**Daily Mail**

**Drink-driving women are more likely to be 'older, better-educated and divorced' according to a new study**

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Young men in their 20s are four times more likely to be involved in drink-drive accidents than other age group and you might assume the same would apply for women.

But a new study has revealed that females who drink and drive are often older, better educated and divorced.

Academics at the University of Nottingham assessed global trends and are now calling for more effective treatment to target this demographic.

They discovered that existing rehabilitation programmes for female drink-drivers induce feelings of guilt and shame and increase risk of re-offending.

A paper due to be published in the Clinical Psychology Review details the study led by Professor Mary McMurran of the Institute of Mental Health.

Prof McMurran said: 'The profile of women drink-driving offenders is of being divorced, widowed or separated and having fewer previous convictions than their male counterparts.

'Thus, it may be that these women are distressed by their situation and are turning to drink for solace.

Over the limit: Women offenders are more likely to have parents and partners who abuse alcohol

'Treatment programmes that induce negative emotions may actually increase emotional distress, which may increase drinking and, in turn, increase the likelihood of alcohol-related offending.'

The researchers reviewed 26 previous studies to help develop treatment for alcohol-related offending by women.

During the investigation they discovered that women drink-drivers were older, better educated, had a lower income and more likely to be separated, divorced or widowed.

They were also more likely to have parents and partners who abused alcohol and themselves had a greater history of mental health problems.

However it found that few women drink-drivers had previously been arrested for public drunkenness and other alcohol-related offences.

Prof McMurran added: 'Programmes designed specifically for women whose offences are alcohol-related need to be designed and evaluated,

'While these may draw on those programmes designed for men, greater attention to broader psychological health issues is needed as these may affect the success of the intervention.

'The information contained in this review may help inform the future development and design of treatment programmes for this neglected group of offenders.'

The number of women drivers caught drunk behind the wheel has increased rapidly since the mid-1990s.

In 1995, 6,793 female drivers were found guilty of drink-driving, compared with  10,765 in 2004.

Gender differences were also addressed but findings showed that alcohol tends to increase the likelihood of offending and the risk of violence in both sexes