



The Auckland Pseudo Patrons Project 2003

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Executive Summary

- ♦ The Auckland Pseudo-Patrons project investigated the age verification practices of off-licensed premises in the greater Auckland region (Auckland, Manukau, North Shore and Waitakere cities and Franklin, Papakura and Rodney districts).
- ♦ The first survey was undertaken in 2002; this report presents results from the follow-up study in 2003 and reports comparisons between the 2002 and 2003 surveys.
- ♦ As with the survey in 2002, data collection in 2003 took place over three successive weekends. The study involved 18 year old “pseudo-patrons” visiting approximately 250 randomly selected off-licensed premises and attempting to purchase alcohol without providing age identification (ID). Each premise was visited twice; once by a female and once by a male. The off-licensed premises visited were bottle shops, supermarkets and grocery stores (convenience stores, superettes, etc).
- ♦ To date this is the largest survey of its kind in New Zealand.

Results

- ♦ Of the visits made to selected off-licenses in the Auckland region in 2003 the total proportion of successful purchases without ID was 46%. This was a significant decrease from 2002 where the proportion was 61%.
- ♦ The percentage of sales made without ID in the cities and districts were as follows (2003; 2002):
 - Franklin (57%; 65%), Auckland city (53%; 57%), Manukau city (52%; 77 %), Rodney (42%; 67%), Waitakere city (36%; 40%), North Shore city (30%; 39%) and Papakura (25%; 91%).

Significant decreases in the proportions of sales made without ID were found in Manukau, Rodney and Papakura between 2002 and 2003.

- ♦ In 2003 pseudo-patrons were able to purchase alcohol without ID for 71% of visits to grocery outlets, 43% of bottle shops and 28% of visits to supermarkets. In 2002 these proportions were 80% for grocery outlets, 59% for bottle shops and 53% for supermarkets.
- ♦ Significant decreases in the proportion of sales made without ID were found for supermarkets and bottle shops between 2002 and 2003.

Introduction

The Auckland Pseudo patron's project was first conducted in 2002. The purpose of the project was to conduct a survey to monitor ID verification practices of a sample of off-licensed premises in the greater Auckland region (Auckland, Manukau, North shore, Waitakere, Papakura, Franklin and Rodney). Data collection took place over three successive weekends, and involved 18 year olds visiting randomly selected off-licensed premises and attempting to purchase alcohol without ID.

A follow-up pseudo patron's project has been conducted in 2003. Again the purpose of the study was to monitor the ID verification practices of a sample of off-licensed premises in the greater Auckland region. As with the 2002 study, data collection in 2003 took place over three successive weekends and involved 18 year olds visiting randomly selected off-licensed premises and attempting to purchase alcohol without ID.

The results presented in this report are from this follow-up survey and show comparisons between the 2002 and 2003 surveys.

Background

The minimum legal age for purchase of alcohol has been found to be a particularly important environmental policy that can restrict consumption and related harm among young people (Wagenaar et al 2002). In New Zealand the minimum purchase age for alcohol was lowered from 20 to 18 years in December 1999. Following this, the New Zealand National Alcohol Surveys 1995 & 2000 identified significant increases in heavier consumption of alcohol on a typical drinking occasion by those under the new minimum purchase age of 18 years (Habgood et al 2001).

The pseudo patron's project conducted in 2002 indicated that off-licensed premises were a source from which those under the minimum purchase age were likely to be obtaining alcohol relatively easily (61% of visits made to selected off-licenses resulted in alcohol being purchased without ID) (Woolgrove, Huckle et al 2002). This occurred despite an argument by the hospitality industry that 'a hard 18', no ID, no sale culture would be implemented following the lowering of the minimum purchase age in December 1999 (Conway et al 2003).

From a public health perspective, adequate enforcement of the purchase age through age verification practices at alcohol outlets is vital to avoid increases in alcohol consumption and related harm to young people resulting from a decrease in the de facto purchase age. The ease of access to alcohol in teenage years is important as it has been shown in longitudinal research to predict subsequent levels of heavier drinking and related problems (Connolly et al 1992; Casswell et al 1996; Grant et al 1997; Chou et al, 1992; Fillmore et al 1991).

Despite these public health concerns there is currently no strategy in place to monitor ID verification practices to ensure compliance with the intent of the Sale of Liquor Act legislative changes (a hard 18 ID culture) in New Zealand.

Methodology

Sample

In both 2002 and 2003 the total population of bottle shops, supermarkets and grocery outlets holding off- licences to sell alcohol in Auckland were identified from a current list of off licensed premises. This list was obtained from the Liquor Licensing Authority, Department of Justice, Wellington. Random samples of off-licenses were

selected for the city District Licensing Authorities and for the regional District Licensing Authorities. Representative numbers for each type of premise (bottle shop, supermarket and grocery outlet) were obtained. The total number of premises randomly selected was approximately 250 in both 2002 and 2003¹.

Pseudo patrons

A small number of pseudo patrons were used for data collection in both 2002 and 2003. Selecting only a small group of pseudo-patrons served two purposes: reducing inter-person variability and thereby making the data collection process more consistent, and minimising the number of people who knew about the project, and thus maintaining a greater degree of confidentiality.

All the pseudo-patrons were 18 years old, and were required to provide verification of their age from a driver's license, birth certificate or passport before being hired. Each pseudo-patron was paired up with a research supervisor/driver whose role was to drive between premises and to ensure that the research protocols were followed.

Data collection

Data collection took place over three successive weekends in 2003 and this was the same period in which the 2002 data collection was conducted. Weekends were chosen, as they are the times that young people are most likely to be trying to buy alcohol. Data collection typically started in the afternoons on Friday and Saturday and continued till around 9-10pm each night.

In 2002, where necessary data collection also took place on Sundays between 1pm and 7pm, in order to visit premises that were unable to be reached on Friday or Saturday evenings. In 2003 the same process was repeated in order to maintain comparability of results. This meant that the same numbers of premises, in the same district licensing authorities, within the same time frame, with the same gender pseudo patron were visited on Sundays in 2003 as were visited in 2002.

Pseudo-patrons were required to enter a premise, choose one item of alcohol of up to \$10 worth and attempt to purchase the item. If asked for ID they said to the server they had no ID on them. The sale then either took place or was discontinued by the server and the pseudo-patron left the premise. Pseudo-patrons wrote up the results of each visit.

Data collection involved each randomly selected off license being visited twice, once by a male and once by a female. This method was chosen since previous research in this area has indicated that there are differences between males and females in age verification practices by premises that sell alcohol (Lang et al 1996).

