levels are at increased risk for harmful physical, mental, and social consequences (e.g., hypertension, liver cirrhosis, depression, accidents, injuries, family tensions, job loss). Harmful alcohol use refers to consumption that result in at least some of these negative consequences. Dependence symptoms can occur after excessive alcohol use and results in symptoms such as impaired control over the use of alcohol, persistent drinking despite harmful consequences and increased alcohol tolerance.

The scores on the AUDIT range from 0 to 40 with higher scores representing a greater likelihood of excessive drinking (as well as an increased likelihood of alcohol dependence and subsequent problems). Scores of 8 or more are typically used as the cut-off for harmful and hazardous drinking.

1.4.2 Definition of Drinking

Respondents were told that “drink” referred to “one 341 ml or 12 ounce bottle of beer or a glass of draft; one 142 ml or 5 ounce glass of wine or a wine cooler or one straight or mixed drink with one ounce and a half or 43 ml of liquor.”

In this study, the term “non-drinker” refers to someone who has not consumed alcohol in the past 12 months including former drinkers and those who have never drank.

Heavy drinking in the current report is defined as the consumption of 5+ drinks per sitting for males or 4+ drinks per sitting for females.

1.4.3 Primary Report Segmentation

Table 4: Primary Report Segmentation

Key Segmentation Variables	Categories	Unweighted Sample Size (n)	Percentage of Sample (%)	Margin of Error (95% C.I.)
Gender	Male	560	46.7%	±4.14%
	Female	640	53.3%	±3.87%
Age	15-18 years	76	6.3%	±11.24%
	19-24 years	92	7.7%	±10.22%
	25-34 years	165	13.8%	±7.63%
	35-44 years	213	17.8%	±6.71%
	45-54 years	227	18.9%	±6.50%
	55-64 years	212	17.7%	±6.73%
	65+ years	215	17.9%	±6.68%
AUDIT Risk Level (cut-off 8+)	Non-Drinkers	287	23.9%	±5.78%
	Low-risk Drinkers	748	62.3%	±3.58%
	Hazardous Drinkers	165	13.8%	±7.63%
Drinking Status	Non-Drinkers	287	23.9%	±5.78%
	Non-Heavy Drinking	391	32.6%	±4.96%
	Infrequent Heavy Drinking	275	22.9%	±5.91%
	Monthly Heavy Drinking	162	13.5%	±7.70%
	Weekly Heavy Drinking	85	7.1%	±10.63%

1.5 LIMITATIONS

The study is subject to limitations associated with all telephone-based surveys that rely on self-reported responses. The small minority of Nova Scotians ($\approx 2\%$)⁵ who do not live in private households with telephone access will not be included in the current study. This would exclude populations such as those in hospitals, prisons, the military or who are homeless. Although alcohol consumption, attitudes and context can be expected to vary for these groups consideration of these populations is beyond the scope of the current project.

⁵ FP Markets: Canadian Demographics 2007 Population Estimates. Toronto: Financial Post. DataGroup, National Post Company.

SECTION 2.0 KEY FINDINGS

The Highlight Report for the 2008 Culture of Alcohol Use in Nova Scotia is intended to provide a high level overview of key findings emerging from the study. The analysis was descriptive in nature summarizing responses on key variables for all those Nova Scotians 15 years of age and older (n=1200) as well as Past Year Drinkers (e.g. those who consumed any alcohol in the 12 months preceding the survey; n= 913). In addition to providing summary estimates at a total population level, when appropriate, key findings are segmented and discussed by Males (n=454) versus Females (n=459) and age category (15-18 years (n=44); 19-24 years (n=84); 25-34 years (n=147); 35-44 years (n=186); 45-54 years (n=187); 55-64 years (n=151) and 65 years+ (n=114).

The findings were also segmented and compared by risk for drinking harm as measured by the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT): Non-drinkers (n=287); Low-risk Drinkers (AUDIT Score<8; n=748); Hazardous Drinkers (AUDIT Score =8+; n=165).

Respondents were told that “a drink” referred to “one 341 ml or 12 ounce bottle of beer or a glass of draft; one 142 ml or 5 ounce glass of wine or a wine cooler or one straight or mixed drink with one ounce and a half or 43 ml of liquor.”

Other terms referred to in the report include:

“**Non-drinker**” defined as someone who has not consumed alcohol in the past 12 months including former drinkers and those who have never drank.

“**Heavy drinking**” defined as the consumption of 5+ drinks per sitting for males or 4+ drinks per sitting for females.

“**Heavy Weekly Drinkers**” defined as the percentage reporting on average a heavy drinking session at least once per week over the 12 month preceding the survey

“**Heavy Monthly Drinkers**” defined as the percentage reporting, on average, a heavy drinking session at least once per month but not as frequently as once per week over the 12 months preceding the survey.

All differences reported in the tables or discussed in the text were significant at the 95% Confidence interval ($p \leq .05$) unless otherwise specified.

2.1 Alcohol Consumption and Patterns of Use

All Nova Scotians 15 years or older participating in the survey were asked a series of questions about their alcohol consumption including frequency, number of drinks and heavy drinking patterns.

Table 5: Alcohol Consumption and Patterns

	Measure	Estimate
Alcohol Consumption and Patterns	Percent who have tried alcohol	92.9% – All Respondents 15+ years 94.7% – Adults 19+ years 67.1% – Youth 15-18 years
	Mean age at onset of drinking	18.2 years – All Respondents 15+ years 16.8 years – Males 19.4 years – Females
	Percent drinking alcohol in the past 12 months	76.1% – All Respondents 15+ years 81.1% – Males 71.7% – Females
	Mean number of drinks in a typical drinking day in the past 12 months	3.1 drinks – Past-Year Drinkers Most drinks/day: 19-24 years (5.2 drinks) Least drinks/day: 65+ years (1.8 drinks)
	Percent drinking 4+ times per week	4.8% – All Respondents 15+ years 6.4% – Past-Year Drinkers
	Percent who had 8+ drinks at one sitting in the past 12 months	5.8% – All Respondents 15+ years 7.7% – Past-Year Drinkers
	Percent engaging in heavy drinking⁶ in the past 12 months	43.5% – All Respondents 15+ years 54.7% – Males 33.7% – Females 57.2% – Past-Year Drinkers
	Percent engaging in weekly heavy drinking in the past 12 months	7.1% – All Respondents 15+ years 11.1% – Males 3.6% – Females 9.3% – Past-Year Drinkers Most likely – 19-24 years (19.0%) Least likely – 65+ years (4.4%)

- The majority (92.9%) of Nova Scotians had tried alcohol at least once.
- While both males and females were equally likely to have consumed alcohol at some time in the past, males tended to drink more often as well as consume higher amounts in a single sitting.

⁶ Heavy drinking in the current report is defined as the consumption of 5+ drinks per sitting for males or 4+ drinks per sitting for females.

- As would be expected adults 19 years of age or older (94.7%) reported higher rates of consumption than those aged 15-18 years although two-thirds (67.1%) of these teens have consumed alcohol despite being under the legal drinking age.
- On average, Nova Scotians 15 years or older started drinking alcoholic beverages at 18.2 years of age with males (16.8) reporting younger age of onset than females (19.4).
- For individuals aged 15 to 54 years drinking onset typically occurred between 15 to 17 years of age whereas those older than 54 years started drinking at 20 years or older. Part of this difference is likely attributable to the legal drinking age being lowered from 21 to 19 years in 1971⁷. However, findings suggest that age of first drinking is steadily declining over the subsequent generations moving from 17.3 years on average for those aged 45-54 years to 15 years among youth aged 15-18 years.
- The majority of Nova Scotians (76.1%) had a drink in the past 12 months, with over half of teens (57.9%) aged 15-18 years identified as Past-Year drinkers.
- For adults over 19 years of age, the likelihood of alcohol consumption in the past year decreased as age increased among those of legal drinking age with 91.3% of the respondents aged 19-24 years having a drink versus 53.0% for those aged 65 years or older.
- About one-third (35.6%) of Past-Year drinkers consumed alcohol on a regular weekly basis, with approximately one in 15 (6.4%) drinking four or more times per week.
- Frequency of alcohol consumption varied by gender with males being more likely than females to engage in excessive drinking (i.e. 4+ times/week).
- Generally, older individuals consumed alcohol more frequently than younger drinkers. For example, almost one in every seven seniors who drank alcohol last year reported drinking four or more times a week (Past-Year Drinkers 55+ years: 13.9%), as compared to only 1% of Past-Year drinkers aged 19-24 years.
- While older drinkers tended to drink more often than their younger counterparts, younger drinkers tended to consume larger quantities at a single sitting (i.e., engage in binge drinking). For example, 22.6% of young Past-Year drinkers (19-24 years) reported drinking eight or more drinks per occasion as compared to only 1% of Past-Year drinkers aged 55 years or older.

