Facts on: Current Drinkers

In Durham Region

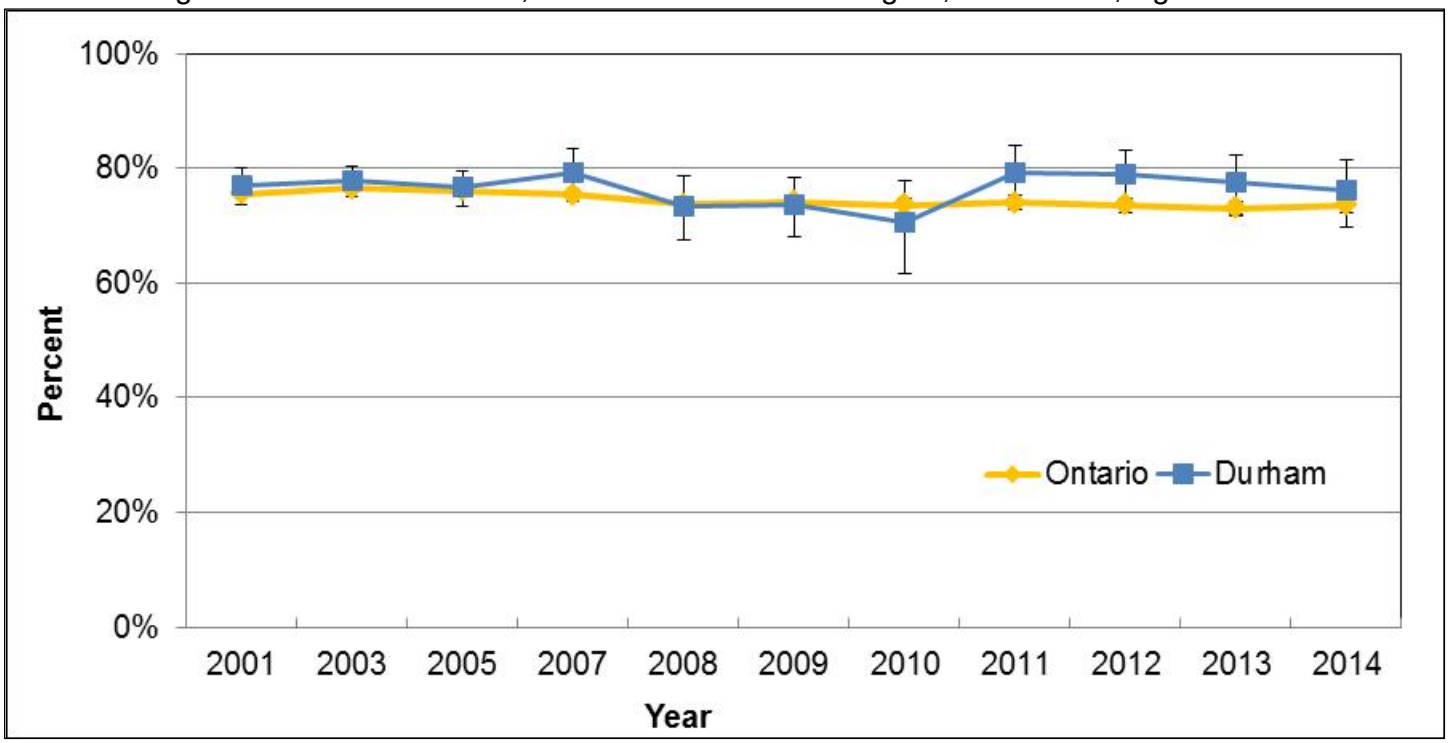
Highlights

April 2016

- In 2014, 76% of the Durham Region residents aged 12 and over were current drinkers (those who reported having a drink of alcoholic beverages in the past year). Rates for both Durham and Ontario have remained relatively stable since 2001.
- Percentage of current drinkers ranged from 64% to 84% among the 36 Ontario health units. Durham's rate was within the up middle of the range.
- Those 19 to 64 years old, especially 19 to 24 year olds, males, as well as people with higher income and education were more likely to be current drinkers.

