

# **Women and Alcohol**

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# Two stages of research

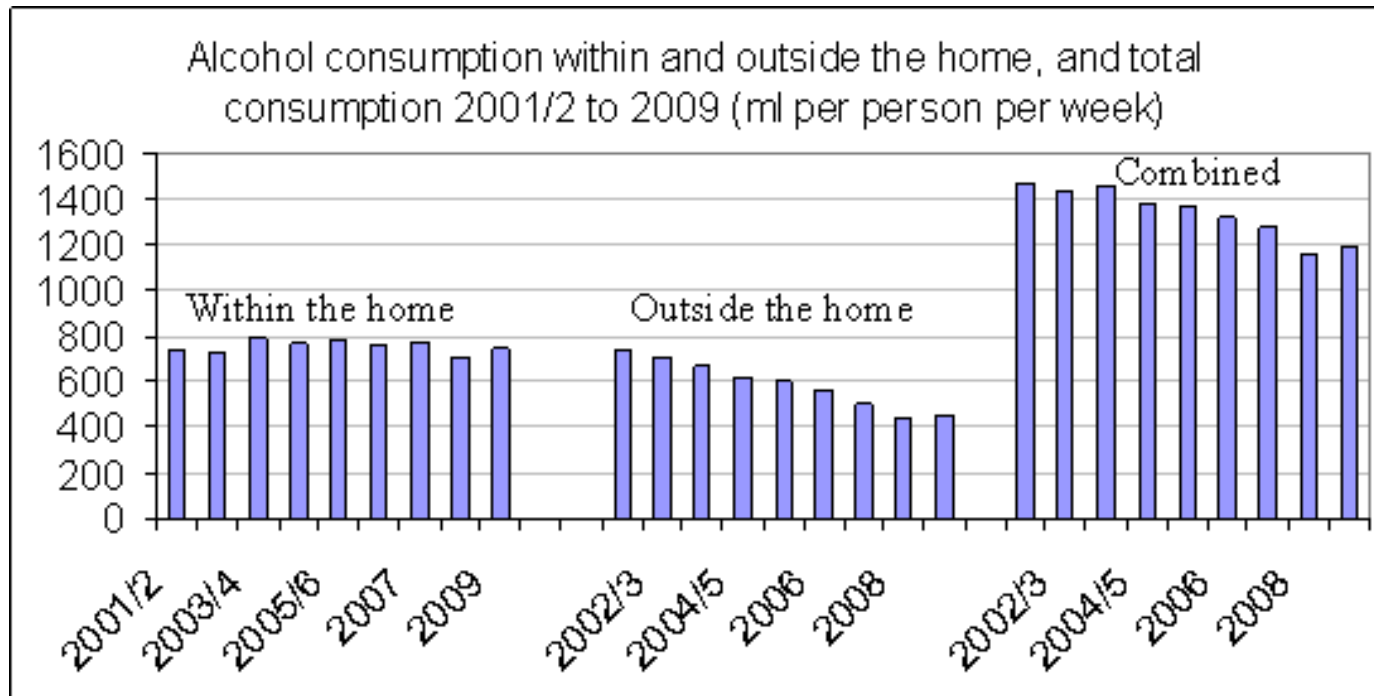
- Stage One – literature review  
<http://www.reesjeffreys.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Women-and-Drinking-Literature-Review-2012.pdf>
- Stage Two (on going – 2013)  
Empirical research with stakeholders and women drinkers in four areas of UK

# The general drink problem

- Binge drinking defined in UK health literature
  - 6 or more units a day men (recommended 3-4)
  - 4 or more units a day women (recommended 2-3)
- 10% population drink 44% of all alcohol consumed
- 75% alcohol drunk by people who exceed the recommended limits
- 28% men and 44% women didn't drink at all in previous week (NHS Health & Social Care Information Centre, 2010)

# Consumption is falling

- 1400ml per person per week in 2000 - 1200ml in 2009
- Reduction comes from outside home
- 63% of all alcohol drunk is within home (NHS HSCIC, 2011)



# Age related consumption

- Fall in alcohol consumption unequal across age groups
  - Fastest in 16-24 year olds
  - Least amongst middle aged and oldest
- 16-24 age group still has highest weekly consumption because drink heavily on few occasions (e.g. at weekends)
- In North West - males can drink 27.2 units and females 16.5 in an evening (Hughes et al, 2009)

# Income effects

Alcohol consumption rises with household income (NHS HSCIC, 2011)

