

# Welcome to the *Positive Choices* Webinar Series

## Today's Webinar:



What can parents do  
to prevent teenage  
substance use?

Dr Louise Thornton &  
Ms Dana Leidl

**in case you missed it...**

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Personality-targeted  
interventions for prevention:  
the Preventure program.  
A/Prof Nicola Newton  
& Erin Kelly

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How can teachers and  
parents respond to the  
challenge of 'Legal-Highs'?

Dr Katrina Champion

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How to Engage Your  
Students with Evidence-  
Based Drug Education  
Siobhan Lawler

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Drugs & Alcohol and the  
Maturing Adolescent Brain.

Dr Louise Mewton

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Positive Choices.](#)



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# Drugs and Alcohol

Get the facts, Stay smart, Stay safe

# What is *Positive Choices* ?

[www.positivechoices.org.au](http://www.positivechoices.org.au)

- Central access point for trustworthy, up-to-date drug and alcohol information and educational resources
- Learning resources, factsheets, videos, and games to engage young people with drug education
- Access to classroom-based drug prevention programs that are proven to reduced drug-related harms

**Suggestions/feedback:**  
[info@positivechoices.org.au](mailto:info@positivechoices.org.au)



Developed by NDARC and NDRI, in consultation with teachers, parents and students. Funded by Australian Department of Health.

*Drugs and Alcohol*  
Get the facts, Stay smart, Stay safe



# What can parents do to prevent teenage substance use?

Dr Louise Thornton  
Ms Dana Leidl

@Louise\_Thornton  
@CREcomorbidity  
@pos\_choices



*Drugs and Alcohol*

Get the facts, Stay smart, Stay safe

# Overview

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- Drug and alcohol use among young people in Australia
- The role parents can play
- Filling the gap: an online, combined student-parent substance use prevention program





# Drug and Alcohol Use among Young People in Australia

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# Drug and Alcohol Use in Australia

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- 4 in 5 (80%) Australians consumed alcohol in the past year
  - 6.5% drank on a daily basis.
- 38% reported they had consumed alcohol at a level placing them at risk of injury
  - 26% had done so as often as monthly
- 14% Australians have used any illicit drug in the last 12 months
- 42% of Australians have ever used an illicit drug

What about young people?

# Poll

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# How many 13-14 year olds have had a full serve of alcohol in their lifetime?

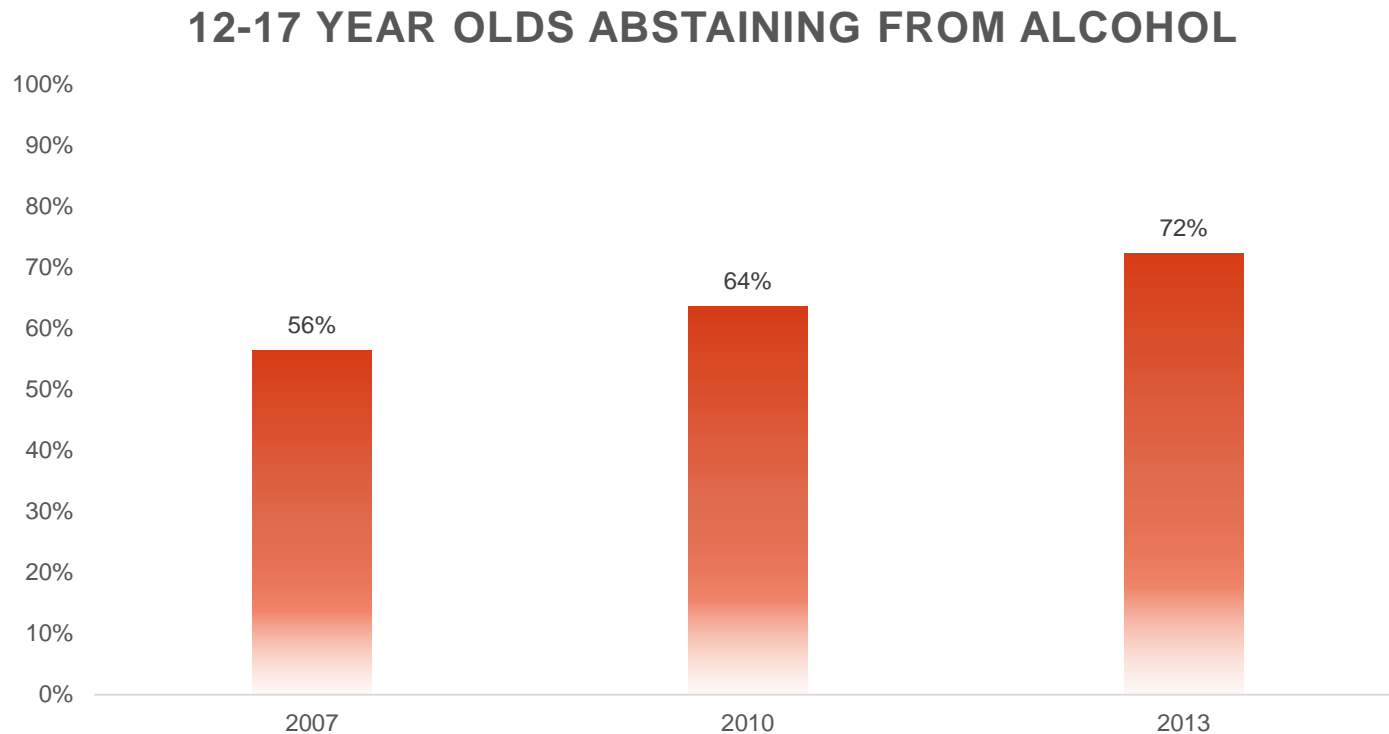
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- 4 in 5 (80%)
- 2 in 4 (50%)
- 1 in 4 (25%)
- 1 in 3 (33%)



# The Good News

- Fewer teenagers are drinking alcohol and using illicit drugs than in previous decades



