

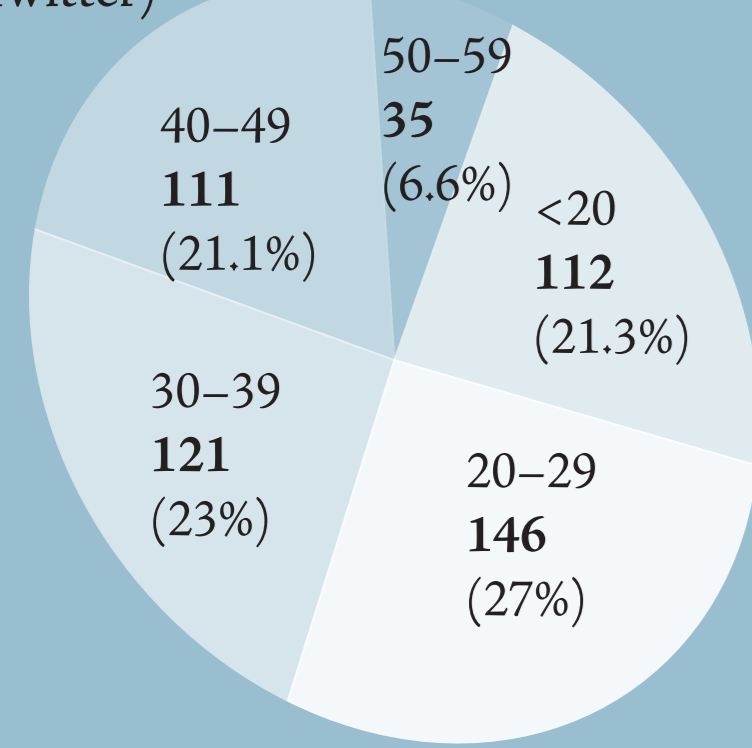
# Why do adults drink at home? An internet survey

## Introduction

From 2001 to 2006, consumption of alcohol per head of population rose within the home by an average of 5%, whilst alcohol consumption on licensed premises fell by 40% from 2001-2008 (Statistics on Alcohol 2010). Despite the increasing relative importance of home drinking, media and policy recognition has come late; although government alcohol strategies have begun to address home drinking, media reports continue to construct problematic drinking, or "binge drinking", largely in terms of young people's drinking on licensed premises in town centres. Much academic literature has followed existing policy concerns (Jayne et al 2008), which Knale and French (2008) attribute to the re-emergence of an epidemiological model of alcohol-related harm which focuses on specific geographical loci of concentrated drinking behaviour.

## Methodology

- Systematic literature review
- Multi-choice internet survey, drawn up by Dr. John Foster and checked and modified by Colin Ferguson and project statistician Swatee Patel.
- Published online using SurveyGizmo software
- Participants initially recruited from two cohorts: University of Greenwich staff, contacted via email containing weblink to the online survey; Social medial invitations using (Facebook and Twitter)



## Conclusions

Some of our findings appear to reflect the focus-group findings of Foster et al (2010) and Holloway et al (2008), particularly in relation to issues of convenience and relaxation, but motivations where participants were clearly required to state a preference in terms of drinking location gave more ambiguous results: in particular, few participants cited discomfort or safety as a motivation for drinking at home: whether this reflects a greater understanding of risks associated with home drinking (Foster et al 2010 found that focus group participants were able to identify acute risks particularly associated at home) or that perception of danger does not affect drinking behaviour is an issue that requires further research. Neither the