Trend over Time

Figure 1: Current Drinkers, Ontario and Durham Region, 2001-2014, Ages 12+



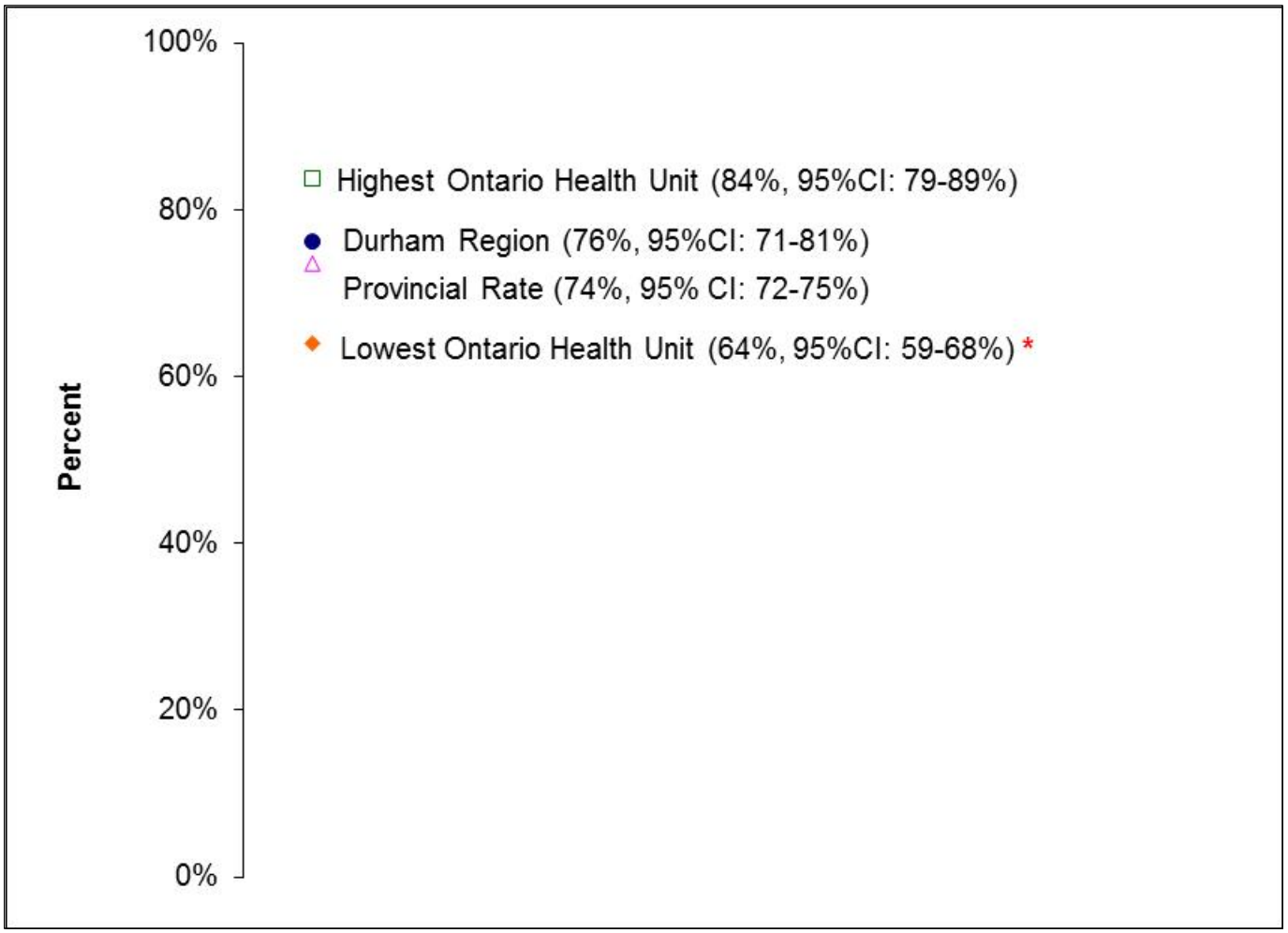
	2001	2003	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Ontario	76%	77%	76%	75%	74%	74%	74%	74%	74%	73%	74%
Durham	77%	78%	77%	79%	73%	74%	70%	79%	79%	78%	76%

Source: CCHS [2001, 2003, 2005, 2007/08, 2009/10, 2011/12, 2013/14]. Statistics Canada, Share File, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

In 2014, 76% of the Durham Region residents aged 12 and were current drinkers, which are defined as those who reported having a drink of beer, wine, liquor or any other alcoholic beverages in the past 12 months. This rate is similar to Ontario's rate of 74%. Rates for both Durham and Ontario have remained relatively stable since 2001 (Figure 1).

