

# The influence of alcohol consumption among cohabitating partners

December 4 2019

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Research has linked a partner's or spouse's drinking with changes in alcohol-related behaviours, but few studies have considered only cohabiting relationships. A new study published in *Drug & Alcohol Review* sought to determine if a cohabiting partner's drinking habits are influenced by their partner's consumption.

In the analysis of survey data on 1,483 newly cohabiting, Australian heterosexual couples, a respondent's own drinking was a stable and significant predictor of future consumption, and it was a greater predictor of later drinking than their partner's. A woman's consumption generally exerted significant influence on her [male partner's](#) later consumption, while a man's drinking had no effect for all but the first year following cohabitation.

"Cohabitation is increasingly becoming an important relationship step and precursor or alternative to marriage. Our findings suggest that cohabitation may present with similar levels of partner influence, related to [alcohol consumption](#), as new marriages," said lead author Geoffrey Leggat, MSc, of the Centre for Alcohol Policy Research, La Trobe University, in Australia. "Partners in cohabiting relationships should be mindful of the [potential effect](#) that their alcohol consumption may have, not only on their own consumption, but on that of their partner."

**More information:** Geoffrey Leggat et al, The influence of alcohol consumption among partners in newly cohabiting relationships, *Drug and Alcohol Review* (2019). [DOI: 10.1111/dar.13007](https://doi.org/10.1111/dar.13007)

Provided by Wiley

Citation: The influence of alcohol consumption among cohabitating partners (2019, December 4) retrieved 3 January 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-12-alcohol-consumption-cohabitating-partners.html>

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