

County Variation in Alcohol Behaviours and Problems

This *eBulletin* presents survey data on the prevalence of alcohol-related problems and behaviours according to Ontario county (also called regional or district municipality). The data are from five cycles of the *CAMH Monitor*, conducted between 2000 and 2004. There are 49 counties in Ontario, but data are shown here only for those with a total sample size of 100 or more respondents (33 of the 49).

Variation by county is notable. As seen in Table 1 and Figure 1, drinking and driving, which averages 8.8% provincially, varies from 5.8% to 15.6%, with 12 counties showing rates that are significantly above average. Hazardous drinking averages 13.5% provincially, but varies from 8.2% to 22.6%, with 5 counties showing above average rates and 2 showing below average rates (Table 1, Figure 2). Reports of at least one problem from drinking averages 19.2% provincially, but varies from 7.8% to 26.3%, with 4 counties showing above average rates and 1 showing below average (Table 1). Finally, binge drinking once a week or more often, which averages 11.6%, varies from 6.1% to 16.3%, with 2 counties showing above average rates (Table 1).

Several counties exceed the provincial average on all or most of these alcohol problem measures. Residents from Middlesex report above average rates for all 4 indicators, and residents from Simcoe and Wellington report above average rates for 3 indicators (see Table 1).

Figure 1. Percentage Reporting Drinking and Driving by Ontario County, 2000–2004 CAMH Monitor

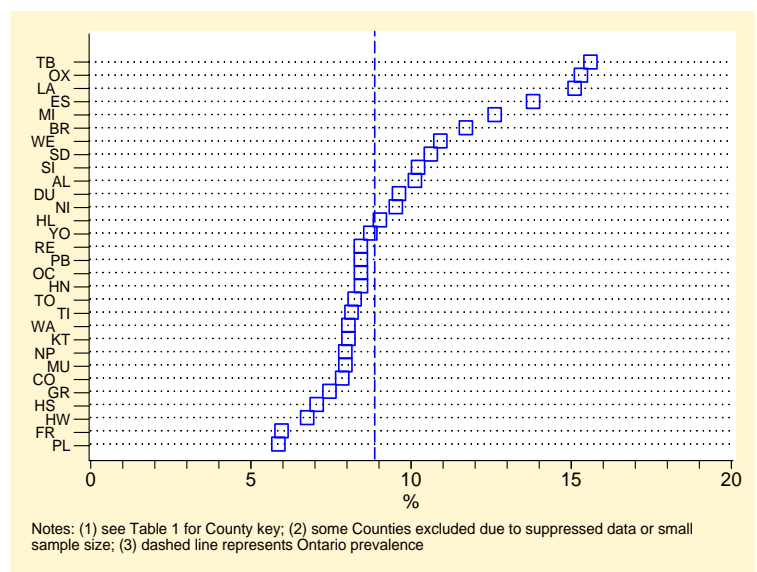


Figure 2. Percentage Reporting Hazardous Drinking by Ontario County, 2000–2004 CAMH Monitor

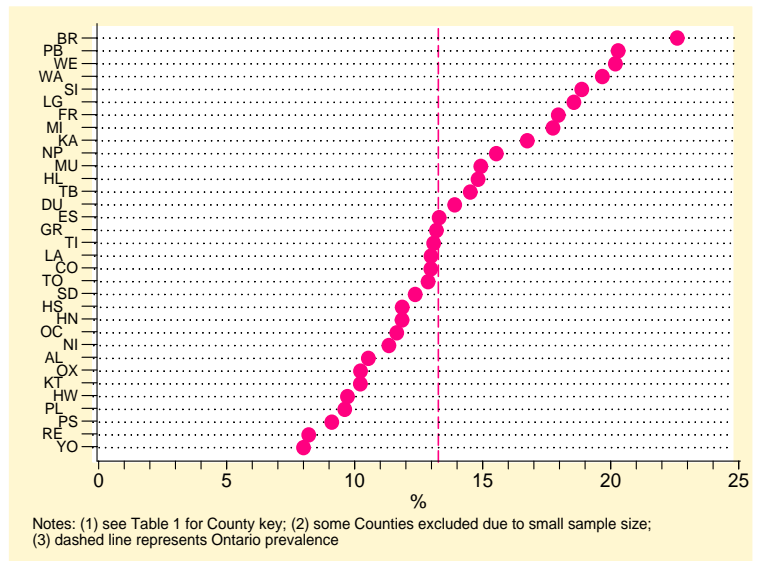
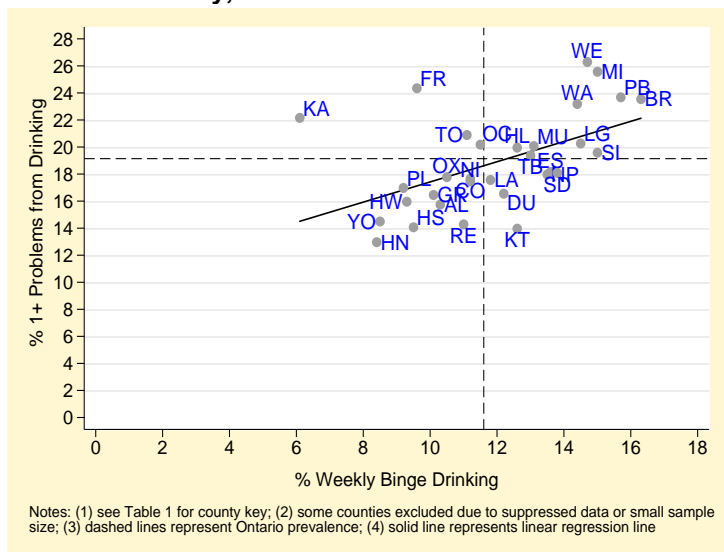


