

TITLE: A Study of Repeat Drink Drivers in West Australia

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ABSTRACT: Approximately 10,000 drivers are arrested per annum in Western Australia on charges associated with driving whilst impaired. It is known that of these around 30 percent have one or more further drink driving related charges. Despite the frequency of repeat offending, repeat drink drivers represent a population about whom relatively little has been reported in the literature. With a view to preventing these recurrent patterns of offending there is a clear need to understand more about this population of drivers and also about the attitudinal and situational factors that have contributed to their continued behaviour of driving after drinking. This presentation will describe a qualitative and quantitative study based upon semi-structured interviews and questionnaires completed with 40 repeat drink driving offenders in WA. The study, was funded by the Road Safety Council of WA and conducted by NDRI and The Injury Research Centre at UWA. It collected not only demographic data, but also information concerning levels and frequency of alcohol dependence, the use of other drugs, personality factors and attitudes of these drivers towards potential strategies to counter drink driving. Also, the situational factors that surround and contribute to these drivers continuing to operate vehicles following their consumption of alcohol have been collected using qualitative interview techniques. The findings from this study provide valuable insights into the contributing factors that underlie episodes of driving whilst intoxicated and carry important implications for those formulating future strategies that aim to reduce the incidence of drink driving in the community.