# The Good News

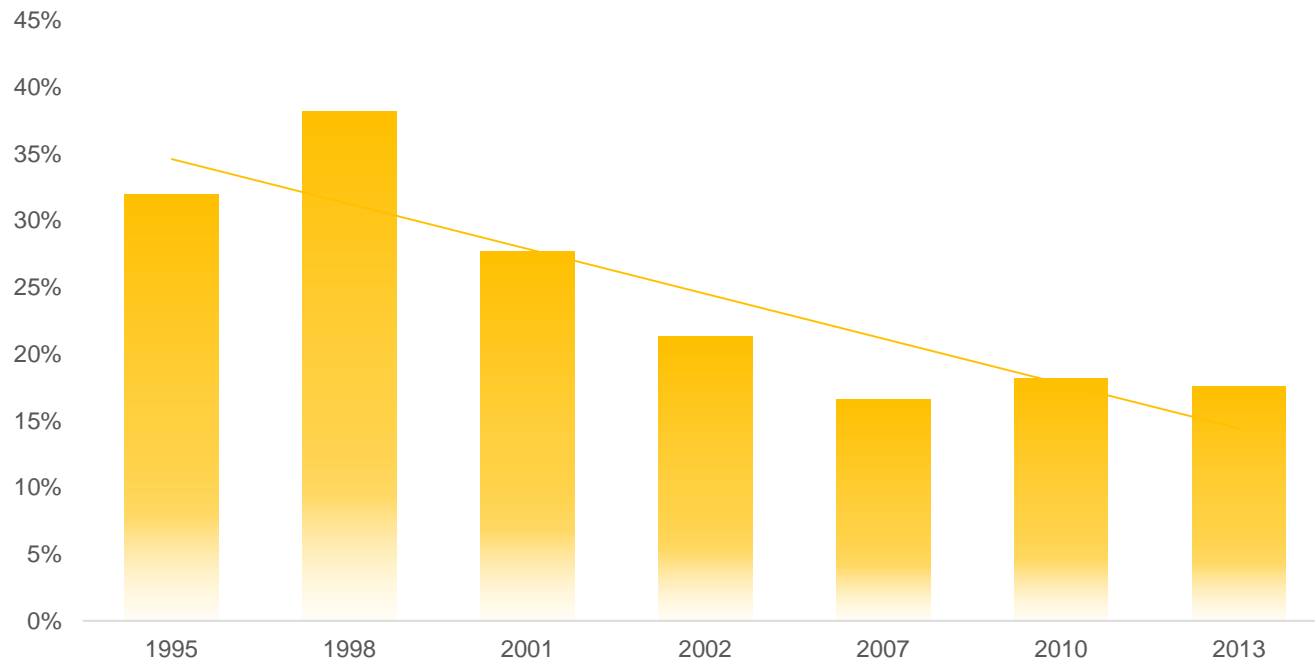
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- Fewer teenagers are drinking alcohol and using illicit drugs than in previous decades
- Younger people are also delaying starting drinking
  - Average age of initiation in 1998 = 14.4 years old
  - Average age of initiation in 2013 = 15.7 years old

# The Good News

- Fewer teenagers are drinking alcohol and using illicit drugs than in previous decades

