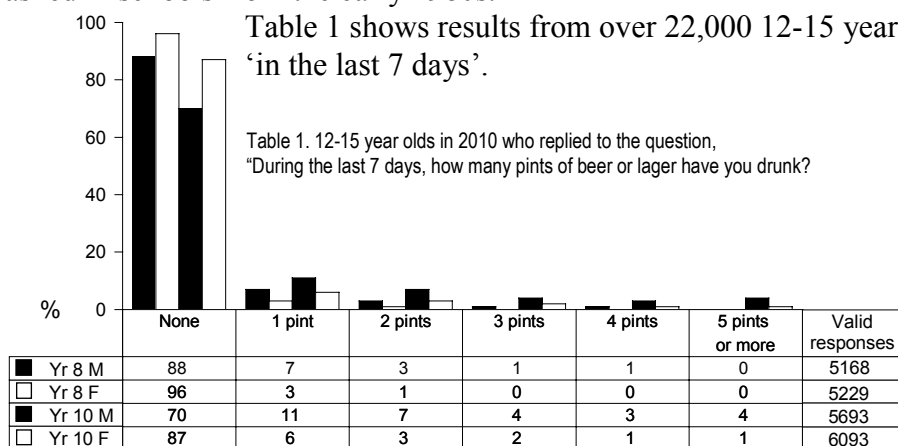


YOUNG PEOPLE, BEER AND LAGER

The Schools Health Education Unit (SHEU) has been talking to young people, about their health and wellbeing, since 1977. The results, from the Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire (HRBQ), are used by local authorities to inform their planning. Over one million young people have completed the HRBQ. Among the topics that are explored in the surveys is the use of alcohol. In this Byte, the focus is on the consumption of alcoholic drinks and in particular beer and lager. Questions from SHEU about drinking alcohol have been asked in schools from the early 1980s.



The consumption of beer or lager is much greater in the 14-15 year olds, and males in particular, although, in 2010, 13% of older females reported drinking it 'in the last 7 days'.

It is worthwhile pointing out that, in the response to this question in 2010, 88%-96% of over 10,000 12-13 year olds and 70%-87% of over 11,000 14-15 year olds reported consuming no beer or lager 'in the last 7 days'.

