

# ABOUT A.A.

...a newsletter for professional men and women

Summer 1981

## A.A. Releases Survey Report

Every three years since 1968 the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous has conducted a survey of its U.S. and Canadian membership. The fifth survey was conducted as we approached the half-million reported membership mark in 1980.\*

Although we aimed for a 3% sample, we actually had a survey return of about 5% of the membership (24,950 of a total of 476,000 estimated members).

Information-gathering procedures may have affected the findings. The survey was implemented by our 91 area delegates who chose what they considered "representative" groups in their respective areas to participate. This, then, does not constitute a purely random sample. Only future surveys will confirm the stability of these data over time.

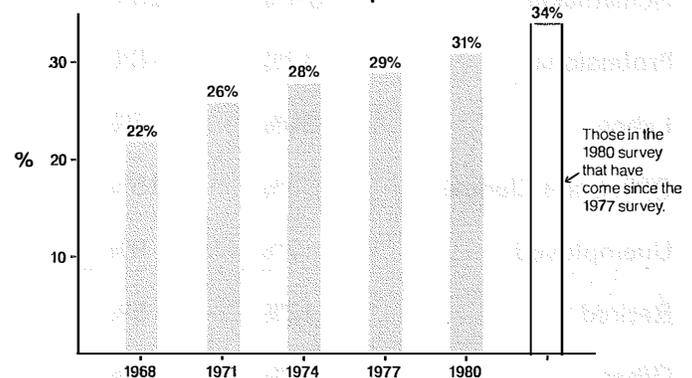
*Scope.* The full range of inquiry included the following: age, sex, date of first A.A. meeting, date of last drink, frequency of attendance at meetings, time since last meeting, factors responsible for coming to A.A., nature of employment, membership in an A.A. group, sponsorship activities, counseling or treatment in addition to A.A., addiction to other drugs, and relationship to the medical profession.

*General trends.* Some general trends which may be of interest to readers of *About A.A.* include the following:

- The percentage of women in the U.S. and Canadian sample rose from 22% to 31% since 1968. Moreover, the percentage of women in the portion of the sample who came to the Fellowship since the last survey is 34%, indicating that the upward trend continues.
- The percentage of young people (30 years and under) in the sample increased from 11.3% in 1977 to 14.7% in 1980. It was 7.6% in 1974, so in six years the proportion has about doubled.

\* Estimated at 1,000,000 worldwide.

Percentage of Women  
In the Sample



• The percentage of the sample who reported addiction to another drug (in addition to alcohol) has risen from 18% in 1977 to 24% in 1980. Among alcoholics coming to the Fellowship since 1977, 27% report dual addiction, suggesting a continually rising proportion, although there is indication that the *rate of increase* is slowing down.

• The percentage of alcoholics who cite counseling and rehabs as important in leading them to A.A. has increased from 19% to 26%. Since the last survey, the proportion has reached 33%.

*New questions.* Three new questions regarding the relationship of A.A.'s to their physicians were added to the current survey. Responses revealed that among at least 25% of the membership, their doctors did *not* know they were in A.A. Asked if their doctors presented A.A. as a program of recovery to their patients, 31% answered yes, 9% no, and 57% answered that they did not know. In answer to the question, "Has your doctor been to an A.A. meeting?" the response was 11% yes, 12% no, and 74% did not know.

*Occupations.* For this survey, the number of occupational categories has been expanded and, therefore, the categories are not directly comparable to those of past surveys. In themselves the numbers suggest proportions that are not true of the American and Canadian population as a whole and may be peculiar to A.A. membership for reasons as yet undetermined.

Following is the occupational chart, giving the percentage of men and women in each of the categories:

	Men	Women
Sales and Business	19%	11%
Homemaker	0.1%	25%
Professional	17%	18%
Labor	30%	7%
Office and Clerical	3%	15%
Unemployed	7%	9%
Retired	12%	5%
Other (including agriculture, military, student, etc.)	12%	10%

*Distribution of sobriety.* At a typical A.A. meeting, from 35% to 40% are sober less than one year, roughly the same percentage from one to five years, and 20% to 30% are sober five years or more. The proportions were very similar to those found in the 1974 and 1977 surveys, and the constancy of these data suggest that the survey techniques are producing relatively accurate results.

*The newcomer.* Further analysis of the data points to the importance of newcomers to the A.A. program: staying in it for the first three months.

About half of those who remain in the Fellowship three months, sober or not, will then make it through the next year sober and active. The odds improve considerably with time. A random member now sober one to five years in A.A. has an 86% chance of staying sober next year. A member sober five years or more has a 92% chance of remaining that way for another year.

**Survey Report Available  
Upon Request**

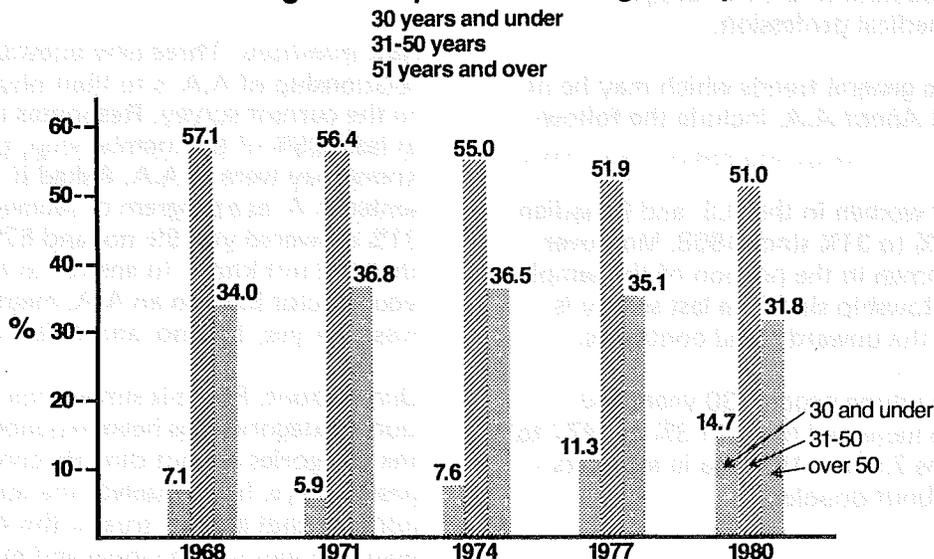
A copy of the complete survey report is available upon request. Quantities are limited and, therefore, we will be able to supply only one per request.

**"A.A. IN YOUR COMMUNITY"**

The pamphlet "A.A. in Your Community" is again available. A copy is enclosed for your information.

Although priced at 10 cents each, we will gladly send up to 10 free copies upon request.

**Percentage of Sample in Various Age Groups**



\*Note: Percentages do not add to 100 because some respondents did not report their ages.