Analysis

The surveys were both complex designs that allowed for obtaining sufficient numbers in each district, especially the smaller districts, as well as in each of the different categories of off-license premise e.g. bottle shop, supermarket and grocery outlet. This meant that there were different probabilities of selection in each category by district strata and that some strata had a high proportion of coverage. An added

¹ The Massey University Ethics Committee provided ethical approval for the Pseudo Patrons project in 2003. The ethical jurisdictions for the project state that reporting of aggregate data is permitted. No individual premise will be identified publicly or to Police and/or other relevant stakeholders.

complexity was the repeated measures taken at each off-licence, one by a male and one by a female. The program WesVar[<http://www.westat.com/wesvar/>] was used to calculate the estimates and their variances and the significance testing was completed by hand. WesVar uses replication variance estimation which consists of repeatedly calculating estimates for subgroups of the full sample and then computing the variance among these “replicate” estimates. This technique implicitly accounts for the complexity of both a sample design and the estimators that are used. The replicate variance estimation method that was used in this report was the jackknife.

Significant differences are reported when they are statistically significant at the 0.05 level and there are at least 14 observations in each comparison group.

Results

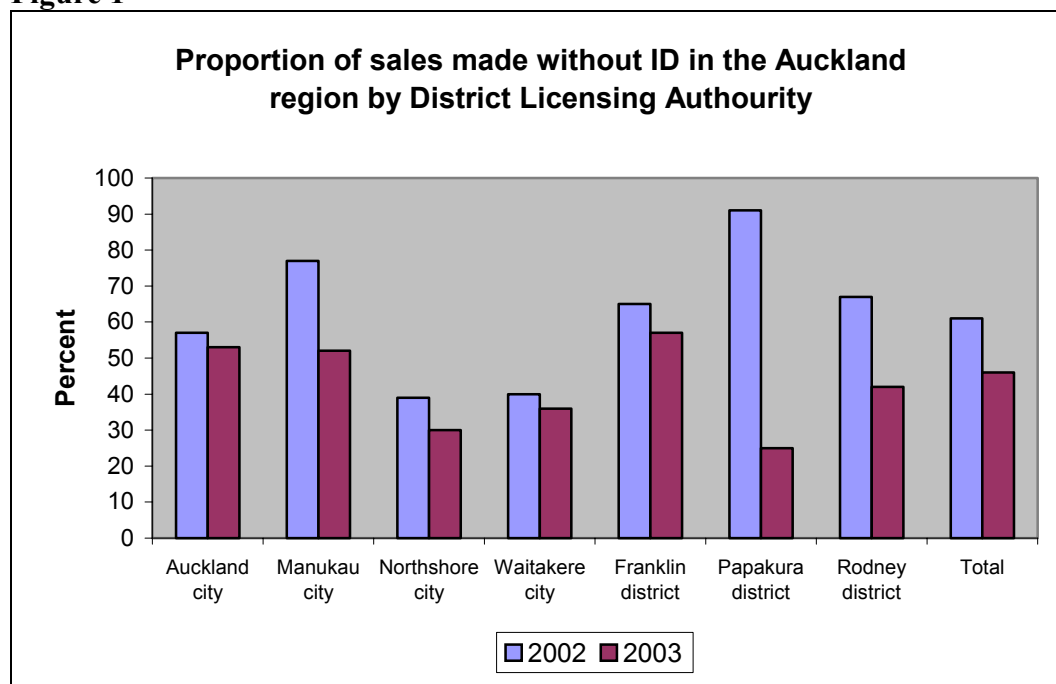
Results provided in this section include 1) ID verification practices in the Auckland region by District Licensing Authority (cities and districts) and by premise type e.g. bottle store, supermarket and grocery store 2) age signage by District Licensing Authority and by premise type 3) the effect of pseudo-patron gender on sales made without ID 4) District Licensing Authority profiles and 5) narrative evidence from transactions at some off-licence outlets.

Coverage of the selected off-licenses

Of the original random sample of off-licensed premises selected in 2003 86% of licenses were visited. In 2002 84% of selected off-licenses were visited. The main reason for off-licensed premises not being visited was because they no longer existed.

The proportions reported in the following tables are based on the number of visits to the selected off-licensed premises, bearing in mind that each premise was visited two times.

Figure 1



In 2003, 57% of visits made to off-license premises in the Franklin district resulted in the sale of alcohol without ID. This proportion was 65% in 2002 and no significant difference was found between the years. In Auckland city 53% of sales were made without ID in 2003 and this had not significantly changed since 2002 (57%). Manukau and Rodney followed with 52% and 42% of sales made without ID in 2003. These proportions however had significantly decreased from 2002 where they were 77% for Manukau and 67% for Rodney. Both North Shore and Waitakere cities had no significant change in proportion of sales made without ID between the years. For Papakura the proportion of sales made without ID was 25% in 2003 and this was a large and significant decrease compared with 91% in 2002.

Overall there was a significant decrease in the proportion of sales made without ID at off-licenses visited in the Auckland region; 46% in 2003 compared with 61% in 2002 (Figure 1).

