

# What can parents do?

Teaching parents what they can do to keep their children out of trouble: an example of a cost-effective, universal alcohol- and drug use prevention programme that makes use of existing resources in the community

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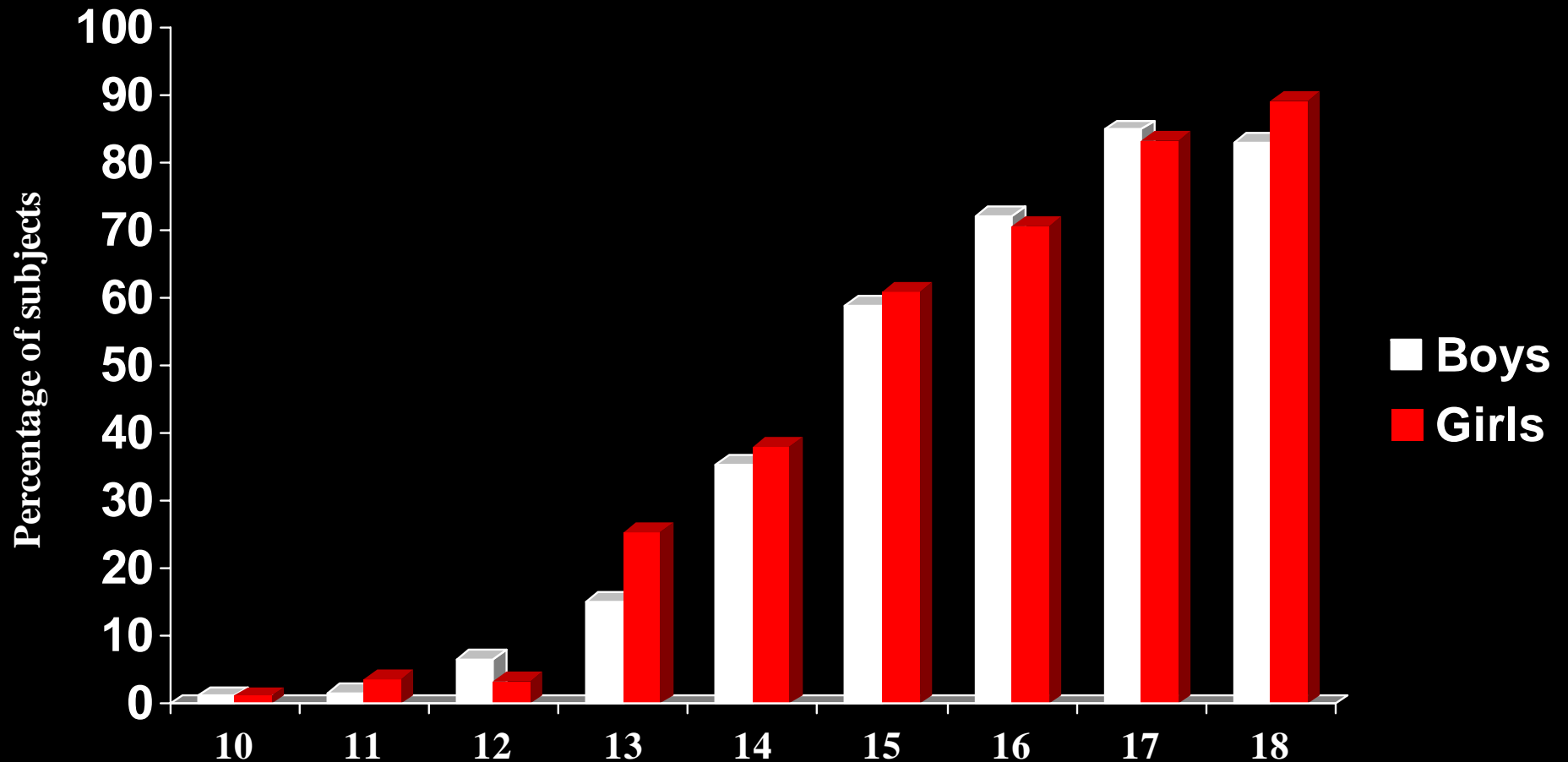