**14-19 YEAR OLDS USING ILLICIT DRUGS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS**



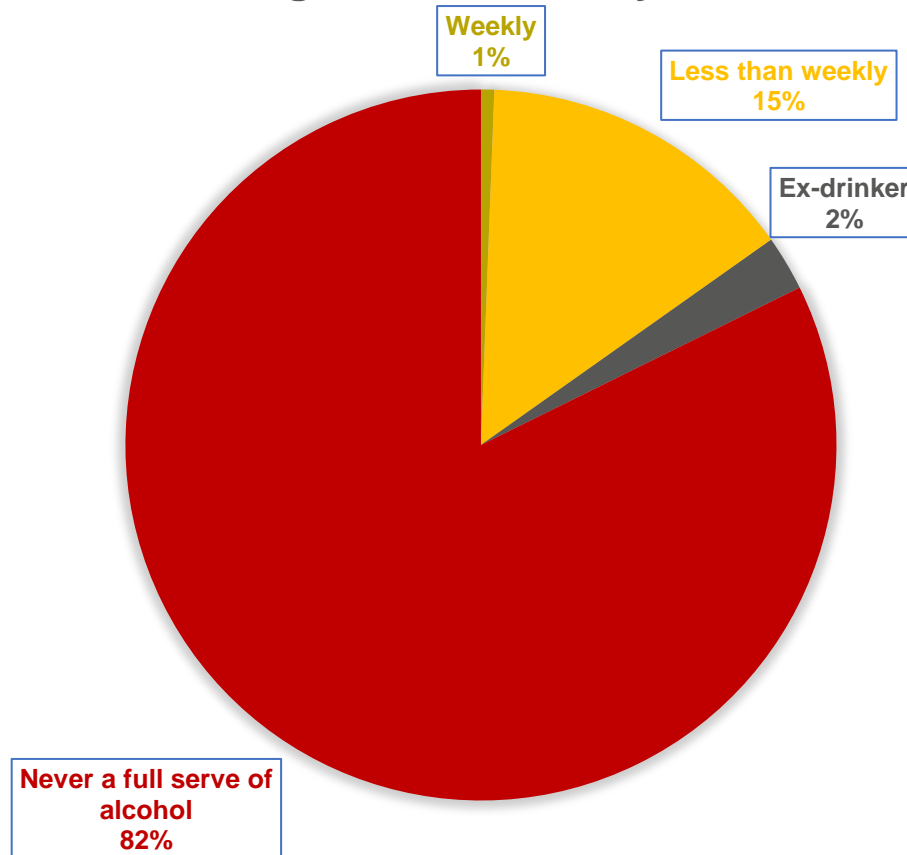
# The Bad News

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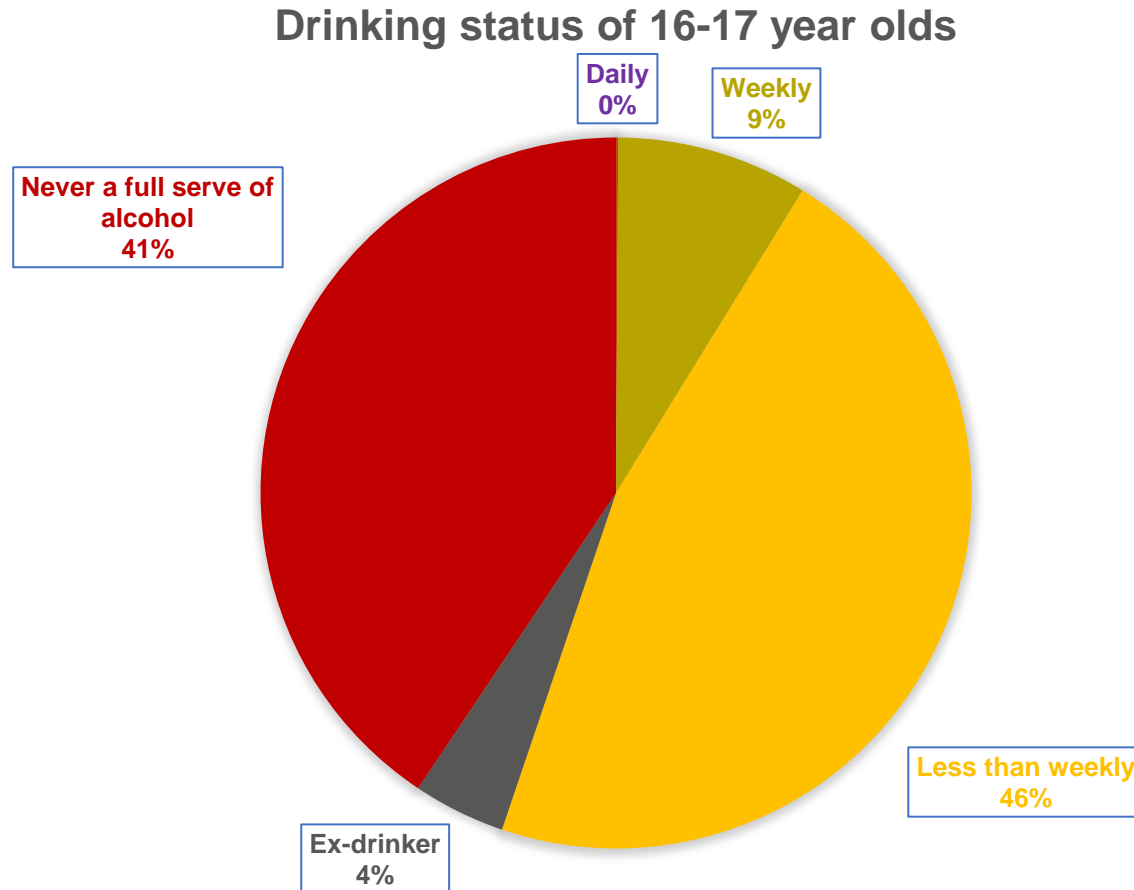
- NHMRC Guidelines
  - Under 18
    - Not drinking is the safest option
  - Under 15
    - Should not drink at all as they are at the greatest risk of harm
  - 15 – 17
    - The safest option is to delay drinking as long as possible
- Despite this most people start drinking alcohol during adolescence

# Drinking status of Australian teenagers

Drinking status of 12-15 year olds



# Drinking status of Australian teenagers

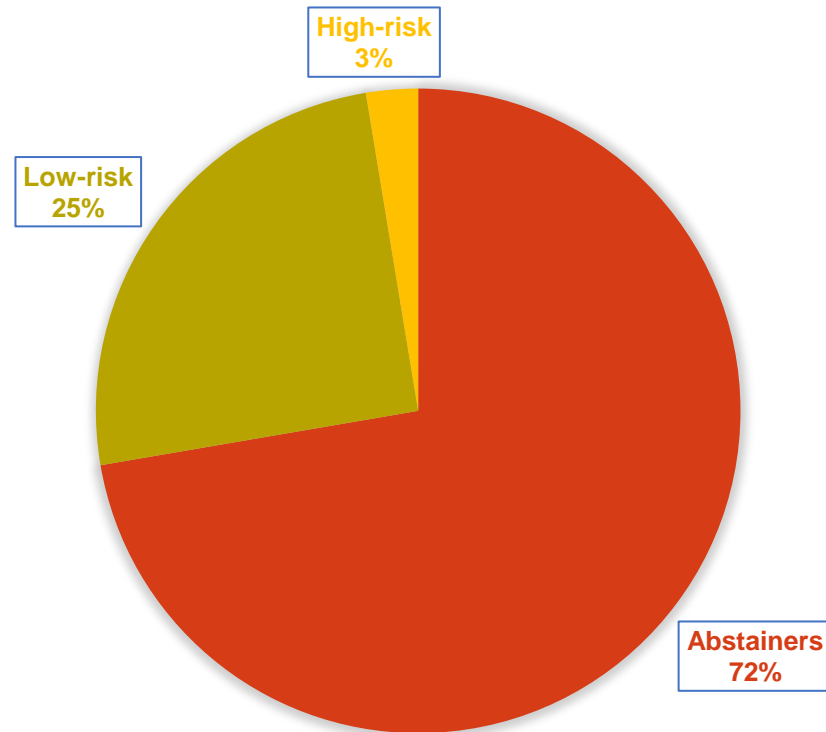




# Risky drinking among Australian teens

- Most teens drink at low risk levels
- A small proportion drink at high risk levels
- Teenage drinking associated with alcohol related incidents

