

Women and Drink- Driving

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Table of contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Tables.....	5
Figures.....	6
Background	7
Literature review.....	7
Drinking behaviour.....	7
Patterns of drinking and driving	8
Strategies to combat drink-driving	10
Method	11
Statistics	13
Attitudes to drink driving	13
Driving behaviour.....	16
Involvement in accidents	19
Media reporting of women and drink-driving	30
Mothers as drink drivers	31
Older women	35
Results from focus group and individual interviews.....	35
Why young women don't drink and drive	37
Conclusion.....	39
Recommendations	40
Appendix: Information Sheet, Consent Form and Interview Check List.....	41
References	44
Media reports and articles.....	47

Tables

Table 1: Not much chance of an accident when driving after drinking if careful: % agreeing/strongly agreeing	14
Table 2: Legal blood alcohol limit should be lower: % agreeing/strongly agreeing	14
Table 3: The risk of being caught drinking and driving is small: % agreeing/strongly agreeing	15
Table 4: Penalties for drink-driving not very severe even if caught: % agreeing/strongly agreeing ...	15
Table 5: Most people who get caught drink-driving are just unlucky: % agreeing/strongly agreeing .	15
Table 6: It is difficult to drink less than the group when drinking with friends: % agreeing/strongly agree	16
Table 7: It is difficult in social occasions to keep track of what you are drinking: % agreeing/strongly agreeing	16
Table 8: Driving while slightly intoxicated in the past 12 months	17
Table 9: Number of alcohol/drug affected drivers involved in fatal crashes	19
Table 10: Number of alcohol/drug affected drivers involved in serious injury crashes	21
Table 11: Number of Alcohol/drug affected drivers involved in minor injury crashes	21
Table 12: Number of deaths & injuries in alcohol related crashes by the at-fault driver 2002-2012 ..	23
Table 13: Effectiveness of drink-driving laws at reducing road toll: % agreeing/strongly agreeing.....	25
Table 14: Breath alcohol level over 400 mcgs per litre of breath.....	29
Table 15: Media reporting of mothers caught driving with excess blood alcohol and children in the vehicle	32

Figures

Figure 1: Have driven while feeling under the influence of alcohol at least once in the past 12 months (among total population).....	18
Figure 2: Have driven while feeling under the influence of alcohol at least once in the past 12 months (among past-year drinkers).....	19
Figure 3: Drink drivers involved in fatal crashes 2002-2012.....	20
Figure 4: Drink drivers involved in serious injury crashes 2002-2012	22
Figure 5: Drink drivers involved in minor injury crashes 2002-2012	23
Figure 6: Deaths and injuries in alcohol related crashes by at-fault driver, 2002-2012.....	24
Figure 7: Total deaths and injuries in alcohol related crashes by at-fault drivers, 2002-2012.....	24
Figure 8: Driving with excess blood alcohol content 2002-2012, under 25 years.....	25
Figure 9: Driving with excess blood alcohol content 2002-2012, 25-64 years	26
Figure 10: Drove with excess breath alcohol 3rd or subsequent offence 2002-2012, under 25 years	27
Figure 11: Drove with excess breath alcohol 3rd or subsequent offence 2002-2012, 25-64 years	27
Figure 12: Driving with excess blood alcohol content 2002-2012, 65 years and over	28
Figure 13: Convictions for driving with excess breath alcohol 3rd or subsequent offence 2002-2012, 65 years and over.....	29

Background

Women and drink-driving has been a somewhat contentious topic for some time, given the continuing prevalence of the double standard around women and drinking (Massey 2006). Little is known, however, about women's drink-driving attitudes and behaviours in New Zealand, or about how these may or may not have changed over time. A scan of the relevant literature, from 2000 onwards, found that there was limited information on drink-driving disaggregated by gender, especially in the New Zealand situation. There is some drink-driving research providing evidence on the way in which women drink (or not) and their perceptions of the legal limit (Kypri & Stephenson 2005, Gulliver & Begg 2004); the influence of gender with regard to being a passenger in a car and unsafe behaviour (Williams et al 2007); and persistent drink-driving, using results from the Dunedin longitudinal study (Begg et al 2003). As the New Zealand population ages, the behaviour of older women drivers will become an important area for policy, but at present this area is under-researched.

The aim of the current research was to explore the attitudes and behaviours around women and drink-driving, and ascertain the extent to which these had changed over the past decade. The next section of the report is the literature review, which provides the broad context for the research. This is followed by the methods, the results, and the conclusion.

Literature review

As indicated above, there was a paucity of literature available from the past decade that was either New Zealand specific or had a gender analysis. Similar problems existed with the international literature. For this reason, the New Zealand and international literature are considered together under thematic areas when presenting the results of the literature review.

Drinking behaviour

In their 104 nation study, Wilsnack et al (2009) indicated that New Zealand was one of only four countries (the others being Finland, Ireland, and Norway) where there was a ratio of 1 or less between males and females who are drinkers. Similarly, in their 14 country study, Room et al (2012) found that in New Zealand, although more males than females were drinkers, there was a comparatively high ratio of female drinkers to male drinkers. The NZMA (2011) reports that while New Zealand has a relatively high binge drinking culture, those involved are significantly more likely to be young men of lower socio-economic status than other demographics. However, Connor (2008) suggests that when it comes to hazardous drinking, a practice that is increasing, there is no significant difference between female and male 12-17 year olds. Younger New Zealand men are more likely to have quit drinking, while heavy episodic drinking declines with age among New Zealand women (Wilsnack et al 2009); by mid age women have definitely tempered their drinking (Valentine et al 2010). This accords with research by Hutton (2011), which found that for most young women, excessive drinking was a phase that they 'grew out of'. Valentine et al (2010) observed that while intergenerational patterns of drinking behaviour are similar, young people now consume significantly more than their parents did, and there is more peer pressure to drink and get drunk than in the past.

Patterns of drinking and driving

Patterns of drinking and driving behaviour have been measured in 14 countries, including New Zealand, with data collected in 2007 by postal survey. The age range of respondents was 18-70 years, with 820 men and 1055 women in the New Zealand sample (Room et al 2012). New Zealand was identified as one of the countries in the study where current drinkers were in a strong majority. It was found that night time road crashes, especially in the weekend, were more likely to involve alcohol. In a UK study, Foster et al (2010) found that both women and men drink at home because it is safer than drink-driving. This is part of a growing trend supported by the New Zealand Travel Survey (McSaveney & Povey 2010), which found that over 70% of all drinking is now done in private homes, either in respondents' own homes or someone else's, compared with 66% 10 years earlier. They suggest that changes in modes of transport (people being less likely to drink and then drive their car) are likely to reflect the smaller portion of people now driving after drinking.

An earlier report by Bailey and Bailey (1997) indicated that in the 1990s, women drivers became increasingly involved in drink-driving accidents in New Zealand, although less frequently than male drivers. Young women did less drinking and driving at excessive speeds than their male counterparts, but did so more than older women. The rationale for this changing picture was highlighted by Wylie's (1995) comment that one of the likely reasons for the increased involvement of young women in drink-driving incidents was the increase in alcohol consumption by this particular demographic.

Boden and Fergusson (2011) found that morbidity and mortality due to adolescent alcohol-impaired driving is greater than would be predicted by an additive effect of alcohol-impaired driving and adolescent driving ability and skill. Their research, as part of the Christchurch longitudinal study, found a statistically significant effect of alcohol increasing driving accidents for adolescents. As they did not include any gender analysis, it is not possible to tell whether this is more likely to affect male rather than female drivers, or whether there is no gender difference. However, Connor (2008) suggests that motor vehicle crashes involving young drink drivers have increased markedly, and this increase has been more evident for young women.

In a review of the New Zealand literature and statistics looking at alcohol-related harm to others, Connor and Casswell (2012) found that the prevalence of self-reported harm from others' drinking was higher than that from their own, particularly for women and young people, and included unintentional injury from traffic accidents. In MacLennan's 2007 Community Sentiment Survey in seven local government areas (n=1236), the role of alcohol in community problems featured prominently. Alcohol related traffic accidents (26%) and dangerous driving (39%) were seen as a major problem. An even higher percentage of those surveyed saw alcohol playing a major role in traffic accidents (57%) and dangerous driving (62%). Connor and Casswell (2012) also estimate that around 40% of those injured in alcohol-related traffic crashes are not the drinker responsible.

In a web survey of undergraduates at five New Zealand universities (Krypri et al 2009), either drink-driving themselves or being the passenger in a car driven by a drink-driver in the previous four weeks was reported by 9% of young women and 11% of young men. The authors cite research showing that when New Zealand lowered the legal age for drinking from 20 to 18, this had adverse effects on traffic crash incidents for 18 and 19 year olds. While there is no gender breakdown, it is

suggested that for this demographic in New Zealand, the difference between men and women (as reported above) is not as significant as it is in other countries.

Gulliver and Begg (2004) used the results from the 21 year olds' interviews in the Dunedin longitudinal study to explore whether there was a relationship between previous experience (at ages 15 and/or 18 years) of travelling with a drink-impaired adult, and driving with a drink-impaired youth. They reported that there was: for young women, it was related to concurrently travelling with an impaired youth, whereas for young men, it was related to subsequently travelling with an impaired youth. They postulate that young people who place themselves in danger by driving with drink-impaired drivers are perhaps already desensitised to the risks of driving while impaired.

Williams et al (2007), reviewing evidence on the effects that carrying passengers can have on teenage drivers, suggest that carrying other teenage passengers increases the risk for young male drivers, but does not have the same effect on young female drivers. Furthermore, there is a differential effect when the driver is a young male and the passenger/s are female, with less risky behaviour occurring, regardless of whether they are older or of a similar age to the young male driver. The reasons for this difference are not known.

The modelling of drinking and driving behaviour was also related to the amount young women thought they could drink and still drive safely. Since the Gulliver and Begg (2004) report, the legal drink-driving limit for under 20 year olds has been reduced to zero, so it will be interesting to see whether this effect continues to hold. Using the same longitudinal study data base, Morrison et al (2002) reported that there was a strong correlation between alcohol and drug dependency at age 21 years and being involved in a drink-driving incident at age 26 years. Over three-quarters (77.4%) of those in the sample who completed the road safety interviews reported a critical incident. Of the 355 women in this category, 17 (4.8%) were involved in a drink-driver incident, compared with 70 (17.7%) of the men, with 338 women also reporting a sober driver incident, ie one involving a driver below the legal limit. Furthermore, passengers in cars driven by drink-drivers were usually under the influence of alcohol too, thus impairing their judgement, although there was no gender analysis for this aspect. Begg et al (2003), analysing the Dunedin data, indicated that of the 459 young women who took part in the road safety interviews, only six (1%) reported unsafe drink-driving, while a further 61 (13%) reported drink-driving.

A study of students aged under 30 years at Otago University (Kypri & Stephenson 2005) showed that over the previous four weeks, 3% of the women and 9% of the men who answered the survey had drink-driven, while 7% of the women and 11% of the men had ridden in cars that were driven by drink-impaired drivers. In this study, women were more likely than men to over-estimate how much a person could drink and still legally drive. The authors also quote a study of drink-driving among students from 23 countries, which found a 12 month prevalence rate of 7% for women drink-drivers.

Two international studies came to similar conclusions. An Australian study found that female students, mean age 22.5 years, were less likely to drink and drive than their male counterparts (Fernan and Palk 2012). A US study in two west coast universities (La Brie et al 2011) argued that male university students are at a greater risk of experiencing negative drinking outcomes that are public, harmful to others and have legal consequences; however, there is little gender difference for

alcohol-related problems that are relatively private or only involve harm to self. Overall, 84% of their respondents strongly disapproved of driving after drinking, but 20% did so anyway.

Internationally, McMurrin et al (2011) undertook a systematic review of studies around interventions for women and alcohol-related offending. They found that in older age, there was a gradual increase in women's drink-driving offences and a decrease in men's, possibly predicting recidivist behaviour for women. However, in a survey carried out in New Zealand by Meiklejohn et al (2012), only 1% of older people reported drink-driving as an issue. As people got older, they were less likely to have problems and related troubles as a result of drinking.