⁷ In 1971 the legal drinking age in Nova Scotia was lowered from 21 years to 19 years. Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (2005). Legal Drinking Age by Province in Canada. <http://www.ccsa.ca/CCSA/EN/Topics/Legislation/LegalDrinkingAgeByProvCan.htm>

- Rates of binge drinking were also notably higher among youth 15-18 years with about one in ten reporting consumption of 8+ drinks per drinking occasion.
- Heavy drinking is often defined as consumption of five or more drinks at a sitting for men and four or more for women (although some simply use five or more drinks for both genders)⁸. Using the former criteria of 5+ drinks for males and 4+ for females, over half of all males in the province 15 years of age or older (54.7%) and one-third of females (33.7%) reported heavy drinking in the past year.
- Based on this definition more than half (57.2%) of Past-Year Drinkers in Nova Scotia had at least one heavy drinking session in the past 12 months.
- Almost one in 10 Nova Scotia drinkers (9.3%) were drinking heavily on a regular weekly basis (i.e. heavy weekly drinkers) with an additional 17.7% drinking heavily at least once a month (i.e. heavy monthly drinkers)
- The majority of Past-Year drinkers aged 19-24 years (61.9%) reported heavy drinking on a regular basis each month versus only 9.7% among those aged 65+ years and 16.5% for those aged 55 to 64 years. In fact, 19.0% were engaging in heavy drinking each week.
- It is important to note that among underage youth 15-18 years who consumed alcohol in the past 12 months, one-third were classified as regular heavy drinkers with one-quarter drinking heavily at least once a month and 9.1% drinking heavily every week.

Table 6: Alcohol Consumption in the Past 30 Days

	Measure	Estimate
Alcohol Consumption and Patterns in the Past 30 Days	Percent who drank in the past 30 days	58.5% – All Respondents 15+ years 68.4% – Males 49.8% – Females 76.9% – Past-Year Drinkers
	Percent who drank heavily in the past 30 days	21.2% – All Respondents 15+ years 30.5% – Males 12.8% – Females <i>Mostly likely: 19-24 years (52.2%)</i> <i>Least likely: 65+ years (5.1%)</i> 27.7% – Past-Year Drinkers 37.7% – Male Past-Year Drinkers 17.9% – Female Past-Year Drinkers

⁸ Department of Health Promotion and Protection (September, 2007). Changing the Culture of Alcohol Use in Nova Scotia. http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/repPub/Alcohol_Strategy.pdf

- Respondents were also asked about their drinking patterns over the past 30 days.
- More than half (58.5%) of all Nova Scotians aged 15+ years had reported consuming alcohol in the past 30 days representing about 76.9% of all those who consumed alcohol in the past year. Overall, male drinkers (84.4%) were significantly more likely than females (69.5%) to have had a drink in the past month.
- Even among underage drinkers a slight majority (54.5%) reported having had at least one drink within the past 30 days. This meant that almost one-third of all youth in Nova Scotia aged 15-18 years had consumed alcohol in the 30 days preceding the survey.
- Overall, one in five (21.2%) Nova Scotians aged 15 years + had engaged in heavy drinking at least once in the last 30 days.
- Rates of heavy drinking in the past 30 days were twice as high for male drinkers (37.7%) as compared to female drinkers (17.9%).
- Heavy drinking in the past 30 days was highest for those young adults aged 19-24 years (52.2%) and dropped off with age (65+ years:5.1%) .

2.2 AUDIT: Harmful and Hazardous Drinking

The scores on the AUDIT range from 0 to 40, with higher scores representing a greater likelihood of excessive drinking (as well as an increased likelihood of alcohol dependence and subsequent problems). Scores of 8 or more are typically used as the cut-off for harmful and hazardous drinking.⁹

Table 7: AUDIT: Risk for Harmful and Hazardous Drinking

	Measure	Estimate
AUDIT: Harmful & Hazardous Drinking	Percent of Hazardous Drinkers (AUDIT=8+)	13.8% – All Respondents 15+ years 22.5% – Males 6.1% – Females Most likely: 19-24 years (39.1%) Least likely: 65+ years (4.7%) 18.1% – Past-Year Drinkers 27.8% – Males 8.5% – Females Most likely: 19-24 years (42.9%) Least likely: 65+ years (8.8%)

⁹Babor, T.F., Higgins-Biddle, J.C., Saunders, J.B., & Monteiro, M.G. (2001) AUDIT: The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test, Guidelines for Use in Primary Care, 2nd ed., World Health Organization, Geneva

- Based on the AUDIT, 13.8% of Nova Scotians 15 years or older were drinking alcohol at harmful and hazardous levels with 3 times as many males drinking at these rates than females (22.5% versus 6.1%).
- Among adults 19 years or older, hazardous rates of drinking decreased as age increased; 39.1% of 19-24 years olds were classified as Hazardous drinkers as compared to 4.7% of seniors 65 years or older.
- Rates of hazardous drinking were also significantly higher among those aged 15-18 years (13.2%) as compared to older adults in the province especially those 65 years+ (4.7%).
- Among, those who have consumed alcohol in the last year (i.e. Past-Year drinkers) almost half of those aged 19-24 (42.9%) and about one in every five youth aged 15-18 years (22.7%) scored as consuming alcohol at harmful or hazardous levels.

Table 8: Alcohol Consumption and Patterns (Hazardous Drinkers vs. Low-Risk Drinkers)

	Measure	Estimate
Alcohol Consumption and Patterns	Mean age at onset of drinking	16.1 years – Hazardous Drinkers 18.2 years – Low-Risk Drinkers
	Mean number of drinks in a typical drinking day in the past 12 months	6.2 drinks – Hazardous Drinkers 2.4 drinks – Low-Risk Drinkers
	Percent drinking 4+ times per week	15.8% – Hazardous Drinkers 4.3% – Low-Risk Drinkers
	Percent who had 8+ drinks at one sitting in the past 12 months	35.2% – Hazardous Drinkers 1.6% – Low-Risk Drinkers
	Percent engaging in heavy drinking¹⁰ in the past 12 months	97.6% – Hazardous Drinkers 48.3% – Low-Risk Drinkers
	Percent engaging in weekly heavy drinking in the past 12 months	47.3% – Hazardous Drinkers 0.9% – Low-Risk Drinkers

- On average, Hazardous drinkers started consuming alcohol at a younger age (16.1 years versus 18.2 years) and typically drank more at a single sitting (6.2 drinks versus 2.4 drinks) with over one-third (35.2%) having consumed eight or more drinks at one time during the past year as compared to only 1.6% of Low-Risk drinkers.
- Almost 16% of Hazardous drinkers reported consuming alcohol at least four or more times per week with almost half (47.3%) engaging in weekly heavy drinking behaviour.

¹⁰ Heavy drinking in the current report is defined as the consumption of 5+ drinks per sitting for males or 4+ drinks per sitting for females.

- In contrast, only 4.3% of Low-Risk drinkers were drinking on four or more occasion in an average week and less than 1% (0.9%) reported heavy weekly drinking patterns.
- It is noteworthy that even among Low-Risk drinkers, almost half (48.3%) reported at least one heavy drinking experience during the past year.

2.3 Drinking Contexts and Influences

In order to understand when and why Nova Scotians consume alcohol, Past-Year drinkers were asked questions concerning what influences their drinking habits as well as why and where they typically drink. These items were examined by gender and age as well as by AUDIT risk levels (Low-Risk vs. Hazardous).

