



# STATISTICHE

figures and graphs to understand Veneto

*Flash*

In Italy, April is the 'Alcohol Awareness' month, with the objective of raising awareness of the health risks caused by alcohol, considered one of the leading causes of preventable death, disability and chronic diseases. The World Health Organization (WHO) ranks alcohol among the top four factors that most endanger health, together with smoking, poor diet and lack of exercise. For this reason, Italy and the Veneto Region have put into action a plan called 'Guadagnare Salute' (Get Healthy), to implement policies and strategies to help the population make healthier lifestyle choices.

## ALCOHOL AND YOUNG PEOPLE: A DANGEROUS COMBINATION

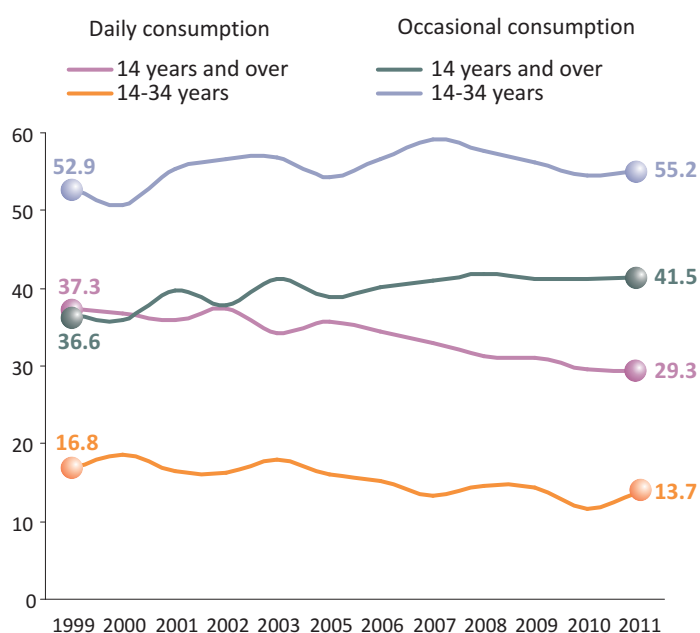
Despite the fact that alcohol is an addictive substance which can lead to addiction, dependency and highly antisocial behaviour, as well as impairing the function of the central nervous system, its consumption is supported and promoted by our culture. Statistics also confirm that the consumption of alcoholic drinks is widespread and concerns both men and women of all ages, albeit in a

different way.

The risk of alcohol-related harm and alcohol addiction depends on several factors: the amount regularly consumed, the amount consumed on a single occasion and how and where alcohol is consumed. National and international alcohol intake limits have been defined, beyond which consumption poses a greater health risk. For example, for men, 3 or more alcohol units consumed a day is considered as a 'high habitual consumption', while 5 or more units consumed on one single occasion is considered as 'binge drinking', as shown in the box below. For adults, it is not possible to set a lower risk-free limit, and for children, any quantity of alcohol is considered a risk.

More specifically, we will focus primarily on the consumption of alcohol amongst young people, with special reference to the WHO recommendations and Italian legislation, which recently increased the minimum age for buying alcohol to 18. An increasing tendency of occasional alcohol consumption has been shown, now a behaviour adopted by 55% of the population aged 14-34, while for the same age group, daily consumption is much less widespread (13.7%), compared to the figure for the general population of 29.3%.