Self-regulation as a concept has primarily been explored as a precursor to driving cessation among older people, for example with behaviours such as not driving at night or when there are adverse conditions (eg in rush hours or when it is very wet). Gwyther and Holland (2012) explored whether this type of behaviour also occurs with other drivers. They found that older and younger women drivers were significantly more likely to self-regulate (a risk reduction strategy) as a result of anxiety. Rather than self-regulation increasing with age, they postulate that it is a positive coping strategy across the age span (Gwyther and Holland 2012), and thus may be a factor that contributes to lower involvement in drink-driving. As Valentine et al (2010) indicate, women of all ages who drink to excess in public face much more opprobrium than men, as losing self-control is considered unacceptable for women drinkers of any age (Emslie et al 2011). In early mid-life (35-50 years), more consideration is given to not drinking because of life responsibilities, thus reinforcing the general acceptability of not drinking and driving. Women also presented themselves as in control of their drinking, unlike men at this life stage (ibid).

Strategies to combat drink-driving

Opinions differ as to what strategies might work best to combat drink-driving. Meiklejohn et al (2012) suggest that population strategies are more useful in decreasing the incidence of hazardous drinking, given that it occurs across the board, whereas Begg et al (2003) point out that because of the different characteristics of drink drivers, different kinds of strategies need to be employed to deal with them.

Based on data from a nationwide longitudinal US study, Maldonado et al (2011) suggest that drink-driving campaigns are needed for young prospective drivers, before they reach 15 years of age. This timing would address the known risk factor of parental alcohol consumption for driving under the influence for both young men and young women, as well as attempting to deal with peer influence that comes into play if parents do not drink.

There are some reviews of strategies used to combat drink-driving. Brown and Gregg (2012) discuss the ways in which current campaigns do not work with young women drinkers. They suggest that such campaigns may do the opposite to what was intended and glamorise binge drinking for young women, as alcohol messages tend to emphasise only the negative aspects, without acknowledging the pleasurable aspects. The authors also thought that some anti-drinking campaigns are aimed at 'placating' parents, rather than dealing with the relevant issues for young drivers. In New Zealand, Hutton (2011) points out that binge-drinking students already felt that they exercised control over their drinking, and this affected how they regarded a campaign. She also discussed the concept of

‘determined drunkenness’ and a notion of pleasure that makes young women resistant to seeing their alcohol consumption as concerning.

La Brie et al (2011) suggested that education campaigns needed to aim at reducing alcohol-related expectations and perceptions of others’ favourable attitudes toward drink-driving. However, there was no gender analysis of what might work for young women in particular.

McMurran et al (2011) carried out a systematic review of studies around interventions for women and alcohol-related offending. They found that appearing before victim impact panels had a negative effect for older women drink-driving offenders, and hypothesised that feelings of guilt led these women to further drinking. They found no difference in the effects such programmes had on male or female adolescent drink drivers, and suggested programmes for them could be the same, with the rider that participants needed reinforcement/follow-up, as the effects dissipated after six months. The researchers concluded (920) that older women are not generally anti-social with psychosocial problems, so inducing negative emotions in a generally pro-social woman who drinks to cope with personal problems increases the very states that precipitate drinking in the first place. They suggest that attention to the psychosocial problems that lead women to drink heavily and then drive may be one model of change that might work for this group of older women drink-drivers. However, the conclusions are not necessarily generalisable to the New Zealand situation.

Research on the impact of warning labels is equivocal. Scholes-Balog et al (2012) found that alcohol warning labels did not change adolescent drink-driving behaviour, but might increase adolescent awareness of the issue. On the other hand, Tarn and Greenfield (2010) found that women are more likely than men to take notice of warning labels. They are also more likely to take action to deter another’s drink-driving, with the authors suggesting that women are more affected by authoritative health messages which ‘legitimate’ them to intervene. More research is needed to ascertain the reasons for this difference.

A New Zealand study (Renner et al 2013) looked at the effectiveness of self-designed text-based alcohol interventions for young people in terms of harm reduction. There were 24 participants, aged 18-34 years, who had experienced at least one unintended consequence from drinking in the previous three months, and 56 messages were generated. The authors conclude that further research into this technique would be worthwhile. Of the 24 participants involved in the study, three indicated that they had driven a car once in the previous three months when they knew that they had had too much to drink to drive safely (personal correspondence).

Method

As stated in the project proposal, this research was undertaken in two stages. The first stage was based on the use of existing materials covering the past 10 years.¹ This included available statistics,²

¹ Information prior to this period has been well canvassed by Bailey and Bailey in their work.

² Writing in the *NZ Science Monthly* (1996), Bailey noted: ‘much of the data on drinking and driving is of poor quality and can be misleading’. He therefore combined data from ten different data sets to provide triangulation and a more complete view of fatal road accidents (Bailey 1996).

a literature review, and a media scan, with an emphasis on younger women (those aged under 30 years) and older women (those aged 65 years and over).

Time series data on women and drink-driving were sourced from the New Zealand Police (Statistics section), and the Ministry of Transport (Financial, Economic and Statistical Analysis section). The MOT ran gender and age breakdowns of their published 'Fact Sheet' information, as well as providing a gender and age breakdown for the questions dealing with attitudes to drink-driving in their 'attitudes to road safety survey'.

Available literature from the past decade (see literature review above) was sourced through Google Scholar, with a focus on New Zealand material and material considering younger and older women. Besides reviewing nationally available literature, relevant international literature was also reviewed for features that were applicable in the New Zealand situation. Evaluations of appropriate drink-driving initiatives were also canvassed. It should be noted that there was a general paucity of relevant material, particularly research that reported a gender analysis.

A scan of the news media in New Zealand for the past decade identified the themes and headlines under which the topic of women and drink-driving was reported, as well as analysing the language used and assumptions underlying the reporting. In the media scan, a third group of women was specifically looked at: mothers who were caught drink-driving with children in the car at the time. There is no actual offence that combines these two aspects, unless the child/ren is/are not restrained, but it is an area of particular opprobrium.

The second stage of the research provided an opportunity to include the opinions of younger and older New Zealand women, so as to ascertain whether their views accorded with those identified in the literature reviewed, informed by the statistics. Focus group and individual interviews with younger women and older women explored their attitudes to drink-driving, why they do or do not drink and drive, whether they have been involved with any hazardous driving situations, and the factors that influence their behaviour.³

Recent research suggests that those aged under 25 years are aware of the consequences of their actions, but this awareness can be over-ridden because of the salience of competing factors, eg pleasure in the moment overrides known negative consequences. The information collected provides some possible directions for future drink-driving campaigns targeted at young women. The results could also be used to inform campaigns around safe driving by organisations such as AA and Age Concern.

The initial review of material indicated what is known already and what is happening now, and built up a picture of trends and understandings around these. The interview schedule for the second stage was based around the information from the first stage of the research. The second stage of the research provides further information to give a deeper understanding of what is occurring in terms of women and drink-driving.

³ See Appendix for copy of interview checklist, information sheet and consent form.

Prior to undertaking the interviews, the researchers obtained ethical approval from the VUW Human Ethics Committee, required for any research involving human subjects. Using a snowball technique, a purposive sample was recruited, starting from a range of different networks to ensure that there was a mix of participants, including those from rural and urban backgrounds, with varying levels of education, occupations and socio-economic status. The inclusion criterion was age (under 30 or over 65); the exclusion criteria were obvious cognitive impairment, a poorly controlled mental health problem, and inability to speak English. While originally it was expected that up to 45 women might be interviewed, data collection ceased after 25 women had been interviewed. At this stage saturation had been reached, ie no new information was being generated from additional participants. Furthermore, the intention was not to obtain 'quantitative quality', as this would have required a completely different approach. Those included were 14 women aged between 65 and 76 years and 11 women aged between 19 and 29 years. They were interviewed either individually or as part of a focus group. No demographic data other than age group were collected.

Statistics

The data provided below were drawn from three sources: data routinely collected (though not reported in this form) by the Ministry of Transport (MoT), the New Zealand Alcohol and Drug Use Survey, and relevant New Zealand Police statistics. We consider these sources to be the most reliable and complete, and these data to be the best available. As with any data set, there is the possibility of error due to miscoding, missing data, or data corruption. The MoT and NZ Police provided publicly unavailable data which were further disaggregated at the authors' request. The data analyses are descriptive, as it was thought that inferential statistics would add little to this account (eg with very large sample sizes, a small change may be found 'statistically significant' – a measure which is in itself an arbitrary cutoff – without having any real-world significance). The data presented below pertains to: attitudes; drinking behaviour; driving behaviour; breath alcohol; convictions; injury crash data; and fatalities, by age, gender, and longitudinally.

Attitudes to drink driving

The annual Ministry of Transport (2013c) survey of 'Public attitudes to road safety' confirms that speed and alcohol are universally recognised as significant road safety problems. Since the early 2000s, there has been an increasing trend reflecting improving attitudes towards safe driving and the consumption of alcohol, although 8% of those surveyed in the latest round still do not recognise the risks associated with drink-driving (ibid).

Table 1: Not much chance of an accident when driving after drinking if careful: % agreeing/strongly agreeing

Year	% Aged under 30		% Aged 30-64		% Aged 65 & over		Total %
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
2001	6	9	2	9	10	19	7
2006	8	12	6	8	8	12	8
2012	8	11	4	10	9	15	8

MOT Statistics

Overall there was little change between 2001 and 2012, with fewer than 10% of those interviewed agreeing or strongly agreeing that driving carefully after drinking meant there was less likelihood of an accident. Women of all ages appeared to have a more realistic appraisal of the dangers of drink-driving than their male contemporaries, in terms of recognising that drink-driving is hazardous (Ministry of Transport 2013c).

Lowering the blood alcohol limit is supported by the MoT (2013c) survey, with a majority of all interviewees now agreeing or strongly agreeing that the limit should be lower, although only 50% of young men saw it this way. As Table 2 shows, this marks a significant change over the past decade.

Table 2: Legal blood alcohol limit should be lower: % agreeing/strongly agreeing

Year	% Aged under 30		% Aged 30-64		% Aged 65 & over		Total %
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
2001	34	27	49	39	48	42	40
2006	37	33	42	40	48	38	40
2012	61	50	67	55	65	62	60

MoT Statistics

The Ministry of Transport (2013c) survey also showed that people were unaware of how much people could drink before driving and still be under the legal limit. Sixty percent of the 2012 sample felt that the legal blood alcohol limit should be lower, compared with 40% in both 2001 and 2006. Ninety-one percent of the women in their sample indicated that women should be allowed only two or fewer standard drinks per hour before driving, with 69% saying it should be only one. The actual legal amount would be 2.5 glasses, although when the new limit comes into force in 2014, it will be only one glass for women.

There appears, however, to be an ongoing perception that 'getting away with' drink-driving is a possibility (see Table 3). Although the percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing is dropping, indicating that younger drivers perceive a greater risk of being caught compared with older drivers,

the young women surveyed are more likely to see less risk of getting caught than their male contemporaries (MoT 2013c).

Table 3: The risk of being caught drinking and driving is small: % agreeing/strongly agreeing

Year	% Aged under 30		% Aged 30-64		% Aged 65 & over		Total %
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
2001	39	38	44	43	52	54	43
2006	48	30	36	43	44	54	41
2012	35	29	34	40	41	48	37

MOT Statistics

In the responses to the MoT (2013c) survey, the young women interviewed were also more likely than the young men to agree or strongly agree that penalties for drink-driving are not very severe even if you are caught.

Table 4: Penalties for drink-driving not very severe even if caught: % agreeing/strongly agreeing

Year	% Aged under 30		% Aged 30-64		% Aged 65 & over		Total %
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
2001	39	34	46	47	56	52	44
2006	47	41	49	49	50	53	48
2012	40	34	58	55	54	56	51

MoT Statistics

In contrast to the rather cavalier attitude expressed above, where over half of those aged 30 and over considered the penalties for being caught drink-driving were not severe, only a small percentage of all those interviewed agreed or strongly agreed that those who were caught were just unlucky (ibid).