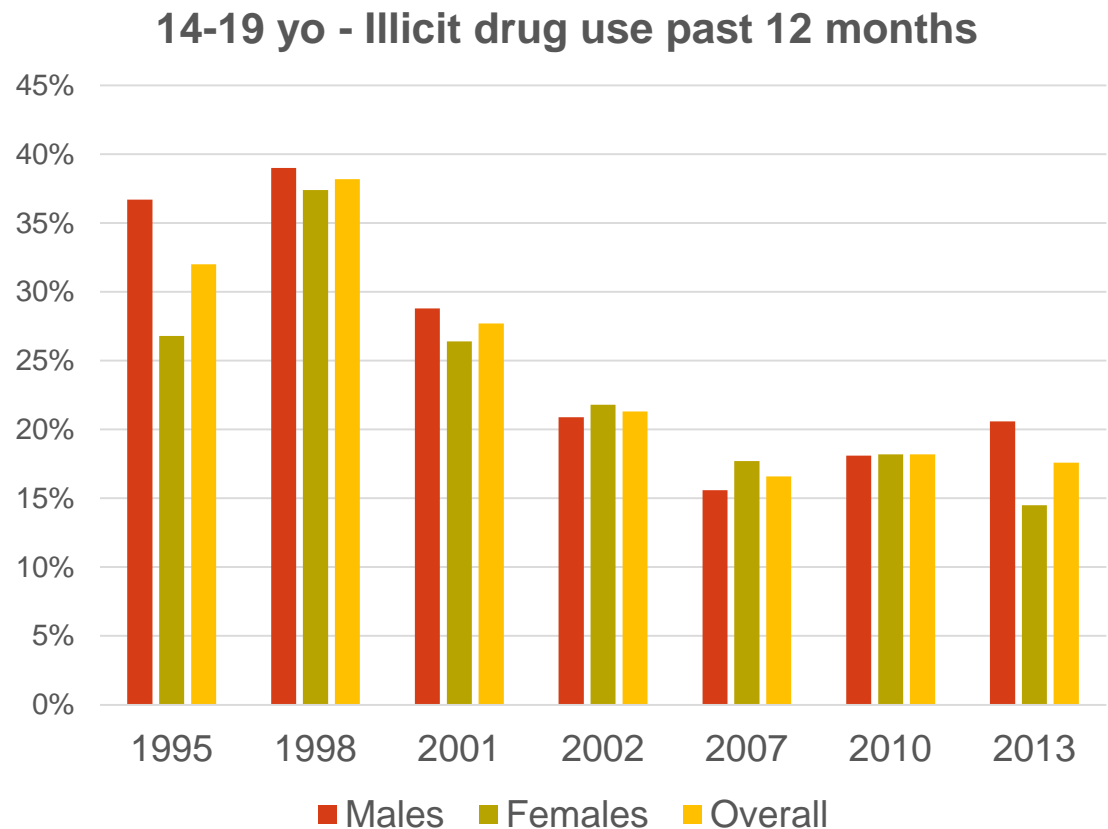
Risky drinking among 12-17 year olds



Incident	12-15	16-17
Verbal abuse	9.9	21.2
Physical abuse	2.7	10.5
Put in fear	11.5	14.7
Any Incident	16.5	26.9

# Illicit drug use among Australian teens

- Any level of illicit drug use worrying
- Illicit drug use more common in males



# Cannabis use among Australian teens

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- Most common illicit drug used by teenagers is cannabis
  - 18% have ever used cannabis
  - 14.7% have used in last 12 months
  - 7.6% have used in the last month
  - 4.8% have used in the last week
  - Average age of initiation =16.7yo



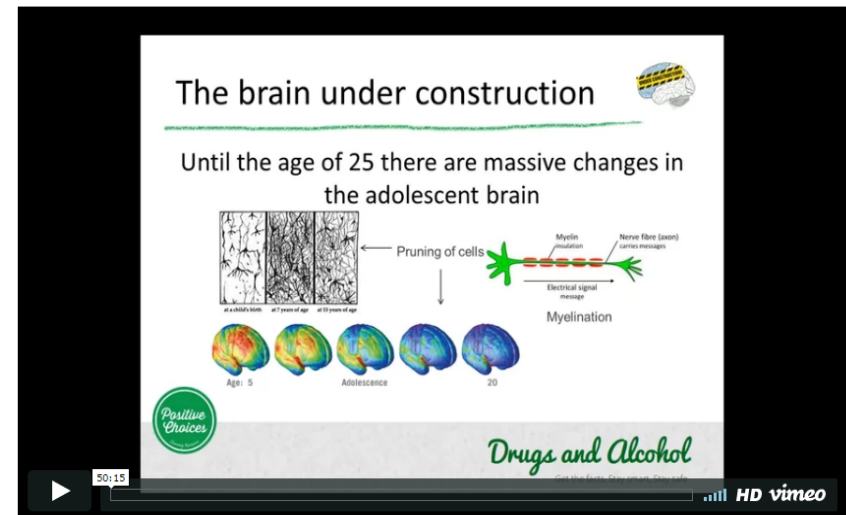
# Consequences of teenage drug and alcohol use

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- Early substance use associated with:
  - Increased risk for short- and long-term alcohol related harms
  - Substance use disorders
  - Mental health problems
  - Physical harms
  - Cognitive impairments
  - May adversely effect important social transitions

# Consequences of teenage drug and alcohol use

- Substantial changes occur in the adolescent brain
- Epidemiological research has shown drug and alcohol use may adversely affect adolescent brain development
- Positive Choices Webinar: *Drug and Alcohol and the Maturing Adolescent Brain* - Dr Louise Mewton
  - <https://positivechoices.org.au/teachers/adolescent-brain-development-and-prevention>



# PREVENTION IS CRITICAL!

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# The role parents can play

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# Parents are important!

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- Parents can play a pivotal role in their child's alcohol and drug use.
  - Specific parenting factors shown to influence adolescent drug and alcohol use – **in both directions**.
- Parent's attitudes towards alcohol can play a major role in influencing their children's alcohol use
  - More favourable parental attitudes towards alcohol related to higher levels of alcohol use and harms in adolescents and earlier first use.