## References

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 Morton C, 'Ban alcohol loyalty points to save health', *BBC News*, 12 May 2010, www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/8637969.stm (Accessed 25 October 2011)  
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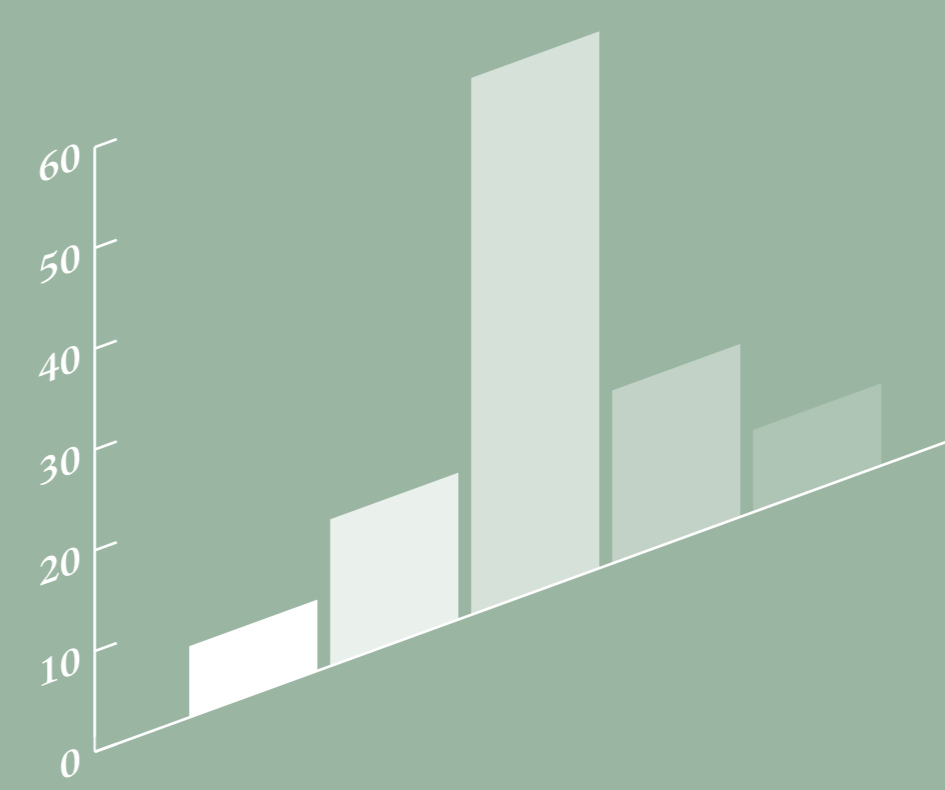
More recently, a small number of papers have emerged dealing specifically with home drinking, and drinkers' motivations for drinking at home and their understandings of the dangers involved. Holloway et al (2008) found home drinkers to be largely unaware of alcohol-related risks from drinking at home, and to be motivated by matters of convenience, relaxation, safety and autonomy. Foster et al (2010) made similar findings, though with a more ambiguous message on understandings of alcohol related harm. In response to these findings, we devised a questionnaire to establish the psychometric properties of home drinking, as a means of being conducting larger-scale empirical studies into motivations for drinking at home. Preliminary prevalence data is supplied here.

## Survey structure

- Demographic information – age, gender, household makeup, income
- System also logged country and city, and how participant was recruited
- Alcohol Use Dependency Identification Test (AUDIT) – a set of questions forming an international diagnostics to identify hazardous and harmful drinking behaviours
- Frequency and level of alcohol consumption
- Motivations for drinking at home
- Activities associated with drinking at home
- Alcohol purchasing behaviour
- Attitudes towards various alcohol-related issues
- Female n = 304 (59.7%); Male n = 221 (42.1)
- UK n = 493 (98.2%), with almost all the remainder from the Republic of Ireland or the USA

smoking ban nor childcare appeared as significant motivations for home drinking, again in contrast to Foster and Holloway's findings: however, responses indicated that few of our participants are parents or smokers, suggesting that further research specifically targeting these groups is necessary, and although few of our participants appear to engage in pre-loading studies, generally above the 18-24 year old group most dealt with in pre-loading studies. More detailed analysis of the data is currently being carried out at Glyndwr University, and by ourselves, with view to publication, and validation of the questionnaire as a tool for future research.

## Home drinking



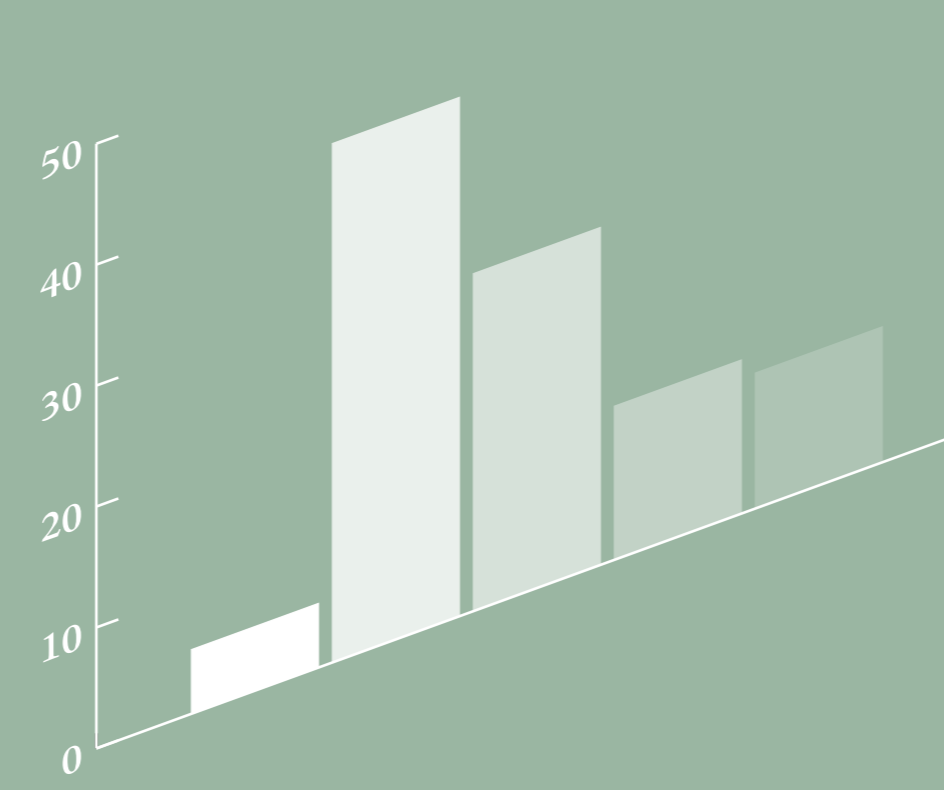
"I prefer to drink alcohol at home rather than at pubs/restaurants, etc"