Figure 2

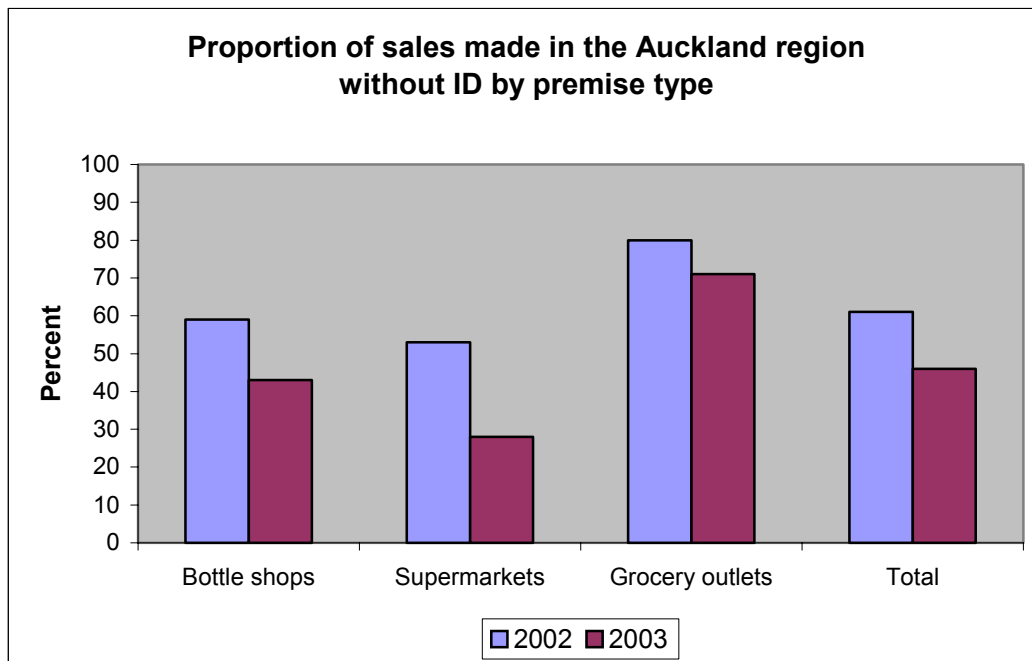
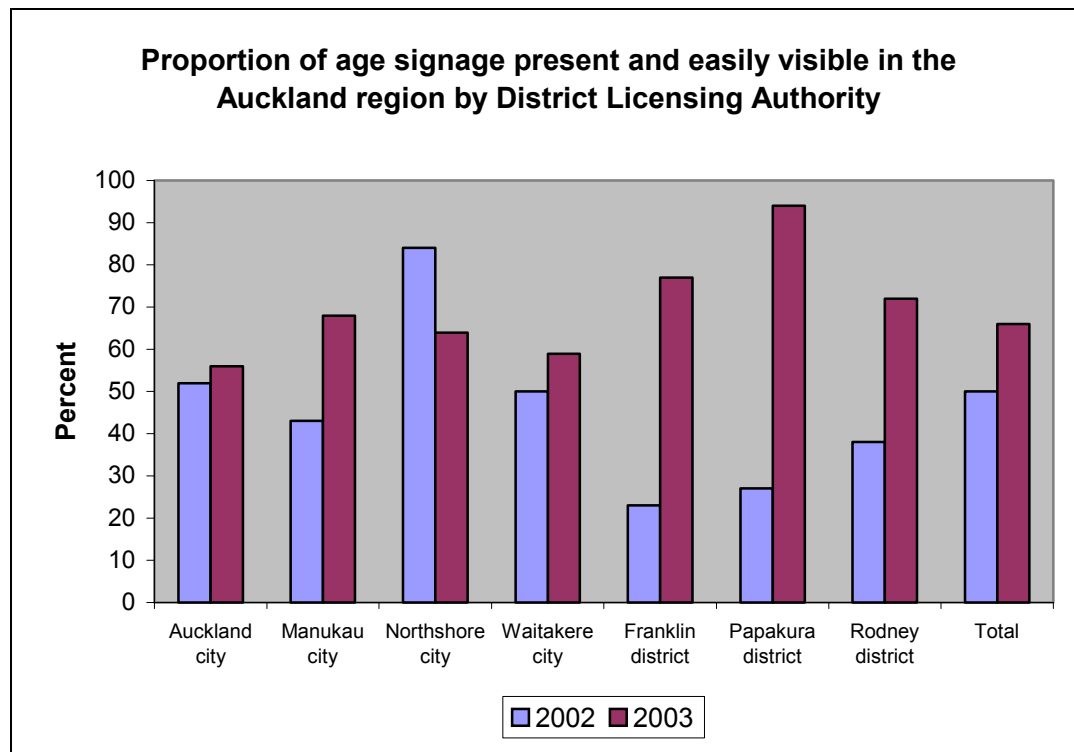


Figure 2 indicates that alcohol was able to be purchased without ID for 71% of visits made to selected grocery stores in the Auckland region. This was not a significant change from the proportion of sales made in 2002 (80%). Bottle shops had the next largest proportion of sales made without ID (43%) however this had significantly decreased from 59% in 2002. For supermarkets, 28% of visits made resulted in sales of alcohol without ID and this had significantly decreased from 53% in 2002.

Figure 3

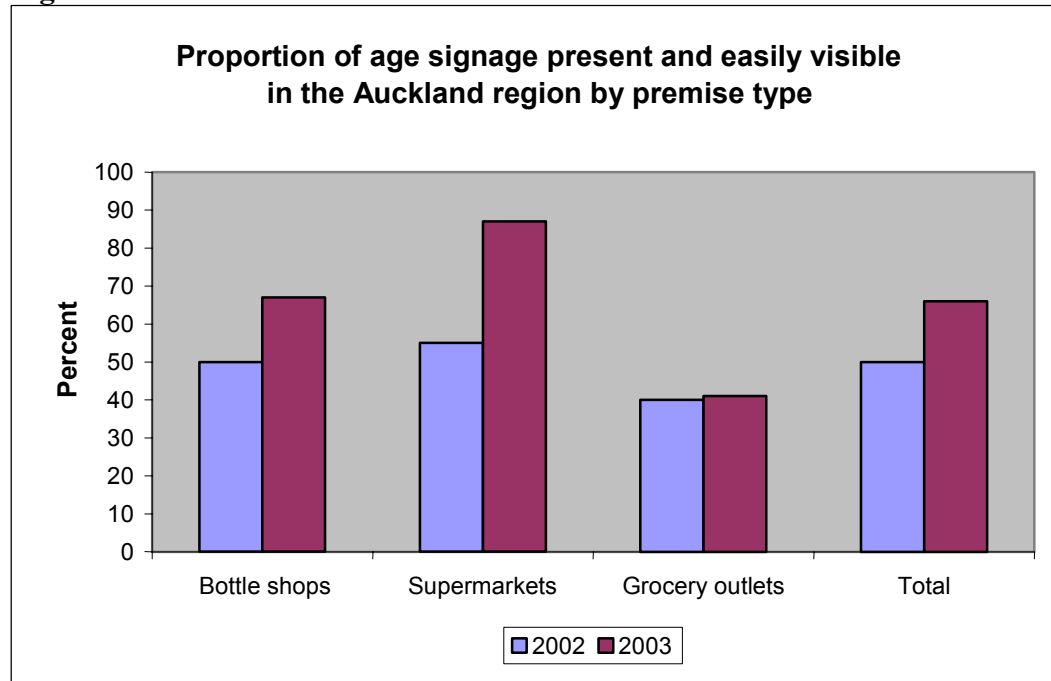
Pseudo-patrons were asked to indicate whether age signage was present in off- license premises visited. There were three categories into which signage fell: signage was present and easily visible; signage was present but not easily visible; there was no signage present. The results reported in Figure 3 show the proportion of age signage that was present and easily visible in the Auckland region by District Licensing Authority.



