Are you OK to drive? Commuting behaviour and blood alcohol concentrations amongst restaurant diners
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Why do this research?
All around the world, every day we hear about car crashes in which the driver was driving under the influence of alcohol. The Sunshine Coast is a popular tourist destination with many venues in close proximity to a lovely beach.

We wanted to know what the blood alcohol concentrations were of restaurant diners in this lovely tourist destination, and to explore how they attended the restaurant or venue and how they were going to get home.

What did we do?
We interviewed 544 diners and asked them to use a breathalyser so we could measure their blood alcohol concentrations, during the summer tourist season.

What did we find?
Forty percent of the diners said they don’t drink and drive. Of diners who do plan to have a drink before they drive home, three quarters said they would count the number of their drinks, while one in ten of them reported they judged their inebriation by how they were feeling. More than a third of the diners said it was easy or very easy to estimate blood alcohol levels, but we found that a third underestimated their blood alcohol level. Some of those drivers who intended to drive home had a blood alcohol level in excess of the Queensland 0.05 limit.

What does it mean?
The best message to eliminate crashes arising from drink driving is to separate the two: If you plan to drink, don’t drive; if you plan to drive, don't drink. If the temptation to drive is too much, designate a driver to stay sober, or use the services of a taxi company or an Uber as a safe way to get home.

Interestingly, we found every female diner who said that they would be driving home had a legal blood alcohol concentration. This tells us that we need to think about interventions separately for men and women.