# Parents are important!

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- Parent's drinking behaviour has a major influence on adolescent's drinking
- Supply of alcohol to teens
  - Associated with early alcohol initiation, and levels of alcohol use in the future
  - 34.4% of recent teenage drinkers were given their first glass of alcohol by their parents



# Parents are important!

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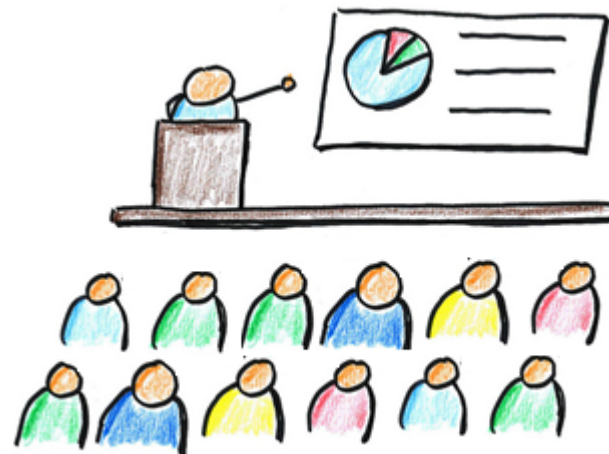
## Protective factors:

- Having clear rules about alcohol is associated with a delay in onset of drinking
- Being aware of child's activities, friends and whereabouts can help delay adolescent drinking, and later alcohol misuse
- Having a strong relationship with your child, supporting and being involved in your child's life are all protective factors



# Case study: Preventing heavy alcohol use in adolescents (PAS)

- PAS is a face-to-face parenting intervention targeting rule setting
- Program components:
  1. Presentation
  2. Group consensus on a shared set of rules
  3. Information leaflet
- Outcomes (when combined with a student intervention):
  - Delayed onset of drinking
  - Reduces heavy drinking



- 9 out of 10 school based combined student and parent programs identified showed a reduction in alcohol and other drug outcomes

# Parent participation is necessary for success!

- Many studies report difficulty recruiting parents to studies and engaging parents in interventions
- Overall, **parental uptake is low**
- Barriers:
  - Lack of time
  - Costs
  - Childcare
  - Transport issues

*Drug and Alcohol Review* (2017)  
DOI: 10.1111/dar.12407

## COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

### A systematic review of combined student- and parent-based programs to prevent alcohol and other drug use among adolescents

NICOLA C. NEWTON<sup>1</sup>, KATRINA E. CHAMPION<sup>1</sup>, TIM SLADE<sup>1</sup>, CATH CHAPMAN<sup>1</sup>,  
LEXINE STAPINSKI<sup>1</sup>, INA KONING<sup>2</sup>, ZOE TONKS<sup>1</sup> & MARIE TEESON<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use, National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, UNSW Australia, Sydney, Australia, and <sup>2</sup>Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands

#### Abstract

**Issues.** Alcohol and other drug use among adolescents is a serious concern, and effective prevention is critical. Research indicates that expanding school-based prevention programs to include parenting components could increase prevention outcomes. This paper aims to identify and describe existing combined student- and parent-based programs for the prevention of alcohol and other drug use to evaluate the efficacy of existing programs. **Approach.** The PsycINFO, Medline, Central Register of Controlled trials and Cochrane databases were searched in April 2015 and additional articles were obtained from reference lists. Studies were included if they evaluated a combined universal intervention for students (aged 11–18 years old) and their parents designed to prevent alcohol and/or other drug use, and were delivered in a school-based setting. Risk of bias was assessed by two independent reviewers. Because of the heterogeneity of the included studies, it was not possible to conduct a meta-analysis and a qualitative description of the studies was provided. **Key Findings.** From a total of 1654 screened papers, 22 research papers met inclusion criteria, which included 13 trials of 10 programs. Of these, nine programs demonstrated significant intervention effects in terms of delaying or reducing adolescent alcohol and/or other drug use in at least one trial. **Conclusion.** This is the first review of combined student- and parent-based interventions to prevent and reduce alcohol and other drug use. Whilst existing combined student- and parent-based programs have shown promising results, key gaps in the literature have been identified and are discussed in the context of the development of future prevention programs. [Newton NC, Champion KE, Slade T, Chapman C, Stapinski L, Koning I, Tonks Z, Teesson M. A systematic review of combined student- and parent-based programs to prevent alcohol and other drug use among adolescents. *Drug Alcohol Rev* 2017;00:000-000]

**Key words:** prevention, parent, review, alcohol, drugs.

The use of alcohol and other drugs (AOD) is widely recognised as a major global health problem [1]. Substance use is particularly problematic among adolescents, with recent Australian research indicating that among adolescents aged 12–17 years old, approximately three-quarters have tried alcohol, one in 10 put him/herself at risk of alcohol-related harm on a monthly basis and one in six has tried an illicit drug [2]. These data are particularly worrying given that early substance use initiation is associated with an increased risk for short- and long-term alcohol-related harms [1], development

of substance use disorders [3] and comorbid mental health disorders, such as anxiety and depression [4]. The need for effective prevention is therefore critical.

There are three common approaches to prevention: 'universal', 'selective' and 'indicated'. Universal programs are designed for, and applied to, everyone in a given setting; selective programs are only delivered to specific adolescents, based on their risk of developing a substance use disorder; and indicated programs are targeted at individuals who are experiencing early signs of substance use problems [5]. Universal programs offer

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# Parent participation is necessary for success!

- Many studies report difficulty recruiting parents to studies and engaging parents in interventions
- Programs that integrate parent-based components within existing meetings at school, or that utilise online delivery, have potential to reduce barriers to uptake among parents
- Only 2 student intervention components and no parent components were delivered online

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# Filling the gap: an online, combined student-parent program

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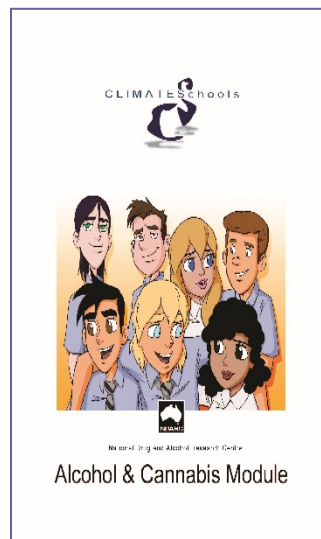
# Filling the gap...