- Weekly income >£1000 79% men & 71% women drank in last week and more likely to exceed more than twice recommended limit on at least one day
- Weekly income <£200 56% men & 39% women drank in last week

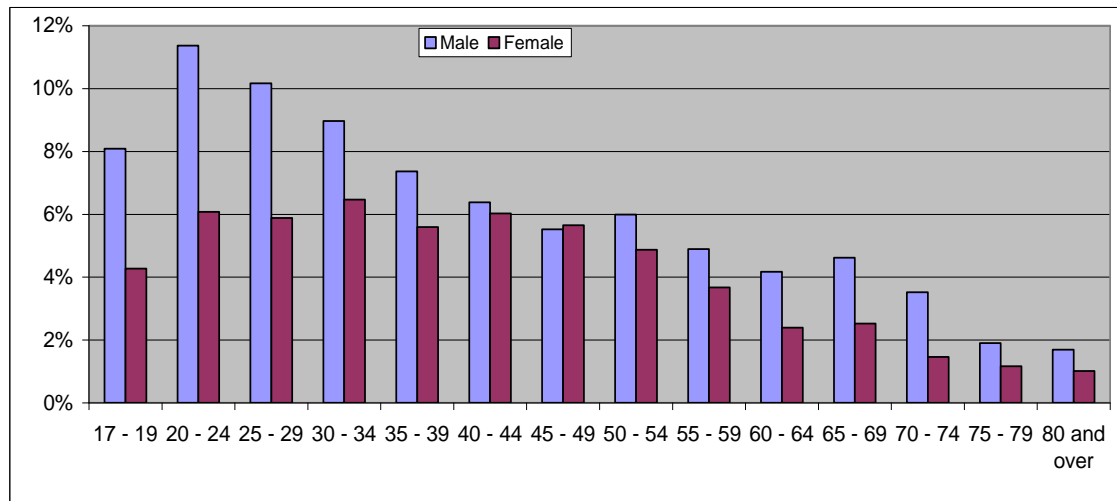
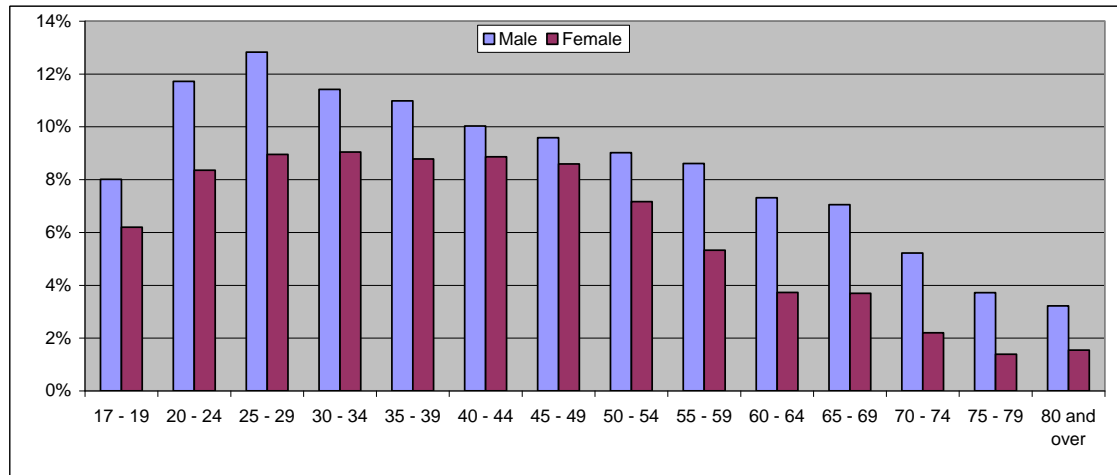
# Women's offending

- Female share of drunk and disorderly penalty notices increased from 14.9% in 2004 to 17.2% in 2011
- Female share convictions for drink/drug driving increased year on year from 9% in 1998 to 16.1% in 2011 (Minsitry of Justice, 2011)