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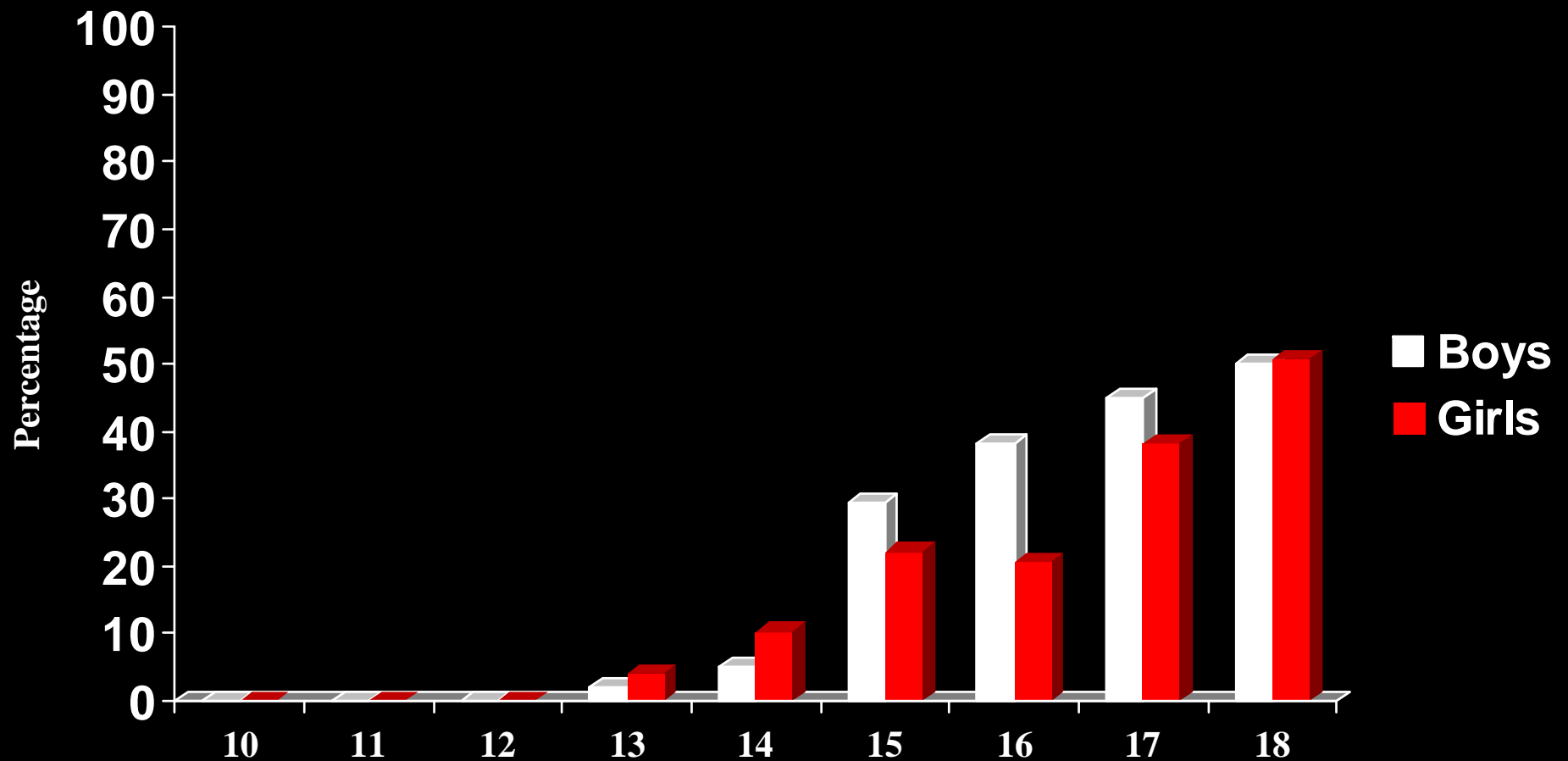


Center for Developmental Research

# Been drunk at least once the last semester



# Been drunk >10 times the last semester



# Current Swedish situation

- Among adults: rapid increase the latest ten years.
- Authorities are concerned.
- What is being done?

# Common strategies in Swedish schools:

Biological / Pharmacological consequences

Drug orientation

Illustrative example

**Provide information about harm**

## Implicit assumption about the cause of underage use

- Youth use alcohol and drugs because they lack knowledge about the risk of using.
- As rational consumers of information youth will stay away from alcohol and drugs when informed about the risks of using.

Literature:  
ineffective refusal skills;  
normative believes

- It is crucial to focus on influential conditions that is reasonable easy to alter with the chosen method.

Ministry of public health research  
grant: Community Based  
Prevention:  
Work through parents



Parents are important but are they motivated?