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- To fill the gap, we wanted to develop:
  - The first combined parent-student substance use prevention program in Australian
  - The first combined program internationally that adopts an online delivery method

# Climate Schools: Student Program

- Universal prevention programs which aim to prevent substance use and related harms in adolescents and anxiety and depression
  1. Alcohol module (Yr 8: 13-14yr olds)
  2. Alcohol & Cannabis module (Yr 8/9: 13-15yr olds)
  3. Anxiety and depression module (Yr 9/10: 14-16 yr olds)
  4. Cannabis & Psychostimulant module (Yr 9/10: 14-16yr olds)
  5. Ecstasy & Emerging Drugs module (Yr 11: 16-17yr olds)



# Climate Schools: Student Program



To be continued.....



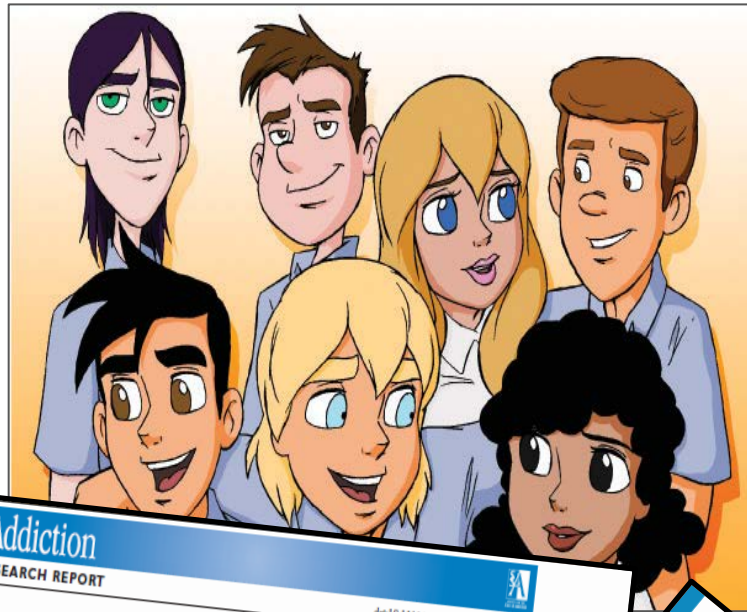
# Evidence base behind Climate Schools

- 6 RCTs in Australia (5 complete, 1 ongoing) and a pilot in UK
  - 157 schools and > 14,000 students have participated across NSW, WA, VIC, ACT, QLD and London
  - 17 papers reporting their effectiveness





# Climate Schools: Student Program



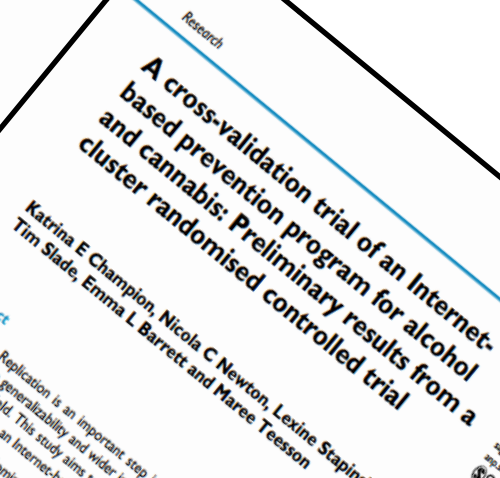
- Alcohol and Cannabis Module

- Two independent RCTs
- Summary of results:
  - ✓ Increased alcohol and cannabis knowledge
  - ✓ Decreased frequency of cannabis use
  - ✓ Decreased average alcohol consumption
  - ✓ Decreased binge drinking
  - ✓ Reduced truancy, psychological distress & moral disengagement
  - ✓ Positive teacher & student evaluations



ABSTRACT

To establish the long-term efficacy of a universal internet-based alcohol and cannabis prevention program for schools. **Methods** A cluster-randomized controlled trial was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the Alcohol and Cannabis Course. The evidence-based course, aimed at reducing alcohol and cannabis use, was delivered to 12 schools. **Results** A total of 764 year 8 students (13 years) from 10 Australian schools participated in the Internet-based prevention programme (n = 397, five schools). **Measures** Participants were assessed at baseline, immediately post-intervention, and at follow-up. This paper reports the final results of the intervention in schools. **Conclusions** The Alcohol and Cannabis Course. The effectiveness of the course was compared to the control group. At the 12-month follow-up, the course was found to be effective in reducing alcohol and cannabis use, and in increasing knowledge and skills.