Table 5: Most people who get caught drink-driving are just unlucky: % agreeing/strongly agreeing

Year	% Aged under 30		% Aged 30-64		% Aged 65 & over		Total %
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
2001	16	27	18	28	23	35	23
2006	19	21	14	18	23	27	19
2012	15	16	14	18	16	14	16

MoT Statistics

Over a third of those surveyed for the MoT (2013c) agreed or strongly agreed with the statements that it was difficult to drink less than the group when drinking with friends, or to keep track of what you are drinking in social occasions (see Table 6). The results also indicate that this is not just an age related issue. Attitudes have remained relatively constant, with around one third of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing that it is *difficult to drink less than the group when drinking with friends* and *difficult in social occasions to keep track of what you are drinking*.

Table 6: It is difficult to drink less than the group when drinking with friends: % agreeing/strongly agree

Year	% Aged under 30		% Aged 30-64		% Aged 65 & over		Total %
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
2001	29	50	27	43	29	38	36
2006	36	50	27	39	26	37	35
2012	38	41	31	37	28	38	35

MOT Statistics

Table 7: It is difficult in social occasions to keep track of what you are drinking: % agreeing/strongly agreeing

Year	% Aged under 30		% Aged 30-64		% Aged 65 & over		Total %
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
2001	33	37	29	40	36	39	35
2006	38	43	27	36	24	41	34
2012	41	45	33	31	28	33	34

MoT Statistics

Driving behaviour

Table 7 shows that in social occasions, or when drinking with friends, monitoring and controlling your drinking behaviour can be a problem because of the actions of those you are drinking with. Women and men have similar reactions, although drinking less than the group and keeping track of what you are drinking have become more of a problem for young women since 2001. Keeping track of what you are drinking has become less of a problem for older women. Whether awareness of problems that these specific situations cause then translates to modified drink-driving behaviour is difficult to ascertain, although the data presented below (Table 8) would tend to suggest that for some people, it might do so.

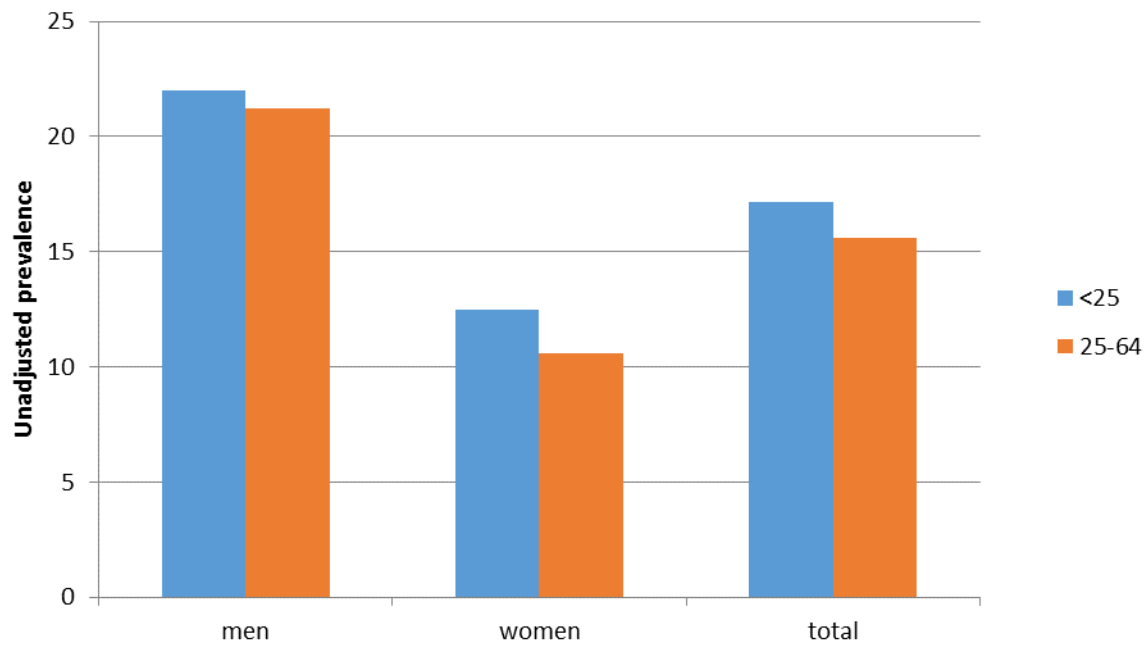
Table 8: Driving while slightly intoxicated in the past 12 months

Year	% Aged under 30		% Aged 30-64		% Aged 65 & over		Total %
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
2001	22	41	18	33	4	13	25
2006	21	33	17	34	7	14	24
2012	20	33	14	27	8	13	20

MoT Statistics

The proportion of those indicating that they have driven while slightly intoxicated has remained fairly high for under 30 year olds over the period, although it is more common among young men. However, although the absolute numbers are small, proportionately women aged 65 and over have increased their drinking and driving behaviour more than men in the same age cohort, although the men are still more likely to do this (13%, compared with 8%). It will be interesting to see if this increase among older women is a trend that continues. It is also worth noting that while the proportion of men in the under 30 group who report driving while slightly intoxicated has decreased over the time period, the proportion of young women doing so has remained relatively stable.

Figure 1: Have driven while feeling under the influence of alcohol at least once in the past 12 months (among total population)



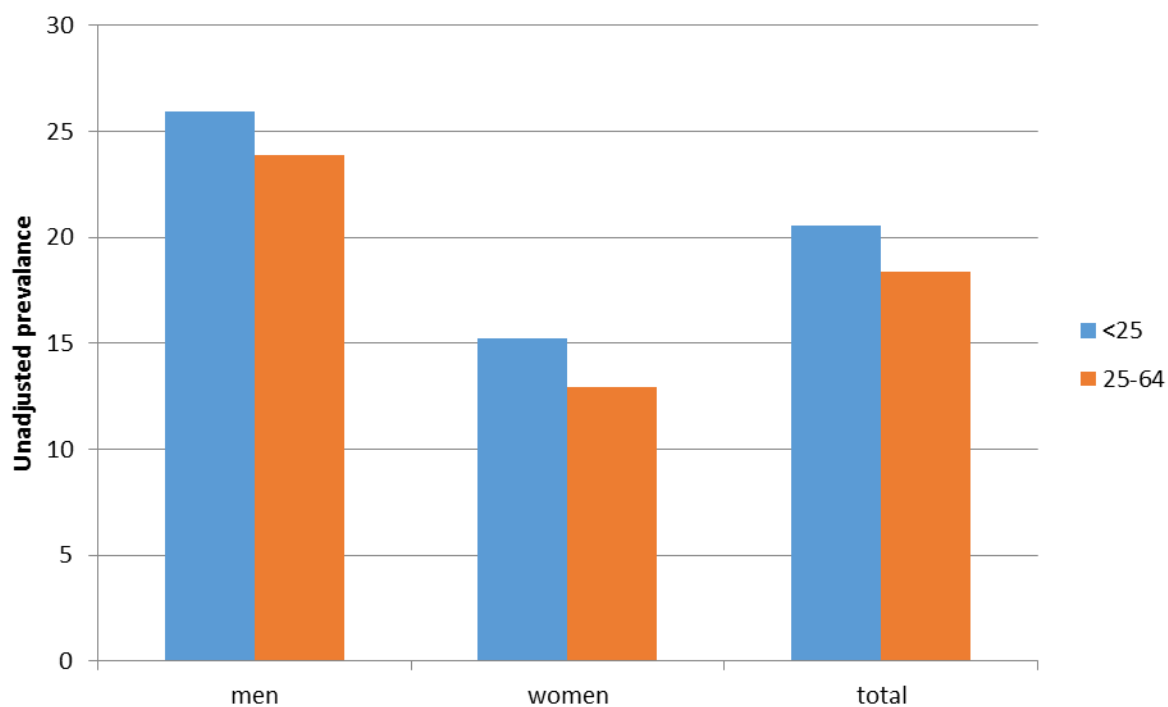
2

007/2008 NZ Alcohol and Drug Use Survey (2009)⁴

In terms of the prevalence of risky behaviours while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, drink-driving is a particular problem for young men. It also reflects the great prevalence of drinkers in this demographic. This gender difference becomes more obvious when male and female drinkers are compared, rather than all men and women (Figure 2)

⁴ NB data was not collected in this survey for those aged 65 and over

Figure 2: Have driven while feeling under the influence of alcohol at least once in the past 12 months (among past-year drinkers)



2007/2008 NZ Alcohol and Drug Use Survey (2009)

Involvement in accidents

Information from the Ministry of Transport (2013a) indicates that young women aged 15-19 years have a lower risk of crashing than males of the same age, but are still seven times more likely to crash than women drivers aged 55-59 years, who are the group with the lowest risk.

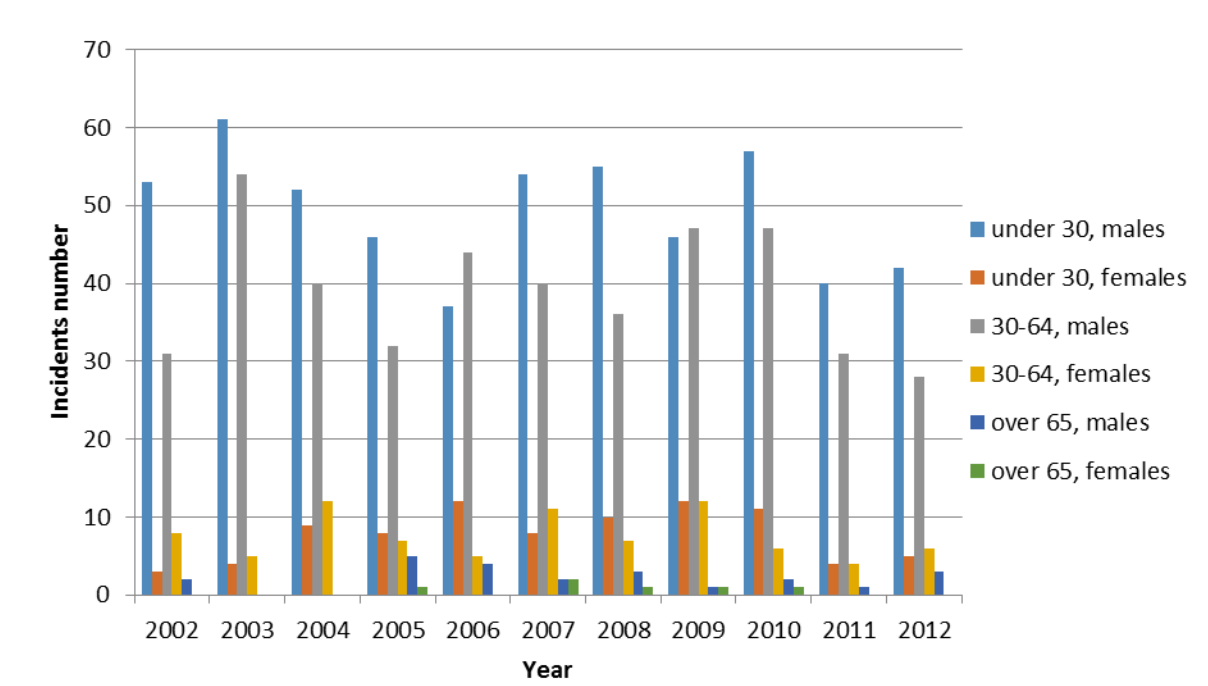
Table 9: Number of alcohol/drug affected drivers involved in fatal crashes

Year	Under 30 years		65 years and over		Total
	Women	Men	Women	Men	
2002	3	53	0	3	99
2007	8	54	3	2	120
2012	5	42	0	3	86
2002-2012	84	543	6	23	1189

MoT Statistics

Over the period 2002-2012, it can be seen that the overall number of alcohol/drug affected drivers has gone down, although those aged under 30 tend to be involved in more than half the fatal crashes. However, over the period the overall proportion of alcohol/drug affected drivers involved in fatal crashes has remained relatively constant, at around 20%.

