



Exploring the perspective & experiences of repeat drink-drivers

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Context



- ‘Druid project’ - Repeat drink-drivers may engage in more regular drink-driving at higher blood levels, as they may be drinking alcohol in higher quantities and driving on a regular basis
- ‘Progress in reducing drink-driving in Europe’ - people convicted of drink-driving multiple times may have an underlying health problem relating to alcohol misuse or dependency



Aim & Methods

- To better understand the experiences and perceptions of repeat drink-drivers in relation to motivations, perceived risks and deterrents.
- Qualitative study involving semi-structured interviews with people who:
 - Had one or more drink-driving convictions, had or did not have an alcohol problem*
 - Drank and drove on multiple occasions and had an alcohol problem
- Recruited through alcohol recovery/addiction services (non-NHS), academic networks, drink-driving online forum, PPI groups on alcohol, social media (Twitter, Facebook), word of mouth - bet Nov 2019 and Jun 2020
- Interviews mostly over telephone; participants given £30 vouchers
- Thematic analysis to analyse data



Results

Participants



Total no.		30
Gender		
	Female	15
	Male	15
Age		
	20-29	2
	30-39	4
	40-49	12
	50-59	8
	60-69	4
Location		
	England	15
	Scotland	11
	Wales	3
	N. Ireland	1

Total no.		30
Drink-driving conviction		
	Yes	13
	No	17
Alcohol problem		
	Yes	19
	No	11
Mental health problem		
	Yes	11
	No	19



Varied circumstances, risks & harms of drink-driving

Driving to get home after socialising

Driving the morning after

Driving frequently under the influence of alcohol

“I was drinking with just one friend after work...**we drank maybe 3 bottles of wine between us** and then **I decided that I wanted more wine**...(I) told her I was walking, but I didn't have my bank card so I **drove my car the 20 miles back to my house to get my bank card to go to a garage to get wine** to go back to her house...I was definitely like I shouldn't be doing this, I can barely see.” (Holly, F, 37, England, in recovery (alcohol))



Varied circumstances, risks & harms of drink-driving

Driving while experiencing a mental health crisis

“...something had **triggered** me...It was still a highly stressful time, running around with mum having episodic periods of dementia. So basically, I had crashed – not crashed the car, I had gone into a **crisis**...I’d started **to drink excessively and out of control.**”
(Stephanie, F, 51, England, DD conviction, in recovery (mental health))



Justifications for repeat drink-driving

Most participants were primarily concerned with avoiding causing harm to other people and being caught by the police

Driving very late at night or early in the morning

“It was **the early hours** – this is how I justified it in my mind. It’s the early hours of the morning, it’s dark, **there’s hardly anybody on the road**. If anybody is going to die, it’s going to be me. It’s not like I’m going to kill anybody.”
(Ruby, F, 50, England, in recovery (alcohol))

Driving only short distances

“I’ve certainly driven after, kind of, three large wines quite frequently but **not long distances generally**. And I’ve just always chanced it really because I’ve always perceived that **there’s a very slim chance of getting stopped**.” (Leon, M, 45, England, in recovery (alcohol))



Justifications for repeat drink-driving

Felt okay to drive - intoxicated vs being drunk

“**Carter**: It was an imbalance of me being **intoxicated**, which I was, but my ability to think that I could control the situation was **obviously misguided that time**.

Interviewer: So you knew you were intoxicated, but you didn't feel drunk?

Carter: Yes absolutely.

Interviewer: So what does being **drunk** feel like to you, or what did it feel back then?

Carter: Drunk is **something eighteen year olds in a local park with a bottle of Frosty Jacks**.” (Carter, M 50, Wales, DD conviction, in recovery (alcohol))

Dependency on alcohol & effect on rational thinking

“You **rationalise it all the way through**...I couldn't leave the house unless I had a drink, so I've got to drive 'cos I'm working. So, **unless I drink, I can't go to work**. So, then you're stuck...It is crazy, but it made perfect sense.” (Hugo, M, 63, Wales, in recovery (alcohol))



Views on preventing drink-driving

- **Zero limit - does not allow for debate; sends a clear message**
 - “...it [the law] is too wishy-washy...the law is set at a level and people do think - I was one of those you know - oh I can have a drink. But they don't know how it's going to affect them and they don't know what that limit is.” Participant 26, F, England, DD conviction, alcohol problem, mental health problem
- **Increased police enforcement**
 - Challenge perceptions of not going to get caught
- **Frequent and relatable/hard-hitting anti drink-driving campaigns where potential consequences are reiterated**
- **Support for people with alcohol and mental problems**
 - Complete alcohol recovery programme (before sentencing)
 - Encourage people to talk about problem and to seek help

Conclusions



- **Lower/zero tolerance drink-drive limit:**
 - Little change in circumstances & reasons for drink-driving in the UK, and perceptions of drink-driving and drink-drivers remain stereotypical
- **Increased police presence & enforcement**
 - Breath testing
- **Look at opportunities for intervene where alcohol and/or mental health problems may occur**
 - Time of sentencing/work place/community
 - Providing timely & appropriate support
- **Increased awareness of problems relating to alcohol and mental health**
 - Wide societal discussion about alcohol and mental health
 - Awareness & education of the effects and dangers of alcohol



Thank you for listening. Any questions



Source: Fastweb <https://www.fastweb.com/student-news/articles/do-you-have-any-questions-for-me-what-to-ask-your-interviewer>