

Estimates of alcohol consumption per adult in 2013

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Introduction

This objective of this brief paper is to calculate the 2013 level of average per adult consumption of alcohol. The change since 2012 is also identified. The data used are from the CSO Population and Migration Estimates for April 2013 (September 2013) and the Revenue Commissioners' alcohol clearances data (the 2013 figures were made available on March 31st 2014). The level and trend in average alcohol consumption are important elements in public policy evaluation and design.

Methodology

The measurement approach follows standard international practice. The aggregate alcohol content of the different beverages are based on 5% alcohol by volume for cider, 12.5% alcohol content for wine and the actual alcohol estimates provided in the clearances data for spirits and beer. Some international and national estimates would use lower alcohol contents for wine and cider. The international convention of defining the adult population as 15 years and over is used, although this is, of course, an inaccurate measure of the adult population. The population data refer to April of each year. Consumption is equated with clearances as is normally done, although clearances are not an exact measure of consumption due to factors such as unrecorded out of state sourcing, stock changes and the effects of outward and inward tourism.

Average alcohol consumption per adult 2012 and 2013

The data are presented in Table 1. The aggregate alcohol clearances and the "adult" populations are presented. These two combine to provide the average per adult consumption.

Table 1. Average per adult alcohol consumption 2012 and 2013

	2012	2013	% change 2012/2013
Million litres of pure alcohol (MPLA), Total consumption	41.703160	38.472436	-7.7
Population aged 15 and over, millions	3.5906	3.5854	-0.1
Litres of pure alcohol per adult (LPA)	11.615	10.730	-7.6
Beer (MLPA)	19.282539	18.089538	-6.2
Cider (MPLA)	3.188155	3.106897	-2.5
Spirits (MPLA)	8.261387	7.281334	-11.9
Wine (MPLA)	10.971079	9.994667	-8.9

Sources. CSO Population and Migration Estimates Sept 2013, Revenue Commissioners' Clearances data March 2014.

Total alcohol consumption declined substantially in 2013, by 7.7%. The number of adults declined slightly by 0.1%.

Average per adult alcohol consumption declined substantially in 2013, It was 10.730 lpa in 2013 compared with 11.615 lpa in 2012, a decline of 7.6%. A notable feature of the 2013 situation is that average per adult consumption is now substantially below 11 lpa. By comparison it was just below 11 lpa in 1990 and peaked at 14.44 lpa in 2001. Since 2001 the average per adult alcohol consumption has declined by 25.7%.

Summary

Average per adult alcohol consumption declined substantially in 2013 compared with 2012 from 11.615 lpa to 10.730 lpa, a decrease of 7.6%. Total consumption declined by 7.7% in 2013 and there were declines in all four beverages groups. The decline in spirits was greatest at 11.9%, followed by wine, 8.9%, beer 6.2% and cider 2.5%. Since its peak in 2001 the average per adult alcohol consumption has declined by 25.7%.

For additional information on the data and calculations please contact
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