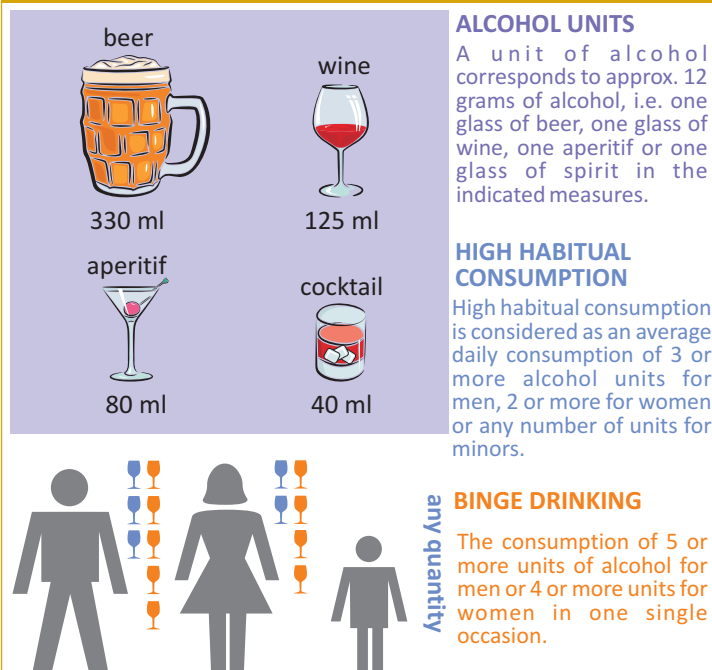
% OF PEOPLE CONSUMING ALCOHOL BY AGE GROUP IN VENETO - YEARS 1999-2011 (\*)



(\*) Data for 2004 is not available

Source: processing by Veneto Region – Directorate of Regional Statistical System on Istat and ISS data

### THE RISKS OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

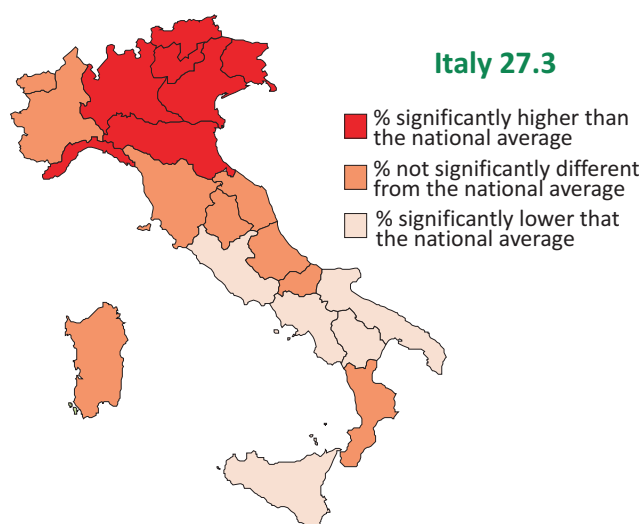


People drink to socialise and enjoy the company of others. Meeting up for a drink together can improve a relationship and also help people to relax and unwind. Young people are well aware of this, often choosing a cocktail or beer as an opportunity to get together and have fun. On the one hand we are witnessing young people experimenting with alcohol at an increasingly early age and on the