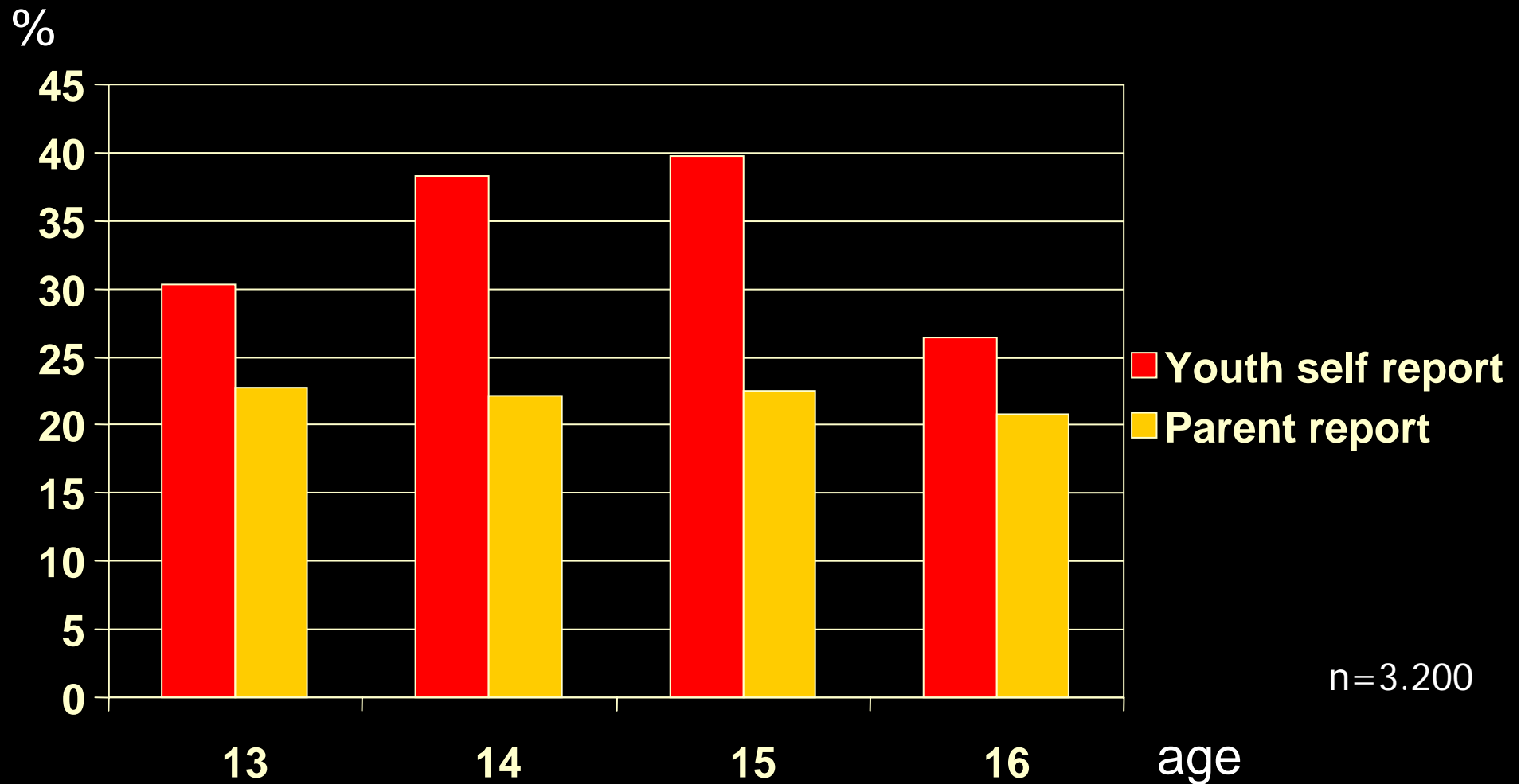
Do we need to motivate parents?

A common assumption is that parents of early adolescents are concerned about this issue and therefore highly susceptible and motivated to participate in prevention strategies.

# Are parents in general concerned?

Do parents have worries that their children will get in to trouble because of alcohol drinking?