Table 9: Drinking Contexts and Influences among Past-Year Drinkers (n=913)

	Measure	Estimate (Past-Year Drinkers Only)
Drinking Context and Influences	Percent who bought alcohol on sale at the liquor store	22.2% – Past-Year Drinkers <i>Most likely: 35-44 years (29.6%)</i> <i>Least likely: 15-18 years (9.1%)</i> 35.8% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent who bought lower priced drinks at bars	15.1% – Past-Year Drinkers <i>Most likely: 19-24 years (44.0%)</i> <i>Least likely: 55-64 years (5.3%)</i> 33.3% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Most often reported reasons for consuming alcohol	Past-Year Drinkers: – <i>To be sociable: 80.3%</i> – <i>To enjoy the taste: 60.9%</i> – <i>To celebrate: 55.3%</i> – <i>To help me relax: 43.5%</i> – <i>To add to the enjoyment of a meal: 40.4%</i>
	Most often reported locations for alcohol consumption	Past-Year Drinkers: – <i>One's own home: 87.5%</i> – <i>Some else's home: 54.8%</i> – <i>Bar, disco or nightclub: 26.9%</i>
	Percent who drink with meals	48.4% – Past-Year Drinkers <i>Most likely: 55-64 years (57.0%)</i> <i>Least likely: 15-18 years (15.9%)</i> 38.8% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent who drink in public places (e.g. restaurants, pubs, bars)	37.0% – Past-Year Drinkers <i>Most likely: 19-24 years (64.3%)</i> <i>Least likely: 15-18 years (9.1%)</i> 52.7% – Hazardous Drinkers

Table 9: Drinking Contexts and Influences among Past-Year Drinkers (n=913) (Continued)

	Measure	Estimate (Past-Year Drinkers Only)
Drinking Context and Influences	Percent who redeemed coupons for alcohol purchases	5.8% – Past-Year Drinkers <i>Most likely: 35-44 years (8.1%)</i> <i>Least likely: 15-18 years (2.3%)</i> 13.3% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent who changed their drinking in some way in the past 12 months	14.2% – Past-Year Drinkers – <i>Drinking less often (10.0%)</i> – <i>Having fewer drinks per occasion (6.2%)</i> – <i>Drinking more often (2.7%)</i> – <i>Having more drinks per occasion (1.3%)</i> 29.1% – Hazardous Drinkers

- Just over one in every five Past-Year drinkers in Nova Scotia (22.2%) *bought alcohol on sale*, the majority less than once a month. While 35-44 year olds (29.6%) were most likely to take advantage of sale prices for alcohol, there were no real differences observed among the adult age categories. Over one-third of Hazardous drinkers (35.8%) purchased sale-priced alcohol at the NSLC compared to about one-fifth of Low-Risk drinkers (19.3%).
- Use of coupons for alcohol purchases was low although 5.8% of Past-Year drinkers reported redeeming at least one coupon for discounting liquor purchases. This percentage was higher among Hazardous drinkers with 13.3% using coupons versus 4.1% of Low-Risk drinkers.
- In contrast, “happy hour” discounts tended to attract younger drinkers with those 19-24 years old (44.0%) significantly more likely to be taking advantage of discounted prices for drinks than those in any other age category (5.3%-19.0%). Likewise, Hazardous drinkers were three times more likely than Low-Risk drinkers to take advantage of “happy hour” discounts (33.3% vs. 11.1%).
- During the current study only 1.6% (n=15 respondents) indicated that they had paid a cover charge at a bar that included unlimited drinks. When only considered among younger drinkers, 4.8% of those aged 19-24 years and 3.2% of those aged 25-34 years had been at a venue that offered a cover charge option for unlimited drinks. Rates of use were also higher among those scoring as Hazardous drinkers (4.2% vs. 1.1%).
- When asked *why* they consumed alcohol, the primary reason cited by drinkers across all categories was *to be sociable* (80.3%). Other common responses included *to enjoy the taste* (60.9%), *to celebrate* (55.3%) and *to help relax* (43.5%).

- Reasons for drinking varied depending on age. For example, three-quarters of 15-18 years olds reported drinking *to celebrate* as compared to only one-third (36.0%) of Past-Year drinkers over age 65 years. Likewise, just over one-third of drinkers aged 15 to 24 years reportedly drink *to get high or drunk* (36.4%-36.9%) versus less than 10% of drinkers aged 35+ years (0%-7.5%). Conversely, about half of adults aged 45 years or older (43.9%-55.6%) indicated that they consume alcohol *to add to the enjoyment of a meal* compared to only 11.4% of 15-18 year olds and 29.8% of those age 19-24 years.
- Hazardous drinkers were much more likely to consume alcohol *to get high or drunk* than Low-Risk drinkers (41.8% vs. 4.8%). They were also more likely than those at Low-Risk to drink for the emotional benefits such as making them more relaxed (65.5% vs. 38.0), less worried (19.4% vs. 4.4%) and less inhibited (15.8% vs. 3.6%). Two-thirds of Hazardous drinkers drank *to celebrate* (69.1%) compared to about half of Low-Risk drinkers (52.3%). A greater proportion of Hazardous drinkers consumed alcohol *to enjoy the taste* (78.2% vs. 57.1%) however; they were less likely to drink *to add to the enjoyment of a meal* (33.9% vs. 41.8%). For both Hazardous and Low-Risk segments, four out of five drank *to be sociable* (79.4% & 80.5%).
- While the majority of Nova Scotia drinkers (87.5%) tended to drink alcohol in their own home, this did not hold true for underage drinkers who were much more likely to drink in someone else's house (90.9% vs. own home: 29.5%).
- Two-thirds of 19 to 24 years old drinkers (65.5%) consumed alcohol at a bar or nightclub last year compared to one-third or less for any other age group (4.5%-33.3%).
- Past-Year drinkers in Nova Scotia tended to consume more alcohol in their own home than elsewhere (41.6%) especially among adults 25 years and older (38.6%-50.3%).
- Underage drinkers and those aged 19-24 years were more likely to drink larger quantities at someone else's home (18.2%-33.3%). Likewise, a higher proportion of 19-24 year olds (19.0%) reported higher consumption levels at bars and clubs than any other age group (2.3%-10.9%).
- Most Hazardous and Low-Risk drinkers drank in their own home (86.1% & 87.8%) but Hazardous drinkers were more likely to consume alcohol in bars, discos or nightclubs (50.9% vs. 21.7%) and drink in someone else's home (66.7% vs. 52.1%).
- Almost half of the Past-Year drinkers consumed alcohol with meals (48.4%). Adults aged 55 and older (20.5%-21.1%) were significantly more likely than younger drinkers to *almost always* include alcohol with meals (4.5%-14.0%). Female drinkers were also

more likely than male drinkers to *almost always* have a drink with a meal (17.6% versus 11.2%). While half of Low-Risk drinkers (49.5%) tended to drink with meals, only around one-third of Hazardous drinkers drank with meals (38.8%).

- Just over a third of Past-Year drinkers (37.0%) consumed liquor in public places like bars or restaurants last year. Drinkers aged 19-24 years had the highest rates of alcohol consumption in public venues or places (64.3%) compared to 44.1% to 23.2% for older drinkers. Not surprisingly, less than 10% of under-aged drinkers consumed alcohol in a public licensed venue last year. Just over half of Hazardous drinkers (52.7%) drank alcohol in public places compared to one-third of Low-Risk (33.6%)
- When asked, 14.2% of drinkers noted that they changed their drinking in some way in the past 12 months. Most of these changes were positive (10.0% drinking less often; 6.2% having fewer drinks per sitting). However, 15-18 year olds were more likely than any other age group to be *increasing* their frequency (18.2%) and quantity of alcohol (13.6%) whereas 19 to 34 years old were more likely to be *decreasing* their frequency (16.7%-17.7%) and quantity of alcohol (8.3%-12.2%).
- Hazardous drinkers were more likely to have made changes in the past 12 months than Low-Risk (29.1% vs. 11.0%). As with drinkers overall, these changes tended to be positive with almost two-thirds of Hazardous drinkers who had made changes reducing their alcohol consumption.

2.4 Opinions on Effects of Alcohol

Respondents were asked what they considered to be “safe drinking,” that is, what they thought was a safe number of drinks to have on one occasion. They were also asked their opinions on the effects of alcohol use and questions regarding their own alcohol consumption. Comparisons were made across age and gender as well as AUDIT risk levels.