Figure 3 shows the association between weekly binge drinking and problems experienced as a result of one's drinking. Not surprisingly, the most notable feature of this graph is the strong correlation showing that counties with a high rate of weekly binge drinking are also likely to report alcohol-related problems.

Figure 3. The Relationship Between Weekly Binge Drinking and Reporting 1+ Problems from Drinking, by Ontario County, 2000–2004 CAMH Monitor



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To receive future issues of the *eBulletin*, please contact Maureen Kothare via email at: maureen_kothare@camh.net

Media Enquiries: Tel: 416-595-6015

Methods:

The *CAMH Monitor* is an addiction and mental health random, anonymous telephone survey of the Ontario population aged 18 and older, administered by the Institute for Social Research, York University. The *CAMH Monitor* is conducted on an ongoing monthly basis and employs a stratified (region) two-stage (household, respondent) probability sample design. The following 6 regional strata are used: Toronto, Central East, East, Central West, West, and North. The annual sample size of the CM averages around 2,400 respondents. The results shown here are based on merged data, containing CM data from 2000 to 2004, inclusive. The total sample size across the five years is 12,476.

All survey estimates were weighted, and variance and statistical tests were corrected for the sampling design.

Terminology:

- **Drinking and Driving** was measured with the question: "How many times in the past 12 months have you driven a motor vehicle after having two or more drinks in the previous hour?" Prevalence is based on those with a valid driver's licence who report having done so at least once during the 12 months before the survey.
- **Hazardous Drinking** was measured by the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT), which is a 10-item instrument designed to detect problematic drinking at the less severe end of the spectrum. The percentage reported here is based on a cut-off score of at least 8 out of 40. This cut-off score represents an established high-risk pattern of drinking that increases the likelihood of future medical and physical problems, or indicates harmful consequences of use already experienced. The reference period for the AUDIT is the past 12 months before the survey.
- **Weekly Binge Drinking** is defined as drinking 5 or more drinks on one occasion at least once a week during the 12 months before the survey.
- **1+ Problems from Drinking** is based on the 7 AUDIT items that measure problems experienced due to drinking during the 12 months before the survey. These are: lack of control over drinking, failure to meet expectations, drinking first thing in the morning, feelings of guilt, black-outs, injuries due to drinking, and family/friend or doctor expressed concern about one's drinking.
- **95% Confidence Interval (CI)** can be crudely interpreted as being 95% likely to include the "true" percentage value if every adult in Ontario was surveyed.
- **Significant Difference** refers to a difference between two percentages that is not likely due to chance. For example, a difference found at the $p < .05$ level of statistical significance is one that is less than 5% likely to occur by chance alone.

Source:

These *CAMH Monitor* results are based on unpublished statistical analyses. For more details on alcohol and other drug use among Ontario adults, please see:

Adlaf, E.M., & Ialomiteanu, A. (2002). *CAMH Monitor eReport: Addiction and Mental Health Indicators Among Ontario Adults in 2001, and Changes Since 1977*. CAMH Research Document Series No. 12. Toronto: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. [electronic document]; available: http://www.camh.net/research/camh_monitor.html .

Table 1. Percentage (95% CI) Reporting Alcohol-Related Behaviours and Problems, 2000 – 2004