Convenience and relaxation emerge as the most common motivations for drinking at home, with 51.7% and 48.1% respectively either agreeing or strongly disagreeing, compared to only 17.6% and 23.9% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. This is consistent with the findings of Foster et al (2010) and Holloway et al (2008). However, we must point out that neither of these questions posit drinking at home in opposition to drinking on licensed premises.

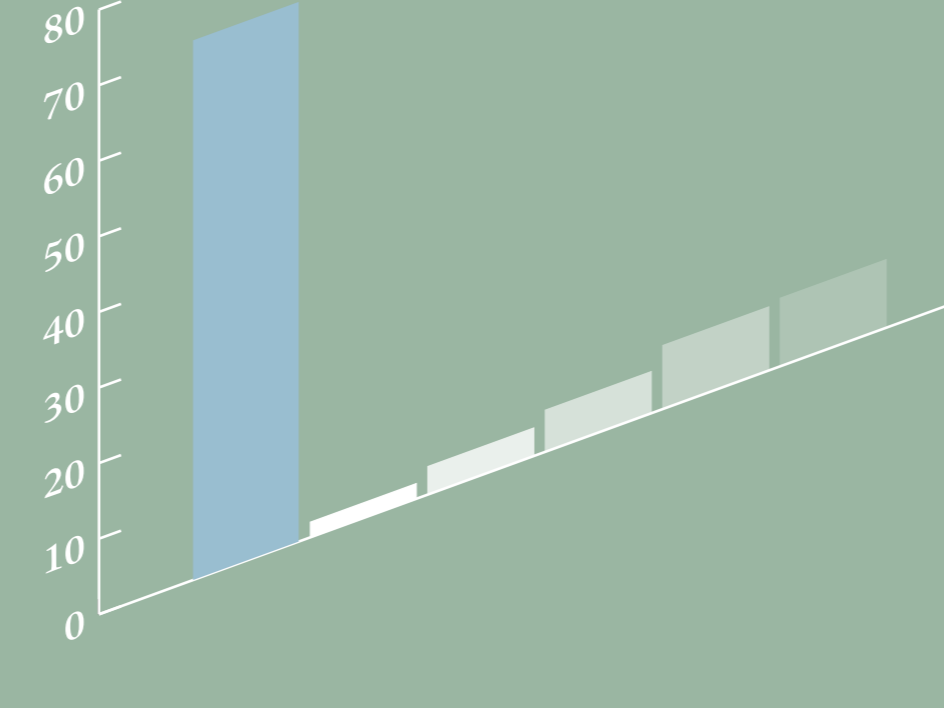
A high proportion of participants (43.4%) agreed that they drank outside the home because it was cheaper than drinking on licensed premises. This question does present drinking at home in opposition to licensed premises in opposition, suggesting that for many participants, price is an influencing factor in choosing to drink at home rather than on licensed premises. This is also in tune with Foster's and Holloway's work, where focus group participants frequently raised the issue of price. However, a significant minority of participants 26.7% disagreed or strong disagreed with the statement and a further 30% neither agreed nor disagreed. It is unclear whether this indicates that some participants do not believe that drinking at home is cheaper than drinking on licensed premises, or whether price is not a motivating factor in their drinking behaviour.