Table 10: Perceived Safe Drinking Levels

	Measure	Estimate
Perceived Safe Drinking Levels	Mean Safe Drinking levels	Men: 3.0 drinks Women: 2.2 drinks A Pregnant Woman: 0.1 drinks Youth under 15 years: 0.1 drinks Youth 16-18 years: 0.5 drinks Seniors 65+ years: 1.7 drinks Before Driving a Vehicle: 0.3 drinks Before Operating Machinery: 0.2 drinks Before Operating a Boat: 0.2 drinks For you Personally: 1.8 drinks

- On average, Nova Scotians believed that men could safely consume more alcoholic drinks per occasion than women (Man: 3.0 drinks versus Woman: 2.2 drinks).
- Perceptions of how many drinks were within the range of safe drinking generally declined with age; those 19-24 years, on average, felt 4.3 drinks for men and 3.1 drinks for women to be safe.
- Regardless of gender the vast majority of respondents reported safe drinking levels under 8 drinks per occasion (Female: 99.1%; Male: 95.7%).
- Most of those taking part in the survey believed that it was not safe for pregnant women (94.8%) or youth aged 15 years or younger (95.2%) to consume any level of alcohol.
- Although most (70.5%) felt that it was not safe for underage youth to consume alcohol about one-quarter (23.8%) thought that one or two drinks would be safe for older youth age 16 to 18 years of age.
- The majority (64.1%) indicated that one or two drinks were safe for seniors 65 years and older.
- Most Nova Scotians felt that it was not safe to drink any alcohol when driving a motor vehicle (79.6%), operating machinery (87.5%) or operating a recreational boat (77.5%).
- When respondents were asked about what was considered to be a safe number of drinks for them personally, almost one-third (31.8%) believed there was no safe level. Many considered one to two drinks to be safe consumption rate for them personally (42.3%) although males, on average, reported comparatively higher numbers than females (2.5 versus 1.3).
- Younger adults (under 35 years) were more likely to believe that five or more drinks were still within their personal safety zone. One in four of those aged 19-24 years reported personal safe drinking levels in excess of 5 drinks per occasion as compared to fewer than one in ten for adults over 45 years. It is notable that among underage youth 9.2% reported amounts greater than 5 drinks per sitting as being a safe level of consumption for them personally.

Table 11: Opinions on Effects of Alcohol

	Measure	Estimate
Opinions on Effects of Alcohol	Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing to “It is okay for a pregnant woman to drink once in a while”	12.3% – All Respondents 15+ years 13.9% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing to alcohol use during pregnancy can lead to life-long disabilities in a child.	94.5% – All Respondents 15+ years 89.1% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing to most of the effects of a pregnant mother's drinking on her unborn child usually disappear as the child grows older	5.3% – All Respondents 15+ years 7.9% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing to drinking 1-2 drinks everyday can be beneficial for everyone	20.2% – All Respondents 15+ years 39.4% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing to alcohol is a factor in more than 60 health conditions, including many cancers, cardiovascular disease, and mental illness	69.0% – All Respondents 15+ years 64.8% – Hazardous Drinkers

- Generally, Nova Scotians were aware of the harmful effects that alcohol can have on an unborn child. Overall 82.3% strongly disagreed that it is *okay for a pregnant woman to drink once in a while*, 83.3% strongly agreed that *alcohol use during pregnancy can lead to life-long disabilities in a child* and 79.4% strongly disagreed that *most of the effects of a pregnant mother's drinking on her unborn child usually disappear as the child grows older*. These proportions were similar among Hazardous and Low-Risk drinkers.
- Only one in five (20.2%) agreed that *drinking 1-2 drinks everyday can be beneficial for everyone*. The majority (59.2%) strongly disagreed with this position especially Non-drinkers (78%), youth (75%) and to a lesser extent females (65.3%) and adults over 45 years of age ($\approx 60.4\%+$). Hazardous drinkers (39.4%) and those aged 19-24 years (46.7%) were most likely to strongly endorse the benefits of daily drinking for most people.
- Most (69.0%) were at least somewhat cognizant of the fact that *alcohol is a factor in more than 60 health conditions, including many cancers, cardiovascular disease, and mental illness* (Somewhat Agreed: 34.8%; Strongly Agreed: 34.2%). There were no differences in agreement by AUDIT risk levels.

Table 12: Drinking Situations

	Measure	Estimate
Drinking Situations	Percent who usually drink in social situations (at least some of the time)	57.2% – All Respondents 15+ years <i>Most to All of the time: 25.8%</i> <i>Some of the time: 31.4%</i> 74.2% – Past-Year Drinkers: <i>Most to All of the time: 33.6%</i> <i>Some of the time: 40.6%</i> 90.9% – Hazardous Drinkers 70.6% – Low-Risk Drinkers
	Percent who ever feel pressured to drink in social situations	11.2% – All Respondents 15+ years 12.8% – Past-Year Drinkers 16.3% – Hazardous Drinkers 4.3% – Low-Risk Drinkers
	Percent who ever Feel out of place if you don't drink in social situations	14.5% – All Respondents 15+ years 16.1% – Past-Year Drinkers 26.6% – Hazardous Drinkers 6.8% – Low-Risk Drinkers

- Over half of Nova Scotians reported that they drank at least some of the time (57.2%) when they were in a social situation involving alcohol. For one in four (25.6%) drinking usually occurred when exposed to alcohol in such social situations and these rates increased to more than one-third among under-aged youth (34.2%) and young adults (52.2%).
- More than half (57.0%) of Hazardous drinkers usually drink when alcohol is available in a social situation with 9% indicating they rarely or never drink under such circumstances.
- About one in ten (11%) Nova Scotians reported they ever feel any pressure to drink in a social setting. Hazardous drinkers are most likely to report social pressure to drink with 16.3% noting this occurs at least some of time versus only 4.3% for Low-risk or Non-drinkers. Youth (13.7%) and young adults 19-24 years (21.4%) also report higher levels of social pressure to drink at least some of time.
- Overall 14.5% of adults have ever felt out of place because they were not drinking in a social situation. Youth aged 15-18 years (20.5%) were just as likely as young adults 19-24 years (23.8%) to report ever feeling uncomfortable for choosing not to drink socially. Hazardous drinkers, especially, were more inclined to feel out of place in social situations when they did not drink (26.6% versus 6.8%).

Table 13: Drinking and Social Image

	Measure	Estimate
Drinking and Social Image	Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing to “Drinking is an important part of your life”	5.6% – All Respondents 15+ years 7.3% – Past-Year Drinkers 24.2% – Hazardous Drinkers 3.6% – Low-risk Drinkers
	Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing to “It’s important to show how much you can drink and still hold your liquor”	2.8% – All Respondents 15+ years 3.3% – Past-Year Drinkers 13.3% – Hazardous Drinkers 1.0% – Low-risk Drinkers
	Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing to “You can’t make it socially in your crowd without drinking”	5.1% – All Respondents 15+ years 5.4% – Past-Year Drinkers 12.7% – Hazardous Drinkers 3.7% – Low-risk Drinkers
	Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing to “Some of the people you socialize with experience problems with their alcohol use”	45.9% – All Respondents 15+ years 50.2% – Past-Year Drinkers 69.7% – Hazardous Drinkers 45.8% – Low-risk Drinkers
	How often is someone in your social crowd intoxicated? (<i>at least some of the time</i>)	43.7% – All Respondents 15+ years 49.8% – Past-Year Drinkers 77.0% – Hazardous Drinkers 43.8% – Low-risk Drinkers

- For most Nova Scotians (94.4%), drinking alcohol was perceived to be only a minor part of their lives. Being able to show “*how much you can drink and still hold your liquor*” was not an issue for 97.2% of respondents. Likewise, only 5.1% agreed that “*you can’t make it socially in your crowd without drinking*”.
- However, in contrast almost one-quarter of Hazardous drinkers (24.2%) agreed that alcohol was an important part of their lives compared to 3.6% of Low-Risk drinkers. Likewise, Hazardous drinkers were more likely to think it was important to be able to “hold their liquor” (13.3% vs. 1.0%) and to believe that it was a factor in *making it socially* in their crowd (12.7% vs. 3.7%).
- Despite the fact that respondents did not perceive alcohol to be important to them personally, almost half (45.9%) recognized that *some of the people they socialized with experience problems with alcohol use*. These numbers were higher for those scoring as Hazardous drinkers with 69.7% agreeing compared to 45.8% among Low-risk drinkers.
- Not quite half of Low-Risk drinkers (43.8%) reported having *someone in their social crowd intoxicated* some to all of the time; three-quarters of Hazardous drinkers (77.0%)

reported it. In fact, one-fifth of Hazardous drinkers (20.0%) noted that someone was intoxicated at least most of the time (6.8% for Low-Risk).