Whilst males are the majority offenders the female share is becoming noticeable

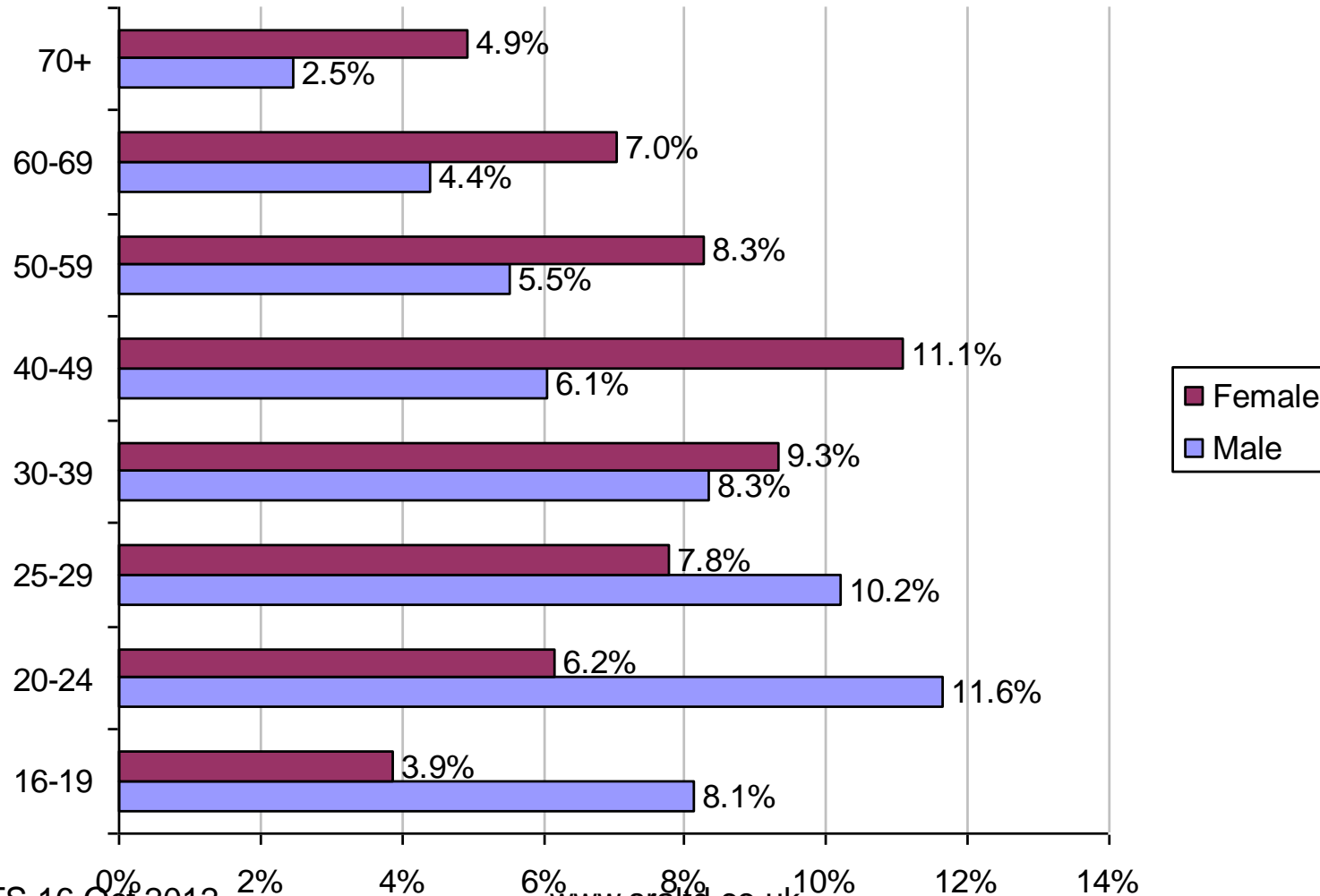
# Percentage of drivers failing a breath test (top)