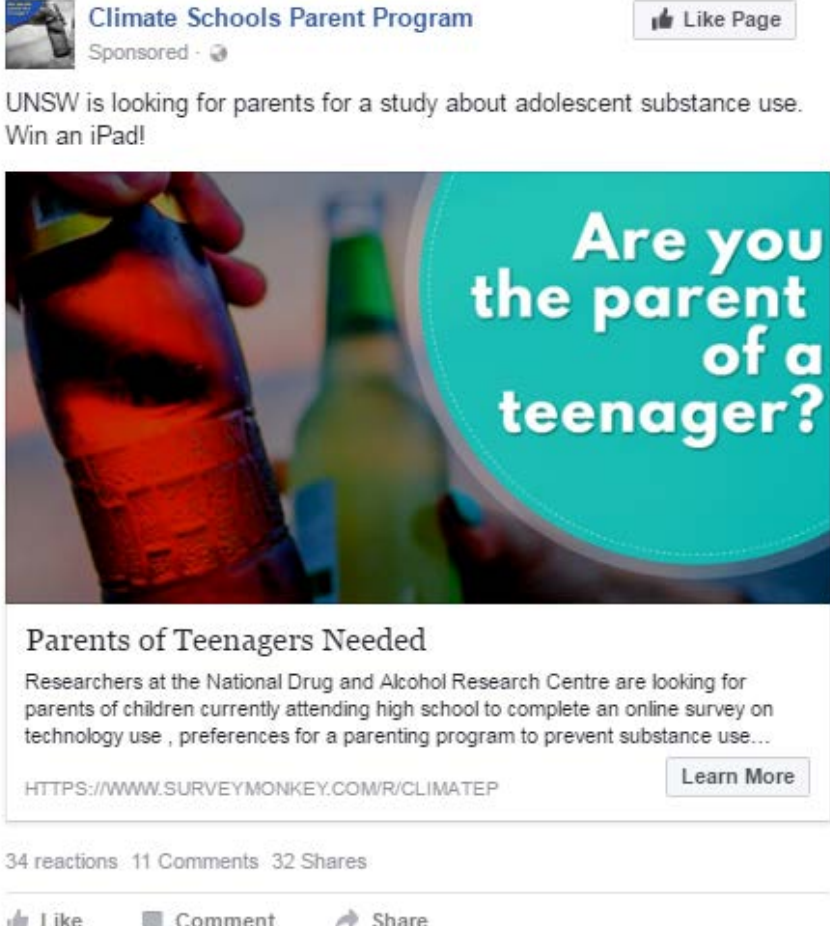
## Abstract

**Objective:** Replication is an important step in establishing the generalizability and wider impact of a prevention science field. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of an Internet-based prevention program for alcohol and cannabis use, an Internet-based prevention program for schools. **Method:** A cluster-randomized controlled trial was conducted in Australia in 2012. Six schools were randomly assigned to the intervention and control groups. **Results:** The course was found to be effective in reducing alcohol and cannabis use, and in increasing knowledge and skills.

**ANZJP**  
Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychology  
2016, Vol. 50(1) 64-73  
DOI: 10.1177/0005401715577435  
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New Zealand Psychological Society  
http://jap.sagepub.com  
http://anp.sagepub.com

# Parent scoping survey

- **Aim:** to seek feedback from Australian parents of high school students on the need for, and prospective features of the program
- Ethics approval granted by UNSW HREC
- Participants recruited via paid and unpaid advertisements online
- Surveyed participants on:
  - Their use of technology
  - Their preferences regarding parenting programs to prevent substance use
  - Their attitudes towards a range of substance use rules they might set



The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook post from the 'Climate Schools Parent Program' page. The post is sponsored and features a large image of a hand holding a red bottle of alcohol, with a green bottle visible in the background. A teal speech bubble with white text asks, 'Are you the parent of a teenager?'. Below the image, the text reads: 'Parents of Teenagers Needed. Researchers at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre are looking for parents of children currently attending high school to complete an online survey on technology use, preferences for a parenting program to prevent substance use...'. A URL is provided: 'HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/CLIMATEP'. A 'Learn More' button is located at the bottom right of the post content. The post has 34 reactions, 11 comments, and 32 shares. At the bottom, there are icons and labels for 'Like', 'Comment', and 'Share'.

**Climate Schools Parent Program**  
Sponsored · 🌐

UNSW is looking for parents for a study about adolescent substance use. Win an iPad!

**Are you the parent of a teenager?**

**Parents of Teenagers Needed**  
Researchers at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre are looking for parents of children currently attending high school to complete an online survey on technology use, preferences for a parenting program to prevent substance use...

<HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/CLIMATEP> [Learn More](#)

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👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share