Ontario County	N	Drinking & Driving	Hazardous Drinking	Weekly Binge Drinking	1+ Problems from Drinking
Algoma (AL)	449	10.1 (7.2-13.8)	10.7 (8.0-14.2)	10.3 (7.6-13.7)	15.8 (12.6-19.8)
Brant (BR)	129	11.7 (6.7-19.8)	22.6 (15.8-31.3)	16.3 (10.7-24.1)	23.6 (16.8-32.1)
Cochrane (CO)	271	7.8 (4.6-13.1)	13.1 (9.2-18.4)	11.2 (7.5-16.3)	17.7 (13.2-23.3)
Durham (DU)	380	9.6 (6.5-14.0)	14.0 (10.5-18.5)	12.2 (8.9-16.6)	16.6 (12.9-21.1)
Essex (ES)	460	13.8 (10.6-17.7)	13.4 (10.4-17.2)	13.6 (10.4-17.4)	18.2 (14.8-22.3)
Frontenac (FR)	203	5.9 (3.0-11.4)	18.0 (12.4-25.2)	9.6 (6.1-14.8)	24.4 (18.2-31.8)
Grey (GR)	152	7.4 (3.7-14.3)	13.3 (8.5-20.3)	10.1 (6.0-16.5)	16.5 (11.2-23.8)
Haldimand-Norfolk (HN)	119	8.4 (4.5-15.0)	12.0 (6.5-21.2)	8.4 (3.8-17.4)	13.0 (7.8-20.9)
Halton (HL)	329	9.0 (5.9-13.3)	14.9 (11.0-20.0)	12.6 (9.0-17.3)	20.0 (15.6-25.3)
Hamilton-Wentworth (HW)	413	6.7 (3.9-11.1)	9.9 (6.8-14.1)	9.3 (6.5-13.3)	16.0 (12.4-20.6)
Hastings (HS)	183	7.0 (3.9-12.1)	12.0 (7.7-18.3)	9.5 (5.8-15.1)	14.1 (9.3-20.9)
Kenora (KA)	159	s	16.8 (11.3-24.1)	6.1 (3.1-11.7)	22.2 (16.2-29.8)
Kent (KT)	163	8.0 (4.4-14.1)	10.4 (6.2-16.8)	12.6 (7.9-19.5)	14.0 (9.1-20.8)
Lambton (LA)	153	15.1 (9.6-22.9)	13.1 (8.1-20.5)	11.8 (7.0-19.3)	17.6 (11.6-25.7)
Leeds & Grenville (LG)	131	s	18.6 (12.1-27.4)	14.5 (9.0-22.4)	20.3 (13.7-29.1)
Middlesex (MI)	580	12.6 (9.6-16.3)	17.8 (14.6-21.6)	15.0 (12.0-18.7)	25.6 (21.9-29.8)
Muskoka (MU)	228	7.9 (4.5-13.3)	15.0 (10.3-21.2)	13.1 (8.9-18.8)	20.1 (15.0-26.4)
Niagara (NI)	397	9.5 (6.8-13.2)	11.5 (8.5-15.4)	11.2 (8.3-15.0)	17.5 (13.8-22.0)
Nipissing (NP)	343	7.9 (5.0-12.2)	15.6 (11.6-20.5)	13.5 (9.9-18.1)	18.0 (13.9-23.0)
Ottawa-Carleton (OC)	993	8.4 (6.6-10.7)	11.8 (9.7-14.3)	11.5 (9.5-13.9)	20.2 (17.6-23.1)
Oxford (OX)	144	15.3 (10.0-22.8)	10.4 (6.2-17.0)	10.5 (6.3-16.9)	17.8 (12.2-25.4)
Parry Sound (PS)	130	s	9.3 (4.9-16.9)	s	7.8 (3.9-15.0)
Peel (PL)	605	5.8 (4.0-8.3)	9.8 (7.5-12.8)	9.2 (6.9-12.2)	17.0 (13.9-20.5)
Peterborough (PB)	138	8.4 (4.4-15.4)	20.3 (13.6-29.4)	15.7 (10.0-23.8)	23.7 (16.8-32.4)
Renfrew (RE)	140	8.4 (4.6-15.0)	8.4 (4.7-14.7)	11.0 (6.6-17.9)	14.3 (9.3-21.3)
Simcoe (SI)	349	10.2 (6.9-14.8)	18.9 (14.6-24.1)	15.0 (11.3-19.7)	19.6 (15.4-24.6)
Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry (SD)	141	10.6 (6.2-17.5)	12.5 (7.3-20.6)	13.8 (8.4-21.6)	18.1 (12.2-25.9)
Thunder Bay (TB)	418	15.6 (11.9-20.1)	14.6 (11.3-18.8)	13.0 (9.9-17.0)	19.4 (15.6-24.0)
Timiskaming (TI)	133	8.1 (4.0-15.6)	13.2 (8.0-20.8)	s	13.6 (8.2-21.5)
Toronto (TO)	2,018	8.2 (6.8-9.9)	13.0 (11.4-14.8)	11.1 (9.6-12.8)	20.9 (19.0-23.0)
Waterloo (WA)	425	8.0 (5.6-11.3)	19.7 (15.6-24.4)	14.4 (11.0-18.6)	23.2 (19.1-28.0)
Wellington (WE)	189	10.9 (6.9-16.8)	20.2 (14.4-27.6)	14.7 (9.8-21.5)	26.3 (19.9-33.9)
York (YO)	403	8.7 (6.0-12.4)	8.2 (5.8-11.5)	8.5 (5.9-12.1)	14.5 (11.1-18.8)
ONTARIO	12,476	8.8 (8.2-9.5)	13.5 (12.8-14.2)	11.6 (10.9-12.3)	19.2 (18.4-20.0)

Notes: (1) The following 16 counties were excluded due to samples of less than 100 people: Bruce, Dufferin, Elgin, Haliburton, Huron, Lanark, Lennox & Addington, Manitoulin, Northumberland, Perth, Prescott & Russell, Prince Edward, Rainy River, Sudbury District, Sudbury Region, and Victoria; (2) a shaded cell indicates that the percentage is significantly different (blue=higher, green=lower) than Ontario, $p < .05$; (3) “s” indicates estimate suppressed due to unreliability.