# ATTRIBUTABLE BURDEN OF ALCOHOL USE

## Patterns of alcohol use in Belgium, 2013-2020

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# Background







Belgium has one of the **highest rates of alcohol consumption** in Europe,

Hidden costs to health, contributing to **years lost to disease** and **disability.**

# Background

Examine and evaluate patterns of alcohol consumption in Belgium from 2013-2020, as a first step to attributable burden calculations.
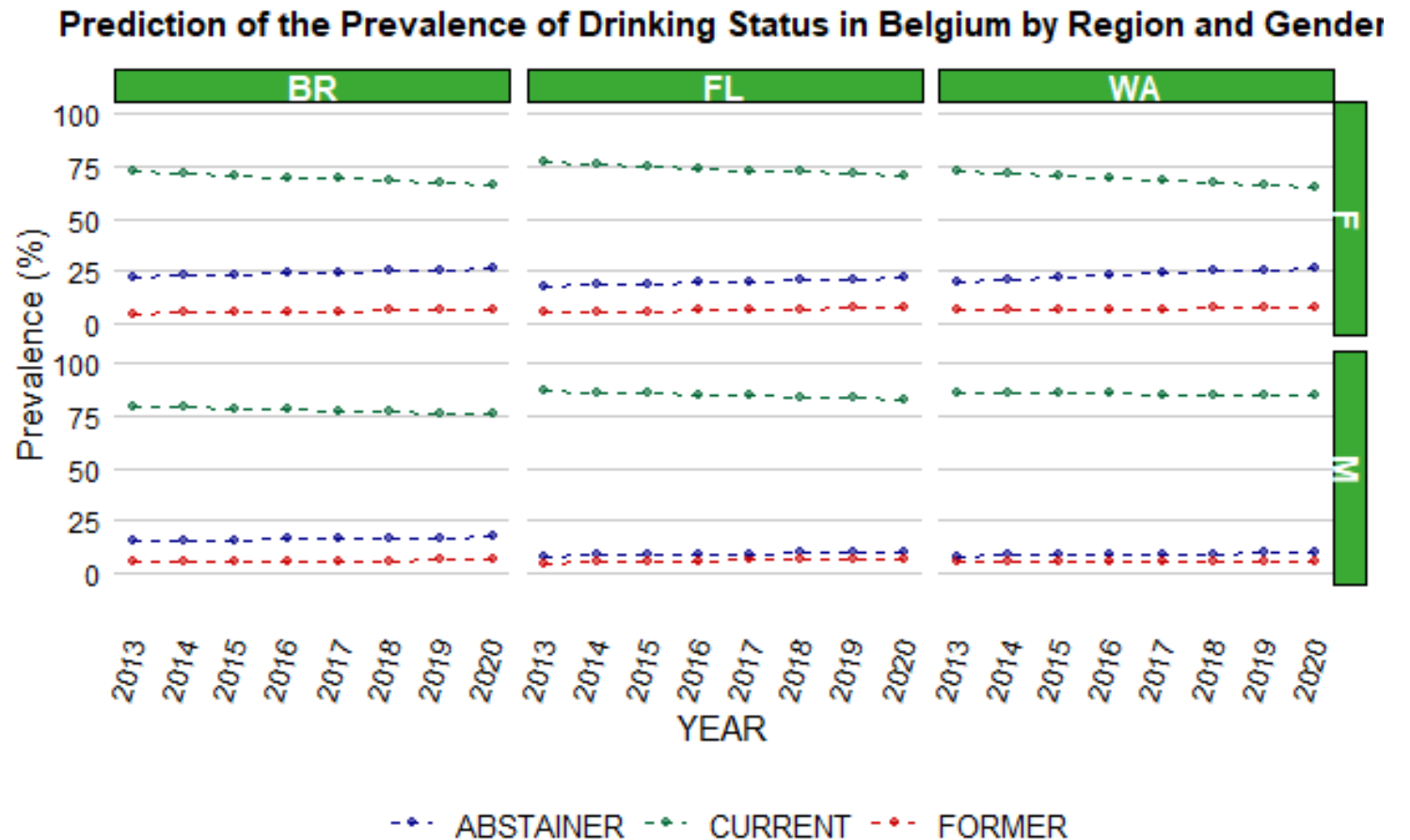
# Methods – data and modelling

- **Data Source**: Repeated **cross-sectional survey data** from the Belgian Health Interview Survey (HIS)

- **Variables**: **Self-reported** drinking status (Current drinkers, Former drinkers, Lifetime abstainers) by year (2013–2018), sex, region, and age groups

- **Statistical Model**: Bayesian hierarchical model using the Integrated Nested Laplace Approximation (INLA) to create a time series and forecast the HIS data **between the HIS points and until 2020**

- **Model selection :**

  - **CURRENT:** Current_cases ~ 1 + YEAR * AGEGR * REGION + YEAR * REGION * SEX + YEAR * SEX * AGEGR

  - **FORMER:** Former_cases ~ 1 + YEAR * AGEGR * REGION * SEX

  - **ABSTAINER:** Abstainer_cases ~ 1 + YEAR * AGEGR * REGION + YEAR * REGION * SEX + YEAR * SEX * AGEGR

# Key findings

- Approximately **80%** of the Belgian population reported being **current drinkers** from 2013 to 2020

- The percentage of **former drinkers** rose from **5% in 2013 to 8% in 2020**

- National **abstainer** rates increased from **15% in 2013 to 19% in 2020**

- Men exhibited consistently **higher prevalence rates** across all drinking categories (current, former, abstainers)



Prediction of the Prevalence of Drinking Status in Belgium by Region and Gender

# Take home message

Alcohol use in Belgium remains a pressing public health issue, characterized by **high prevalence rates** and distinct regional patterns. Despite slight declines, the ongoing burden of alcohol consumption on population health highlights the need for **effective monitoring** and **targeted policies** to reduce its impact by assessing whether Belgium is on track to meet **global targets** for reducing alcohol consumption.