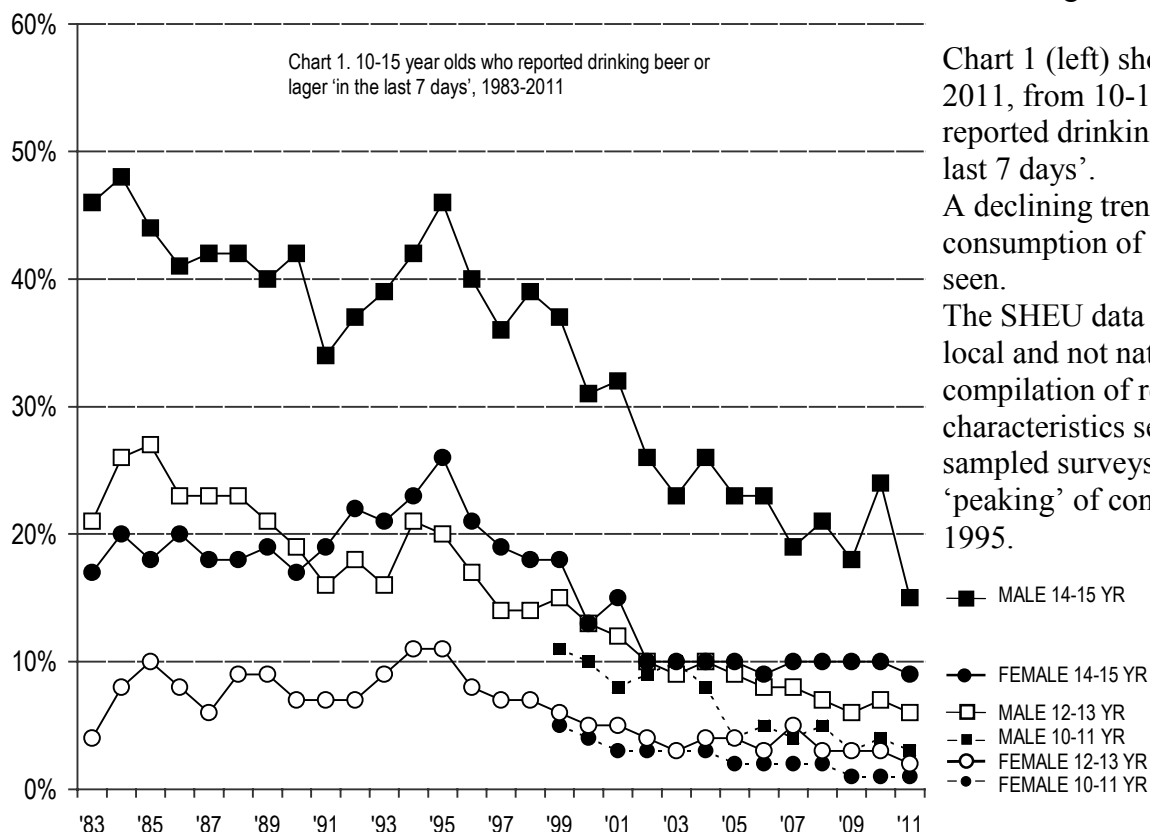


Chart 1 (left) shows results, 1983-2011, from 10-15 year olds who reported drinking beer or lager 