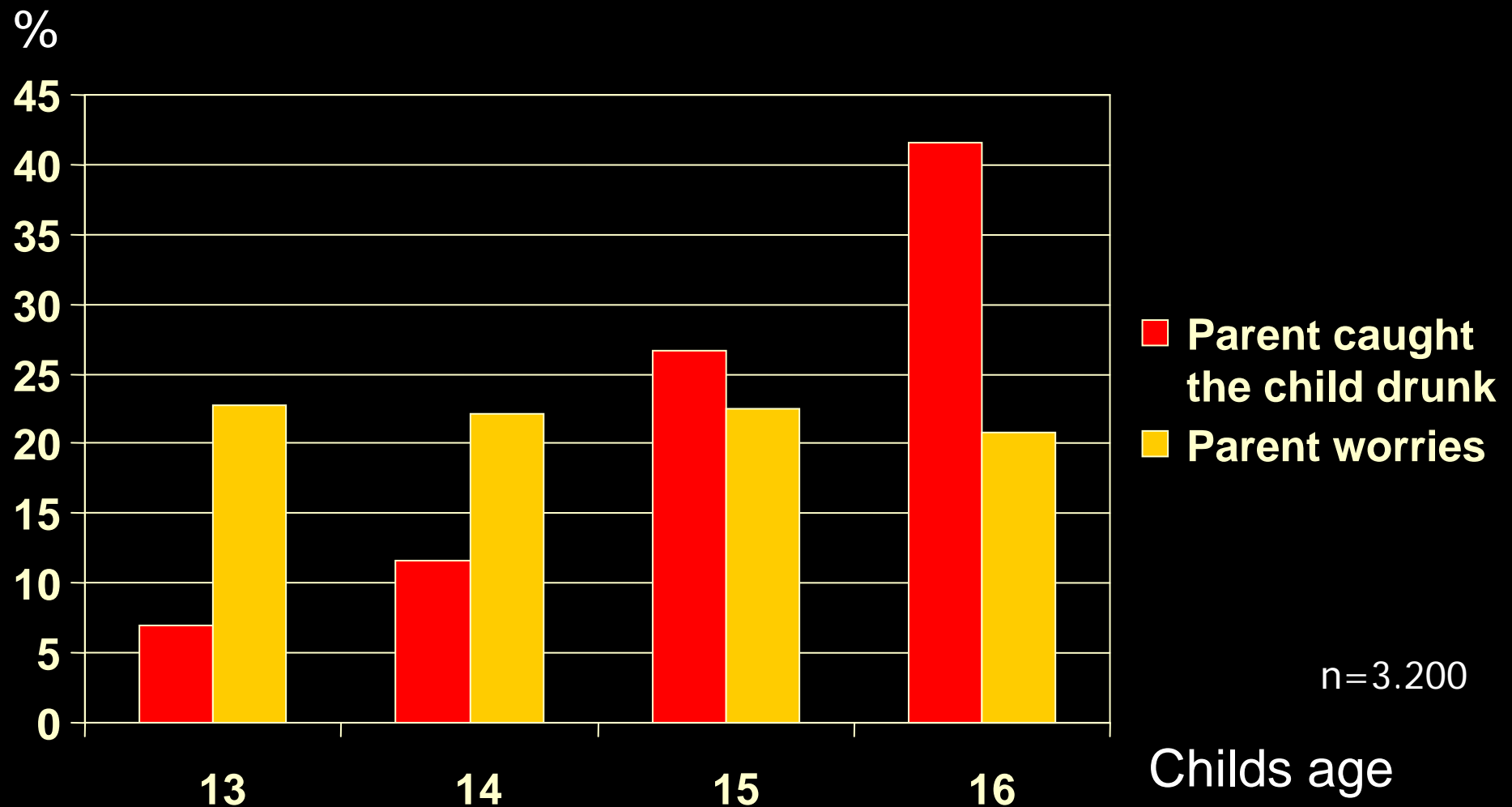
Amount of youth that believes that their parents worries about their children's alcohol consumption in relation to their parents report about their worries.



Parents in general do not worry to the same extent as youths believes.

- We expected increasing levels of parent worries as the child grows older.
- Parents are more likely to have caught their child drunk the older the child is.
- This awareness ought to make parents concerned.

Parents get increasing experiences of seeing their child drunk but parent worries is not affected by their experiences of seeing the child drunk.



- Parents in general does not seem to worry.
- If parents do not worry about underage drinking they are not motivated to engage in actions aiming to reduce it.

## Prerequisites for preventing underage drinking when working through parents

Prevention programs targeting parents in order to reduce underage drinking should work through a general strategy to influence and question the common ideas and parental practices.