2.5 Alcohol – Consequences of Use

Respondents were asked if they experienced any negative social, financial, work-related or family-related consequences because of their alcohol usage. Responses were examined as a function of age, gender and AUDIT segmentation.

Table 14: Consequences of Alcohol Use

	Measure	Estimate
Alcohol – Consequences of Use	Percent who EVER felt their alcohol use had a harmful effect on your Friendships or Social Life	9.0% – All Respondents 15 + years 13.4% – Males 7.4% – Females <i>Most likely: 15-18 years (14.5%)</i> <i>Least likely: 65+ years (4.2%)</i> 25.5% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent who EVER felt their alcohol use had a harmful effect on your Physical Health	7.6% – All Respondents 15 + years 9.5% – Males 5.8% – Females <i>Most likely: 19-24 years (12.0%)</i> <i>Least likely: 65+ years (3.8%)</i> 22.4% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent who EVER felt their alcohol use had a harmful effect on your Home Life or Marriage	4.2% – All Respondents 15 + years 6.5% – Males 2.3% – Females <i>Most likely: 25-34 years (5.4%)</i> <i>Least likely: 19-24 years (2.2%)</i> 12.1% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent who EVER felt their alcohol use had a harmful effect on your Work, Studies or Employment Opportunities	4.2% – All Respondents 15 + years 5.9% – Males 2.6% – Females <i>Most likely: 19-24 years (8.7%)</i> <i>Least likely: 65+ years (0.9%)</i> 13.4% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent who EVER felt your alcohol use had a harmful effect on your Financial Position	4.1% – All Respondents 15 + years 6.6% – Males 1.8% – Females <i>Most likely: 19-24 years (8.7%)</i> <i>Least likely: 55+ years (1.9%)</i> 15.8% – Hazardous Drinkers

Table 14: Consequences of Alcohol Use (Continued)

	Measure	Estimate
Alcohol – Consequences of Use	Percent who EVER had Legal Problems because of your alcohol use	1.6% – All Respondents 15 + years 2.5% – Males 0.8% – Females Most likely: 15-18 years (3.9%) Least likely: 65+ (0.5%) 5.4% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent who EVER had difficulty learning things because of your alcohol use	1.0% – All Respondents 15 + years 1.4% – Males 0.6% – Females Most likely: 25-34 years (3.0%) Least likely: 15-24 years (0%) 1.2% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent who EVER had Housing Problems because of your alcohol use	0.7% – All Respondents 15 + years 1.3% – Males 0.2% – Females Most likely: 25-34 years (1.2%) Least likely: 15-24 & 65+ years (0%) 3.0% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent who had unplanned sexual intercourse while under the influence of alcohol in the past 12 months?	4.3% – All Respondents 15 + years Most likely: 19-24 years (21.7%) Least likely: 55+ years (0%) 20.6% – Hazardous Drinkers

- Overall, 15.1% of Nova Scotians age 15 years or older had experienced at least one of the negative impacts measured in the survey. Males were almost twice as likely as females to report any negative consequences associated with personal alcohol use (19.8% versus 10.9%). The percent reporting any consequences generally declined with age (19-24 years: 26.1% versus 65+ years: 7.9%), although there were few differences observed among those age 25 to 64 years (ranging 15% to 20%).
- The most common negative experiences associated with personal alcohol use concerned impacts for *friendships or social life* (9.0%) especially for youth (14.5%).
- *Harmful effects of alcohol on physical health* were noted by 7.6% of respondents with the highest proportion of negative physical health outcomes cited by 19-24 year olds (12.0%).
- Hazardous drinkers were at least four times more likely than Low-Risk drinkers to have experienced negative consequences as a result of their drinking in their social life (25.5% vs. 6.3%), their physical health (22.4% vs. 4.3%), their home life (12.1% vs. 2.2%), their work or studies (13.4% vs. 1.7%), their financial position (15.8% vs. 1.2%) and in related legal issues and problem (5.4% vs. 0.8%).

- About one in 25 respondents (4.3%) reported unplanned sexual intercourse under the influence of alcohol in the past 12 months with males having more than double the rate of unplanned sex than females (6.3% versus 2.7%). Young adults aged 19-24 had four times the rate of unplanned sex (21.7%) than those in the other age groups under 55 years ($\approx 5\%$). Likewise, Hazardous drinkers had almost 10 times the rates of unplanned sex than Low-Risk drinkers in the past 12 months (20.6% vs. 2.4%).

2.6 Harm from Other's use of Alcohol

Respondents were asked a number of questions concerning the negative effects associated with alcohol use by others in the past 12 months.

Table 15: Harm Associated with Alcohol Use by Others

	Measure	Estimate
Harm from other's use of alcohol	Percent who were insulted or humiliated by someone who had been drinking	19.3% – All Respondents 15 + years 18.2% – Males 20.3% – Females Most likely: 19-24 years (31.5%) Least likely: 65+ years (8.4%)
	Percent who had serious arguments or quarrels as a result of someone else's drinking	15.0% – All Respondents 15 + years 12.0% – Males 17.7% – Females Most likely: 19-24 years (30.4%) Least likely: 65+ years (3.7%)
	Percent who were verbally abused by someone who had been drinking	14.1% – All Respondents 15 + years 17.0% – Males 7.7% – Females Most likely: 19-24 years (30.4%) Least likely: 65+ years (4.7%)
	Percent who were pushed or shoved by someone who had been drinking	12.0% – All Respondents 15 + years 15.0% – Males 13.3% – Females Most likely: 19-24 years (33.7%) Least likely: 65+ years (2.8%)
	Percent who had family problems or marriage difficulties due to someone else's drinking	8.8% – All Respondents 15 + years 5.2% – Males 11.9% – Females Most likely: 19-24 years (13.0%) Least likely: 65+ years (5.1%)
	Percent who were hit or physically assaulted by someone who had been drinking	4.4% – All Respondents 15 + years 6.1% – Males 3.0% – Females Most likely: 19-24 years (12.0%) Least likely: 65+ years (1.4%)

- Almost one in every five of Nova Scotians (19.3%) was *insulted or humiliated* by someone who had been drinking in the past 12 months with 15% reporting *serious arguments or quarrels*.
- *Verbal abuse* was mentioned by about one in every 7 people 15 years or older (14.1%) with about one in 8 (12.0%) having been *pushed and shoved* by someone who had been drinking and 4.4% hit or *physically assaulted*.
- Young adults aged 19-24 years were most likely to experience physical harms due to someone else's drinking and about one-third had been exposed to verbal or some type of physical abuse (33.7%).

2.7 Alcohol Support Services

Respondents were asked a number of questions regarding their perceptions and recall of information about alcohol use and services to help with any alcohol-related problems.