## Legend

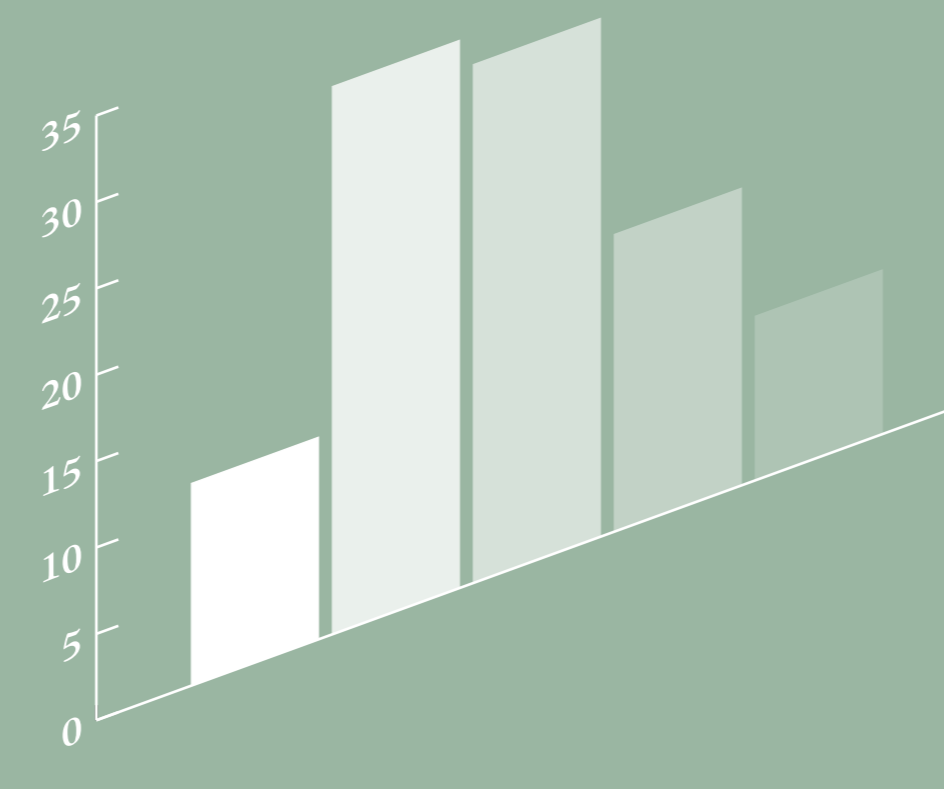
Not applicable
Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree



"I drink alcohol at home because it helps me relax"



"I drink alcohol at home because it is difficult to smoke in licensed premises"

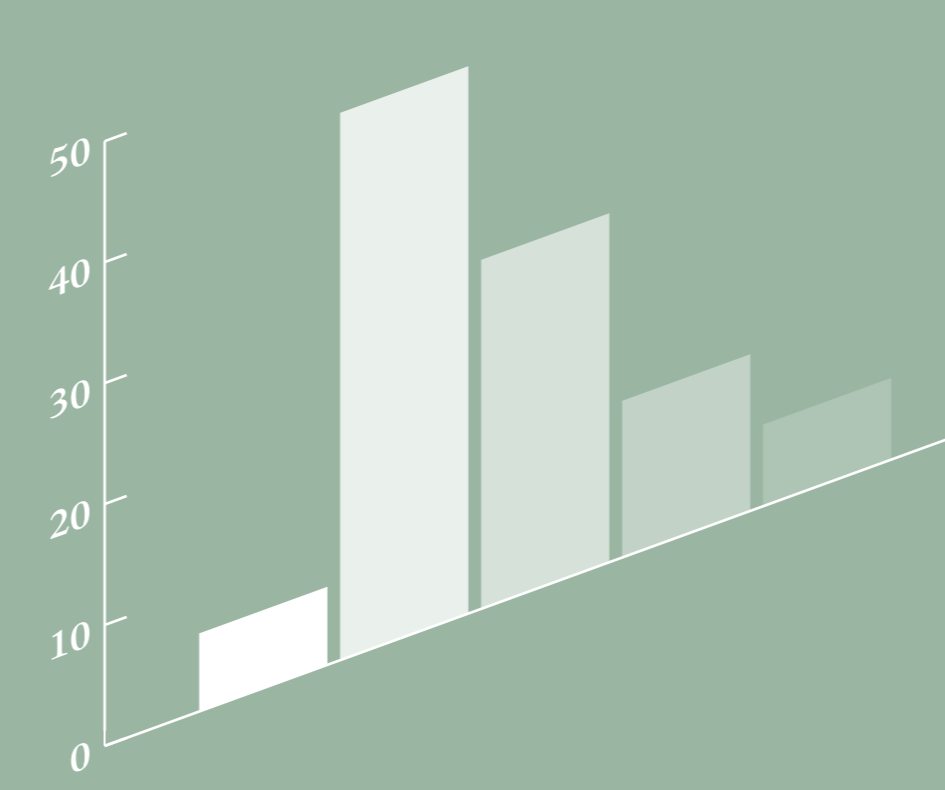


"I drink alcohol at home because it is cheaper than at pubs/restaurants, etc"