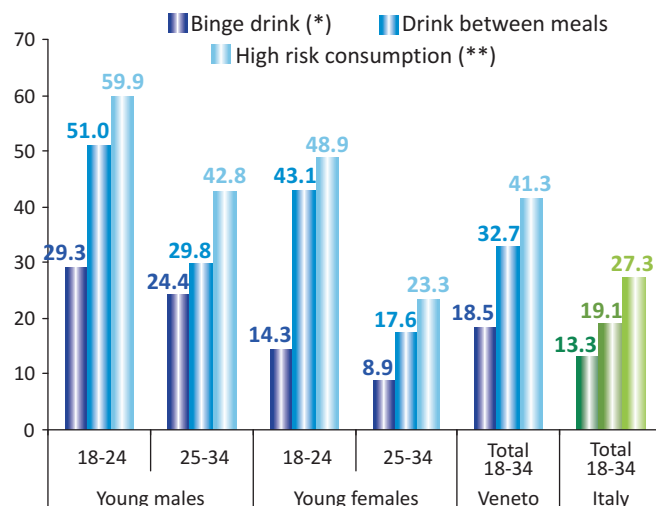
## DRINKING OPPORTUNITIES

other the pattern of consumption is becoming more 'British', meaning more consumption at the weekends and outside of meals, at times in place of food, and in increasingly large quantities. Daily consumption is declining especially amongst young people, as they are abandoning the habits of older generations, who were more accustomed to having a glass of wine with lunch or dinner. In Veneto, as well as in other Northern Italian regions, alcohol is consumed more frequently than in the rest of Italy and across all age groups, but particularly amongst young people. According to figures from the Ministry of Health's 'Passi' project, in 2011, 41% of 18-34 years old (27% of Italy) were classified as the alcohol consumers most at risk, either because they drink between meals (33%), they binge drink (19%) or because they have high habitual consumption (2%). In the same age group, those choosing more high-risk behaviour are mostly aged between 18 and 24 and the majority are males. In addition to drinking habits, the types of drinks consumed are also changing. Over the last 10 years the consumption of both wine and beer has decreased amongst young people, whilst spirits and cocktails are increasing in popularity. Young females and males aged 18-24 tend to choose similar types of drinks, but there is a marked difference between the drinks chosen by the two sexes in the 25-34 age group. More worrying still is the trend of consuming a large number of units on one single occasion (binge drinking): 19 young people out of 100 binge drink (13% of Italy). This behaviour is more common amongst smokers and the youngest members of this group, further classified as without financial difficulties and well-educated. 33 out of 100 young people (19% of Italy) consume alcohol between meals; for those aged over 24, the number of occasions on which alcohol is consumed decreases for both sexes, though the percentages for men remain high.

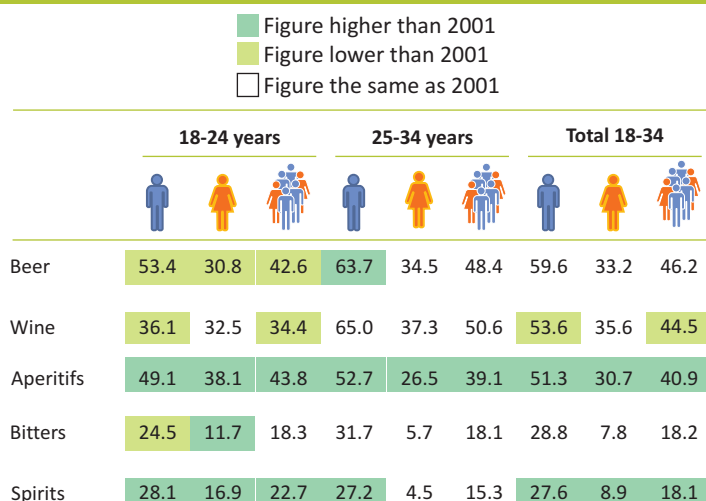
% OF DRINKERS AGED 18-34 MOST AT RISK BY REGION – YEAR 2011 (\*\*)



% OF YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK BY GENDER AND AGE GROUP. VENETO – YEAR 2011



% OF YOUNG CONSUMERS OF ALCOHOL BY DRINK, GENDER AND AGE. VENETO – YEAR 2011



% OF YOUNG DRINKERS BY RISK FACTOR VENETO – YEAR 2011

	Binge drinkers (years 18-34) (*)	Drinkers at high risk (years 18-34) (**)
<b>Economic difficulties</b>		
Yes	16.4	35.6
No	19.8	44.5
<b>Education level</b>		
Low (up to secondary school)	16.3	33.9
High	19.1	43.4
<b>Smoking</b>		
Smokers	31.8	56.0
Non-smokers	11.9	33.0

(\*) Those surveyed said that they had consumed more than 5 units of alcohol (men) or 4 or more units of alcohol (women) on one single occasion, at least once in the last 30 days

(\*\*) Those who binge drink and/or have high habitual consumption levels and/or drink between meals.

Source: processing by Veneto Region – Directorate of Regional Statistical System on Istat data and data from the Passi project (The Behavioural Risk Factor Surveillance System)