## Percentage of drivers failing breath test after a road traffic collision (bottom) (DfT, special tabulation)

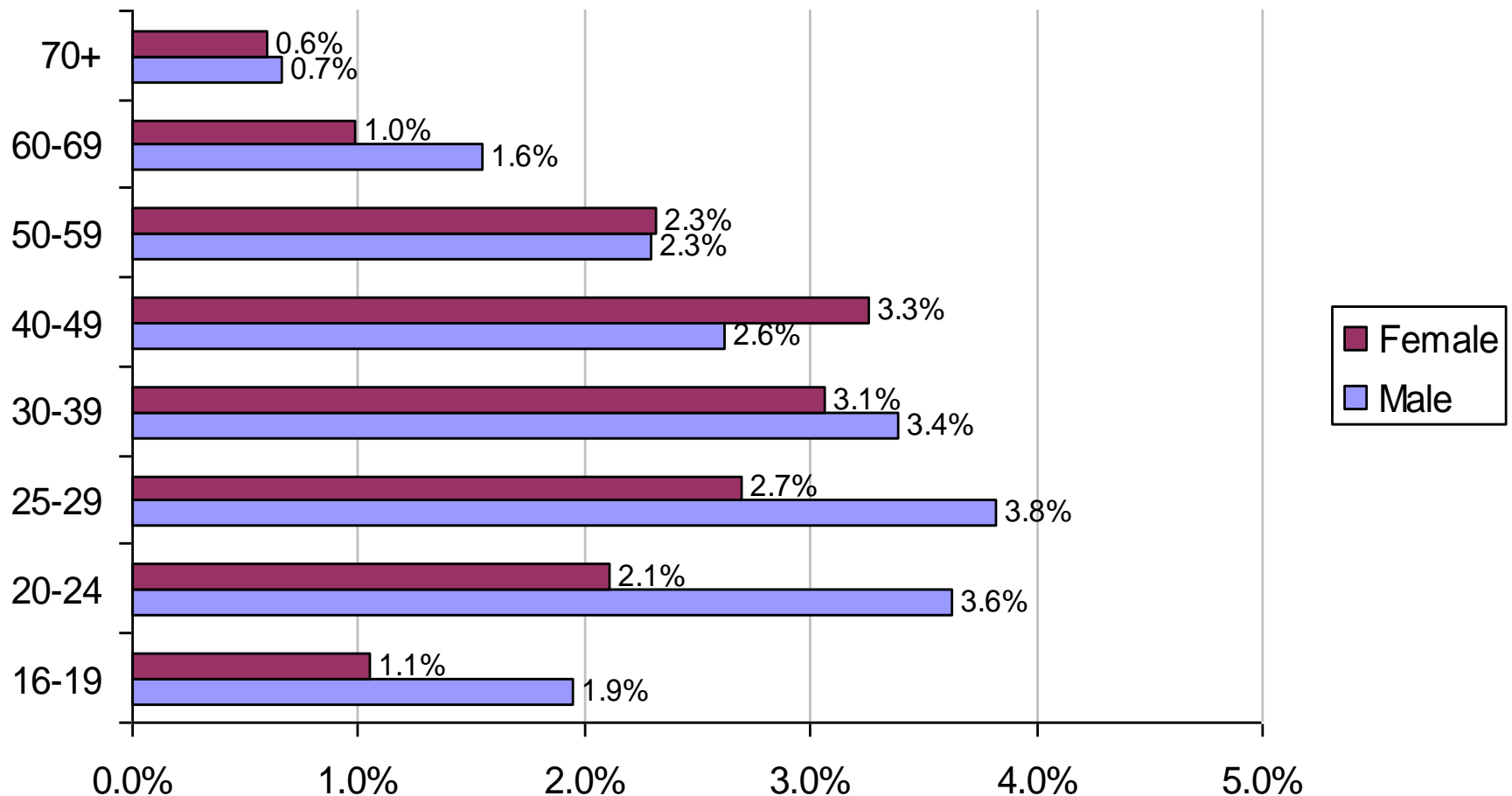




### % of positive screening breath tests following a road traffic collision: 2010 by age and weighted by average annual millage.



## % of positive screening breath tests by 81 mcg and over following a road traffic collision: 2010 by age



# Women pedestrians and alcohol

- There is virtually no information about differences by sex for drunk pedestrian casualties
- In general fatally injured pedestrians have more alcohol in their blood than other road user groups

# Sex differences in alcohol metabolism

- After drinking similar amounts of alcohol females become more impaired than males
- Females achieve higher blood alcohol concentrations than males even when adjusted for body weight
- Higher concentrations of alcohol reach the female brain so cognitive function is more impaired (Mumenthaler et al, 1999)
- These differences important as regards driving as women reach higher blood alcohol levels more quickly than men and experience more adverse effects of cognitive function.