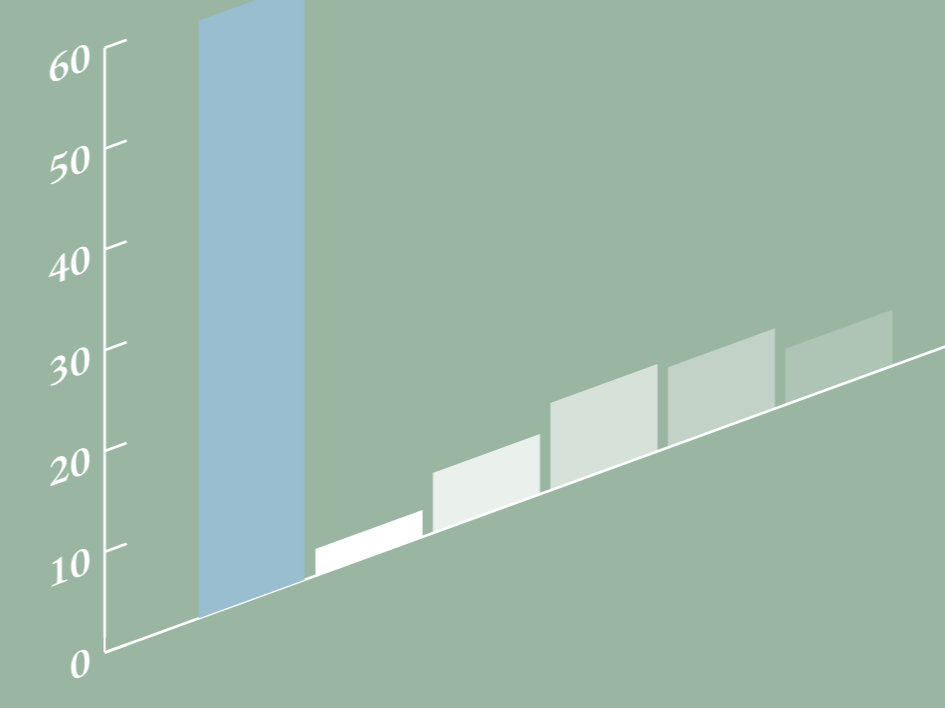
## AUDIT scores

Females exhibit a lower mean AUDIT score than males and also less spread. Sig = .002  
 Scores of 8 and above are significantly predictive of harmful or hazardous drinking behaviours (Babor et al)  
 Mean AUDIT score = 8.1 Median = 7.0  
 Although the mean score is above the point indicative of a high likelihood of hazardous or harmful drinking, most participants do not engage in hazardous or harmful drinking behaviour, as mean scores are positively skewed by a relatively small number of participants with very high scores.  
 Due to the purposely-anonymous nature of the survey, we were unable to offer an advice or intervention to those whose scores indicated hazardous and harmful drinking behaviour.

Gender	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error mean
Audit total	male 218	8.9404	5.76347	.39035
	female 300	7.4367	4.90982	.28347



"I drink alcohol at home because it is convenient"



"I drink alcohol at home because I have children I cannot leave if I go out"

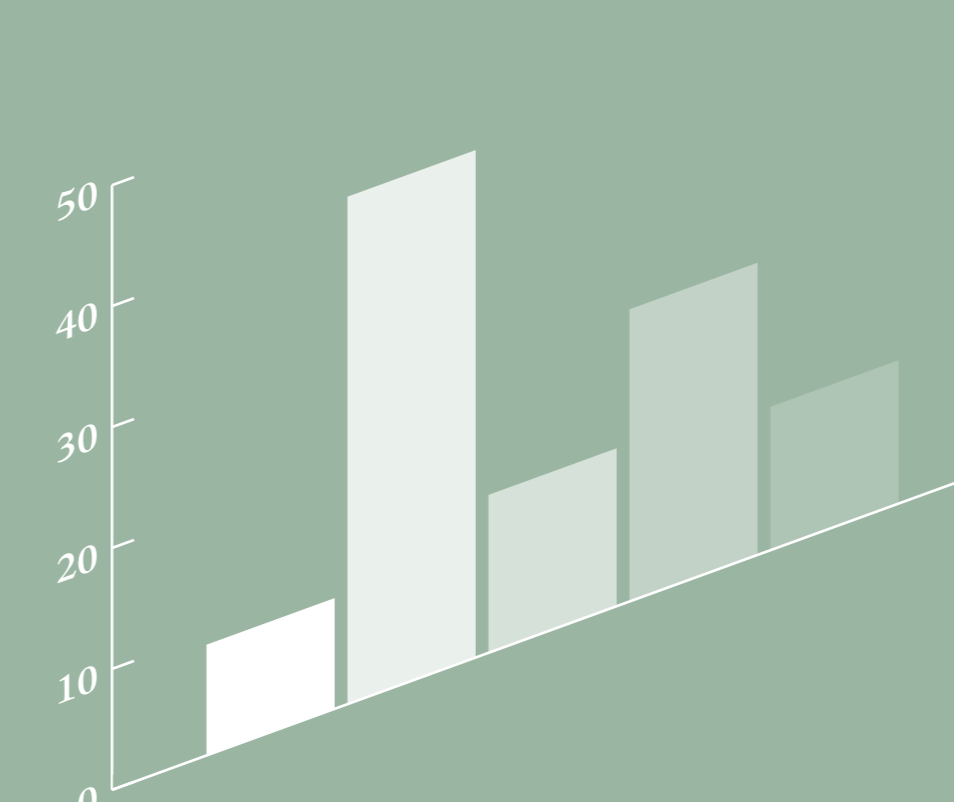
Chi-Square tests: "I prefer to drink alcohol at home rather than a pub/restaurant etc."			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.565 <sup>a</sup>	4	.073
Likelihood ratio	8.487	4	.075
Linear-by-linear association	2.460	1	.117
N of valid cases	454		

