

# 25 per cent of Hong Kong teenagers binge drink - what needs to change?

Kely Support Group also says the government should have stricter laws on sales of alcoholic drinks

By Sebastien Raybaud, with additional reporting by South China Morning Post | November 29, 2017

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The law says those under 18 cannot buy alcohol from b convenience stores?

Photo: Felix Wong/SMP



Sebastien  
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## REPORTER

I love history, and it is a joy to share my passion with you. I love to discover more about other cultures, particularly through museums.

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Schools need to give young people in Hong Kong more information on the effects of drinking alcohol, and the government needs to provide better regulations against the selling of alcoholic drinks, says one youth support charity.

Sky Siu, the executive director of Hong Kong youth charity Kely Support Group, says that government regulations should include things like restricting sales, extra rules on where alcoholic drinks can be sold, and penalties for people who take part in underage drinking.

According to a survey conducted by the Department of Health between 2004 and 2014, the overall number of people who drink alcohol in Hong Kong has doubled over the past decade. The survey also found that 25 per cent of teenagers aged between 15 and 24 years old have a binge drinking habit.

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Siu said that, according to some survey results taken from the Centre for Health Protection in 2014-2015 and from 2004, the number of young people drinking alcohol now seems to be going down, not up. However, she said, every organisation collects their data in different ways, so it is hard to say for sure if that drop is correct.

Siu said that alcohol can be bought from a lot of places, and explains why so many teenagers drink so much. This is a problem that needs to be dealt with by the government.

“According to a survey published by the Narcotics Division, alcohol is the most popular legal substance in Hong Kong. Teenagers can access it easily.

**Hong Kong need tighter controls on underage drinking**

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“The city has a law that people under the age of 18 aren't allowed to buy alcohol in bars and restaurants – but there's no restriction in supermarkets, stores and machines. [This results in] people as young as 10 drinking alcohol,” Siu said.

Constance Chan Hon-ye, the Director of Health at the Department of Health, said that her department will keep a close eye on the buying and selling of alcohol in Hong Kong. She said the Health Department has rolled out educational programmes to discourage drinking among young people.

“Non-drinkers are advised not to start drinking, while drinkers should gradually decrease their drinking to reduce harm,” Chan said.

Edited by Ginny Wong

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This article appeared in the Young Post print edition as **More education needed to lower alcohol sales**