'in the last 7 days'.

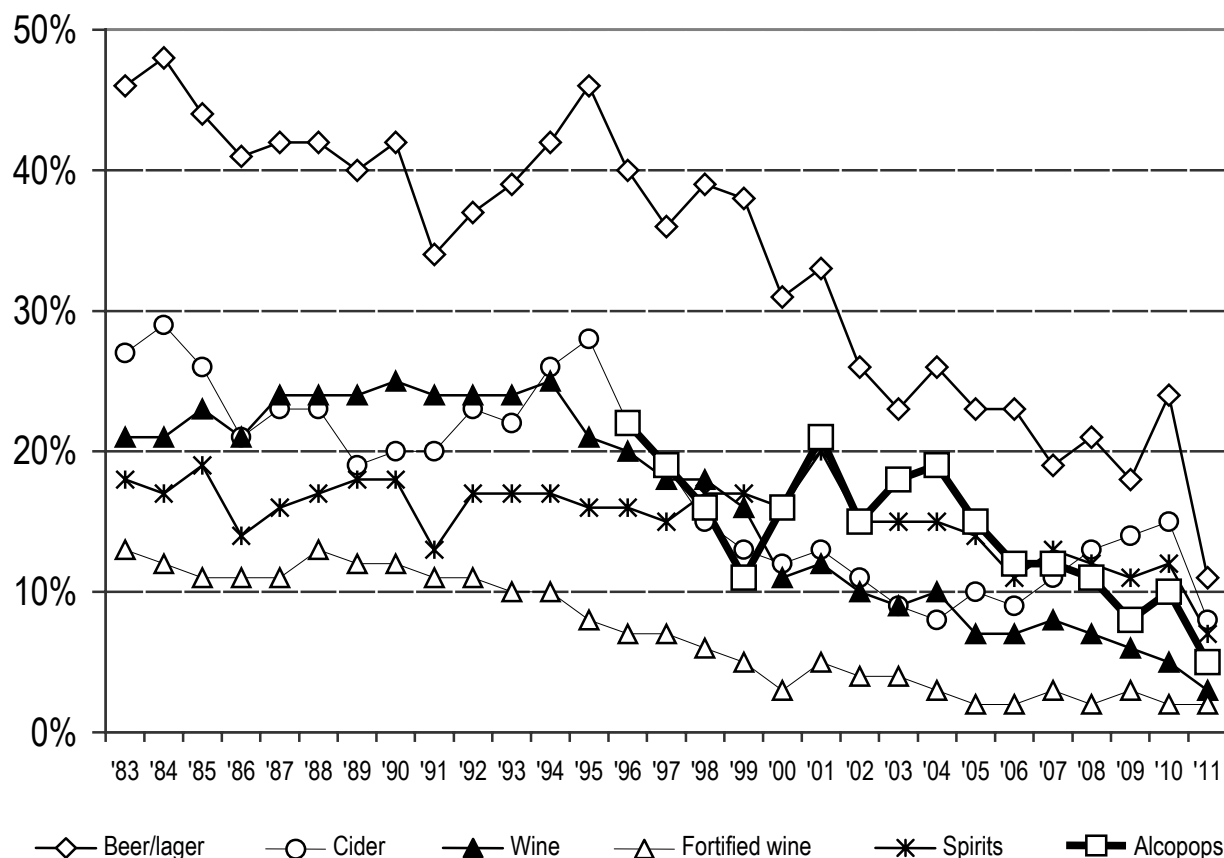
A declining trend in reported consumption of beer or lager can be seen.