<sup>a</sup> 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 13.32.



We had hypothesised that females may be more inclined to prefer drinking at home, due to historical social norms of regarding public houses as "male" environments, social acceptability and due to issues of childcare. However, we found no statistically-significant gendered difference in preference for drinking location. While Foster et al (2010) and Holloway et al (2008) focus groups generated the discussion of drinking at home due to difficulties of childcare (conversely, some participants suggested that the presence of young children at home deterred them from consuming alcohol), the majority of our participants answered n/a, likely indicating that they did not have children. This likely reflects the atypical demographics of a group drawn from university employees and social media users. A similarly large figure responded that the issue of smoking ban was not applicable: of those who did not, many more disagreed or strongly disagreed that they drank at home due to difficulties smoking than those who agreed or strongly agreed. This runs contrary to Adda et al's (2006) findings that the smoking ban had negatively impacted on pubgoing in Scotland.

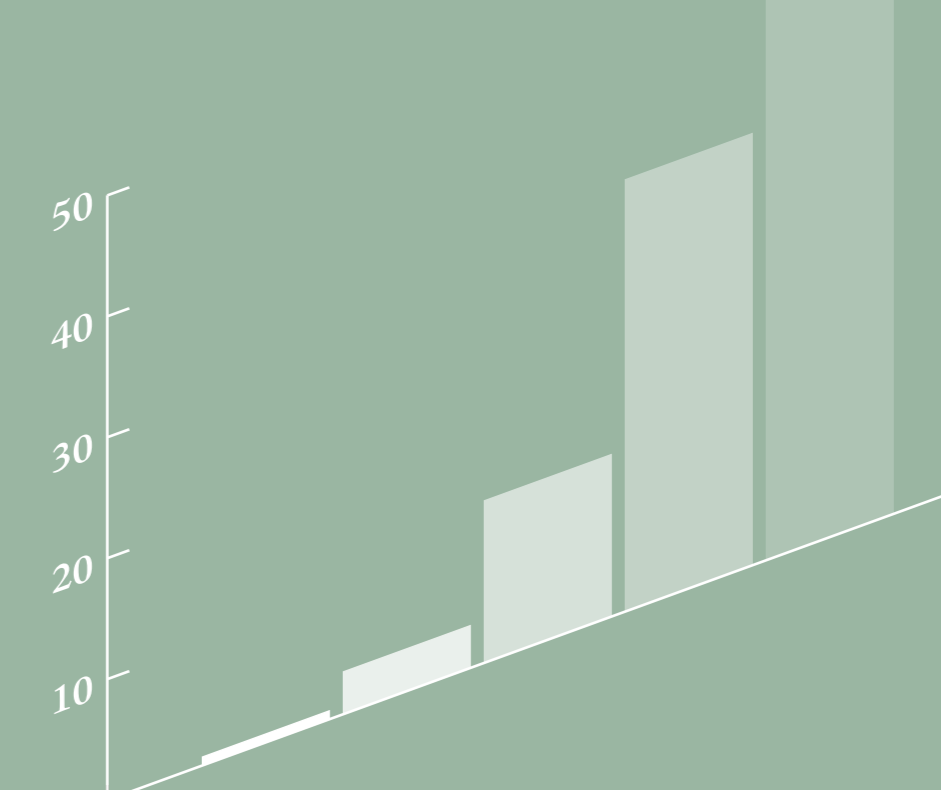
## Purchasing habits



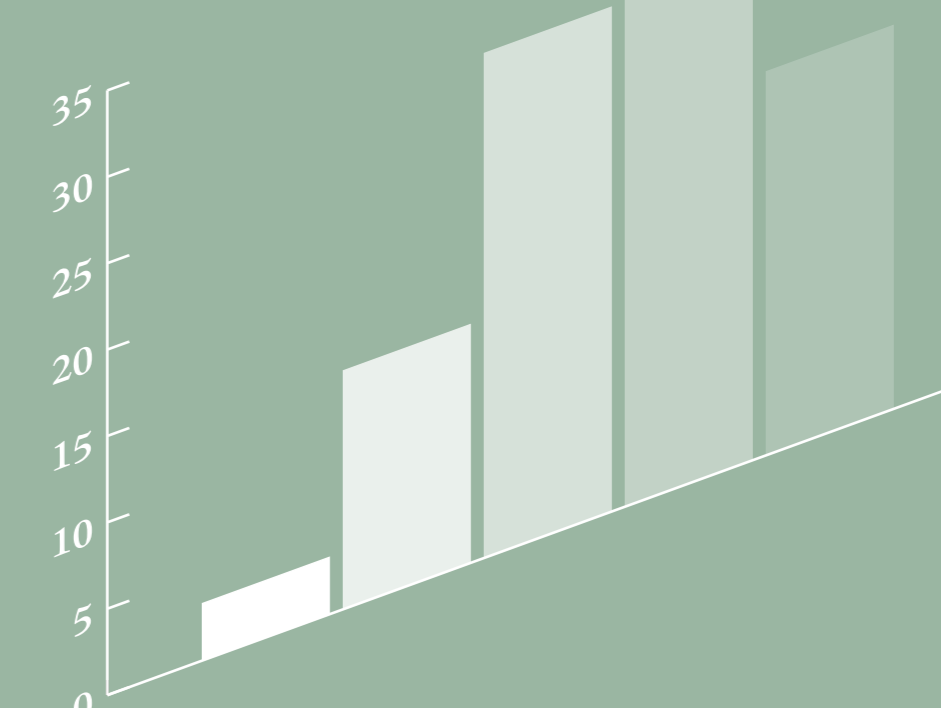
"I regularly purchase alcohol as part of my/our normal household shopping"

51% percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they regularly purchased alcohol as part of their weekly shopping, compared to only 19.5% who agreed or strongly agreed that they regularly purchased alcohol from off-licenses. This resonates with the theme of convenience found in Holloway et al (2008), and is consistent of the findings of the 2008 Family Food Module of the Living Costs and Food Survey, which showed