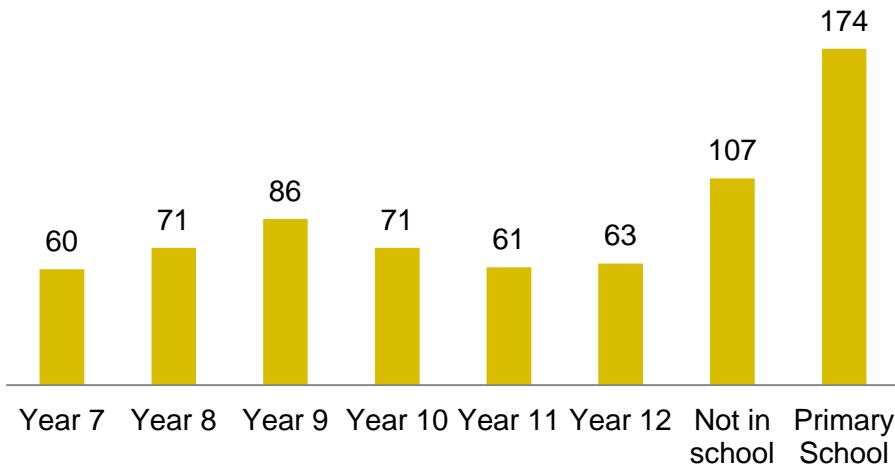
# Participant characteristics

**Sample:** 242 Australian parents of high school students completed the survey

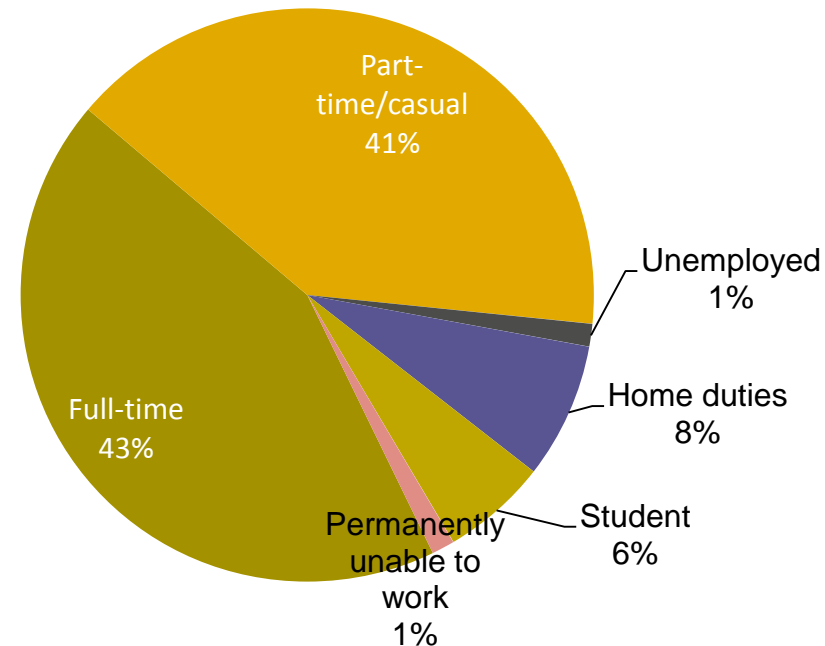
## Demographics:

- 95.5% female, 3.7% male and 0.8% other
- Average age = 43 (range from 30 to 64)
- 6% Speak a language other than English at home
- 5% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Child year



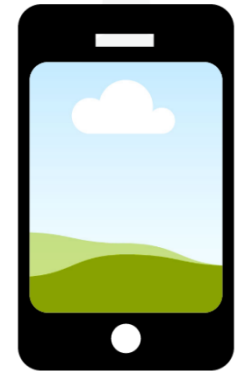
Employment



# Parenting Survey: Summary of key results

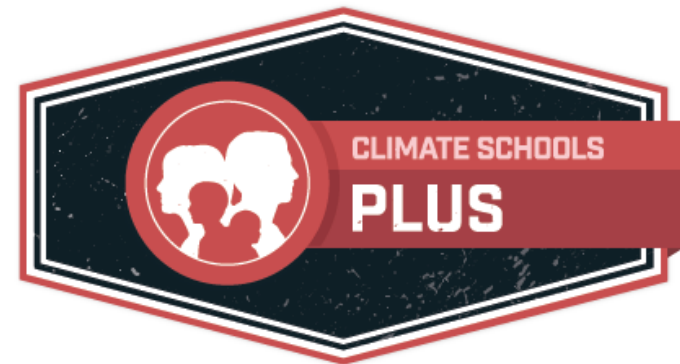
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- **Parents need a program:** Only 19% of parents were confident they could definitely stop their child from becoming drunk.
- **Parents would like to access this program online:** 71% of parents would like to access a parenting program via an app, email or school website
- **Parents care about the credibility of the program:** 98% of parents said it was very/extremely important that information is evidence based, and 90% that the institution making the program is reputable.
- **Parents are interested in the proposed features:** 60%+ parents are interested in webinars, automatic emails, modules and factsheets.
- **Parents want the program to be brief, self-paced and easy to use:** e.g. Most (53%) of parents want to spend under 10 minutes per week on the program



# Climate Schools Plus: Parenting Component

- CSP: Parenting Component is an online intervention targeting **rule setting** and other modifiable parenting factors
1. Interactive **webinar** targeting rule setting
    - Presentation on adolescent alcohol use and harms
    - Interactive rule ranking
  2. Brief, engaging **online modules** to support modifiable parenting factors
    - Attitudes, monitoring, parent-child relationship, monitoring, supply
  3. Emailed **lesson summaries** of student material



# What's in the modules?

Module	Mechanism addressed
<b>Module 1:</b> Getting the facts about alcohol  Prevalence, patterns and harms of alcohol use in teenagers; including changes in population patterns in Australia; Recognising signs of alcohol use in teenagers;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcohol attitudes</li> <li>• Alcohol rules (via attitudes)</li> <li>• Alcohol-specific communication</li> </ul>
<b>Module 2:</b> Parental attitudes and rule-setting  Reasons why teenagers choose to/not to use alcohol and; the role of parental attitudes in preventing alcohol and use and harms; Importance of alcohol-specific rule-setting; parental monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcohol attitudes</li> <li>• Alcohol rules</li> <li>• Parental discipline</li> <li>• Monitoring</li> </ul>
<b>Module 3:</b> Parental supply and use  The role of parental supply of alcohol; addressing parental use of alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcohol supply</li> <li>• Parental modelling</li> <li>• Parental alcohol use</li> </ul>

# What's in the modules?

Module	Mechanism addressed
<b>Module 4:</b> Communication and parental involvement  Effective communication about alcohol use; tips for effective communication; teaching teenagers to deal with peer pressure; parental involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent-child relationship quality</li> <li>• Parental support and involvement</li> <li>• Family conflict</li> <li>• General communication</li> </ul>
<b>Module 5:</b> Getting the facts about cannabis  Prevalence, patterns and harms of cannabis use in teenagers; short- and long-term effects of cannabis use, recognising signs of use and problem use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Favourable attitudes toward cannabis</li> </ul>
<b>Module 6:</b> Parents and cannabis  The role of parental attitudes, communication, involvement and monitoring in adolescent cannabis use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cannabis attitudes</li> <li>• Monitoring</li> <li>• Parent-child relationship quality</li> <li>• Parental support and involvement</li> <li>• Family conflict</li> <li>• General communication</li> </ul>



# Where to next?

- Development nearing completion
- Beta-testing and pilot-testing to commence in the second half of 2017
- A randomised-control trial to study the effectiveness of the program commencing in 2018





# Are you interested in testing the program?

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Contact Dana:  
[d.leidl@unsw.edu.au](mailto:d.leidl@unsw.edu.au)

## More parenting resources

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### Positive Choices

<https://positivechoices.org.au/parents/>



# Read more...

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Yap, M. B. H., Cheong, T. W. K., Zaravinos-Tsakos, F., Lubman, D. I., & Jorm, A. F. (2017). Modifiable parenting factors associated with adolescent alcohol misuse: A systematic review and meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Addiction*.

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# Thank you

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