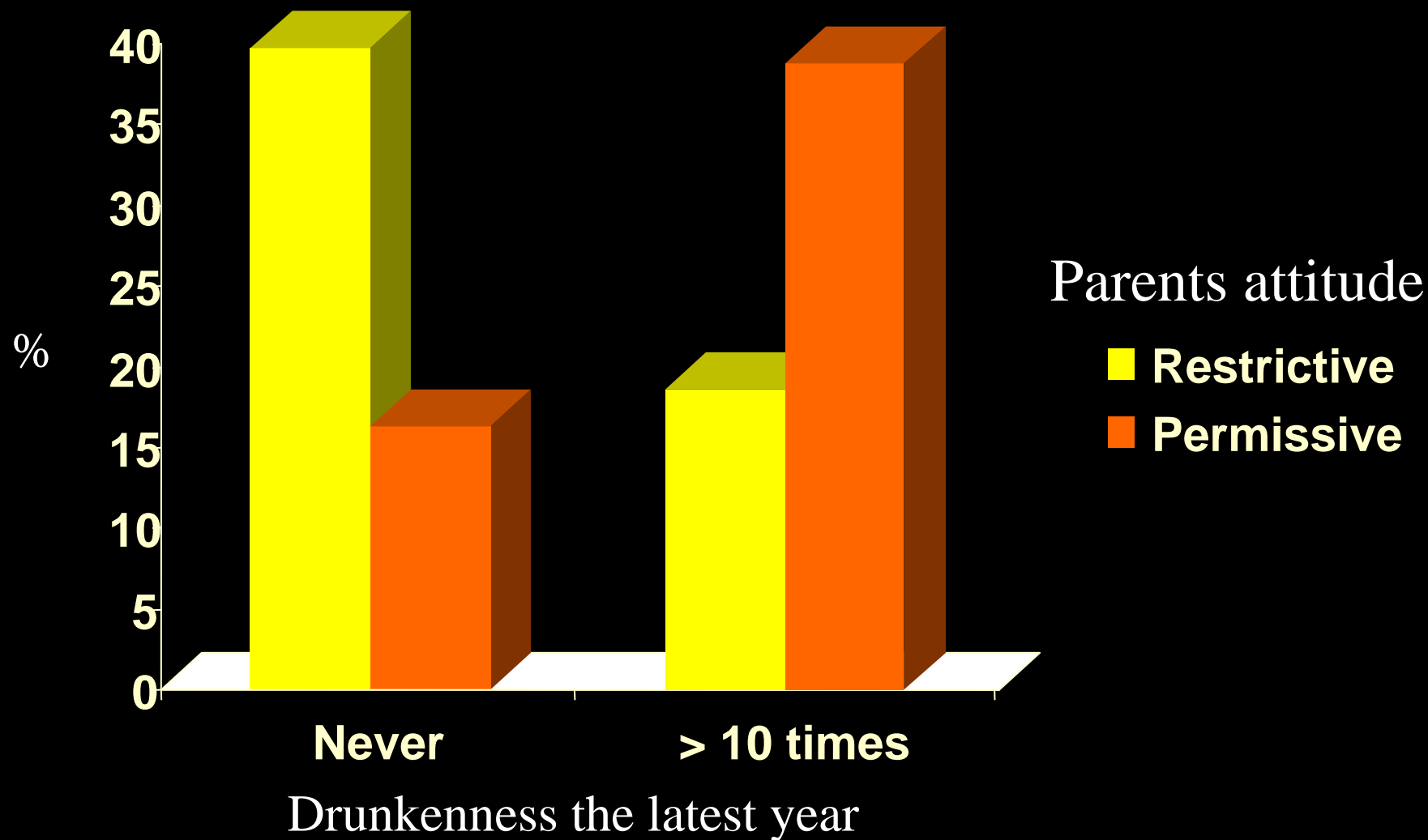
## Open parents' eyes

- Initially, focus on making parents aware of the problems with underage drinking, even to the extent that negative emotions are evoked.
- Purpose: to make parents more open to suggestions for change.

# Change parents' ways of thinking about underage drinking

- Tear down parental misconceptions about youth drinking, such that most youths drink and it is not possible to change the situation.
- Parents should become aware that their attitudes and behavior matters.

# Parents attitudes towards 16-year olds alcohol drinking in relation to the children's actual drinking.



Arguments should be based on the available evidence in the literature of parents' role for youth drinking.

Powerlessness → Empowerment

## Implement specific techniques

Parents should be taught clear and simple rules about how to handle their adolescent's drinking behavior. Simple guiding principles aimed at connecting parental behaviors and positive outcomes should be formulated.

Research question:  
What if we try to maintain parents  
restrictive attitudes toward underage  
drinking;

Will this have an impact on their  
children's alcohol drinking?

Objective: To maintain parents restrictive attitudes over time.



- Target: Parents to 13-15 year olds.
- Administration: Ordinary school meetings.
- Dose: 15-20 minutes per semester (m=5; gr 7-9).
- Content: Arguments and tools.