# Issues

1. Lack of data disaggregated by sex
2. Metabolism and the current limit
3. The link between alcohol and prescription drugs
4. The rise in drinking at home
5. The growth of wine drinking

# Drinking at home

- Many people who drink high levels at home do not regard it as remarkable
- Valentine's et al found up to 75% drank at home or other people's home
- Pre loading not just under 25's behaviour people of all ages have a drink at home before going out
- The home is often where young people learn to drink
- There is a need to consider the journey from home or other people's homes and not just from pubs and clubs when formulating drink-drive strategies

# The rise of wine drinking

- Wine drinking steady growth over past 10 years – faster than other forms of alcohol
- Larger units served by default
- Alcoholic content higher



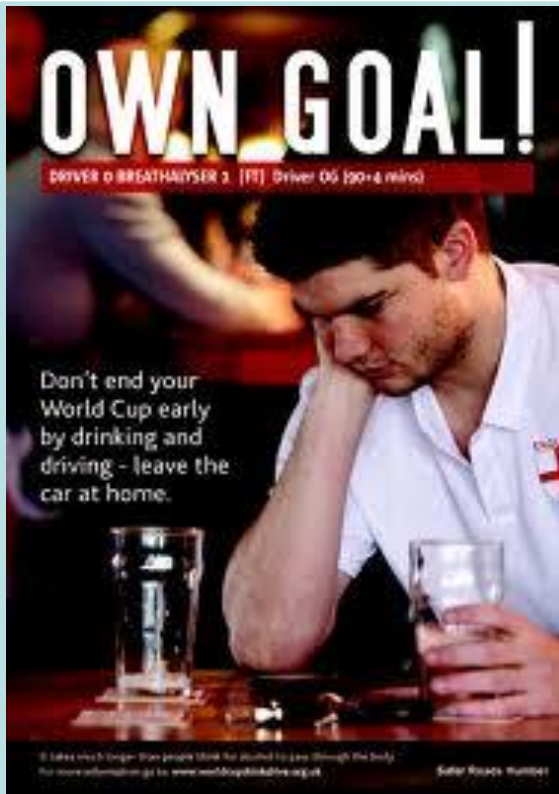
Wine Market Report Plus: Keynote Survey (2010)

# Questions for the next stage of research

- Why the age disparity? What happens to older women to explain increased risk of drink driving?
- Are there different perceptions of drinking at home compared to commercial settings?
- How aware are women about the effects of alcohol on impairing judgement?
- Are drunk women treated differently from drunk men by stakeholders?
- How appropriate are current road safety messages for women?



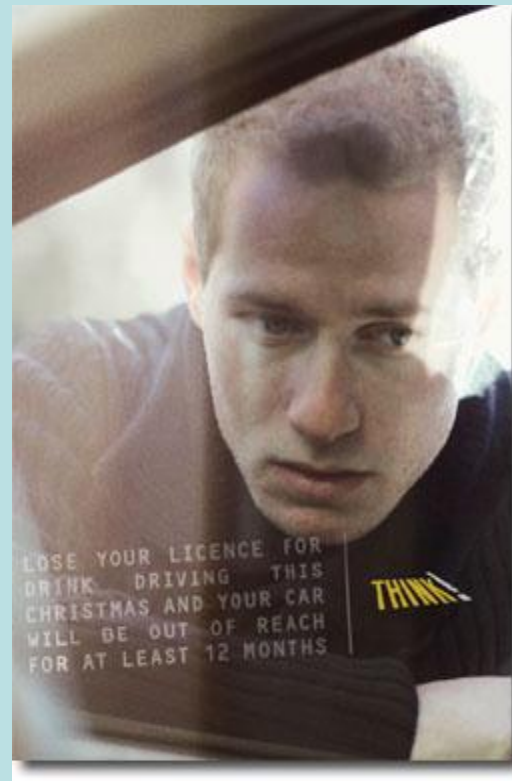
# Drink drive messages



**OWN GOAL!**  
DRIVER 0 BREATHALYSER 2. [11] Driver 06 (20+4 mind)

Don't end your World Cup early by drinking and driving - leave the car at home.

It takes much longer than people think for alcohol to pass through the body.  
For more information go to [www.willbopkins.co.uk](http://www.willbopkins.co.uk)      **Solar Roadz** number 1



LOSE YOUR LICENCE FOR  
DRINK DRIVING THIS  
CHRISTMAS AND YOUR CAR  
WILL BE OUT OF REACH  
FOR AT LEAST 12 MONTHS

**THINK**



**If you drink like a man  
you might end up looking like one.**

Wine doesn't just come with cheese. For women it's also accompanied by hair loss, wrinkles and obesity, plus the other problems like breast cancer, early menopause and memory loss

# Stage 2 Research: the plan

- Continue with literature review
- Interviews with women drinkers in Newcastle, Cardiff, Nottingham and London
- Discussion groups
- In depth interviews/workshops with women drink drivers
- Control study of men
- Interviews and discussions with stakeholders including road safety promotion, police, road safety officers, researchers, retail trade, magistrates, solicitors