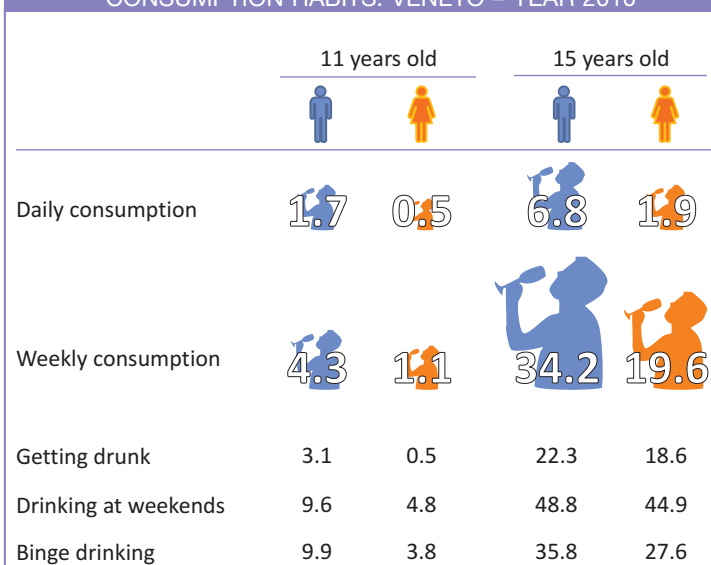
Increasingly more cause for concerns is the diffusion of alcohol consumption amongst the very young, even though international guidelines advise that alcohol should be avoided completely during infancy and adolescence. This is because the very young do not yet have the ability to metabolise alcohol and furthermore, the earlier the consumption of alcohol begins, the greater the risk of

## EXPERIMENTING AT A YOUNG AGE

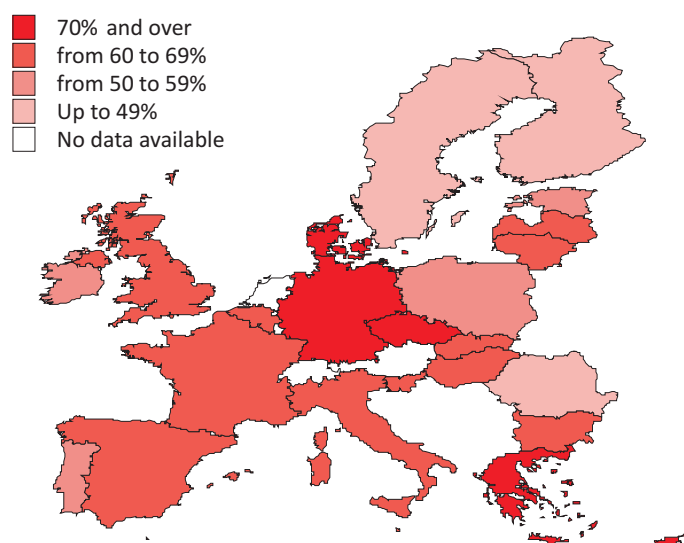
developing alcohol-related problems later on in life. The consequences of premature alcohol consumption are undoubtedly serious for the health of the young person in question, but it also has an effect on relationships with friends and family and leads to a deterioration of performance at school, thus affecting the sense of commitment and responsibility that is so crucial for a teenager. According to recent studies (international HBSC survey), it is not family habits that affect how much alcohol a young

person consumes, but rather those of their peers. The form of informal control placed on young people by their families has little effect and the same applies to self-discipline – neither of these is enough to stop young people from drinking alcohol. Young people also say that it is easy to buy alcohol, in both bars and shops, despite the age restrictions on the sale of alcoholic beverages. Among young Italians aged 15-16, 63 out of 100 say that they have consumed alcohol within the last month; a disturbing figure, despite being lower than that of other countries, such as in Northern and Eastern Europe. The figures for Veneto are also high: 34% of males aged 15 years old say that they consume alcohol on a weekly basis and 7% even say that they drink every day. The figure increases at the weekend to 49%, similar to the figure for females. Many young people associate consuming alcohol with having fun and forgetting their problems. However, they are more aware of the negative consequences of drinking compared to their European peers, and especially of the damage that it can do to their health, not just after a binge; they also realise that under the influence of alcohol, they are more likely to do things they then regret. The favoured alcoholic beverage of young Italians is definitely the 'Spritz' (a mixture of wine, sparkling water and spirits), now virtually a 'must' when meeting for any pre-dinner drinks. It is also popular among the very young, not only because it is relatively cheap, but also because drinking it makes them feel more 'grown-up.' One out of four 15-year-olds in Veneto regularly drinks this cocktail, with little difference between males and females. Consumption seems to increase between the ages of 13 and 15 – the age at which Italian children progress from middle school to upper school.