# Content

- Information about underage drinking.
  - Parent values matter
  - About letting the child drink
- Consensus agreement.
- Having clear and restrictive house rules.



## Consensus agreement

We, parents in class .....  
agreed to decide the  
following common rules:

- The latest time for our children to be out on week-nights \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock.
- The latest time for our children to be out on Friday and Saturday nights \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock.

I agree to these rules.

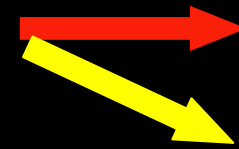
\_\_\_\_\_  
signature

*Youths allowed to sip alcohol from their parents' glasses drink relatively more than youths who have restrictive parents.*

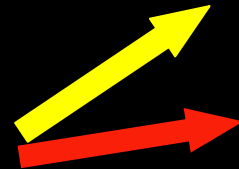
# Results

Quasiexperiment, matched control, pre-post test (ANCOVA).

Parents restrictive attitudes towards underage drinking.



Adolescent drunkenness.

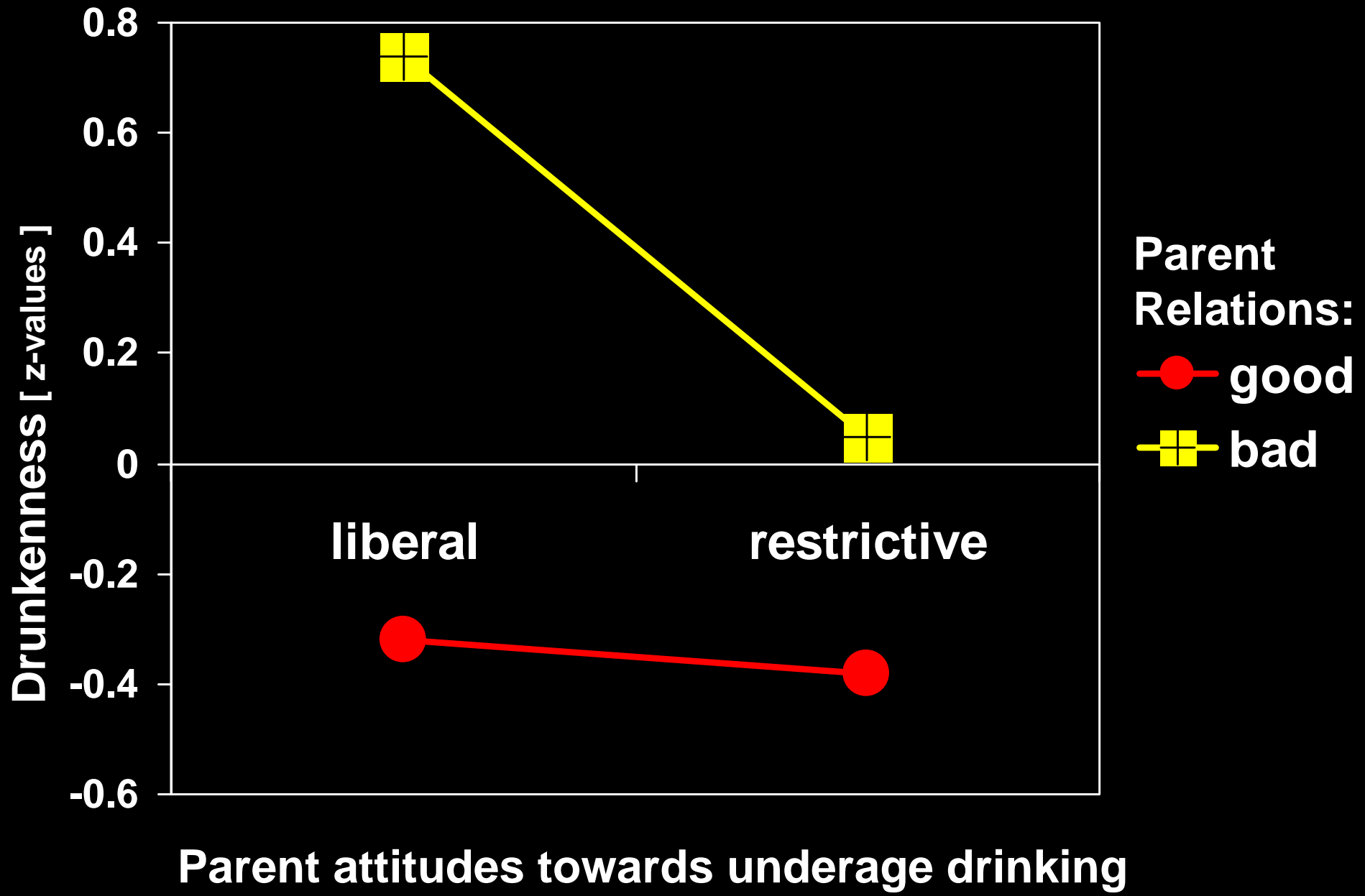


# Effect Size, Cohen's *d*

	Over all ES		Early starters ES	
	Repeated measures, control for pre test	Post test control for pre est	Repeated measures, control for pre test	Post test, control for pre test
Drunkenness	.48	.36	.72	.54
Antisocial behaviour	.42	.38	.46	.32