Figure 3: Drink drivers involved in fatal crashes 2002-2012



MoT Statistics

In summarising the facts around fatal crashes, the Ministry of Transport (2013b) points out that it is 'largely a male problem'. In 84% of fatal crashes involving alcohol/drug affected drivers, those drivers were males. Overall, 16% of women drivers in fatal crashes were affected by alcohol/drugs, compared with 25% of male drivers, and this difference remains when age and vehicle type are taken into account.

Table 10: Number of alcohol/drug affected drivers involved in serious injury crashes

Year	Under 30 years		65 years and over		Total
	Women	Men	Women	Men	
2002	39	185	0	8	395
2007	50	190	1	3	426
2012	31	159	2	3	341
2002-2012	440	2039	7	46	4428

MoT Statistics

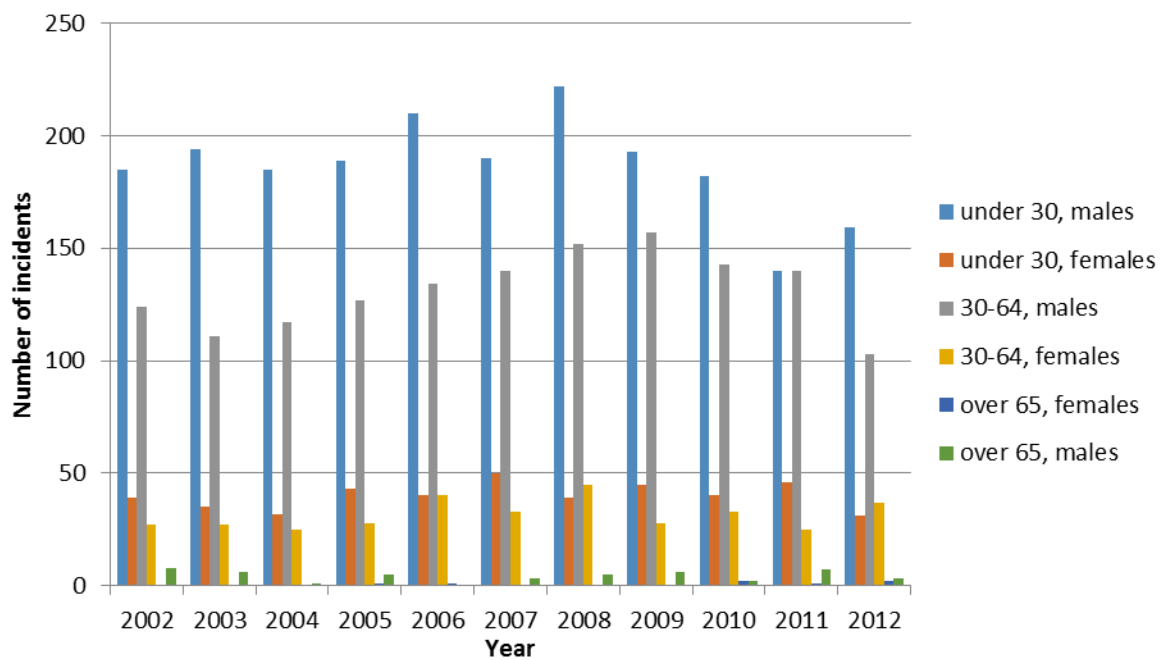
Table 11: Number of Alcohol/drug affected drivers involved in minor injury crashes

Year	Under 30 years		65 years and over		Total
	Women	Men	Women	Men	
2002	106	392	0	10	926
2007	148	535	0	15	1207
2012	127	425	7	16	947
2002-2012	1371	5088	41	132	11307

MoT Statistics

Alcohol/drug affected drivers were consistently involved in 7% of the minor injury crashes, while their involvement in serious injury crashes went from 12% to 14% over the period 2002-2013. Young women (under 30 years) make up around 10% of the drivers involved in serious injury crashes; but over the same period, 2002-2012, they rose from 11% to over 13% of the alcohol/drug affected drivers involved in minor injury crashes. The other noteworthy aspect is the low numbers of both women and men aged 65 years and over involved as alcohol/drug impaired drivers in any type of crash, whether minor, serious, or fatal.

Figure 4: Drink drivers involved in serious injury crashes 2002-2012

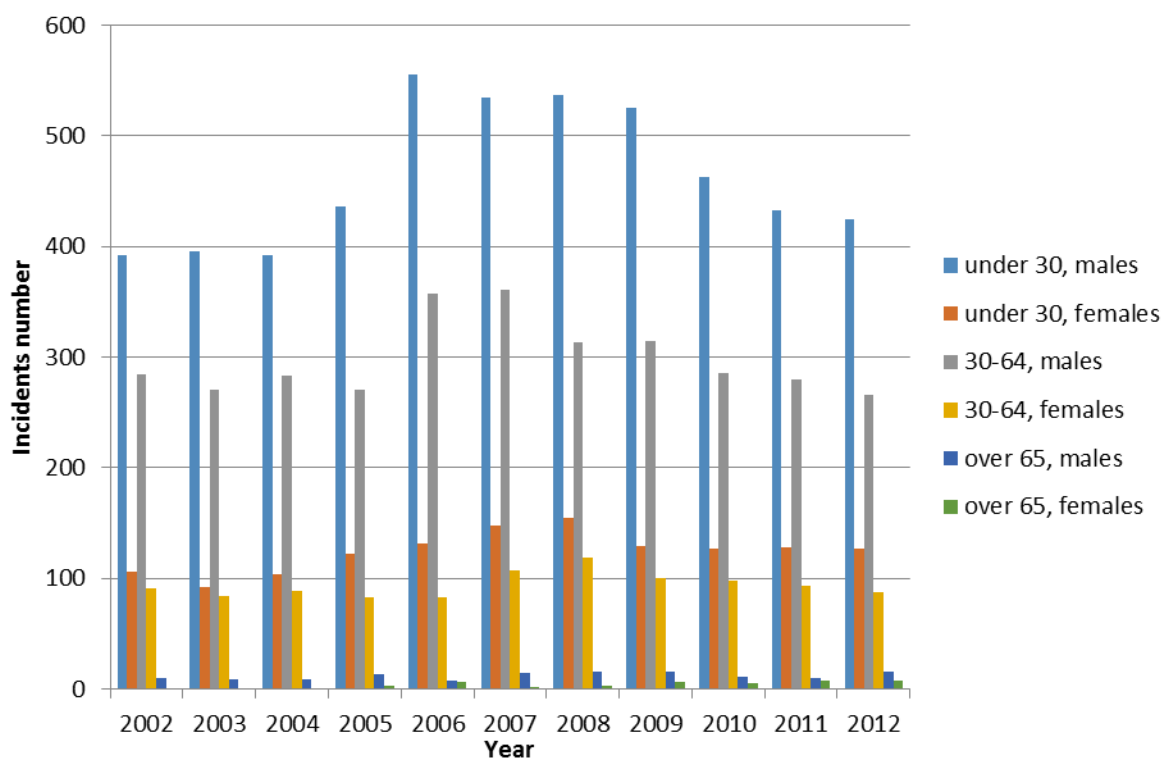


MOT Statistics

In both 2006 and 2009, women drink-drivers under 30 years were involved in 12 fatal crashes, but 2007 appears to be the worst year for women aged under 30 years in terms of being involved in serious injury crashes (50) as a drink driver, whereas 2008 was their worst year for minor injury crashes (150) (see Figures 4 & 5 and Table 12).

The apparent increase in serious injury crashes between 2002 and 2009 may be due to the reduction in fatal crashes as a result of improved medical interventions, faster access to treatment (eg through helicopter use) and improvements in motor vehicle design, with increased compliance with safety codes.

Figure 5: Drink drivers involved in minor injury crashes 2002-2012



MoT Statistics

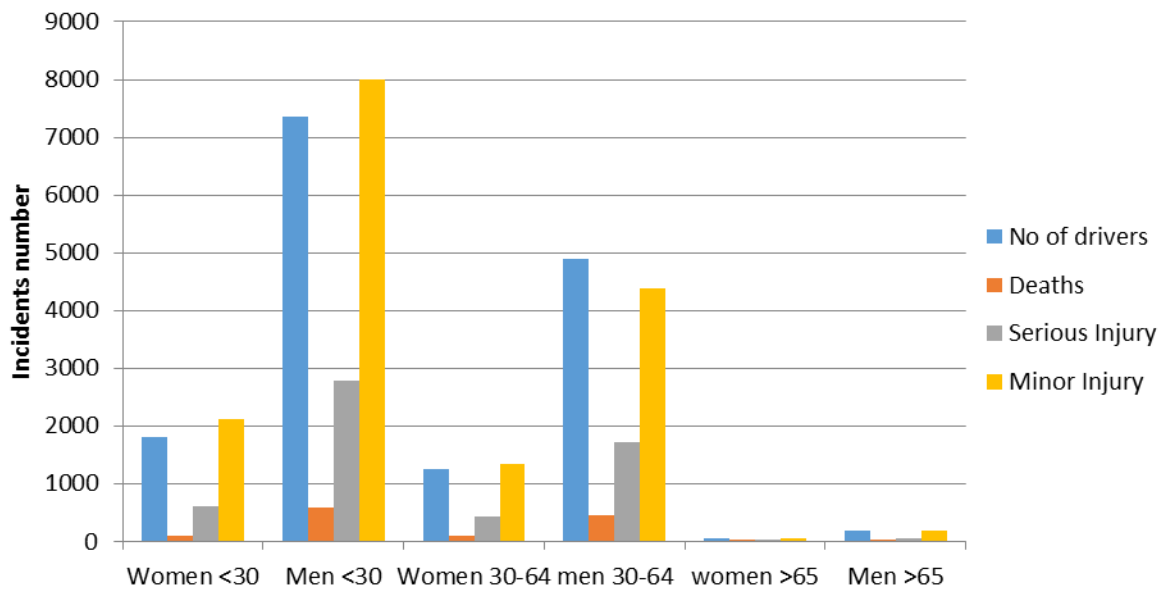
Table 12 shows the total number of fatalities and injuries associated with crashes caused by alcohol-impaired drivers. The data includes passengers and drivers of other vehicles involved.

Table 12: Number of deaths & injuries in alcohol related crashes by the at-fault driver 2002-2012

Total	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
	<30	<30	30-64	30-64	65 & over	65 & over
No of drivers	1807	7351	1261	4884	51	187
Deaths	97	595	88	452	6	23
Serious injury	599	2778	434	1727	10	63
Minor injury	2126	8005	1343	4388	46	178

MoT Statistics

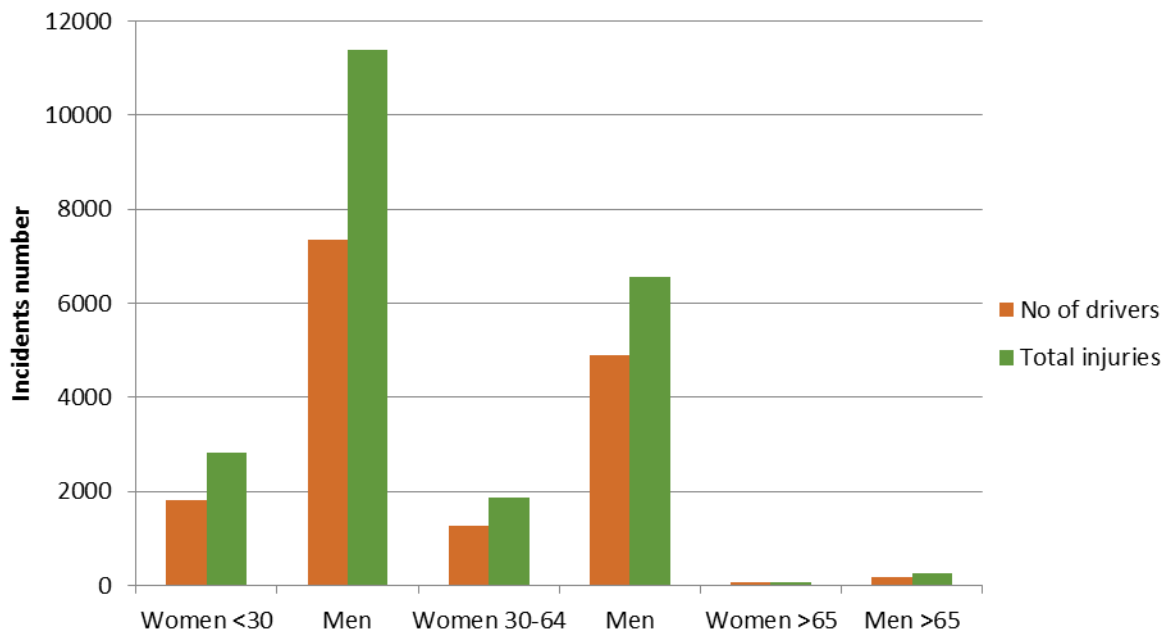
Figure 6: Deaths and injuries in alcohol related crashes by at-fault driver, 2002-2012



MOT Statistics

Proportionately alcohol related crashes involving young women and young men at-fault drink-drivers create similar numbers of victims (see Figure 6 above). While the numbers are very small, for those aged 65 and over, men create slightly more victims than women (see Figure 7 below).

