



Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: 2011 Annual Report

Self-reported drink and drug driving: Findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales

Summary

- This article presents data on self-reported drink and drug driving from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)¹. The CSEW has included questions asking people whether they have driven whilst over the legal alcohol limit, or under the influence of illegal drugs, since 2009. This article presents data from the 2009/10 and 2010/11 waves of the survey.
- In both 2009/10 and 2010/11, an estimated 8 per cent of **adult drivers who had consumed alcohol in the last year** reported driving at least once or twice within the last 12 months whilst they thought they were over the legal alcohol limit.
- In 2010/11, an estimated 19 per cent of **adult drivers who had taken illegal drugs in the last year** reported driving at least once or twice within the last 12 months whilst they thought they were affected by or under the influence of illegal drugs. This was similar to 2009/10, where an estimated 17 per cent reported driving at least once or twice within the last 12 months whilst under the influence of illegal drugs.

Introduction

- The CSEW is a household survey of adults aged 16 and over resident in England and Wales. It collects data on experiences of victimisation and perceptions of anti-social behaviour, through a face to face interview using Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). In total, the CSEW interviewed around 45,000 people over the 2009/10 time period, and 46,000 over 2010/11.
- Approximately half of the total sample underwent a self-completion module conducted at the end of the face-to-face interview. The self-completion module is restricted to those aged 16-59 years, and includes questions relating to alcohol and illegal drug use, drink driving and drug driving².

¹ Formerly known as the British Crime Survey (BCS). The BCS was renamed as the Crime Survey for England and Wales in March 2012. See: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/surveys/respondents/household/crime-survey-for-england---wales/index.html>

² Illicit drug use among a nationally representative sample of 16 to 59 year olds (CSEW data) is presented in the Drug Misuse Declared report series. See: http://data.gov.uk/dataset/drug_misuse_declared_england_and_wales

- The following drink drive question was asked of those respondents who reported drinking alcohol within the last 12 months **AND** who reported driving in the last 12 months:

“In the last 12 months how often, if at all, have you driven when you think you may have been over the legal alcohol limit, even if only by a small amount?”

- The following drug drive question was asked of those respondents who reported taking any drug in the last 12 months **AND** who reported driving in the last 12 months:
- “In the last 12 months how often, if at all, have you driven when you think you may have been affected by or under the influence of illegal drugs?”

Sample characteristics

- For both years of the survey, approximately 74 per cent of respondents who completed the self-completion module had driven a vehicle within the last 12 months, of which 54 per cent were male.
- In 2010/11, of those who reported driving within the last 12 months, 91 per cent also reported drinking alcohol within the last 12 months (90% reported drinking alcohol in 2009/10).
- In 2010/11 and 2009/10, of those who reported driving within the last 12 months, 7 per cent also reported taking an illegal drug within the last 12 months.
- The majority of respondents who reported both driving within the last 12 months AND taking an illegal drug within the last 12 months were male (76 per cent in 2010/11 and 73 per cent in 2009/10).

Drink driving

- In both 2009/10 and 2010/11, 8 per cent of respondents reported having driven at least once or twice in the last 12 months when they thought they were over the legal alcohol limit, of which 1% reported having driven over the legal alcohol limit once or twice a week (see RAS51101)

RAS51101: Reported drink driving (2009/10 and 2010/11)

Percentages

	In the last 12 months how often, if at all, have you driven when you think you may have been over the legal alcohol limit?	
	2009/10	2010/11
Every day/almost every day	0%	0%
A few times a week	0%	0%
Once or twice a week	1%	1%
Once or twice a month	1%	1%
Once every couple of months	1%	1%
Once or twice in the last 12 months	5%	5%
Not at all	92%	92%

Base: Respondents who have both drunk alcohol within the last 12 months AND driven within the last 12 months (unweighted bases: 2009/10 = 18330, 2010/11 = 9358)

- Males were twice as likely to report driving whilst thinking they were over the legal alcohol limit than females (10% versus 4% in 2010/11; 11% versus 5% in 2009/10) (see Table RAS51102).

RAS51102: Percentage reporting driving whilst thinking they are over the legal alcohol limit at least once in last 12 months, by sex and age (2009/10 and 2010/11)

	Numbers / percentages			
	Unweighted base for 2009/10	Unweighted base for 2010/11	2009/10	2010/11
All adults	18330	9358	8%	8%
Males	9014	4621	11%	10%
Females	9316	4737	5%	4%
Age 16-19	535	256	13%	10%
Age 20-24	1075	555	9%	9%
Age 25-29	1722	875	10%	9%
Age 30-39	4717	2399	8%	7%
Age 40-49	5607	2886	7%	7%
Age 50-59	4674	2387	7%	7%

Base: Respondents who have both drunk alcohol within the last 12 months AND driven within the last 12 months

Drug driving

- In 2010/2011, 19% of respondents reported having driven at least once or twice in the last 12 months when affected by or under the influence of illegal drugs, of which 3% reported having driven under the influence of illegal drugs a few times a week or every day/almost every day (see RAS51103). This is very similar to 2009/2010, where 17% of respondents reported having driven at least once or twice in the last 12 months when affected by or under the influence of illegal drugs.