Papakura had the largest proportion of age signage present and easily visible in 2003 (94%) and this proportion had significantly increased from 2002 (27%). Franklin, Rodney and Manukau had the next largest proportions of age signage present and easily visible in 2003 (79%, 72% and 68% respectively). As with Papakura these proportions had significantly increased since 2002 from 23% in Franklin, 38% in Rodney and 43% in Manukau. North Shore city had 64% of age signage present and easily visible and this was a significant decrease from 84% in 2002. No significant change in the proportions of age signage present and easily visible occurred in Waitakere (2003: 59%, 2002: 50%) and Auckland cities (2003: 56%; 2002: 52%).

Overall the proportion of age signage that was present and easily visible in off-licenses visited in the Auckland region was 66% in 2003, a significant increase from 50% in 2002 (Figure 3).

Figure 4



Of the visits made to supermarkets in the Auckland region 87% had age signage present and easily visible and this was a significant increase from 2002 where the proportion was 55%. For bottle shops these proportions were 67% in 2003 and 50% in 2002 (a significant increase between the years). Grocery outlets had the smallest proportions of age signage present and easily visible in both years (around 40%) with no significant change between 2002 and 2003 (Figure 4).

Figure 5

In 2003, pseudo patrons were asked to differentiate between age signage promoting no sale of alcohol to those under 18 years and age signage promoting the request for ID of those who look under 25 years. This was introduced in 2003 as more widespread introduction of 'ID under 25 signage' had occurred. Figure 5 reports proportions of 'under 18 signage' and 'ID under 25 signage' by District Licensing Authority.

As noted previously pseudo-patrons were asked to indicate whether age signage was present and easily visible; signage was present but not easily visible or there was no signage present in the outlets they visited.

** Note – These data are only reported for 2003. Alcohol outlets may have both 'under 18 signage' and 'ID under 25 signage' present and easily visible therefore the combined percentages of these two types of age signage by District Licensing Authority may not equal the percentages reported in Figure 3.*

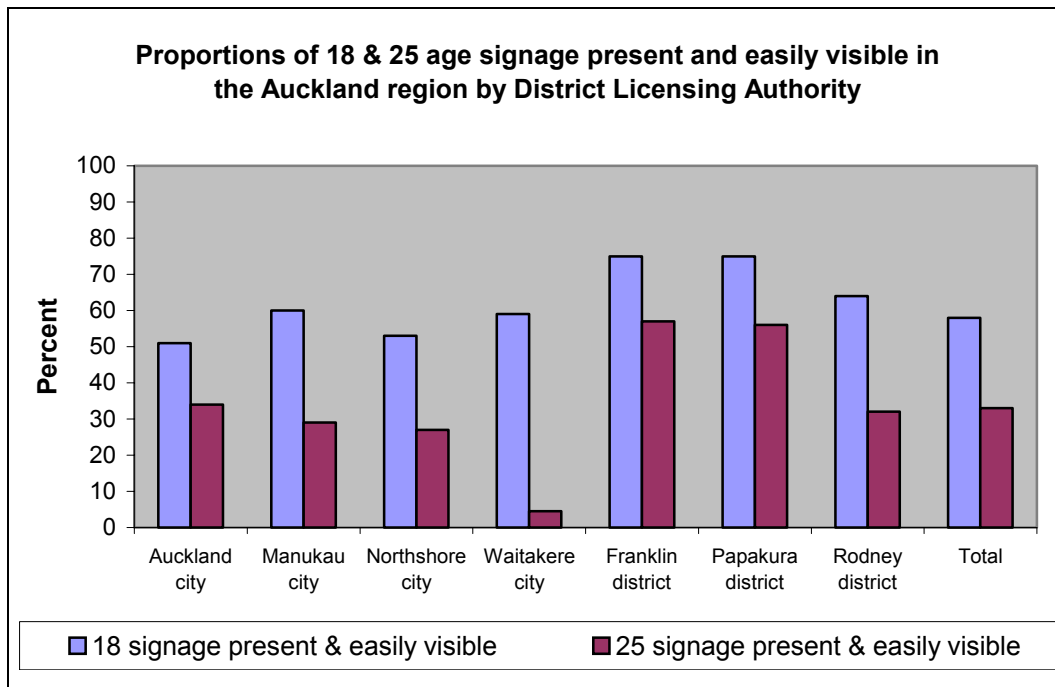
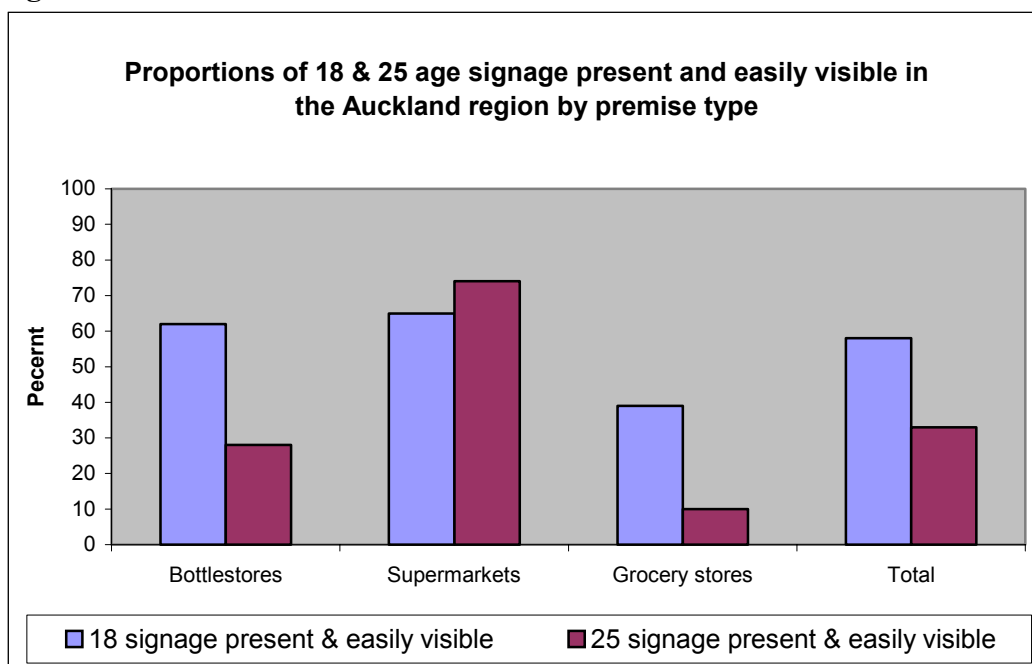


Figure 5 indicates that Franklin and Papakura districts had the largest proportions of ‘under18 signage’ present and easily visible in the Auckland region (75% for both districts). Rodney had the next largest proportion (64%), followed by Manukau and Waitakere cities (approximately 60%), Northshore city (53%) and Auckland city (51%). Franklin and Papakura districts also had the largest proportions of ‘ID under 25 signage’ present and easily visible in the Auckland region (57% and 56% respectively). These two districts were followed by Auckland city (34%), Rodney (32%), Manukau (29%), Northshore (27%) and Waitakere (4.5%)

In 2003 the total proportion of 18 and 25 age signage present and easily visible in outlets visited in the Auckland region was 58% and 33% respectively.