## Explaining the results

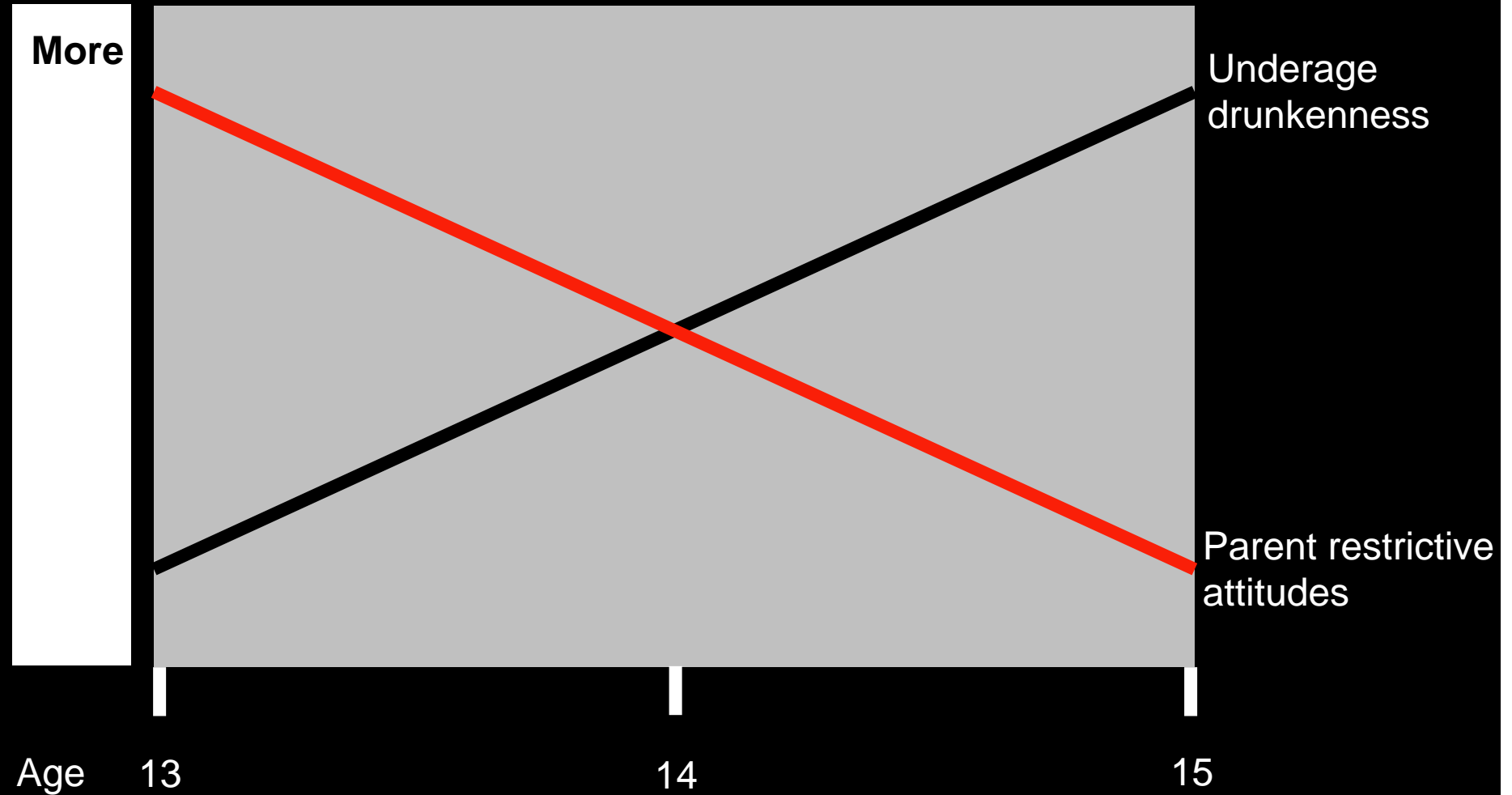
- For whom did the program make a difference?
- What is the role of parental restrictiveness when parent relations is also taken into account?



