

Media Release

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ONE IN TEN CHILDREN HARMED BY ADULTS DRINKING

11 November 2014: A new study has found that at least one in ten children from across the globe have been physically hurt, verbally abused, exposed to domestic violence or left unsupervised because of another's drinking.

An analysis of data from four international Alcohol's Harm To Others (HTO) surveys conducted between 2008 and 2013 showed that families reported 14% of children in Vietnam, 13% of children in Thailand, 12% of children in Australia and 11% of children in Ireland have been affected by others drinking.

The most commonly reported harm was verbal abuse. The number of families reporting children were yelled at, criticised or otherwise verbally abused as a result of someone's drinking was 11.1 percent in Thailand, 9.2 per cent in Ireland, 8.7 per cent in Australia and 7.5 per cent in Thailand.

In Vietnam 3 per cent of families reported a child being physically hurt because of someone's drinking, followed by Ireland (2.8%), Thailand (1.7%) and Australia (1.4%).

6.5 per cent of families in Vietnam reported children had been left in an unsupervised or unsafe situation because of another's drinking, followed by Ireland (5.3%), Thailand (3.6%) and Australia (3.5%).

In Thailand 7.45 per cent of families reported a child witnessing serious violence in the home because of someone's drinking, followed by Vietnam (6.06%), Ireland (4.85%) and Australia (3%).

Dr Anne-Marie Laslett from the Centre for Alcohol Policy Research presented the preliminary findings at the Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and other Drugs (APSAD) 2014 Conference and says the findings are significant, highlighting how alcohol negatively impacts people around the drinker including children.

"Children are being harmed in a number of ways ranging from verbal abuse to physical abuse. With one in ten children affected by the drinking of others, we need to be looking at what can be done in this area to reduce these harms", Dr Laslett said.

In Australia it is estimated that there are 20,000 reported cases of child abuse each year.

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) Chief Executive Michael Thorn says that while the focus is often on the highly visible harms from alcohol that occur in the fierce glare of the media spotlight, we must not overlook the hidden harms from alcohol that occur all too tragically in the home.

“As a nation we should be shocked and ashamed by these findings and be looking at how to address these harms, not only by ensuring that child protection agencies are adequately resourced and prepared to address this challenge, but by looking at better controlling the way in which alcohol is sold and marketed in Australia,” Mr Thorn said.

Dr Laslett and Mr Thorn (@MichaelTThorn) are available for interview.

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The **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)** is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to stop the harm caused by alcohol. Alcohol harm in Australia is significant. Over 5,500 lives are lost every year and more than 157,000 people are hospitalised making alcohol one of our nation’s greatest preventative health challenges.

For over a decade, FARE has been working with communities, governments, health professionals and police across the country to stop alcohol harms by supporting world-leading research, raising public awareness and advocating for changes to alcohol policy. In that time FARE has helped more than 750 communities and organisations, and backed over 1,400 projects around Australia.

For further information visit FARE’s website: www.fare.org.au.

The Centre for Alcohol Policy Research (CAPR) is a world-class alcohol policy research institute led by Professor Robin Room. CAPR examines alcohol-related harms and the effectiveness of alcohol-related policies and is a joint undertaking of FARE, the Victorian Department of Health, Turning Point and the University of Melbourne.

For further information visit CAPR’s website: www.capr.edu.au.