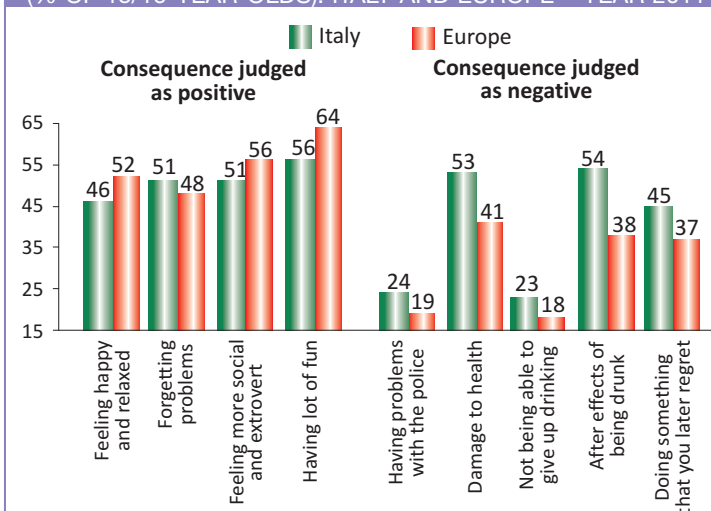
% OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 11-15 AND ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION HABITS. VENETO – YEAR 2010



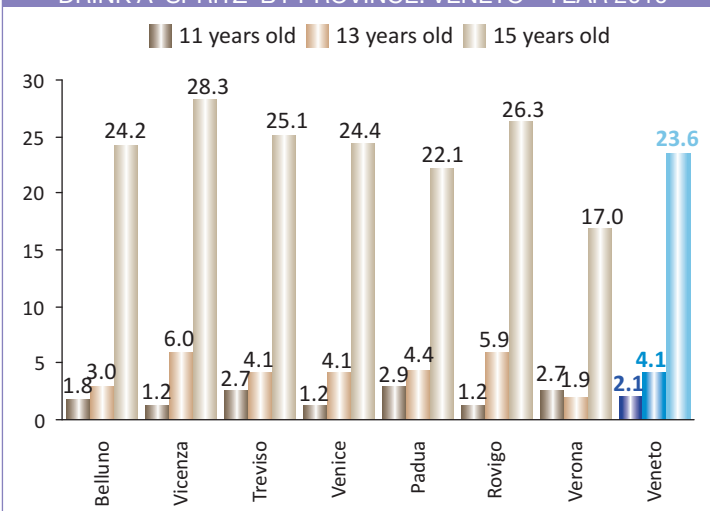
% OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15-16 WHO HAVE CONSUMED ALCOHOL IN THE LAST 30 DAYS – YEARS 2011



JUDGING THE CONSEQUENCES OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION (% OF 15/16-YEAR-OLDS). ITALY AND EUROPE – YEAR 2011



% OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 11, 13 AND 15 WHO REGULARLY DRINK A 'SPRITZ' BY PROVINCE. VENETO - YEAR 2010



# STATISTICHE *Flash*

Being under the influence of alcohol exposes people to hazards situations more frequently, such as dangerous driving or even road accidents with serious consequences also for those who do not drink.

In countries that monitor the phenomena of drink-driving, it has been found that one in five drivers who die following a road accident have a blood alcohol content over the legal limit, which in Italy, like in most other countries, is around 0.5 grams per litre. The 'Passi'

project also looks at how often driving under the influence of alcohol takes place, based on the information given by interviewees who had travelled both by car or motorbike during the 30 days prior to the interview, as drivers or passengers.

During the four-year period from 2008-2011, 11% of those from Veneto and aged 18-25 said that they had driven while under the influence of