Figure 6

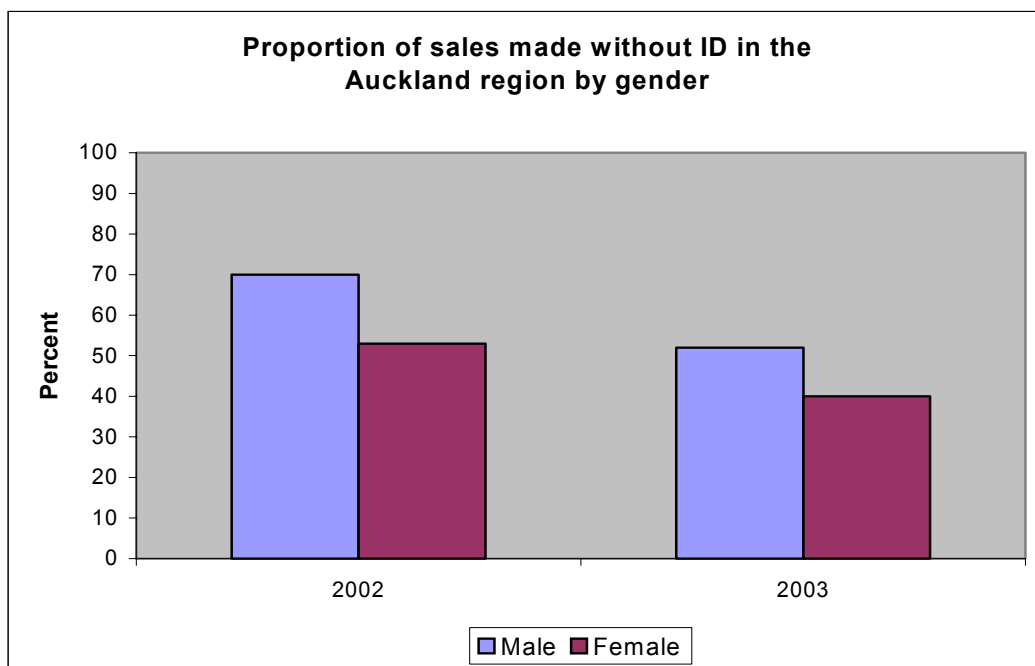


* Note – These data are only reported for 2003. Alcohol outlets may have both ‘18 signage’ and ‘25 signage’ present and visible therefore the combined percentages of these two types of age signage by premise type may not equal the percentages reported in Figure 4.

Of the supermarkets visited in the Auckland region 65% had ‘under 18 signage’ present and easily visible and 74% had ‘ID under 25 signage’ present and easily visible. For bottle shops these proportions were 62% (for under 18 signage) and 28% (for ID under 25 signage). Grocery stores had the lowest proportions of age signage present and easily visible (39% for ‘under 18 signage’ and 10% for ‘ID under 25 signage’).

Figure 7

As has been mentioned, each premise was visited two times – once by a male pseudo-patron and once by a female. The graph below shows differences in ID verification practices by servers towards male and female pseudo-patrons.



Of the visits made to off license outlets in Auckland in both 2002 and 2003, a significantly greater proportion of males were sold alcohol with out ID than females. Of the sales made without ID in 2003, 52% were made to males compared to 40% made to females. In 2002, these proportions were 70% for males and 53% for females.

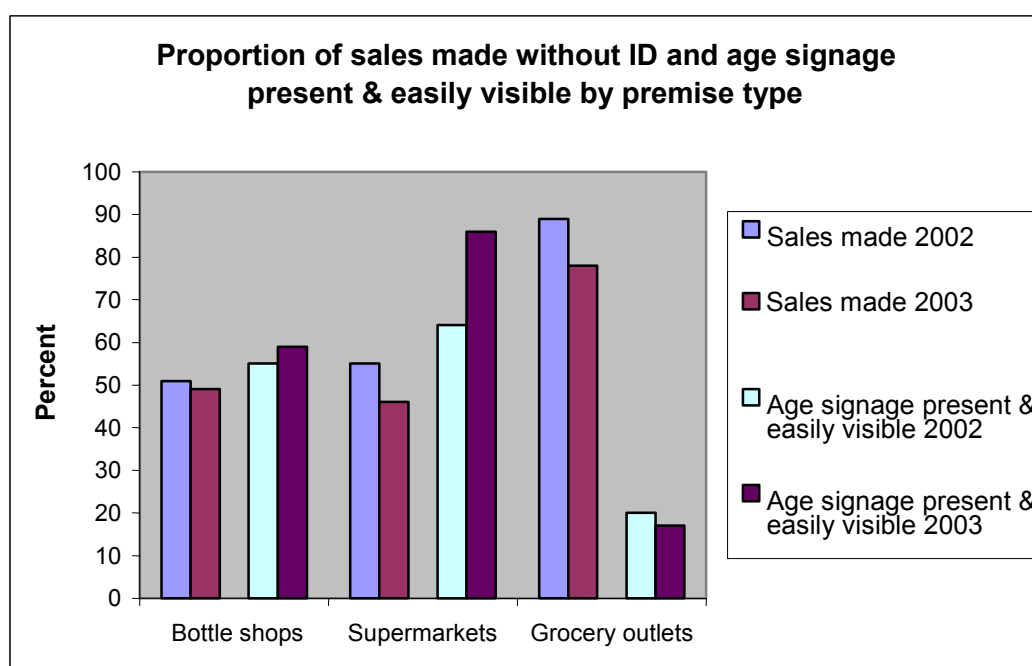
**In the 2002 Pseudo Patrons report gender differences were reported by cities and districts separately. For comparison with 2003 data the 2002 city and district gender breakdowns were combined.*

DISTRICT LICENSING AUTHORITY PROFILES

This section provides a further breakdown of results for each District Licensing Authority (cities and districts). Statistical testing for these data has been undertaken on *bottle shops only* for Manukau, North shore, Waitakere, Papakura, Franklin and Rodney. In Auckland city *each premise type* was tested. The survey design used in the Pseudo Patrons Projects provided adequate numbers of premises for overall city/district and premise type analysis. However when the data is analysed to include a breakdown of premise types by city or district separately, not enough visits were made in some areas where numbers of selected outlets were small to conduct statistical testing with certainty.