Figure 7: Total deaths and injuries in alcohol related crashes by at-fault drivers, 2002-2012



MOT Statistics

Over the years, enacting legislation around drink-driving has been seen as an important tool to use to decrease the incidence of such behaviour. The Ministry of Transport survey (2013c) would suggest

that people have mixed opinions about this, with men aged under 65 years having more trust in the efficacy of such laws (Table 13).

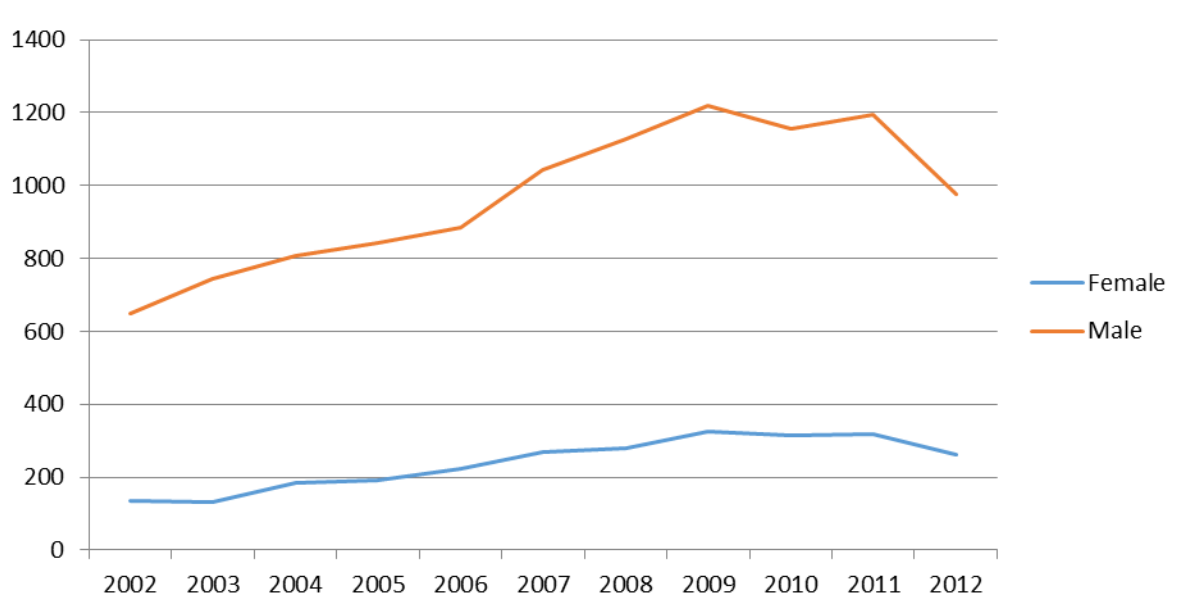
Table 13: Effectiveness of drink-driving laws at reducing road toll: % agreeing/strongly agreeing

Year	% Aged under 30		% Aged 30-64		% Aged 65 & over		Total %
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
2001	63	66	59	63	49	62	61
2006	62	68	53	59	46	53	57
2012	56	71	55	63	49	56	59

MOT Statistics

However, it is clear from Figure 8 below that drink-driving leading to a conviction is disproportionately a problem for men in the under 25 year age group in comparison to the other age groups. And it is a very substantial problem.

Figure 8: Driving with excess blood alcohol content 2002-2012, under 25 years



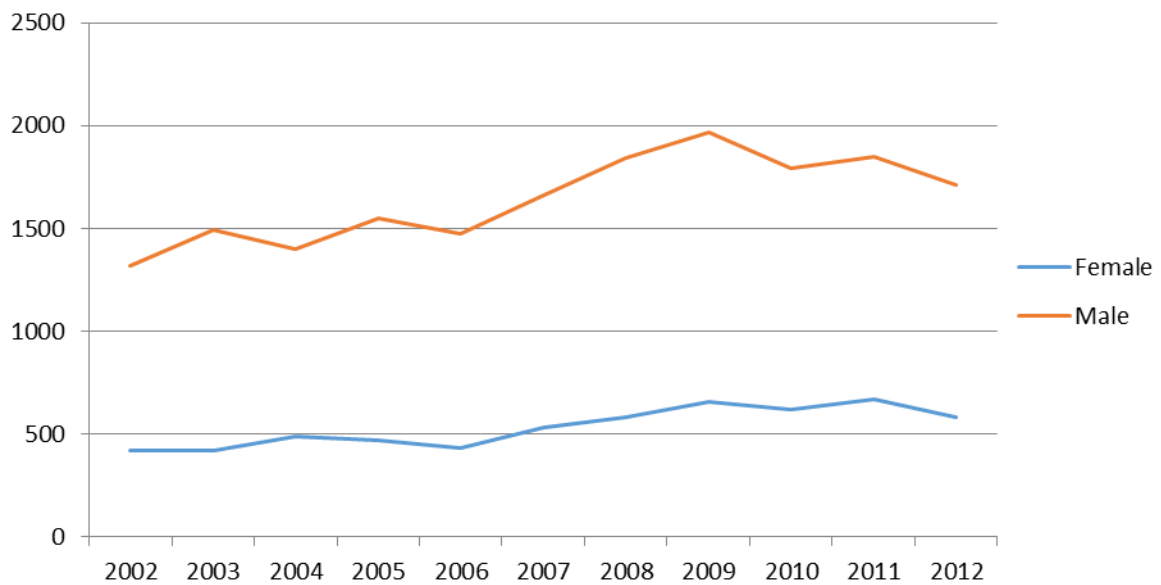
NZ Police Statistics

As indicated above (Figure 8), there has been a significant increase in the number of convictions since 2002. While the absolute number of convictions for young women is considerably less than for men, there has also been a sizeable proportional increase among young women as well. The fact that there is a differential between the genders should not obscure the fact that there have been well over 200 drink-driving convictions among young women every year since 2006 and the trend is clearly rising. The extent to which this reflects actual behavioural change, or is a result of, for

example, increased or changed policing activity cannot be determined from this data. It is, however, a cause for concern.

Women and men aged 25-64 are the main offenders where driving with excess blood alcohol is concerned (see Figure 9 below), Although the rate is going down and drink-driving is still primarily a male problem, there is not the same differential between women and men in this age bracket in comparison to the younger cohort. How the changes in legal limits for blood alcohol and the drink-driving patterns of the younger group will flow through and reflect in future statistics as they age is yet to be seen.

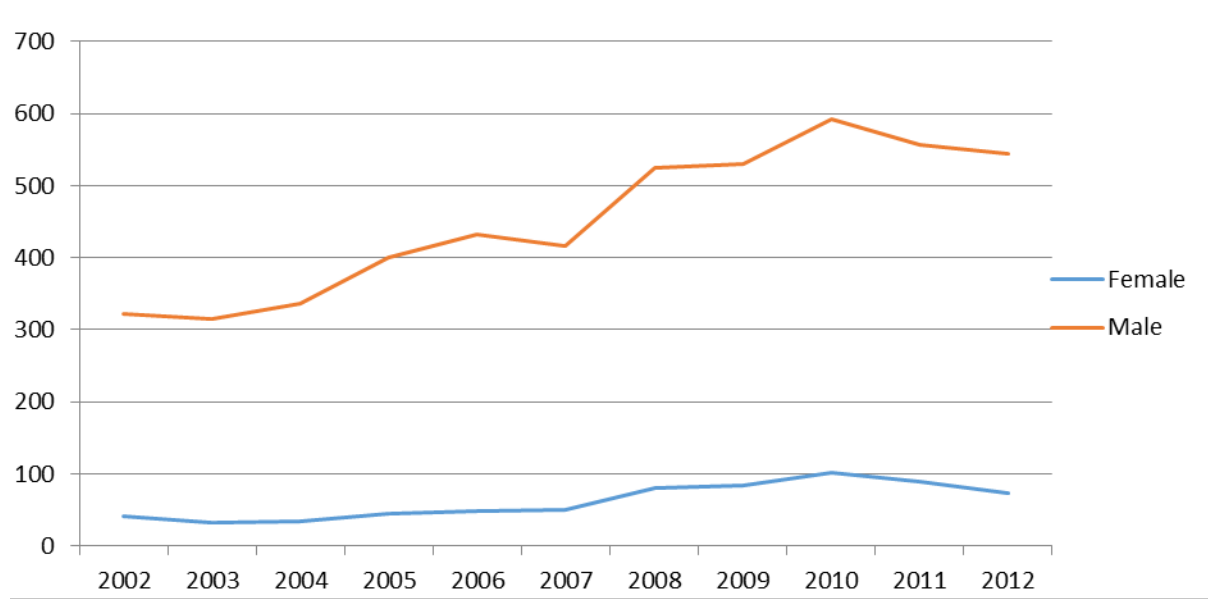
Figure 9: Driving with excess blood alcohol content 2002-2012, 25-64 years



NZ Police Statistics

A further cause for concern is depicted in Figure 10 below. This shows the number of young people receiving their third or subsequent drink-driving conviction rose steadily from 2002-2010 before starting to go down. As could be expected, the difference between genders remains. Nonetheless, there is evidence of a rising trend among women, and Figure 10 demonstrates the existence of a substantial group of young women who are recidivist drink- drivers.