Table 16: Support Services for Alcohol-Related Problems

	Measure	Estimate
Alcohol Support Services	Most popular first choices for information or advice about help with alcohol use	All Respondents 15 + years – Doctor: 35.7% – Alcoholics Anonymous: 24.9% – Internet: 16.7% – Addiction Services: 6.8% – Other (Various): 10.0%
	Percent who recalled of Seeing/ Hearing info about Over-drinking or How to Reduce Risks Associated with Drinking Alcohol	62.3% – All Respondents 15 + years 62.3% – Males 62.2% – Females Most likely: 15-18 years (80.3%) Least likely: 65+ years (53.5%)
	Where heard or saw – Most popular	All Respondents 15 + years – TV: 51.5% – Newspaper: 16.1% – Doctor's Office: 4.7% – Poster: 4.5% – Brochure/Pamphlet: 4.4% – Other (Various): 11.4%
	Percent who discussed their alcohol use in visits to family doctor/clinic (definitely and probably)	4.9% – All Respondents 15 + years 7.7% – Males 2.5% – Females Most likely: 55-64 years (7.1%) Least likely: 15-18 years (2.6%)

Table 16: Support Services for Alcohol-Related Problems (Continued)

	Measure	Estimate
Alcohol Support Services	Percent who used any services or received help to deal with alcohol use	0.7% – All Respondents 15 + years 1.3% – Males 0.2% – Females Most likely: 15-18 years (1.3%) Least likely: 25-34 years (0%)
	Percent who found services easy to use	0.7% – All Respondents 15 + years 100% of those who used services
	Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing to “Nova Scotia needs a toll free number that people can call if they or someone they care about have alcohol problems”	96.6% – All Respondents 15 + years

- Just over one-third (35.7%) of Nova Scotians favoured their physician as the first choice for advice and information about alcohol use. This choice was more popular with older adults with over half (53.5%) of seniors citing their doctor as their first choice as compared to only 10.5% of those age 15-18 years.
- One-quarter of respondents (24.9%) cited Alcoholics Anonymous as their first choice. This choice was more popular with adults over 25 years (24%-31%) compared to 10% to 13% for those 15 to 24 years of age.
- The younger respondents were more likely to cite the internet as their first choice for advice and information. Over half (52.2%) of young adults aged 19-24 years cited the internet compared to only 3.3% of seniors.
- Almost two-thirds those taking part in the survey (62.3%) recalled *seeing or hearing information about over-drinking or how to reduce risks associated with drinking alcohol*. Recall was slightly higher among youth age 15-18 years (80.3%).
- Television was cited as the primary source of exposure to information (51.5%) followed by 16.1% mentioning the newspaper.
- Fewer than one in 20 Nova Scotians (4.9%) have discussed their alcohol use during visits to their family doctor or to clinics.
- Only a small number (0.7% or 8 individuals) have *used any services or received help to deal with alcohol use*.
- Almost all Nova Scotians (96.6%) are supportive of a *toll-free number that people can call if they or someone they care about is having alcohol problems*.

2.8 Drinking & Driving

Respondents were asked a number of questions concerning their driving status and their personal experiences with drinking alcohol before driving a motor vehicle. Responses were examined by age, gender and AUDIT segmentation.

Table 17: Drinking & Driving

	Measure	Estimate
Drinking & Driving	Percent who have driven any type of motor vehicle in the past 12 months	86.1% – All Respondents 15 + years <i>Most likely: 45-54 years (93.4%)</i> <i>Least likely: 15-18 years (60.5%)</i> 90.3% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent who have a valid driver's license	87.1% – All Respondents 15 + years <i>Most likely: 45-54 years (96.0%)</i> <i>Least likely: 15-18 years (56.6%)</i> 88.5% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent who have been a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone who had TWO or more drinks of alcohol in the previous hour	11.9% – All Respondents 15 + years <i>16.3% – Males</i> <i>8.1% – Females</i> <i>Most likely: 19-24 years (27.2%)</i> <i>Least likely: 65+ years (4.7%)</i> 42.4% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent who have driven a motor vehicle within an hour of having TWO or more drinks	6.7% – All Respondents 15 + years <i>11.0% – Males</i> <i>2.8% – Females</i> <i>Most likely: 19-24 years (15.2%)</i> <i>Least likely: 45-54 years (3.5%)</i> 30.2% – Hazardous Drinkers

- The vast majority of the respondents has driven a motor vehicle in the past 12 months (86.1%) and has a valid driver's license (87.9%). Not surprisingly, these proportions were lower for youth, some of who are still under the legal age to drive a vehicle.
- In the past 12 months, 11.9% of respondents acknowledged that they had been a *passenger in a vehicle driven by someone who had two or more drinks of alcohol in the previous hour*. This percentage was six times higher for Hazardous drinkers than Low-Risk drinkers (42.4% vs. 4.1%).
- There were 6.7% of respondents that admitted to *driving within an hour of having two or more alcoholic drinks* and men were significantly more likely to have engaged in this activity than women (11.0% versus 2.8%). Hazardous drinkers were also more likely to have driven *within an hour of having two or more alcoholic drinks* (30.2% vs. 4.1%).

2.9 Opinions about Alcohol

Respondents were asked a variety of questions in order to understand their opinions about alcohol including factors that may influence their drinking, their perceptions of how alcohol may impact the community and their views on advertising and how alcohol is sold.

Table 18: Opinions about Alcohol - Costs

	Measure	Estimate
Opinions about Alcohol - Costs	Percent who would DECREASE their alcohol consumption if it cost more	11.8% – All Respondents 15 + years 15.2% – Past-Year Drinkers 21.2% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent who would INCREASE their alcohol consumption if it cost less	4.4% – All Respondents 15 + years 5.5% – Past-Year Drinkers 15.2% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent who believe that alcohol has a moderate or large impact on...	All Respondents 15 + years – Cost to Health Care: 88.6% – Law Enforcement Costs: 95% – Family Problems: 91.7% – Problems at Work: 72.5%

- According to self-reported impact, changes in alcohol pricing can be expected to have an impact on certain segments of the population that are more price-sensitive.
- For example, increasing the cost of alcohol would reduce consumption for 11.8% of all respondents and 5.2% of Past-Year drinkers said they would drink less. The largest impact was reported by the heaviest drinking segment of young adults of whom almost one-quarter (23.8%) indicated they would decrease alcohol consumption.
- In contrast, only one in 20 (5.5%) Past-Year drinkers noted they would increase their consumption if alcohol was cheaper. Again, younger drinkers (15-18: 20.5% and 19-24: 15.5%) were more inclined to report increased consumption if alcohol was cheaper.
- Among those classified as Hazardous drinkers on the AUDIT, over one in five (21.2%) indicated that they would decrease their drinking levels if alcohol cost more, while 15.2% reported that lower alcohol prices would increase their consumption of alcohol.
- Most Nova Scotians (88.6%) agreed that alcohol impacts the costs of the health care system and of law enforcement (95.0%). The majority of respondents also believed that alcohol use plays a role in family problems (91.7%) and problems at work such as missing time, injuries (72.5%).

Table 19: Opinions about Alcohol Public Policy

	Measure	Estimate
Opinions about Alcohol - Policy	Percent aware of the legal drinking age	86.8% – All Respondents 15+ years
	Percent who believe the legal drinking age in Nova Scotia should be	All Respondents 15+ years – Raised: 29.9% – Lowered: 6.6% – Same: 63.3%
	Percent who agree that ...	All Respondents 15+ years – Underage drinking is a problem: 69.3% – Public drunkenness is a problem: 32.9%
	Percent who support random police spot-checks to catch drinking drivers	97.5% – All Respondents 15+ years
	Percent who believe that efforts to prevent drunken customers from being served should be...	All Respondents 15+ years – Increased: 68.3% – Decreased: 1.3% – Remain the same: 29.8%

- Most Nova Scotians, especially those under 65 years of age, were aware that the legal drinking age is 19 years of age (86.8%). Almost two-thirds of respondents believed that this limit should remain the same although almost one in three (29.9%) supported an increase in the legal drinking age.
- Not surprisingly, younger respondents were less supportive of such a move (15-18 years: 6.6% & 19-24 years: 7.6%). Only 6.3% think that the drinking age should be lowered especially among underage youth (26.3%) and adults 19-24 years (17.4%).
- Over two-thirds (69.3%) agreed that underage drinking is a problem in the community and about one-third (32.9%) concurred that public drunkenness is a problem.
- Almost all (97.5%) Nova Scotians support random police spot-checks to catch drinking drivers with 89.5% *strongly in favour*.
- About two-thirds of Nova Scotians (68.3%) support host responsibility for licensed venues believing efforts to prevent drunken customers from being served should be increased.