The SHEU data are derived from local and not national surveys. This compilation of results shares some characteristics seen in nationally sampled surveys including the 'peaking' of consumption around 1995.

YOUNG PEOPLE, BEER AND LAGER

Over the years we have asked young people to choose from a list of alcoholic drinks if they have consumed 'in the last 7 days'. Some items on the list change to reflect drinks relevant to the time and the age group, local survey commissioners preferences and as a result of survey feedback. However, there has always been a core number of items including beer, wine, spirits etc. Chart 2 shows results, 1983-2011, from 14-15 year old males who report drinking alcoholic drinks 'during the last 7 days'.

Chart 2. 14-15 year old males who reported drinking alcoholic drinks 'during the last 7 days', 1983-2011

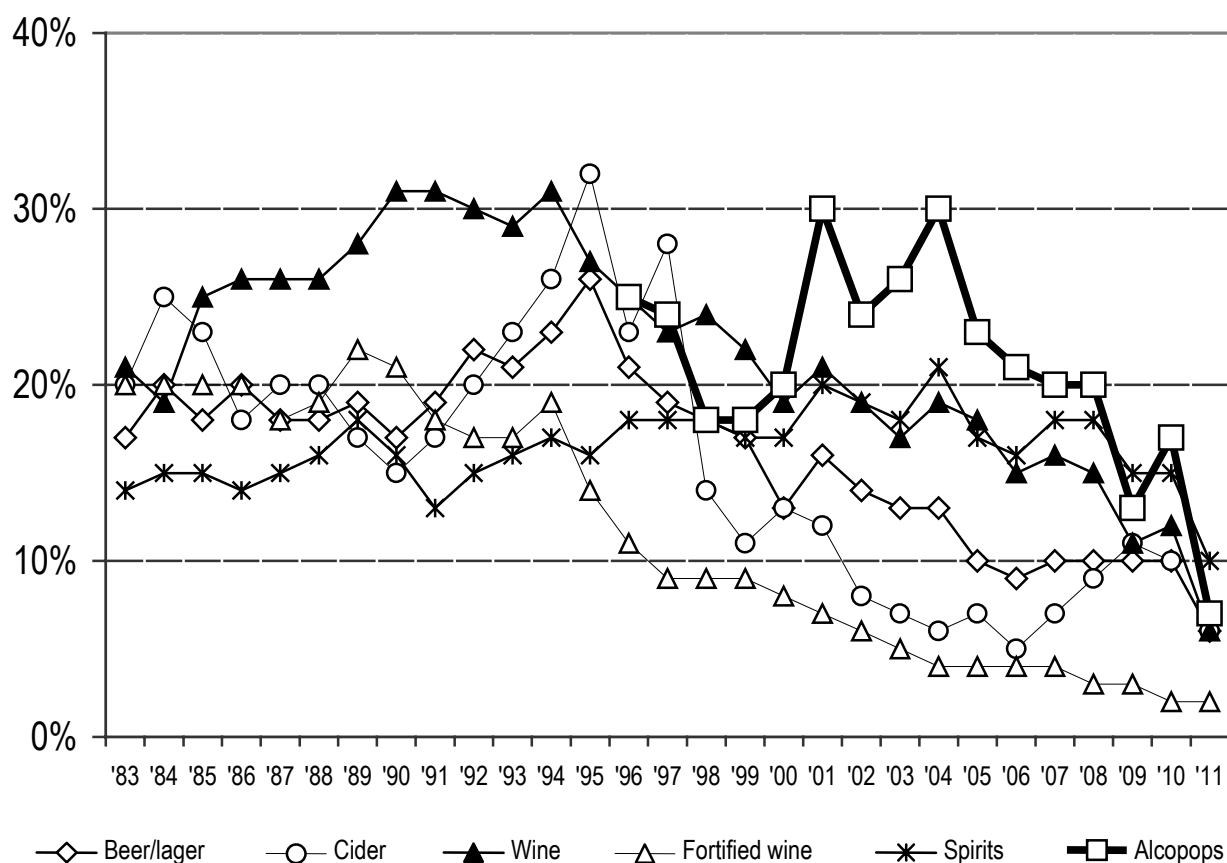


It is clear that beer/lager has always remained the main choice for 14-15 year old males. The 'Alcopops' category did suggest it was going to challenge beer when it first emerged on the market and replace wine as a second most commonly consumed alcoholic drink for these males. Cider has remained one of the preferred drinks and may have made a come-back in recent years despite the overall declining trend in drinking alcohol.

YOUNG PEOPLE, BEER AND LAGER

Chart 3 shows results, 1983-2011, from 14-15 year old females' preferences for alcoholic drinks.

Chart 3. 14-15 year old females who reported drinking alcoholic drinks 'during the last 7 days', 1983-2011