the supermarket to be the favoured location to purchase alcohol. The issue of "pre-loading" has become prominent in policy and media debate in recent years (Morton 2010, Scottish Executive Social Research 2007), particularly due to its association with negative outcomes and higher alcohol consumption (alcohol consumed at home is not at the expense of alcohol consumed when out) (Hughes et al 2008). Holloway et al (2008) found that around 40% of their participants pre-loaded. However, only 22.9% of participants in our study agreed or strongly agreed that they drank alcohol before going out, compared to 51.1% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. This may reflect a more affluent population drawn principally from university employees.

## Safety



"I drink alcohol at home because I do not feel comfortable drinking out"



"I drink alcohol at home because it is safer than going out"

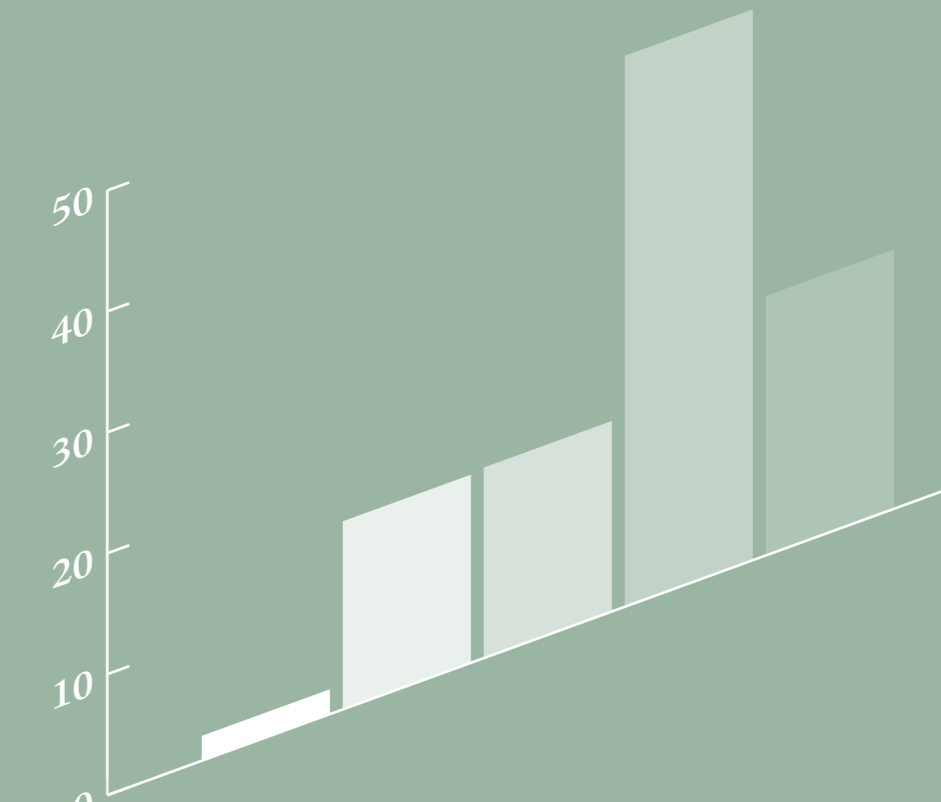
The issue of safety, both in relation to pubs themselves and to generally being outside after dark, arose in Foster et al (2010) and Holloway et al's (2008) studies. However only 13.8% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they drank at home because they felt unsafe drinking outside the home. Importantly, there was no significant difference between men and women on the issue of safety, although the question does not distinguish between those who not believe drinking at home is safer than drinking on licensed premises, and those whose drinking behaviour is not influenced by such a belief. The vast majority of participants (82.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they drank at home because they did not feel comfortable drinking on licensed premises. Again, there was no statistically-significant difference between male and female participants in this respect.