Table 20: Opinions about Alcohol - Advertising

	Measure	Estimate
Opinions about Alcohol – Advertising	Percent who believe that the amount of advertising promoting alcohol in NS is	All Respondents 15+ years – Not Enough: 3.8% – Just Right: 63.5% – Too much: 30.7%
	Percent who believe that alcohol advertising has any effect on underage drinking has	All Respondents 15+ years – No influence: 13.7% – Some influence: 54.4% – Strong influence: 31.8%
	Percent who believe that alcohol ads should not be on	All Respondents 15+ years – TV: 44.0% – Radio: 44.3% – Print: 41.8% – Public Areas: 48.3%

- Almost two-thirds of the respondents (63.5%) indicated that the amount of advertising in Nova Scotia that promotes alcohol is *just right*.
- Younger adults were more likely than older adults to think the amount of advertising was acceptable (19-24 years: 83.7% versus 65+ years: 48.8%). Also, males (71.1%) were more accepting of the current level of advertising than females (56.9%).
- Older adults were more likely to believe that there was *too much* advertising promoting alcohol (65+ years: 44.7% versus 19-24 years 14.1%).
- Most individuals (86.2%) believed that alcohol advertising has at least some influence on underage drinking.
- Just under half (41.6%-48.3%) of Nova Scotians 15 years or older do not think the government should allow advertising for beer, wine and liquor on television, radio, print or public areas and there were no differences observed by age or by type of advertising. However, female respondents were more likely than males to agree to a ban for all mediums (Females: 50.6%-57.5% versus Males 31.6%-37.7%).

Table 21: Opinions about Alcohol - Selling

	Measure	Estimate
Opinions about Alcohol –Selling	Percent who believe that there should be more, less or no change in the number of restaurants that serve alcohol with meals	All Respondents 15+ years – More: 5.2% – Fewer: 14.4% – No Change: 80.4%
	Percent who believe that the hours alcohol can be sold in bars, restaurants should be increased, decreased remain the same.	All Respondents 15+ years – Increased: 1.8% – Decreased: 19.2% – Remain the Same: 78.5%
	Percent who believe that the liquor store hours should be increased, decreased remain the same.	All Respondents 15+ years – Increased: 3.3% – Decreased: 18.0% – Remain the Same: 78.2%

- Most Nova Scotians (80.4%) believe that the current number of restaurants that serve alcohol with meals is acceptable. Likewise, most think that the hours that alcohol is sold in bars and restaurants (78.5%) and is available at the liquor store (78.2%) should *remain the same*.
- Female respondents were more likely than males to endorse reducing the number of liquor-licensed establishments (18.3% versus 10.0%) and have more restrictions on the hours that alcohol is available in restaurants and bars (22.5% versus 15.0) as well as liquor stores (23.4% versus 11.8%).
- There were also differences in opinions across age groups with older respondents being more likely to want increased restrictions than younger respondents. Of interest, one-quarter of youth age 15-18 years believed that there should be fewer restaurants and bars that serve alcohol compared to 8.7% to 16.7% of adults. These differences were not found when considered only among Past-Year drinkers.

Table 22: Exposure to Alcohol Outside the Home

	Measure	Estimate
Opinions about Alcohol – Outside the home	Percent who were at a location other than home where alcohol was being served (in past 30 days)	69.9% – All Respondents 15+ years 75.7% – Past-Year Drinkers 85.5% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent who consumed at a location other than home where alcohol was being served (in past 30 days)	64.9% – All Respondents 15+ years 68.5% – Past-Year Drinkers 85.5% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Mean number of days at a location other than a home where alcohol was being served (in past 30 days)	3.0 Days – All Respondents 15+ years 3.3 Days – Past-Year Drinkers 5.0 Days – Hazardous Drinkers

Table 22: Exposure to Alcohol Outside the Home (Continued)

	Measure	Estimate
Opinions about Alcohol – Outside the home	Mean number of days consumed alcohol when in a social situation with alcohol (in past 30 days)	1.2 Days – All Respondents 15+ years 1.4 Days – Past-Year Drinkers 3.0 Days – Hazardous Drinkers

- In the past 30 days, over two-thirds of respondents (68.9%) were *at locations other than a home where alcohol was being served* with over half (58.4%) being in places that served alcohol on six days or less last month. However, one in every ten Nova Scotians reported being in a place that served alcohol seven or more days in the 30 days preceding the survey.
- Almost two-thirds of respondents (64.9%) consumed alcohol when they were in social situation where alcohol was present in the past 30 days.
- The majority of Hazardous drinkers (85.5%) noted that they were exposed to alcohol outside home during the past 30 days, with the same proportion having consumed in those social places where alcohol was served.

Table 23: Opinions About Alcohol – Purchasing

	Measure	Estimate
Opinions about Alcohol – Purchasing	Percent that EVER purchased alcohol	85.2% – All Respondents 15+ years 90.5% – All Adults 19+ years 6.6% – Youths 15-18 years
	Percent that purchased alcohol in the past 30 days	44.8% – All Respondents 15+ years 47.5% – All Adults 19+ years 3.9% – Youths 15-18 years
	Most common places to purchase alcohol ever	All Respondents 15+ years – <i>NSLC outlets: 77.6%</i> – <i>Cold Beer Store: 14.6%</i> – <i>Specialty Wine Shop: 9.8%</i> – <i>Convenience Stores/Gas Station: 9.3%</i>
	Most common places to purchase alcohol in the past 30 days	All Respondents 15+ years – <i>NSLC outlets: 43.9%</i> – <i>Cold Beer Store: 2.8%</i> – <i>Specialty Wine Shop: 2.4%</i> – <i>Convenience Stores/Gas Station: 2.1%</i>

- Most respondents (85.2%) have purchased alcohol at some point in their lives with almost half purchasing in the last 30 days (44.8%).

- Among those under the legal drinking age (15-18 years) 6.6% had ever purchased alcohol at a licensed outlet and 3.9% had done so within the last 30 days.
- NSLC outlets are the predominant location for alcohol purchases with 77.6% having ever purchased alcohol at these locations and 43.9% having purchased within the past 30 days.
- Over half of males in Nova Scotia have bought alcohol in a NSLC outlet in the past 30 days compared to a third of females (35.0%).
- 14.6% of respondents had purchased alcohol at a cold beer store with 2.8% in the last 30 days. Cold beer stores were used most often by young adults in the last 30 days with 7.6% of 19-24 year olds buying alcohol there compared to 0.5% to 5.2% of those 25 years and older.
- About one in 10 respondents have purchased alcohol (9.8%) at a specialty wine shop with 2.4% frequenting this type of location in the last 30 days.
- Several gender differences were apparent in purchasing habits. Overall, more males (54.8%) have purchased alcohol in the past 30 days than females (35.9%). The cold beer stores were used by a higher proportion of males than females both on the whole (20.2% versus 9.7%) and in the past 30 days (4.1% versus 1.7%). Males were also twice as likely to have ever bought alcohol at convenience stores or gas stations as females (12.5% versus 6.6%) and almost 3 times as likely in the last 30 days (3.2% versus 1.1%). Comparatively females were more likely to buy their alcohol at specialty wine shops (ever: 11.1% versus 8.2%; last 30 days: 2.8% versus 2.0%).
- Underage youth only mentioned NSLC, drive thrus and the cold beer store.

Table 24: Opinions About Alcohol – Prices & Availability

	Measure	Estimate
Opinions about Alcohol – Prices & Availability	Percent who think it is reasonable to pay more for beverages with more alcohol	38.8% – All Respondents 15+ years 30.3% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent agreeing that there would be fewer problems with alcohol if it was harder to get	51.0% – All Respondents 15+ years 41.3% – Hazardous Drinkers
	Percent agreeing that heavy drinkers will drink just a much regardless of how hard it is to get a drink	94.4% – All Respondents 15+ years 91.5% – Hazardous Drinkers

- About a third of Nova Scotians believed that beverages with more alcohol should cost more. Over half of youth aged 15-18 (51.3%) and close to half of seniors (44.7%) were in agreement compared to around a third of adults 19 to 64 years (30.9%-38.3%).

Females were also more likely than males to believe that it is reasonable to pay more for beverages with more alcohol (45.2% versus 31.6%).

- Nova Scotians were divided when asked if they agreed that there would be fewer problems with alcohol if it was harder to get. About a third strongly agreed (35.7%) with this statement and another third strongly disagreed (31.2%). Female respondents were more likely to be in agreement than males (56.9% versus 44.3%) as were seniors 65 years and older (62.8%) and youth 15-18 years (59.2% versus 40.0%-50.3%).
- Conversely, Nova Scotians (94.4%) were in agreement with the statement heavy drinkers will drink just as much regardless of how hard it is to get a drink with no variations across age or gender.