RAS51103: Reported drug driving (2009/10 and 2010/11)

Percentages

	In the last 12 months how often, if at all, have you driven when you think you may have been affected by or under the influence of illegal drugs?	
	2009/10	2010/11
Every day/almost every day	1%	1%
A few times a week	2%	2%
Once or twice a week	1%	1%
Once or twice a month	3%	4%
Once every couple of months	1%	2%
Once or twice in the last 12 months	9%	9%
Not at all	83%	80%

Base: Respondents who have both taken an illegal drug within the last 12 months AND driven within the last 12 months (unweighted bases: 2009/10 = 1211, 2010/11 = 611)

- Males were more likely to report driving under the influence of illegal drugs than females (21% versus 16% in 2010/11; 19% versus 12% in 2009/10) (see RAS51104).
- Of those drivers who reported taking an illegal drug within the last 12 months, those aged 40-49 years were most likely to report driving under the influence of illegal drugs (25% in 2010/11; 23% in 2009/10).

RAS51104: Percentage reporting driving whilst under the influence of illegal drugs at least once in last 12 months, by sex and age (2009/10 and 2010/11)

	Numbers / percentages			
	Unweighted base for 2009/10	Unweighted base for 2010/11	2009/10	2010/11
All adults	1211	611	17%	19%
Males	845	435	19%	21%
Females	366	176	12%	16%
Age 16-19	124	53	16%	23%
Age 20-24	190	102	18%	19%
Age 25-29	219	110	15%	18%
Age 30-39	384	201	16%	17%
Age 40-49	197	100	23%	25%
Age 50-59	97	45	20%	20%

Base: Respondents who have both taken an illegal drug within the last 12 months AND driven within the last 12 months. NB. Base numbers are low for ages 16-19 and 50-59 in 2010/11 and data should be interpreted with care.

The tables on “Self-reported drink and drug driving” can be found on Reported road casualties Great Britain – 2011 annual report web page at:
http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics?post_type=table&series=road-accidents-and-safety-series

Table numbers RAS51101 – RAS51104

Background notes

1. Crime Survey for England and Wales

Estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) are based on a representative sample of the population of England and Wales aged 16 or over each financial year (April to March); the sample is a small-scale representation of the population from which it is drawn. The survey generally obtains high response rates (76% in 2010/11).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Home Office (HO) regularly publish data from the CSEW. See:

- <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/surveys/list-of-surveys/survey.html?survey=Crime+Survey+for+England+and+Wales>
- <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/drugs-misuse-dec-1112/>

The CSEW has been undertaken annually since 2001 (formerly as the British Crime Survey, and re-named this year to the CSEW). Prior to 2001, it ran roughly every 2-4 years, starting in 1982. Responsibility of the survey passed from the HO to ONS in March 2012.

2. Limitations of the data

The CSEW provides estimates of drink and drug driving among adults aged 16-59 within the general household population. The CSEW is weighted to adjust for possible non-response bias and to ensure the sample reflects a profile of the general population.

Being based on a sample survey, the estimates are subject to a margin of error. The results in this report have not been tested for statistical significance, so should be interpreted with caution as differences can be due to random fluctuation.

Further information on the survey can be found in a Technical Report at:
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/bcs1011tech1>

As with all surveys, there may be issues with accurate recall and self-reporting, especially regarding the sensitive nature of the topic under consideration. In addition, the drink drive

question contained in the survey required respondents to make a self-assessment of whether or not they were over the legal alcohol limit for driving.

3. Further data on drink and drug driving

The THINK! Annual Survey focuses on measuring road safety attitudes and behaviour among the British population. The survey includes questions to measure self-reported prevalence of driving when over the legal alcohol limit and driving after taking drugs. Annual survey reports can be downloaded from: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/think-research/>

The Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: 2011 Annual Report Article on Drinking and Driving, including analysis of data on blood alcohol levels from a sample of road traffic fatalities, can be found at: <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/road-accidents-and-safety-annual-report-2011/rrcgb2011-03.pdf>

Since 2011, the Department has also started to collect information about the presence of drugs in road accident fatalities aged 16 and over from Coroners in England and Wales and from Procurators Fiscal in Scotland.

However, toxicological analysis is not performed routinely on all road traffic fatalities. Whether or not toxicological analysis is performed by a Coroner or Procurator Fiscal can depend on many factors, such as whether drugs were suspected as a contributory factor in the accident, the type of road user, or consideration of timescales/medical reasons.

Data collection is still at a preliminary stage and yet to be fully established. A small sample of Coroner and Procurator Fiscal returns for 2010 has been collated, and early observations indicate that:

- Fifty-nine Coroners and Procurators Fiscal supplied some toxicology data in 2010.
- Toxicology data was supplied for approximately one fifth (21 per cent) of all reported fatalities aged 16 or over.
- The presence of a drug has simply been noted as 'detected' or 'not detected'. No attempt was made to determine the level of the drug, or whether the drug caused impairment, at the time of the accident.
- Further work is being undertaken to get the complete set of toxicology data from all Coroners in England and Wales and Procurators Fiscal in Scotland, and validate the data being received. Preliminary results of the drug-driving data will be published in 2013.