Chi-Square tests: "I drink alcohol at home because it is safer than going out"			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.997 <sup>a</sup>	4	.011
Likelihood ratio	13.056	4	.011
Linear-by-linear association	9.765	1	.002
N of valid cases	454		

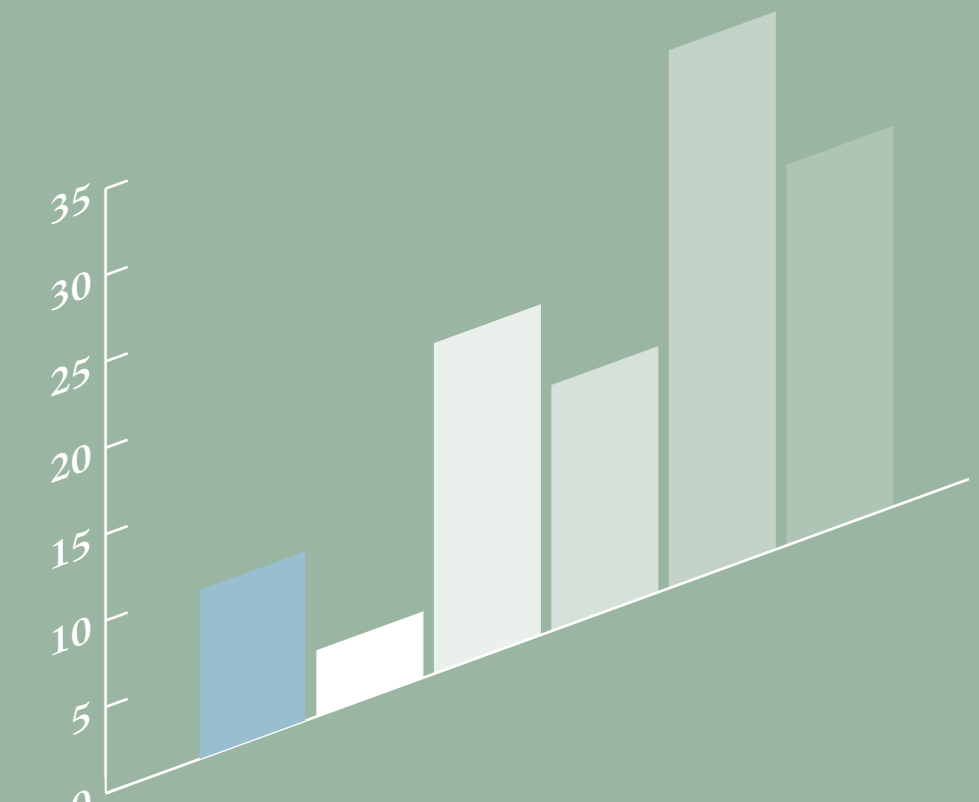
<sup>a</sup> 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.24.

Chi-Square tests: "I drink alcohol at home because it I do not feel comfortable drinking out"			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.768 <sup>a</sup>	4	.312
Likelihood ratio	4.770	4	.312
Linear-by-linear association	.173	1	.678
N of valid cases	453		

<sup>a</sup> 2 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.25.



"I regularly purchase alcohol in an off-licence"



"I drink alcohol at home before going out to a pub, club or restaurant"