



Recent alcohol use among a sample of people who inject drugs, Darwin, NT, 2018-2022

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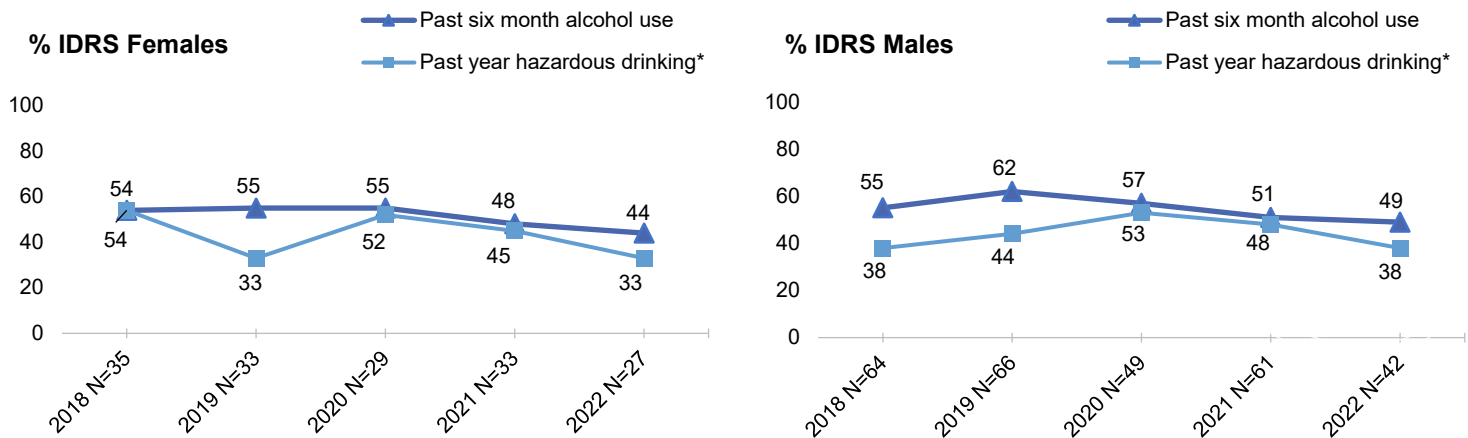
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Introduction

Alcohol use leads to significant mortality and morbidity in Australia, as well as social and economic harms (1). The burden of disease due to alcohol is typically higher for males than females (2). In the Northern Territory, rates of alcohol use and alcohol-related deaths and hospitalisations have been among the highest of all jurisdictions in Australia, with more recent research indicating that alcohol use and related harms remain a significant concern (3-4). Further, risky drinking among a sample of people who use ecstasy and/or other illicit stimulants in Darwin is high (5), but little is known about alcohol use among other samples of people who use drugs. This bulletin aims to describe past six-month alcohol use and risky patterns of use, using AUDIT-C score, for males and females among a sample of people who regularly inject illicit drugs in Darwin, NT, from 2018 to 2022.

Results

Figure 1. Past six-month alcohol use and past year hazardous drinking among female and male respondents, Darwin IDRS, 2018-2022



*AUDIT-C score is considered to indicate hazardous drinking if ≥ 3 for females and ≥ 4 for males. Participants who identified as gender other than female or male excluded from analysis due to low numbers. Methodology of 2018-2022 IDRS found [here](#).

Discussion

Despite fluctuations, reported past six-month use of alcohol among males and females in the Darwin IDRS sample has declined slightly over time, with the percentage of males reporting recent alcohol use slightly higher than that of females. Past year hazardous drinking has remained high among both females and males in the Darwin IDRS sample, with particularly high numbers in 2020. Alcohol use may contribute to the risk of poor health among this population, which is already vulnerable to a variety of injecting-related and general health issues (6). This, combined with our findings, highlights the potential benefit of interventions to reduce the use of alcohol and subsequent harms among people who inject drugs in Darwin, NT.

References

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