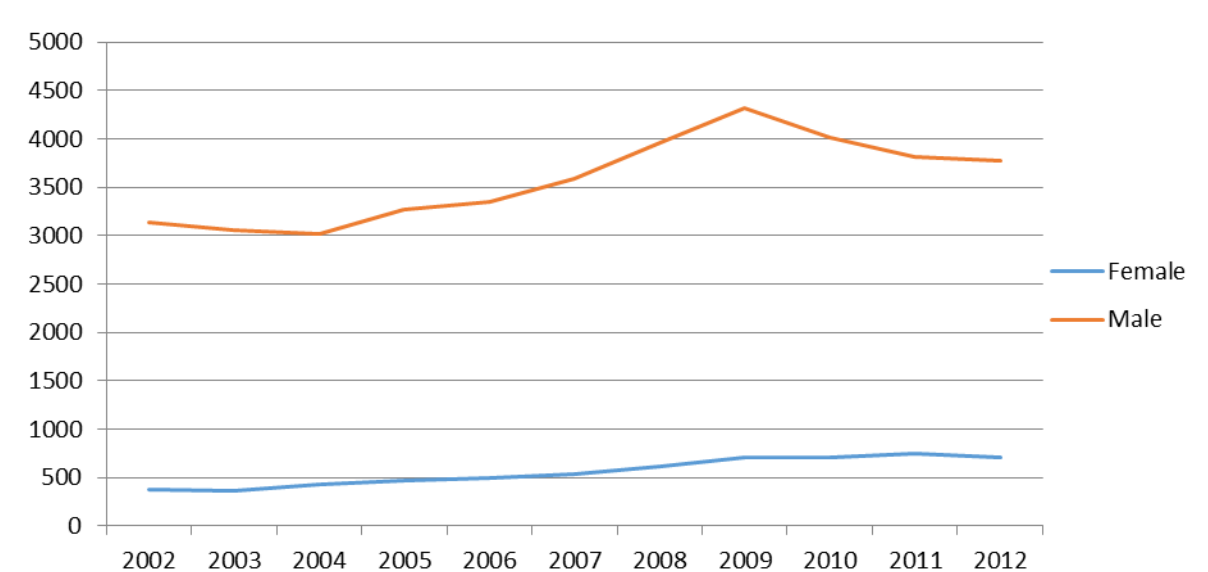
Figure 10: Drove with excess breath alcohol 3rd or subsequent offence 2002-2012, under 25 years



NZ Police Statistics

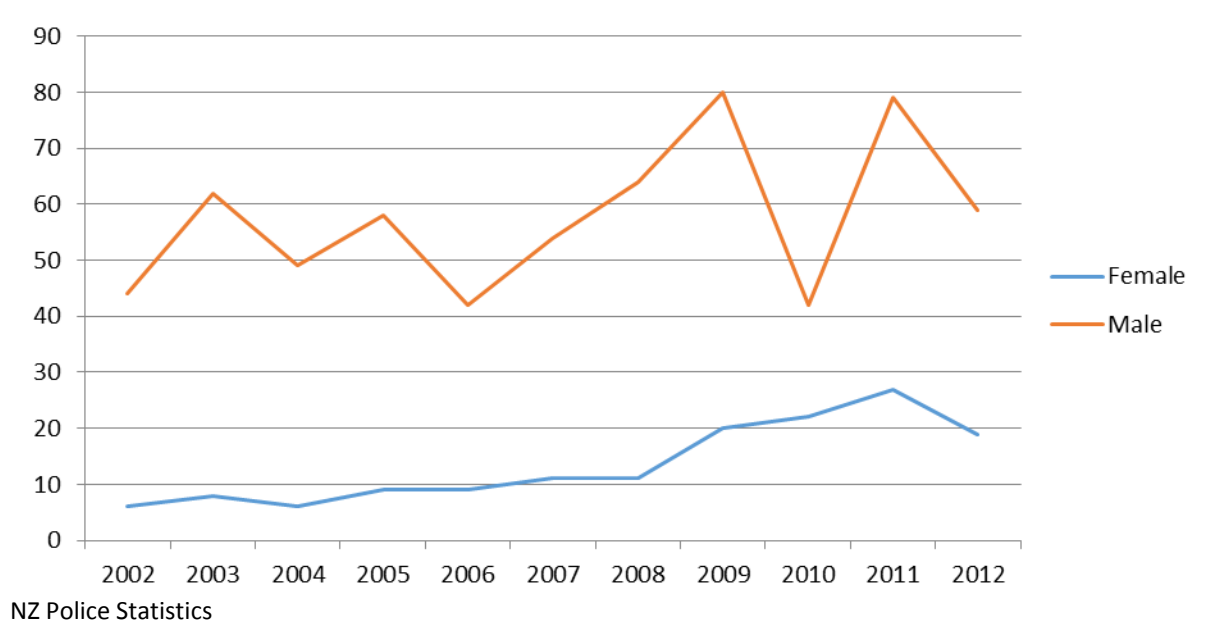
By way of comparison Figure 11 below shows a substantial cohort of women with more than two drink-driving convictions in the 25-64 years age group. According to the Otago Daily Times (2012 January 21), most of the women recidivists were in the 36-40 age group compared with most of the male recidivists who were in the 41-45 bracket. From the data we have it is not possible to ascertain why it is these specific age groups that are the recidivist drink-drivers. However, the numbers of recidivist drink-drivers overall have dropped over the past two years and it will be interesting to see whether this is part of an on-going trend or whether with the new legal limits recidivism will start to go up again.

Figure 11: Drove with excess breath alcohol 3rd or subsequent offence 2002-2012, 25-64 years



NZ Police Statistics

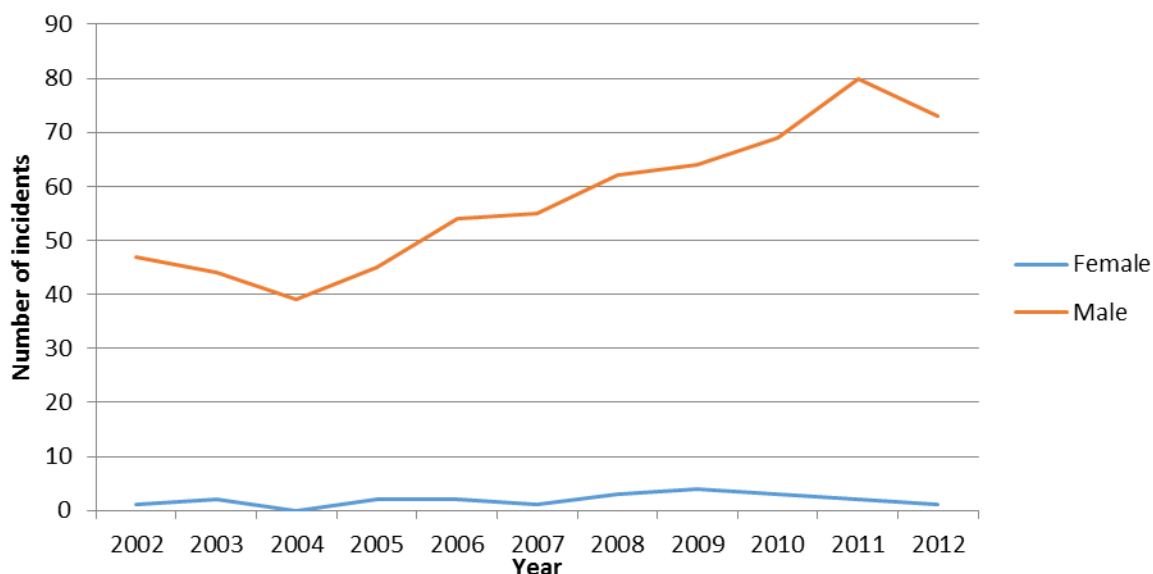
Figure 12: Driving with excess blood alcohol content 2002-2012, 65 years and over



As discussed above, drink-driving is not a sizable problem among older women in terms of the actual numbers who are convicted, compared with older men. However, the numbers have been rising since 2004, and the proportionate increase from 2002 to 2012 is considerable (although starting from a very low base). While 2012 shows a decrease, it is too early to predict whether this is the beginning of a downward trend or just a dip (see Figure 12).

While the number of older men being caught for a third or subsequent excess breath alcohol offence continues to rise, this is not the case for women (see Figure 13, below). There appears to be a small, fairly consistent number of older women repeat offenders. Given the relatively consistent incidence of repeat offending for women in the 25-64 year age group (Figure 11), it does not seem that it will rise dramatically as this demographic reaches older age.

Figure 13: Convictions for driving with excess breath alcohol 3rd or subsequent offence 2002-2012, 65 years and over



NZ Police Statistics

Table 14 shows that the overall numbers of those testing positive for breath alcohol levels over 400mg are going down (after steadily rising from 2002/3 and peaking in 2008/9). However, older women have risen proportionately from 16% to 20% of older drivers testing positive. Over the same period, for those aged under 25 years, the numbers testing positive have gone down, and young women have remained at around 33% of the total for their age bracket.

Table 14: Breath alcohol level over 400 mcgs per litre of breath

	2002/2003	2008/2009	2011/2012
Under 25 Female	926	2137	1744
Male	3861	6487	5137
All under 25 year olds*	4787	8633	6998
65 & over Female	13	24	27
Male	102	156	133
All 65 & over	116	184	163
Total over 400mcgs	11911	19156	15826

*All totals include those whose age x gender is unknown and thus may equal more than the sum of males & females

NZ Police Statistics

Media reporting of women and drink-driving

Print media were scanned to look at the way in which women drink-drivers were depicted, and identify any aspects that excited particularly gendered reporting. During the research period there was also a current affairs television programme addressing the issue of the legal alcohol limit for driving; information from that programme is included because of its relevance to the debate.

There has been some recent publicity in the New Zealand media around the increasing rate of women's involvement in drink-driving incidents, for example the TV3 News item headlined "Female drink-drivers a fast-growing problem" (2008). Based on research by Professor Geoff Hall from the University of Otago, this report highlighted the '1700 increase over the past 20 years'. Professor Hall was quoted as saying that the Government needed to do something about this alarming trend while noting that '[S]urprisingly not one of the drink-driving ads targets females.' The point was made by the Police and Land Transport that although this was a worrying trend, drink-driving was still 'overwhelmingly' a male problem and that was where the focus needed to be. This position appears to be still current.

The media reports on crash injury and/or death over the period 2002-2012 tend not to highlight gender either in the headlines, where phrases such as 'Woman driver charged' appear only sometimes, or in the content, where the driver's or victim's gender is used as a descriptor for those involved in the incident, rather than as an emotive signifier. A similar approach is taken in reporting on women caught driving with high levels of breath alcohol. These tend not to focus on gender or stereotyping of women offenders, instead concentrating on the level of excess in both the headline and the content. For example, *The Herald on Sunday* (December 2007) reported that at that point in time, there were two women holding 'a place in a list of the top 10 Kiwi drink-drivers' – that is, those with blood alcohol levels of 2000 mcgs or more.

Discussion is ongoing around drink-driving and what the legal limit should be, with a proposed change mooted for 2014 which would lower the current limit from 80mg to 50mg per 100ml of blood for drivers over 20 years of age (*The New Zealand Herald* 2013). There is some evidence that people do not know how much they can drink before being over the legal limit. The TV3 television programme *Campbell Live* (week of October 28, 2013) showed how factors such as height and weight came into play in relation to whether people were under or over the legal limit for drinking and driving. In a controlled experiment, all four drinking drivers considered that they had drunk too much to consider driving well before their breath tests indicated they had reached or were over the legal limit. Another report similarly indicates that there is not always a good level of self-awareness around the amount the individual has drunk, although in this instance there was under-estimation rather than over-estimation.

When approached while being processed on Friday night, the 60-year-old grandmother -- who blew 807mcg -- said she felt okay to drive. 'I didn't think I had that much. I thought I was driving carefully but I realise I may have put someone in danger.' She later admitted to having about five glasses of wine but no dinner, just a few nibbles. 'I reckon I would have driven home and not killed anyone.' (*Waikato Times* December 8, 2008).

The identification of the drink-driver as a 'grandmother' in this case is likely to be related to the creation of an image that reinforces the particular moral deviancy of such behaviour. This also occurs when young women, especially those who are young and pregnant, are caught drink-driving. Young women are often described as 'girls' to reinforce the seriousness of the offence. For example, an article headlined 'Girl drove while seven times over the limit' began with 'An 18-year-old girl who drove...' (*The Southland Times* March 25, 2010); another article headlined 'Girl steered from passenger seat' began with 'A 16-year-old girl has been charged...' (*Bay of Plenty Times* October 27, 2009). Infantilisation of young women went further when a teenager was referred to as a 'child' in a report headlined 'Pregnant drink-driving 'child' dismays police'; a police officer was quoted as saying 'This is extremely high for an adult. For a 14-year-old it's quite astounding. For a pregnant 14-year-old it's almost disgusting' (*The New Zealand Herald* January 30, 2009). The same young woman's further offending was reported in the *Bay of Plenty Times* (June 25, 2009) under the heading 'New mum, 14, on third drink-drive charge.'

Mothers as drink drivers

As discussed above, media reporting on women and drink-driving emphasises the fact of being young and pregnant when such women are caught. At any age, however, pregnancy and motherhood invariably appear as descriptors if women in such situations are involved in drink-driving incidents. This is seen as the ultimate offence, because it violates the whole idea of motherhood and the nurturing of children.