Provincial Comparisons

Figure 2: Current Drinkers, Provincial Comparison, 2014, 12+



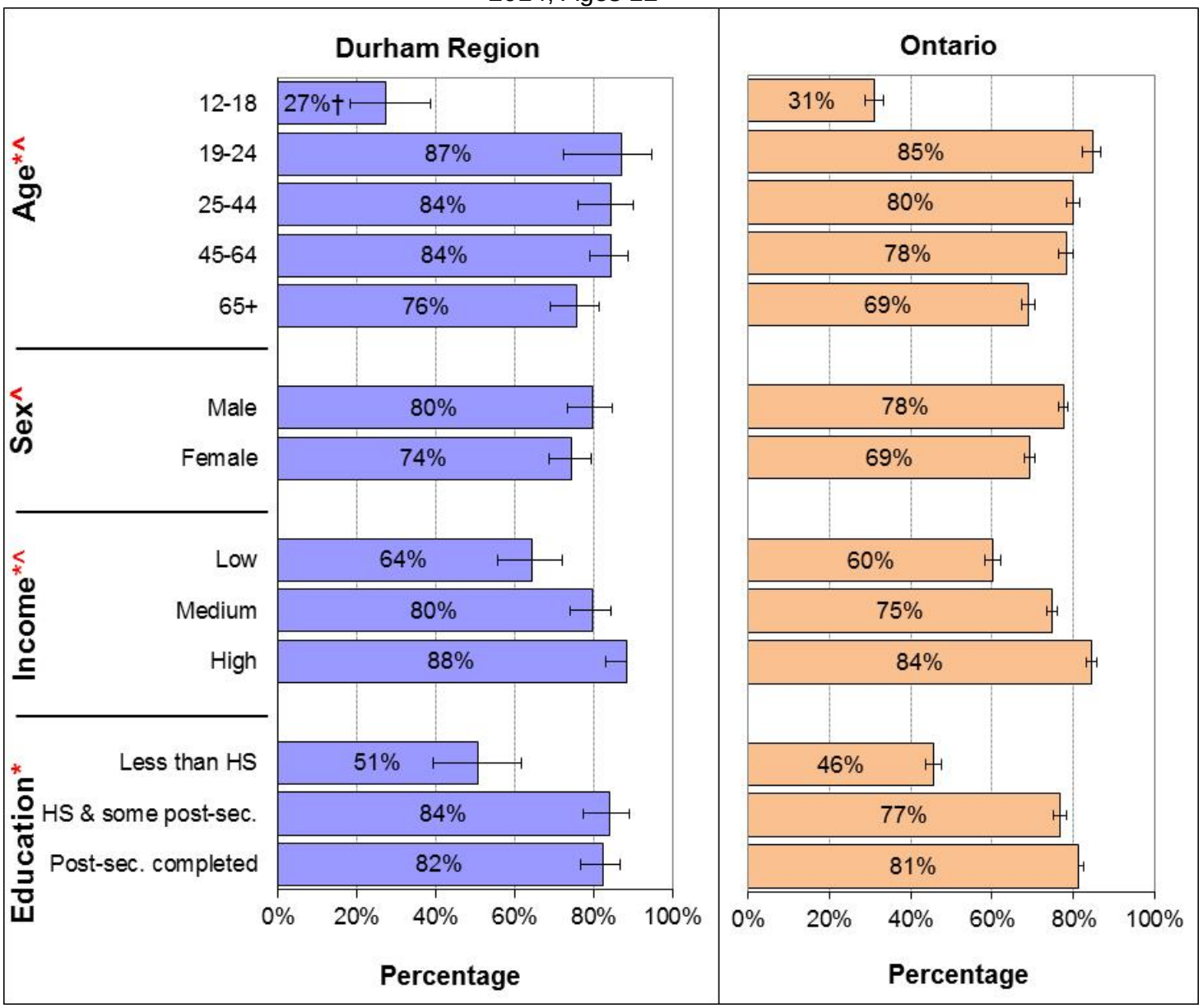
Source: Canadian Community Health Survey [2014], Statistics Canada, Share File, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

*: Statistically significant compared to Durham Region based on $p<0.05$

The percentage of current drinkers in 2014 ranged from 64% to 84% among the 36 Ontario health units. Durham's rate was in the upper middle of the range (Figure 2).