AUCKLAND CITY

Figure 8

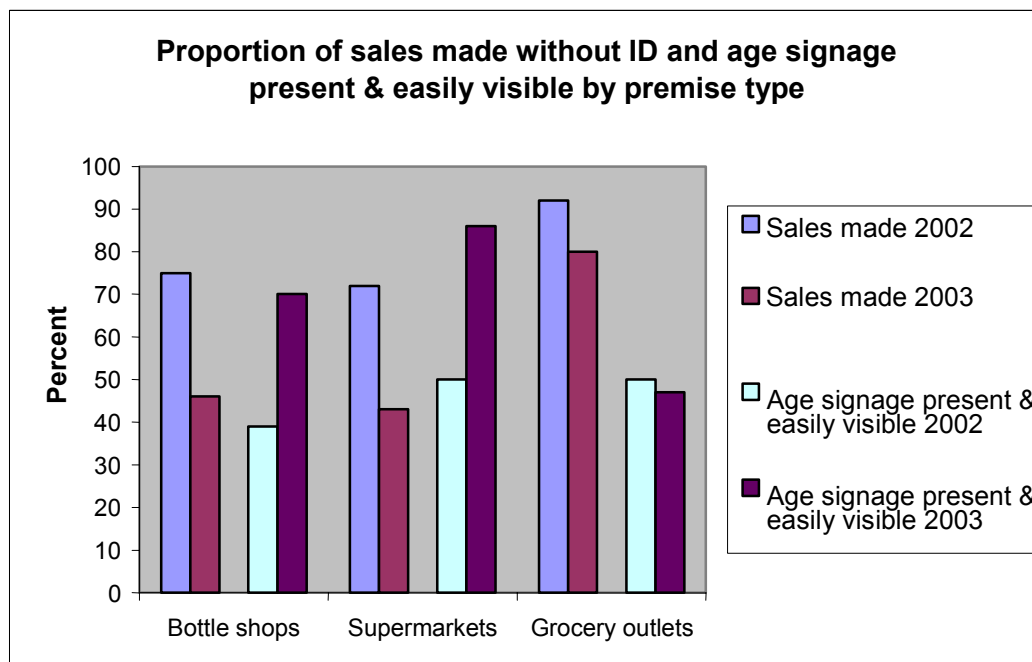


In 2003 the proportions of sales made without ID by premise type for Auckland city were 49% for bottleshops, 46% for supermarkets, and 78% for grocery outlets. In 2002 these proportions were 51% for bottleshops, 55% for supermarkets and 89% for grocery outlets. There were no significant changes in proportion of sales made without ID for any premise type in Auckland city between 2002 and 2003.

The proportions of age signage present and easily visible by premise type in 2003 were as follows: bottleshops (59%), supermarkets (86%) and grocery outlets (17%). In 2002 these proportions were 55% for bottleshops, 64% for supermarkets and 20% for grocery outlets. No significant changes in the proportion of age signage present and easily visible for any premise type occurred between 2002 and 2003 (Figure 8).

MANUKAU CITY

Figure 9

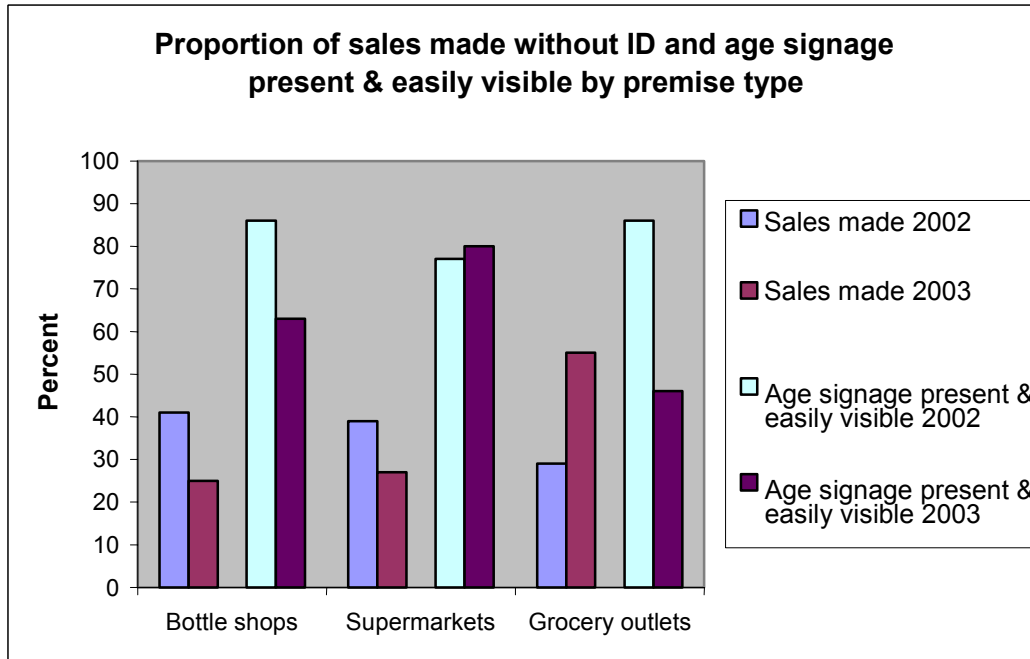


In Manukau the proportions of sales made without ID in 2003 were as follows: bottle shops (46%), supermarkets (43%) and grocery outlets (80%). In 2002 these proportions were: bottle shops (75%), supermarkets (72%) and grocery outlets (92%). There was a significant decrease in the proportion of sales made without ID at bottle shops between 2002 and 2003 in this area.

The proportions of age signage present and easily visible by premise type in Manukau city 2003 were: 70% for bottleshops, 86% for supermarkets and 47% for grocery outlets. In 2002 these proportions were: 39% for bottleshops, 50% for supermarkets and 50% for grocery outlets. There was a significant increase in the proportion of bottle shops with age signage present and easily visible between 2002 and 2003 (Figure 9).