The following extracts typify the tone taken. Waikato road policing manager Leo Tooman was reported as saying that such: 'incidents were "totally irresponsible" and were unfair on the children who had no say on how their parent or guardian behaved. "It's now a matter of people starting to take responsibility for themselves and their young ones. The kids really have got no say in it. They've got no say whether mum's going to be on the booze before she gets behind the wheel.' (*Waikato Times* November 29, 2007). Another report stated that:

A judge has blasted an Opotiki woman who drove drunk with a baby on her lap and two other unrestrained children in the car. Judge John Clapham said it was 'difficult to imagine a worse case of driving' when he sentenced [the woman], 24, in Opotiki District Court yesterday. She had pleaded guilty to charges of driving while disqualified and excess breath alcohol after being stopped by police at 9.30am on June 15 in Buchanan St. The police then discovered the unrestrained children. She had a breath alcohol level of 780 micrograms of alcohol per litre of breath - nearly twice the legal limit of 400 (*Waikato Times* August 18, 2012).

Over the period 2002-2012, the media scan identified 46 items dealing with mothers caught drink-driving, some reporting on multiple cases.

Table 15: Media reporting of mothers caught driving with excess blood alcohol and children in the vehicle

Year	Age of woman	No of children in car	Ages of children
2002	26	1	2 years
	33	1	11 months
2004	Ns	10	5 weeks – 13 years
2005	44	1	2 years
2006	Ns	1	Young
	32	4	Ns
2007	23	3	3 weeks, 2 & 12 years
	Ns	1	4 years
	45	3	4 months, 5 & 9 years
	45	1	2 years
	27	3	3 & 6 & 10 years
	36	3	Young
	Ns	3	2 months, 6 & 9 years
	Ns	2	Young
	23	3	3 weeks, 2 & 12 years
	2008	43	2
Historical case*			
	43	2	Young
2009	30	1	6 weeks
	30	3	Ns
2010	32	1	10 years
	41	2	8 year old twins
	49 & 36	2	4 & 10
	Ns	3	2 babies & 5 year old
2011	31	3	Ns
	31	3	Ns
	38	1	5 years
	21	2	Baby, & 2 years
	44	2	2 & 6 years
2012	35	2	Young
	35	2	Young
	24	3	Baby, ns
	24	1	Ns
	Ns	2	Under 12 years
	Ns	2	Under 12 years
	36	1	2 years
	28	3	Under 5 years
	45	2	Young
	39	2	4 & 8
	24	3	Baby and pre-schoolers
	28	3	Under 5 years
	29	4	8-11 years
	28	2	8 & 11 years
	36	3	7 weeks & ns
	22	2	5 months & 2 years
	24	3	8 months & ns

Changes in behaviour were also commented on as the following piece (marked with an asterisk in Table 15 above) demonstrates.

Canterbury mother-of-five Terri would drink all night, then, after a short doze, pile her five children in the family car and drive them to school. Eventually, she allowed her 13-year-old daughter to take the wheel for the school run. Terri spoke of her own experiences yesterday after reading about a Christchurch mother who was stopped by police and charged with drink-driving on two consecutive mornings last week as she took her children to school. Terri is urging the woman to get help, as she did after her battle with alcoholism put her children in danger. The 66-year-old, who did not want to give her full name because she belongs to Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), has been sober for five years and five months. Terri said she was married at 22 and had five children by the time she was 29. When the children were younger, the family would often spend afternoons at barbecues and backyard cricket matches with friends. 'Then we'd bring the party back home. It never occurred to me that one of us should stay sober for the children', Terri said. 'I was putting my children in danger all the time and not realising the sort of people we were allowing into our house around four vulnerable daughters and our son.' Terri said she was not a morning drinker but would drink through the night, believing two hours of sleep would drain her system of alcohol (*The Press* September 30, 2008).

Some cases were republished elsewhere with identical content, although under different headlines, as the following extract shows. It was headlined 'Children in car with drunk mum' in the *Timaru Herald* and 'Woman blows it driving drunk partner's car home' in the *Dominion Post*. Both papers published the article on 3 July 2012, picking up a Fairfax media release that had no local content, but presumably was deemed to be of interest to their respective readers.

A Tauranga mother who retrieved her partner's car after he was caught drink-driving was herself more than two times over the limit – and had two children in the car with her, police say. She also left two younger children at home alone, Tauranga acting Senior Sergeant Cam Anderson said. The woman was stopped by police on Sunday night after they found her driving the same car they had found her partner driving just hours earlier. The woman was in her pyjamas and accompanied by two children aged under 12, he said. She recorded an alcohol reading of 821 micrograms of alcohol per litre of breath – more than twice the legal limit. Police learned that two younger children were at home alone as her partner was making his way home after earlier being processed for drink-driving. The woman not only faces charges for drink-driving, but also over driving while forbidden and possibly for child neglect, Mr Anderson said. The family would be referred to Child Youth and Family. 'The unfortunate thing is that these sorts of incidents are becoming a common occurrence where people are driving drunk with children in the car', Mr Anderson said. On June 15, a 24-year-old woman was stopped by police at 9.30am in Opotiki. She was driving with a baby on her lap and two other pre-school children unrestrained in her car. She recorded a breath alcohol reading of 780mcg. On June 19, a Christchurch mother who was more than four times over the limit crashed into a power pole and then tried to drive off. The 28-year-old woman had

three young children, all aged under 5 in the car with her. One was unrestrained. She had a reading of 1409mcg.

A further example of mothers not recognising the risky behaviour evidenced when drink-driving and transporting children appears below.

Sergeant Richardson said the woman's behaviour was 'irresponsible' and 'absolutely appalling'. But he said the woman did not accept she had done anything wrong. She argued she was 'just over' the limit, he said. 'That was the most concerning part. She didn't think it was a big deal.' Sergeant Richardson said anyone who was close to twice the legal limit would be 'very intoxicated'. Early Start Project manager Hildegard Grant said the incident was concerning. 'Like any drink-driving would concern us – and we would be even more concerned if there was a child in the car', she said. 'A good parent or sensitive parent would not put their child in a situation like that. Especially when there is so much information out there about the dangers of drink-driving and generally drinking when you have a young baby and (are) breastfeeding' (*Bay of Plenty Times* August 12, 2009).

Media reports also highlighted women being charged for drink-driving while en route to collect their children from school, or elsewhere, that is with the implied intention of driving their children while under the influence of alcohol.

A Foxton woman, on her way to pick up her child from school, was caught drink-driving at one and a half times the legal limit, police say. Police said the 33-year-old was stopped at a checkpoint in Foxton about 3pm yesterday afternoon. It had been set up as part of a campaign to raise awareness of young drivers in breach of their licence conditions. An evidential breath test put the woman's breath-alcohol level at about 600mcg. The legal limit is 400mcg. The officer in charge of Highway Patrol, Senior Sergeant Kris Burberry, said the woman's actions were a significant concern. "Not only was this woman allegedly driving with an excess breath alcohol limit, but she was uplifting a child from school and was driving in the vicinity of a school and numerous other children'. he said. "The results could have been catastrophic' (*Dominion Post* November 10, 2011).

What is not clear from the examples cited above is whether such media reporting, concentrating on women with children involved in drink-driving, is borne out by robust statistics. Is this the 'tip of the iceberg' or all of the actual cases? Is reporting on percentage increases when starting from a low numerical base giving a distorted picture? Statistics are not available to confirm or deny either premise, although the media scan showed a high level of sensationalism in any reporting involving this particular demographic. Clearly there has been much greater interest recently in reporting such instances, as Table 15 indicates, with peaks occurring in 2007, when the number of reports was 50% higher than the total for the preceding five years, and in 2012, when there were 17 such reports, compared with the total of 14 in the previous four years. Various Police initiatives, such as Neighbourhood Policing schemes, mean that there has been a change in Police practices, with more likelihood of women drink-drivers being caught throughout the day.

Older women

Over the past decade there has been little in the print media about this group of drivers. Generally reports concerning them present the information in a straightforward manner, although sometimes ageist 'emotive' signifiers are used to stress the moral implications of older women drinking and driving. For example, under the headline 'Booze blitz nets grannies', the *Waikato Times* (December 8, 2008) gave the following account:

A drink-driving grandmother was among a notable group of older women and under 20s caught in a weekend drink-driving blitz. Police from four policing districts – Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Eastern and Central – joined forces for the first phase of Operation Rose, a project designed to saturate the regions with booze buses. Seventy-seven motorists were busted in Hamilton on Thursday and Friday nights at 33 checkpoints. The highest reading was by a 65-year-old Hamilton woman with 918mcg. Another 60-year-old city grandmother registered 807mcg, another middle-aged woman about 750mcg and a 49-year-old woman 548mcg.

The same drink-driving 'blitz' was also reported by the *Dominion Post* (December 9, 2008) under the headline 'Drink-driving older women "a problem group"':

A pre-Christmas traffic blitz across the central North Island has left police pondering the number of drunken older women getting behind the wheel. The first weekend of Operation Rose, a well-publicised booze-bus campaign ... revealed two main problem groups – apart from the usual recidivists – young drivers under 20 and women over 60. A 65-year-old Waikato woman had a breath-alcohol reading of 918 micrograms per litre of breath, more than twice the legal limit of 400. 'When you combine this with two 60-year-old women who blew 807mcg and 750mcg then we have grounds for concern round the sobriety of our seniors', Waikato road policing manager Leo Tooman said.

While three out of 77 drink-drivers does not appear to be indicative of a major 'problem', clearly those commenting in the media see it as an issue, possibly because these women are transgressing the norms relating to their gender and age. Other reporting emphasised age and role: 'An elderly woman ... This is the 70-year-old grandmother accused of drink-driving and killing a new dad' (*Herald on Sunday* September 27, 2009); 'The pensioner, 70...' (*Dominion Post* September 22, 2009).

Results from focus group and individual interviews

The literature review, the statistics and the media scan indicate that while drink-driving remains a predominately male problem, there is a group of women who, by exhibiting this behaviour, attract moral censure, but no systematic attempts to address its occurrence.

Drink-driving was recognised as a significant problem by the women we interviewed, with both the older and younger participants reflecting on their decreased judgement when they have been drinking, and the implications of that if they got behind the wheel. As one young woman said:

There are too many risks with drink-driving and the consequences are too high, you can kill someone or kill yourself. It's just stupid to do it.

All the young women interviewed talked quite scathingly about drink-driving, using terms such as *stupid, dangerous, selfish, not thinking about the consequences*, as well as pointing out that their friends generally saw it in the same way. There was general agreement that drink-driving was unacceptable behaviour. On the other hand, most of the young women had had experience of either driving themselves or being driven by friends or family after they had been drinking, knowing that realistically, they should not have been behind the wheel or been a passenger in the car driven by that person. In some cases it was only later that they realised they should have either not driven or should not have got in the car with that particular driver: ‘...just think “we’ve only had a couple, let’s just go home” and people aren’t aware of how drunk they actually are.’

As another young woman said, they ‘don’t do it when adults are around – know they shouldn’t but do it with their mates’.

Several of the young women interviewed talked about the ‘taken for grantedness, when they were younger, of driving with older adults, generally family members, who had been drinking, although subsequently it did give them ‘pause for reflection’. There was also the issue of rural living, where if they had not taken the ride they would have been stranded. The need to get home as a reason for driving after drinking was cited by a number of the other young women too. Choosing back roads and not driving on main roads was seen as a reasonable option. While they understood that drink-driving was untenable, their actions did not support this contention. The issue of ‘in the moment experiences’, such as the need to get somewhere, out-weighed knowledge of the possible consequences of such behaviour. An older woman we interviewed also expressed concern about the dilemma that the young women faced when she said: ‘it’s tragic that a lack of public transport or unaffordability of taxis means that people have no choice if they find they’ve drunk too much and then want to get home’.

These aspects were echoed in comments made by the older women we interviewed. They contrasted their current behaviour around drinking and driving to what they did when they were younger: their younger selves saw drink-driving as less problematic, and were more likely to have drunk and then driven without actually thinking about it. They discussed the difficulty of being part of social occasions where their glass had been continuously topped up, so they were not able to keep track of exactly how much they had drunk, then later needing to drive home. They also believed that changes for the better in drinking habits had been brought about by the almost complete absence of ‘byo’ now. They recalled that in the past, particularly when going out as a couple, one of the partners would perhaps drink two (not necessarily standard) glasses and do the driving, while the other would finish off the bottle they had taken. These older women pointed out that today, being able to buy wine by the glass when dining out or ‘going for drinks’ makes it much easier to keep track of what has been drunk. There is also much more awareness of the need to watch how much you are drinking if you are going to drive.