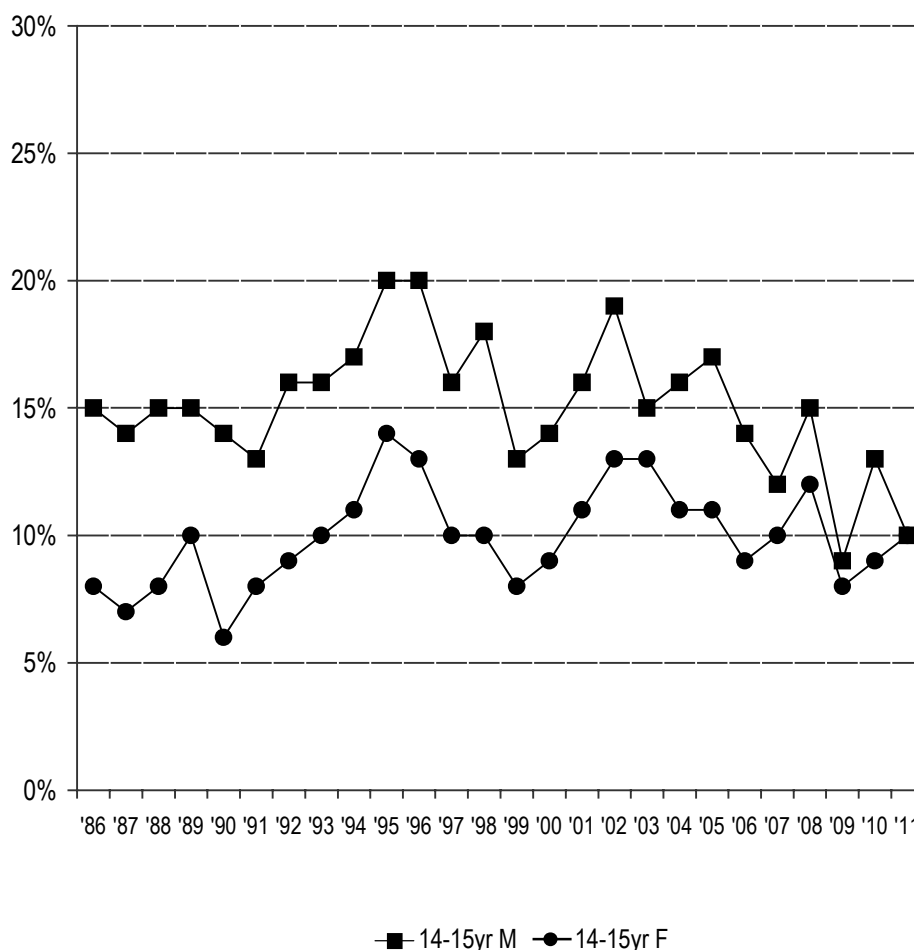


As you might expect, unlike the 14-15 year old males, the females do not favour beer/lager as the alcoholic drink of choice. Over the first period of data collection, a beer/lager selection was usually third or fourth compared to the other drinks. Following peaks over 1995/6, interest in beer/lager fell to fourth and fifth choice for 14-15 year old females. Wine's dominance seems to fall as Alcopops emerged at the turn of the century and now appears to have been overtaken by a liking for spirits. Cider has experienced highs and lows but generally remains at the lower end of the preferences.

YOUNG PEOPLE, BEER AND LAGER

Chart 4 shows results, 1983-2011, from those 14-15 year olds who reported they had drunk more than 10 alcohol units 'during the last 7 days'.

Chart 4. 14-15 year olds who report consuming more than 10 alcoholic units 'in the last 7 days', 1983-2011