NORTHSHORE CITY

Figure 10

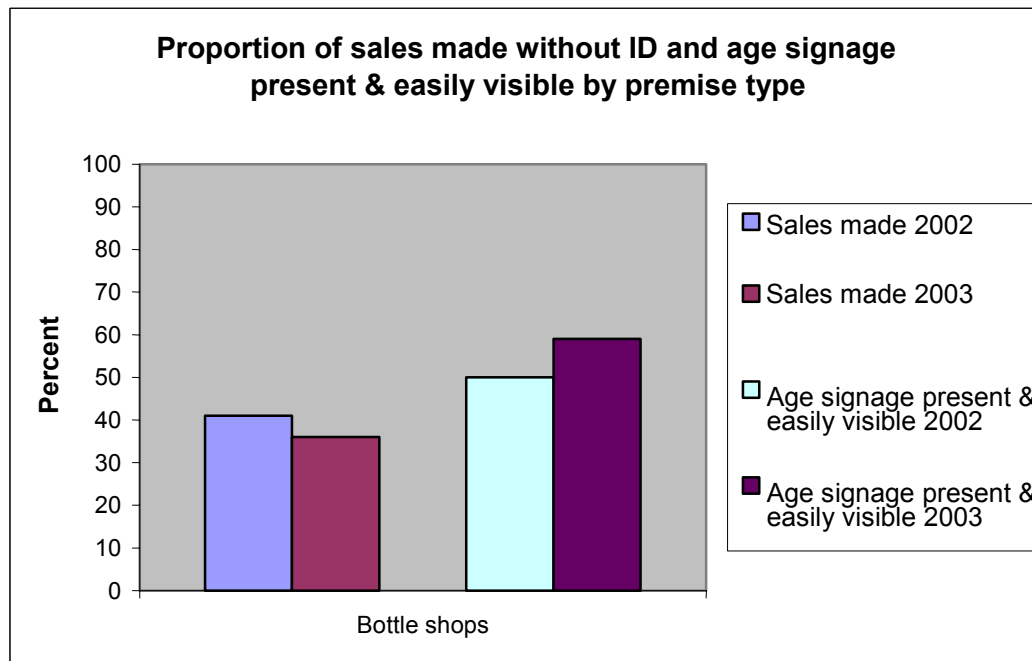


In North shore city the proportions of sales made without ID in 2003 were 25% for bottle shops, 27% for supermarkets and 55% for grocery outlets. In 2002 these proportions were: 41% for bottle shops, 39% for supermarkets and 29% for grocery outlets. There was no significant change in the proportion of bottle shops selling alcohol without ID in this area.

The proportions of age signage present and easily visible in North shore in 2003 were as follows: bottle shops (64%), supermarkets (80%) and grocery outlets (46%). In 2002 these proportions were: bottleshops (86%), supermarkets (77%), and grocery outlets (86%). There was a significant decrease in the proportion of age signage present and easily visible in bottle shops in this area between 2002 and 2003 (Figure 10).

WAITAKERE CITY

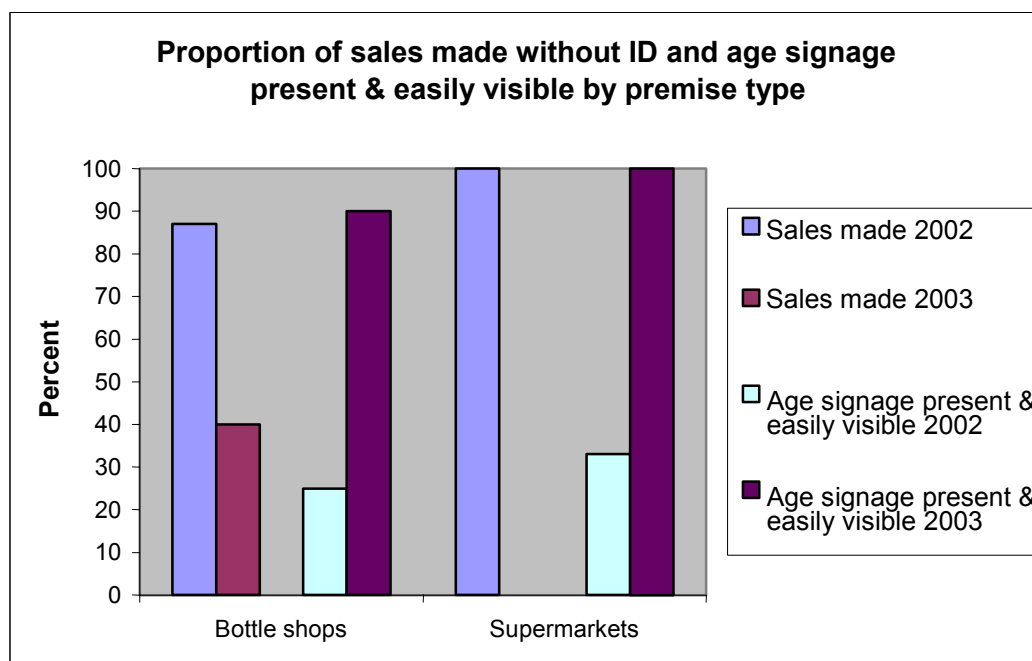
Figure 11



The proportion of sales made without ID in Waitakere city was 36% in 2003; in 2002 this proportion was 40%. Waitakere operates under licensing trusts (Waitakere Licensing Trust and Portage Licensing Trust), so there were no supermarkets or grocery outlets to include in the sample. No significant change in the proportion of sales made without ID from bottle shops occurred in Waitakere between 2002 and 2003. The proportion of age signage that was present and visible in this area was 59% in 2003 and was a non significant increase from 50% in 2002 (Figure 11).