Keeping track of what you have drunk and drinking less than your friends when out with them were also problematic for the younger women. They pointed out that while they might have started out with the idea of a designated sober driver, when they went out they would all finish up drinking as the evening went on, and then it was the least drunk individual who drove everyone home. One young woman said that she and her group of friends often drank at each other’s places and then

stayed the night to avoid the need for anyone to drive. Another expressly supported zero tolerance because 'it takes away uncertainty as some people drink and drive 'cause they don't realise they've drunk too much'.

Both the older and younger women interviewed talked about attitude change. One young woman in her 20s said that when she was younger, she saw drinking and driving as 'cool', related in part to 'getting away with it'. While the younger women may see that there is a low level risk of being caught drink-driving, being stopped at a checkpoint can have a salutary effect, as one young woman recounted:

When I first turned 18 years I will admit I did drink drive home ... I had two bottles, big bottles of wine to myself and thought I'll go home now, I knew I was drunk, drove home and then there was a checkpoint, just before I got home, but the funny thing was when I got tested they said I passed, I just passed ... it scared me so much that I would never do it again so I still passed it but I knew I shouldn't have ... I knew in myself that I wasn't fit to drive. So after that I thought 'nup' I'm never going to do that to myself.

Other young women talked about texting each other if they knew there was a checkpoint set up somewhere to be avoided, as being caught outweighed the other more dangerous outcomes of drink-driving, such as injury or death, which were not considered. However, the consequences of being caught were not seen to be too much of a problem. As one young woman said:

Got the money to pay the fines ... not thinking about getting pulled over, thinking I can get away with it and can always pay it off.

Why young women don't drink and drive

The general consensus was that for lots of young women (including the friends and family of interviewees), drinking and driving was a stage they went through when they were younger, at the point when driving, legally drinking and more independence on leaving school coincided. They suggested the sorts of things that would stop young women drinking and then driving:

- Being responsible and thinking of others
- Having someone close to them die or be injured in a traffic accident
- Don't want to/don't drink
- Being a 'goody-goody'/straight non law-breaker
- Being rich enough to get cabs everywhere
- Having been caught (acts as a deterrent)
- Losing your licence for a longer period (eg 5 years) if caught
- More stories about consequences in the media
- More humorous ads, eg 'bloody legends'.

None of those we interviewed had been involved in either serious injury or fatal crashes, although some had been a passenger in a car involved in an accident with a drinking driver, which was a somewhat sobering experience for them.

All the older women we interviewed indicated that they definitely did not drink and drive. If they were expecting to be driving home, they consumed either no alcohol at all or only one glass of wine. However, while one young woman indicated that she and her friends 'think it's stupid! It's straight out plain and simple stupid', there were others who had themselves drunk and driven when they were younger, as had their friends. They indicated that they had stopped such behaviour either because of an incident that made them realise the consequences of their actions, or because of having increased responsibility, such as having a baby or through their employment.

The older women interviewed discussed the way in which general opinion over drinking and driving has changed over the past 30-40 years, and in particular 'the way the moderation thing has kicked in'. They were clear that the current legal level for drinking and driving meant that they were not contravening the law, as it 'was way higher than we'd do'. One woman had taken part in a demonstration of drinking up to the limit, and said that she didn't 'think anyone would drink up to that' [and then drive]. They also pointed out the influence that weight had: one said that 'as one matures and becomes more robust you can actually drink more', while another thought that older people 'held their drink better', although a number of the older women found the reverse. However, they also indicated that they were much more aware than in the past, with more publicity, more cars on the road and more 'youngsters' driving. These older women felt that when they were younger, they were much less aware and took moderate drinking and driving for granted: 'in the '80s you just got in your car and drove home'. The increased publicity and advertising have made their mark, and as older drivers, these women felt that they needed to be more careful and responsible. Several women indicated that they and their friends had never indulged in the style of binge drinking that has become a feature of current youth culture, although they conceded that this pattern of drinking may well just be a life stage. Several also spoke approvingly of seeing groups of people arrive at a venue in a taxi van or similar transport, so that no-one had to worry about drinking and driving

A number of the younger women interviewed suggested that social media should be used as a way to get anti drink-driving messages across. They pointed out that Facebook and similar sites were an integral part of their daily lives. In spite of having had various programmes delivered as part of the school curriculum, and advocating for education as a way to approach the issue of not drinking and driving, young women felt that ultimately such programmes did not achieve success. While they remembered the stories around teens being injured or killed by drink-drivers, and campaigns by SADD (Students against drink-driving) and DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) – with one young woman saying that these programmes had made a 'huge impact' on her – these were not necessarily then seen as applicable to their own lives and behaviour. As one young woman summed it up:

The ads that I've seen, they are more towards youth, the ones I've seen – it's not focussed on women drink drivers, all about men, and the women are usually telling the men off but it could be just the same or it could be their children telling the mum off coming home drunk, like what if they lost their mum. ...But it needs to be more blunt ... something that's straightforward would hit home, or it should, but it's just hard to talk to people, to women that just don't like talking about that kind of stuff, it's like out of mind kind of thing. It's like where do you start 'so, drink-driving', how do you start that conversation? ... It's getting the

message across, I mean in college we didn't have anyone to come and talk to us about drink-driving or drugs, all we talked about was bullying and women's stuff like sex, no one ever talked to us [women] about drink-driving.

Several of the older women interviewed for our research said that they were 'tired of messages hammering away at us to be careful instead of dealing with the problem – which isn't us!'

Conclusion

The research overall provides an inconsistent picture of changes in women's drink-driving. While the data suggests some increase in conviction rates, this does not appear to be related in any consistent way to the crash injury data, or the other indicators. This echoes the earlier trend from the mid '80s to the mid '90s (see Bailey & Bailey 1997, Bailey 1989), when there was also a reported increase in women drink-driving and being involved in fatal and serious injury accidents. At that stage, drink-driving was also clearly identified as a male problem, but the proportionate increase in women drinking and driving in New Zealand was cited as part of an international trend (Waller & Blow 2002).

Women and drink-driving is a topic that appears to evoke emotional responses, but there is a paucity of evidence on which to base policy initiatives. The literature reviewed in this report indicates that New Zealand is one of a relatively small number of countries where the ratio of female to male drinkers is high. Drinking is therefore a 'taken-for-granted' aspect of the culture, though binge drinking and drink-driving are not approved of.

Women appeared to be more realistic than men about the effects of drinking and driving; yet while the proportion of young men (in the under 30 age group) reporting driving while slightly intoxicated decreased between 2002 and 2012, the proportion of young women doing so remained relatively stable. It is an open question as to whether this reflects the fact that public health messages relating to the dangers of drink-driving focus almost exclusively on young men. A further issue that came up in our interviews with the younger women was the difference between living in town, where there was a range of possible options for getting home after drinking, and living in a more rural location, where the options can be extremely limited.

Women caught drink-driving with children in their car have been of increasing interest to the media over the decade. There does not appear to be any systematic way of addressing this issue and the very real concerns that it raises. Expressions of moral outrage by the Judiciary, Police and others in positions of authority are not likely to achieve an effective solution, and this is an area that needs to be worked on.

While not trying to minimise the seriousness of women's drink-driving in any way, or the legitimate concern that the number of incidents involving women is rising, drink-driving remains a predominantly male problem, especially for young men. However, women who are involved in drink-driving incidents are seen to be particularly deviant. Even now, women are still thought of, albeit unconsciously, as the moral guardians of society – as 'God's police', in the words of Australian historian Anne Summer. Such behaviour is thus seen, by the media and those associated with the legal system, as an opportunity to take the moral high ground. These women therefore meet with

more condemnatory and patronising responses than men committing similar offences, demonstrating that somehow it is 'worse' if it is women who are involved in drink-driving incidents.

Campaigns which continue to address drink-driving as a 'male' problem, and predominantly one for young men, are not targeting the increasing proportion of women who are being convicted for drink-driving offences. The findings of previous research on the success of drink-driving messages are equivocal, as our research reinforced, and moral outrage is certainly not the answer. While there appears to be no easy policy solution, this is an issue that has to be addressed. On a broader horizon, the ready acceptance of New Zealand's heavy drinking culture has to be tackled, with messages around moderation and drinking less for the whole population suggested (personal communication Professor Sellman). More targeting of specific groups with appropriate messages is an adjunct of this. Furthermore, at a New Zealand Fire Service seminar in 2011, where BERL was presenting the results of research on alcohol and fires, it was reported that there were too many messages around the effects of alcohol, each taking a sector specific approach, such as drink-driving, drinking and water safety, or drinking and family violence. It was suggested that there needs to be a consistent approach which encompasses all the sectors and the variety of harms that can result from misuse of alcohol. While this contention was supported by those attending the forum, and an interdepartmental working group had been established earlier to address this issue, nothing has since happened to progress the matter any further. In an age of gender equality, there is a need to ensure that women's drink-driving is treated as a serious issue, and strategies to deal with the problem are formulated.

Recommendations

It is recommended that specific targeted strategies are developed for:

- young women – to reinforce the message of a sober driver. This could be further developed as part of the school curriculum;
- mothers – pointing out the dangers of drinking and then driving with children in the car, perhaps as part of a Plunket educational initiative;
- investigating the practicality of a 'unified' message around drinking and a range of activities, such as driving, boating, cooking.

Appendix: Information Sheet, Consent Form and Interview Check List



Participant Information Sheet for Research on Women and Drink-Driving

There has been a lot of discussion recently around women's drinking behaviour, especially among young women and older women. Greg Martin and Jenny Neale, with the assistance of Nicola Grace, who are all based in the Health Services Research Centre at Victoria University, are carrying out this research.

We are interested in hearing your views on women and drink-driving, what you think is happening and why and any ideas you might have about how this could be dealt with. We invite you to take part either in a focus group or in an individual interview, whichever you prefer, lasting around 45 minutes. Focus group participants will be asked to keep the identities and opinions of the others in their group confidential.

The information from these interviews and focus groups will be combined and along with relevant statistics, an analysis of media reporting on the topic, and other published data, such as journal articles, will form the basis of the final report to the Trustees of the John Bailey Trust. It will not be possible for you to be identified personally. Only grouped and anonymised responses will be presented in this report. All material collected will be kept confidential. It is also intended that one or more articles will be submitted for publication in scholarly journals and/or presented at a conference. .

This research project been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee.'

If you have any further questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me/us at:

Gregory.martin@vuw.ac.nz or phone 463 6524

jenny.neale@vuw.ac.nz or phone 463 5827

nicola.grace@vuw.ac.nz or phone 463 6949

Thank you for your interest in our research.



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Women and Drink-Driving

Researchers: Greg Martin, Jenny Neale and Nicola Grace

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that any identifying information I provide will be kept confidential to the researchers.

I understand the results will be presented in a final report to the John Bailey Trust, as well as in other academic publications, my name will not be used, and that no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me.

I understand that any tape recorded interviews will be wiped at the end of the project.

I agree to keep confidential the identities and opinions of all participants.

I agree to take part in this research.

Signed:

Name of participant

I would like to receive a summary of the results of the research when it is completed.
To be sent to:

(email or other address)

Interview Checklist

We are exploring attitudes to and behaviours around drinking and driving, something that has been discussed quite a bit in the media. We are really interested in what you think and the sorts of things you and your friends do and have done.

- 1) To start with, tell me what you think about drinking and driving?
Probe for any commonalities between you/your friends/colleagues
- 2) Do you think that your attitudes have changed over time?
If yes, in what ways?
- 3) What has influenced you to change/not change?
- 4) Why do you think people drink and drive?
- 5) What experience have you had around drink-driving?
- 6) Do you know anyone who has driven after drinking – a little, some, lots?
- 7) What do you think influenced them to do this?
- 8) Why do you think people don't drink and drive? What stops them?
- 9) Any other comments about drinking and driving?

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