Table 25: Opinions About Alcohol – Allocation of Revenue

	Measure	Estimate
Opinions about Alcohol – Allocation of Revenue	Percent who agree some money from alcohol sales should be given to programs/services to prevent problems from alcohol use	95.7% – All Respondents 15+ years
	Most common programs/services	All Respondents 15+ years – <i>Help youths with alcohol problems: 90.5%</i> – <i>Help adults with alcohol problems: 89.0%</i> – <i>Prevent/reduce underage drinking: 84.9%</i> – <i>Prevent adult alcohol programs: 83.9%</i> – <i>Toll-free help line: 82.3%</i>

- Almost all respondents (95.7%) agreed that some money from alcohol sales should go towards programs and services to prevent problems from the use of alcohol.
- Most respondents believed that this money should be spent on programs that help youths (90.5%) and adults (89.0%) with alcohol problems as well use preventative programs that prevent or reduce underage drinking (84.9%) and problem drinking in adults (83.9%).
- Most (82.3%) also thought the money could go towards a toll-free help line for individuals and families affected by alcohol. Respondents (38.8%) were least likely to support a night shelter for homeless where they don't have to give up alcohol/drugs.

2.10 Pregnancy and Substance Use

Female respondents were asked a number of questions concerning alcohol use and pregnancy.

Table 26: Pregnancy & Substance Use (Females 15+ years Only)

	Measure	Estimate
Pregnancy and Substance use	Percent who recalled seeing information about the effects of alcohol use of a fetus during pregnancy in last 12 months	35.8% – All Females Only 50.0% – 15-18 years 37.4% – 19-44 years 32.9% – 45 years +
	Percent pregnant in past 12 months	3.8% – All Females Only 2.6% – 15-18 years 9.1% – 19-45 years
	Percent who drank alcohol while pregnant	0.6% – All Females Only 16.7% – Pregnant in past 12 months

- In the past 12 months, just over one-third of female respondents (35.8%) remembered seeing *information about the effects of alcohol use on a developing baby during pregnancy* with the highest rate in youth 15-18 years old (50.0%).
- There were 3.8% of females surveyed (n=24) that were pregnant in the past 12 months and the majority of these women (83.4%; n=20) did not drink alcohol during their pregnancy. However, 16.7% (n=4) of those women who were pregnant reported they had consumed alcohol while pregnant.

2.11 Respondent Profile

Respondents were asked a number of questions regarding their general health, tobacco use and demographic information in order to have a profile of respondents overall as well as by drinking status and AUDIT segmentation.

Table 27: Current Health Status

	Measure	Estimate
Current Health Status	Percent whose general health is good to excellent	90.3% – All Respondents 15+ years
	Percent whose mental health is good to excellent	96.7% – All Respondents 15+ years

- Nine out of 10 respondents (90.3%) reported their health to be good, very good or excellent and almost all respondents (96.7%) reported their mental health to be good to excellent.

Table 28: Tobacco Use

	Measure	Estimate
Tobacco Use	Percent who have smoked 100 cigarettes in their lives	50.4% – All Respondents 15+ years
	Frequency of smoking	All Respondents 15+ years – Daily: 14.8% – Occasionally: 5.4% Hazardous Drinkers – Daily: 30.3% – Occasionally: 9.1%
	Mean age at onset smoking	15.4 years – All Respondents 15+ years 14.3 years – Hazardous Drinkers 15.5 years – Low-Risk Drinkers

- While half of respondents (50.4%) have smoked at least 100 cigarettes at some time in their lives, one-fifth reported currently smoking (20.2%) with 14.8% smoking on a daily basis and 5.4% only smoking on occasion.
- Almost one-third of those classified as Hazardous drinkers by the AUDIT smoked on a daily basis compared to one-eighth of non-drinkers (16.3%) and Low-Risk drinkers (11.9%).
- Respondents started smoking cigarettes, on average, at 15.4 years of age. Hazardous drinkers started smoking on average at least one year earlier (14.3 years) than Low-Risk drinkers (15.5 years) and Non-drinkers (15.9 years).

Table 29: Demographic Profile of All Respondents

	Measure	Estimate
Demographic Profile	Education	All Respondents 15+ years – Less than High School: 25.8% – High School: 16.0% – Some Community College: 5.6% – Completed Community College: 21.0% – Some University: 9.8% – Complete University: 16.4% – Post-graduate: 5.3%
	Marital Status	All Respondents 15+ years – Single: 20.0% – Common-law: 9.2% – Married: 56.5% – Separated: 1.8% – Divorced: 4.8% – Widowed: 7.7%

Table 29: Demographic Profile of All Respondents (Continued)

	Measure	Estimate
Demographic Profile	Area of Residence	All Respondents 15+ years – Urban: 48.2% – Rural: 51.8%
	Work Status	All Respondents 15+ years – Full-time: 47.9% – Part-time: 9.6% – Unemployed: 2.9% – Student: 8.8% – Homemaker: 4.9% – Retired: 23.6% – Disabled: 2.3%
	Household Income	All Respondents 15+ years – <\$20,000: 8.2% – \$20,000-39,999: 19.3% – \$40,000-59,999: 20.0% – \$60,000-79,999: 13.1% – \$80,000-99,999: 9.7% – \$100,000: 11.0%
	Household Composition	All Respondents 15+ years – One Adult, no children: 13.2% – Two Adults, no children <19 years: 37.5% – Three+ Adults, no children <19 years: 12.4% – One Adult with children <19 years: 3.0% – Two Adults with children <19 years: 26.0% – Three+ Adults with children <19 years: 7.9%

- While just over half of the respondents (58.1%) had at least some education past high school, a quarter (25.8%) had less than a high school education.
- Over half of the respondents (56.5%) were *married* and another 9.2% *living with a partner*. One-fifth (20.0%) were *single, never married*.
- Almost half of the individuals surveyed (47.9%) were working full-time with another quarter (23.6%) currently retired. One in 10 were working part-time (9.6%) and 8.8% were students.
- Household income levels varied with approximately half of the respondents having a household income of less than \$60,000 per year (47.5%). About one in 10 (11.0%) reported annual household incomes of \$100,000 or more.
- Respondents were equally divided between living in rural (51.8%) and urban (48.2%) areas of the province.

- Almost two-thirds of the respondents do not have children under 18 years of age living in their household (63.1%). Among the remaining 37.9% with children in the household, the vast majority consist of traditional two-parent families (70.4% of those with children, 26.0% overall) with approximately 17.9% residing in single-parent households (29.6% of those with resident children).

Table 30: Demographic Comparison of Hazardous and Low-Risk Drinkers

	Measure	Estimate (Hazardous vs. Low-Risk)
Demographic Comparison of Hazardous & Low-Risk Drinkers	Marital Status	Single: 36.4% vs. 16.4% Common-law: 17.0% vs. 9.2% Married: 35.2% vs. 63.4% Separated: 6.1% vs. 0.9%
	Work Status	Full-time: 61.8% vs. 54.0% Student: 13.3% vs. 7.2% Homemaker: 0% vs. 4.0% Retired: 9.1% vs. 20.6%
	Household Composition	Two Adults, no children <19 years: 26.7% vs. 38.8% Three+ Adults, no children <19 years: 20.0% vs. 11.2% Three+ Adults with children <19 years: 13.3% vs. 7.8%

- As compared to Low-Risk drinkers, Hazardous drinkers were more likely to be *single* (Hazardous: 36.4% versus Low-Risk: 16.4%), living *common-law* (Hazardous: 17.0% versus Low-Risk: 9.2%) or *separated* (Hazardous: 6.1% versus Low-Risk: 0.9%), but less likely to be in formal *married* relationships (Hazardous: 35.2% vs. Low-Risk: 63.4%).
- Of those scoring at the risk levels for hazardous drinking on the AUDIT, almost two-thirds (61.8%) were working on a full-time basis (Low-Risk: 54.0%) and about one in eight (13.3%) were comprised of *student* respondents (Low-Risk: 7.2%). In contrast, no homemaker was identified as a Hazardous drinker in the current study, while retirees represented only 9.1% of Hazardous drinkers, as compared to 20.6% of Low-Risk drinkers.
- In terms of household composition, there were also some differences observed between the two AUDIT segments. Hazardous drinkers were more inclined to live in households with three or more adults (Hazardous: 33.3% versus: Low-Risk: 19.0%), while Low-Risk drinkers tended to live in two-adult households without children under 19 years old (Hazardous: 26.7% versus: Low-Risk: 38.8%).

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