PAPAKURA DISTRICT

Figure 12

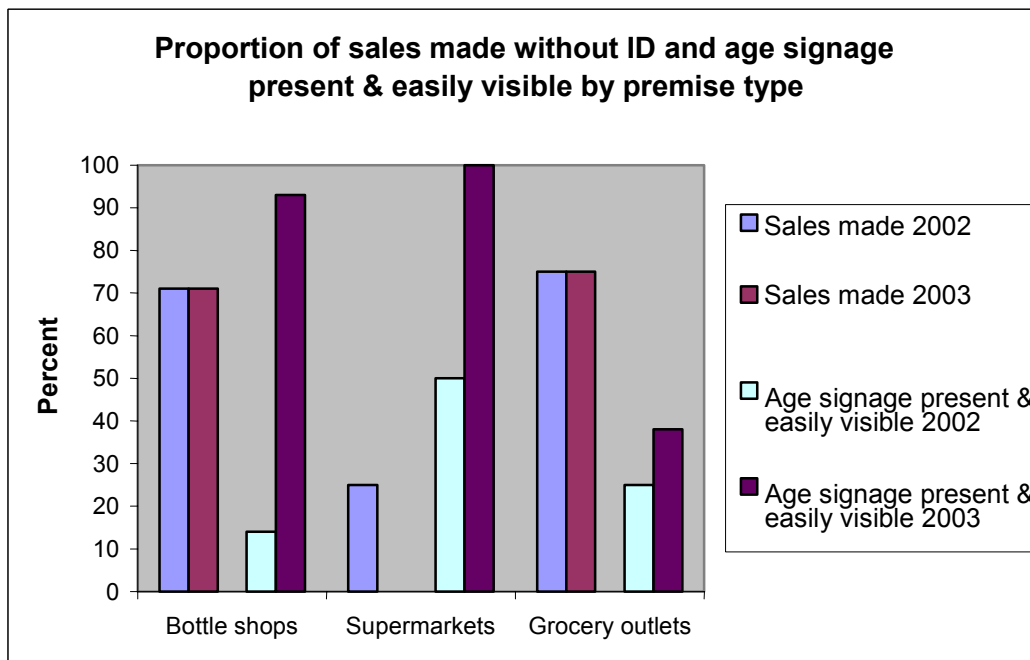


In Papakura the proportions of sales made without ID in 2003 were 40% for bottle shops and 0% for supermarkets. In 2002, 87% of bottle shops sold alcohol without requiring ID and 100% of supermarkets did the same. There was a significant decrease in the proportion of sales made without ID from bottle shops between 2002 and 2003 in this district.

The proportions of age signage that were present and visible in Papakura in 2003 were 90% for bottle shops and 100% for supermarkets. These had increased from 2002 where the proportions were 25% for bottle shops and 33% for supermarkets. A significant increase in age signage that was present and easily visible was found for bottle shops (Figure 12).

FRANKLIN DISTRICT

Figure 13

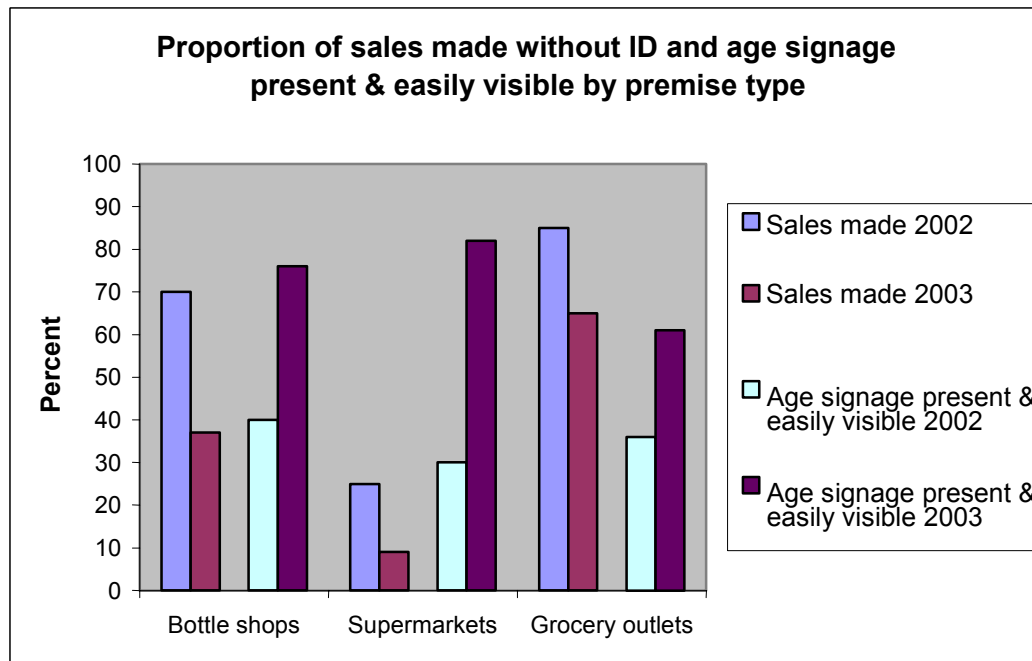


In Franklin the proportion of sales made without ID by premise type were 71% for bottle shops in both 2003 and 2002; 0% for supermarkets in 2003 compared with 25% in 2002 and 75% for grocery outlets in both 2003 and 2002. Given that the same proportion of bottle shops sold alcohol without ID in 2002 and 2003 there was no significant change for these types of premises in Franklin between the years.

Proportions of age signage present and easily visible in Franklin in 2003 are as follows: bottle shops (93%), supermarkets (100%) and grocery outlets (38%). In 2002 these proportions were 14% for bottle shops, 50% for supermarkets and 25% for grocery outlets. A significant increase in the proportion of bottle shops with age signage present and easily visible was found (Figure 13).

Rodney District

Figure 14



In Rodney 37% of bottle shops, 9% of supermarkets and 65% of grocery outlets sold alcohol without ID in 2003. In 2002 the proportions were 70% for bottle shops, 25% for supermarkets and 85% for grocery outlets. There was a significant decrease found in the proportion of sales made without ID from bottle stores in Rodney between 2002 and 2003.

The proportions of age signage present and easily visible in Rodney in 2003 were as follows: bottle shops (76%), supermarkets (82%) and grocery outlets (61%). In 2002 and these proportions were: bottle shops (40%), supermarkets (30%) and grocery outlets (36%). A significant increase in age signage present and easily visible was found for bottle shops in the Rodney district (Figure 14).

Narrative evidence

This section describes narrative evidence reported by the pseudo patrons from transactions in some off-license premises.

- I was initially sold the alcohol then stopped by another member of staff and asked for ID. When I had none I was refused service and the attendant refunded my money. I was asked if there was an inspector waiting for me outside.
- The shop attendant asked me for ID, when I said I had none, a customer in the queue behind me said to the attendant – why don't you sell her the alcohol – the attendant replied that he couldn't as I had no ID
- I was asked for ID as soon as I walked in the door
- Man standing by beer chiller guarding it – asks for photo ID
- Siren/buzzer went off to remind the supermarket attendant to ask me for ID, he didn't and continued with the sale
- Shop attendant said he would make an exception just this once and sell the alcohol without ID
- I was invited to do wine tasting

Summary

Alcohol was able to be purchased by 18 year olds without ID for almost 50% of visits made to off-license premises in the Auckland region. This proportion has shown a decrease from 61% in 2002 which, suggests a positive response to the reports of the survey in 2002 and the subsequent actions taken by the police, licensing inspectors and other stakeholders. However, the proportion of sales made without age identification in the Auckland region, as indicated by this study, remains problematic.

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