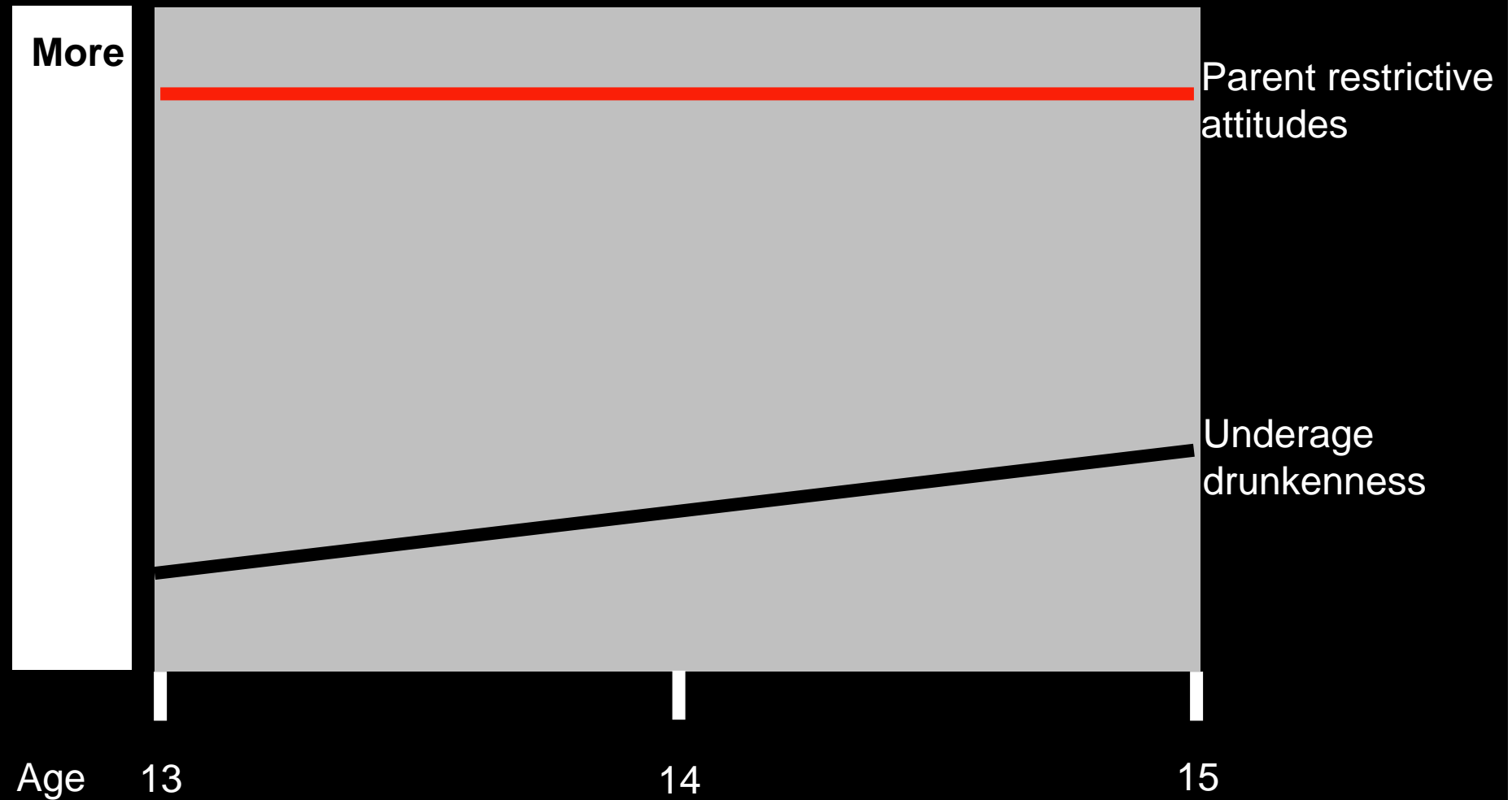
# Conclusions

- Any effective prevention program must focus on important conditions that are realistic to alter.
- In order to be able to mobilize parents, it is crucial to have them motivated.
- Parent attitudes and parenting practices concerning underage drinking does matter.
- The ÖPP approach is effective in maintaining parents restrictiveness and thereby decrease underage drunkenness.
- The program have its greatest impact in families where the relations is poor.
- ÖPP is brought to parents by trained staff within the community = very low cost.

# Normal trajectory



# ÖPP results





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