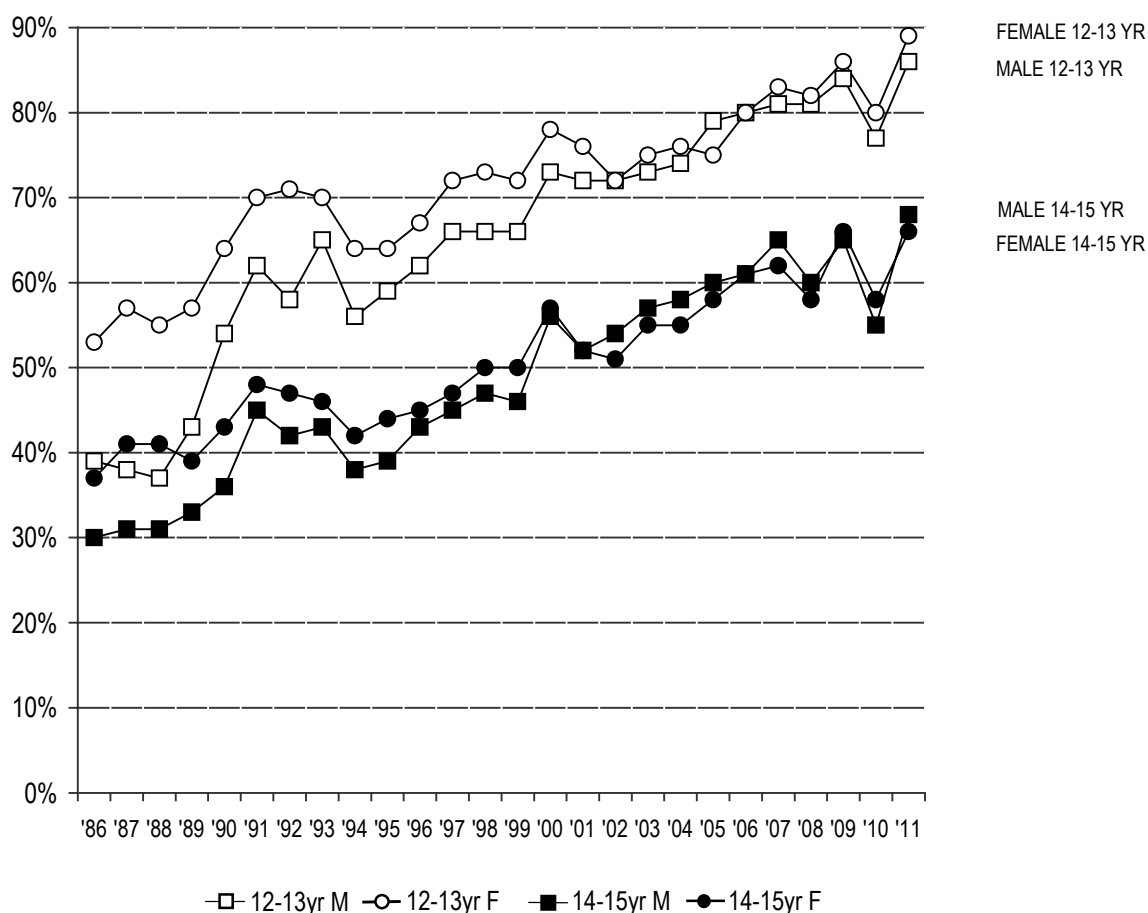


Unsurprisingly, the 14-15 year old males consistently report, more than the 14-15 year old females, drinking more than 10 units of alcohol although the gap has narrowed and may have disappeared.

YOUNG PEOPLE, BEER AND LAGER

Chart 5 shows results, 1983-2011, from 12-15 year olds who reported having no alcoholic units 'in the last 7 days'.

Chart 5. 12-15 year olds who report consuming no alcoholic units 'in the last 7 days', 1983-2011