Current Drinkers and the Determinants of Health

Figure 3: Current Drinkers by Selected Socio-demographics, Durham Region and Ontario, 2013-2014, Ages 12+



Source: CCHS [2013/14], Statistics Canada, Share File, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
*: Association between selected socio-demographics and current drinking is significant based on $p<0.05$ for Durham Region
^: Association between selected socio-demographics and current drinking is significant based on $p<0.05$ for Ontario
Note: "Less than HS"= Less than high school; "HS & some post-sec" = High school and some post-secondary education; "Post-sec. completed" = Completed post-secondary education
†: Results need to be interpreted with caution as the coefficient of variation is between 16.6 and 33.3%.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of people who reported having a drink (current drinkers) in the past year by selected socio-demographic characteristics in 2013-2014. Current drinking was more prevalent among 19-64 year olds, especially in the 19 to 24 age group, males, as well as people with higher income and education. There were no statistically significant differences in current drinking among different sex groups for Durham, which is likely due to the small sample size.

Unlike other health behaviours, alcohol use is usually more prevalent among educated and upper-income people. The findings are consistent with many other studies.

Data Notes

Date Source: The Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) is a cross-sectional survey that collects information related to health status, health care utilization and health determinants for the Canadian population. It surveys a large sample of respondents and is designed to provide reliable estimates at the health region level. Since 2007, data are collected on an ongoing basis with annual releases, rather than every two years as was the case prior to 2007. The CCHS data are collected from persons aged 12 and over living in private dwellings, excluding individuals living on Indian Reserves and on Crown Lands, institutional residents, full-time members of the Canadian Forces, and residents of certain remote regions. Interviews are conducted using computer assisted interviewing, either in person or over the telephone.

Definitions and Survey Questions: Current Drinking is assessed by the following question in the Alcohol Use module:" During the past 12 months, have you had a drink of beer, wine, liquor or any other alcoholic beverage?"

Data Analysis: The CCHS share file obtained from the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care was used for analysis. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 Complex Samples. Estimates are weighted using the final CCHS sampling weight. Error bars (I) in the graphs represent the 95% confidence intervals (CI) around the percentage. The true or actual percentage falls within the range of values, 95 out of 100 times. For all variables, response options of 'Refusal', 'Don't Know', 'Not Stated' and 'Not Applicable' were excluded from the analysis.

The CCHS 2013 and 2014 dataset was used for the 'Current Drinkers and the Determinants of Health' analysis. Statistical significance was based on a Chi-square test with a *p*-value less than 0.05 ($p<0.05$). A statistically significant difference between groups means that the difference is not likely due to chance.

The income categories of low, medium and high were based on a CCHS derived variable which distributed residents according to the adjusted ratio of their total household income to the low income cut-off corresponding to their household and community size. The ten categories in this variable were grouped with "low" income corresponding to the lowest 30%, "medium" including the fourth 10% to seventh 10%, and "high" corresponding to 80% or higher.

True or false?

1. If a female and a male both have an average body type and weigh the same, drinking the same amount of alcohol will have the same effect on each of them.
2. Drinking coffee, working up a sweat, or having a cold shower will sober you up.

Answer

1. **False.** Males have more water in their bodies than females. This means the alcohol gets more diluted in males, and so a male will notice less effect than a female of the same body weight and body type who drank the same amount of alcohol.
2. **False.** Only time will make you sober. Your liver eliminates alcohol at a certain rate and nothing will change that rate. Your liver needs about 1.5 hours to eliminate one standard drink from your body.

Source: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

For more information on the CCHS, visit **http://www.statcan.gc.ca.**