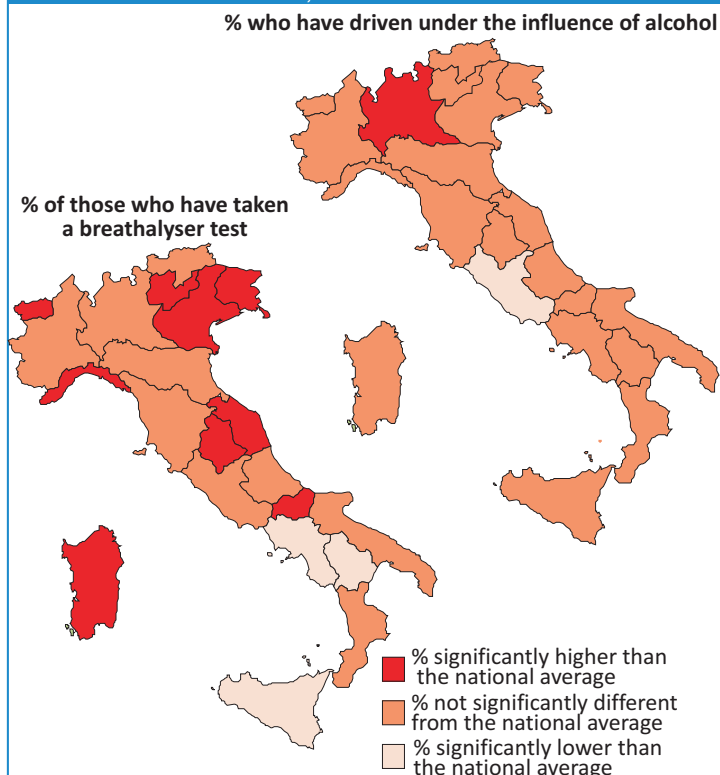
## WORKING TOWARDS MORE RESPONSIBLE DRIVING

alcohol; for those aged between 18 and 21 the figure stood at 9%. For the latter age group, as well as the consequent higher rate of accidents, this behaviour is punishable by law regardless of the quantity consumed, since the blood alcohol content allowed for this age-group is almost zero according to Italian law. However, while the young people from Veneto tend to consume alcohol more frequently than their national peers, the percentage of young people that drive under the influence of alcohol differs only slightly from other regions, where consumption is significantly lower. Furthermore, in Veneto, more checks are made by the police; 39.8% of those surveyed said they had been stopped and 13% said they had been asked to take a breathalyser test. The percentage of those breathalysed is greater amongst young people: 32.2% of 18-24 year-olds compared to 8.3% of 50-69 year-olds.

Within this context, the control and prevention methods of the Veneto traffic police should be noted; as a result of the 'Saturday Night Slaughters' (a phrase attributed to the amount of young people killed in drink-driving accidents at the weekend), over six thousand drivers aged 18-32 have been stopped by police at night in the last year, especially at the peak time for most accidents, between 2 and 4 o'clock in the morning.

4.5% of drivers tested positive for alcohol, a figure that has decreased over the last 3 years. Of all the age ranges, those in the highest risk driving category are aged 23-27.

### % OF PEOPLE AGED 18-34 AND THEIR COMMITMENTS ON DRINKING AND DRIVING, BY REGION - 2008-2011 AVERAGE

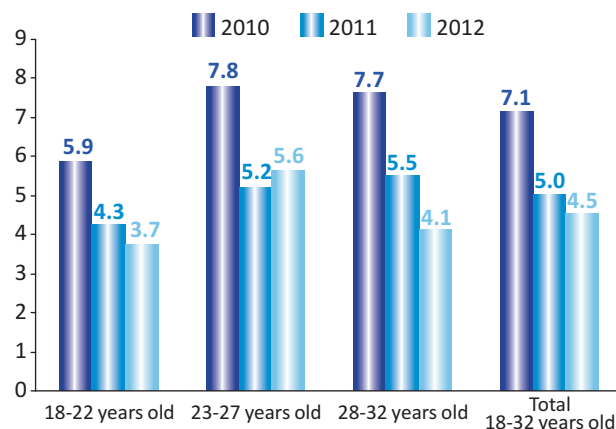


### POLICE ACTIVITY IN VENETO RELATED TO 'SATURDAY NIGHT SLAUGHTERS' - YEARS 2010:2012

#### Breathalyser tests carried out at night on drivers aged 18-32

	Tests			Total tests	Total positive tests	% of positive tests	% of positive tests at peak accident time
	Time	0.00-2.00	2.00-4.00				
2010	1,765	2,809	1,688	6,262	447	7.1	7.7
2011	1,490	2,471	1,281	5,242	264	5.0	5.9
2012	1,696	3,088	1,550	6,334	288	4.5	4.9

#### % of positive breathalyser tests taken at night by age



Source: processing by Veneto Region - Directorate of Regional Statistical System on Istat data and data from the Passi project and from the Veneto police

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