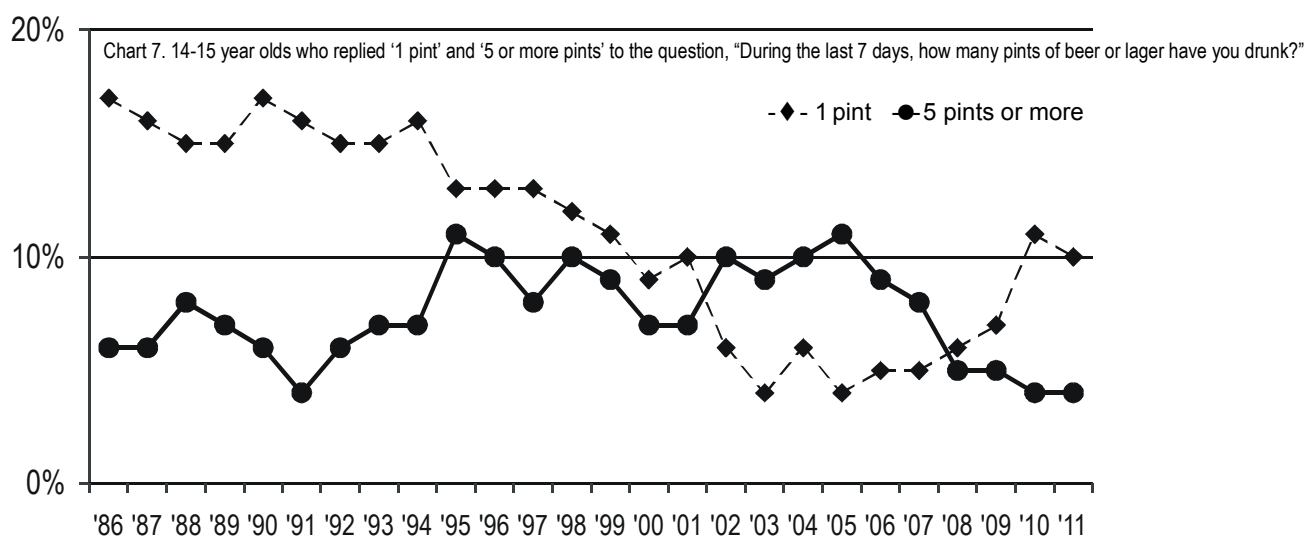
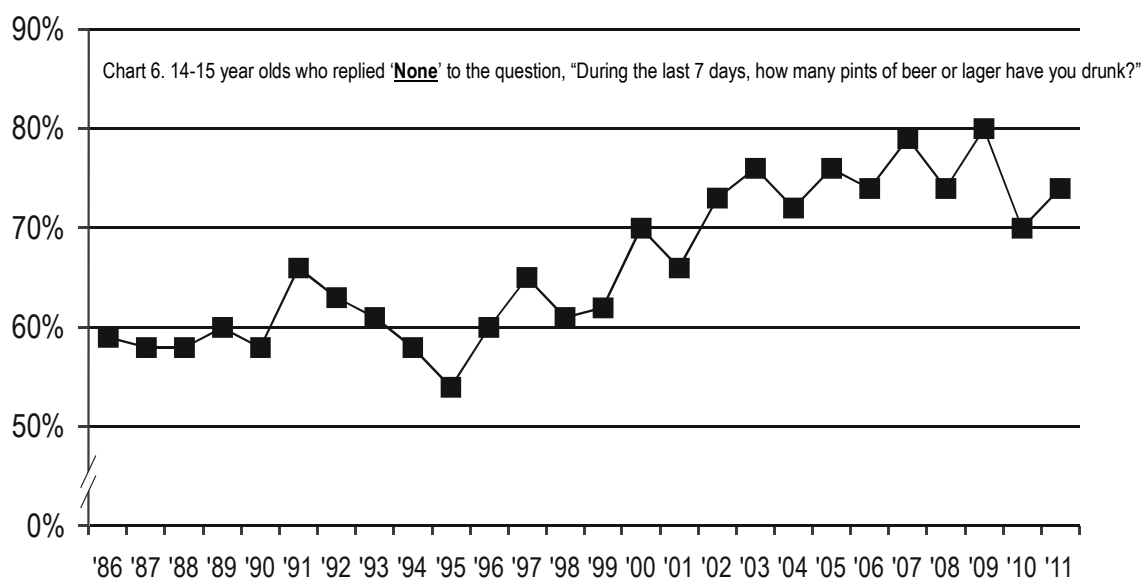


The chart above show the results from those responding to the 'none' option when asked about the total number of units of alcohol they had consumed in the last 7 days. Over the years, a similar method has been used to calculate the units from the answers to the survey question. It is clear there is a rising trend, with younger pupils always giving a higher response, of those pupils who have not drunk alcohol recently.

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Chart 6 shows results, 1983-2011, from those 14-15 year olds males who replied 'None' to the question, "During the last 7 days, how many pints of beer or lager have you drunk?"

Chart 7 shows results from those 14-15 year olds males who replied '1 pint' and '5 or more pints' to the same question.



A rising trend, of those older males who report not drinking beer or lager, can be seen in Chart 6. Interestingly, Chart 7 shows a decline, over the recent past, of those who report drinking 5 or more pints. This decline in consumption follows around 10 years when numbers remained around 10%. It is also worth noting a declining trend, until around 2005, of those who report drinking 1 pint of beer or lager.



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[SHEU WEBSITE](http://sheu.org.uk)

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See also -

There are many studies into alcohol use and young people including:

Impact of Alcohol Advertising and Media Exposure on Adolescent Alcohol Use: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies

<http://alcalc.oxfordjournals.org/content/44/3/229.full>

Parent attitudes, family dynamics and adolescent drinking: qualitative study of the Australian parenting guidelines for adolescent alcohol use

<http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/12/491/>

Preventing alcohol misuse in young people aged 9-11 years through promoting family communication: an exploratory evaluation of the Kids, Adults Together (KAT) Programme

<http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/11/810/>

Young people, alcohol and the media

<http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/15876/1/young-people-alcohol-media-full%5B1%5D.pdf>