

Underage Drinking **Fact Sheet**

Each year students spend 5.5 billion dollars on alcohol. This is more than they spend on soft drinks, milk, juice, tea, coffee and books combined. (1)

Alcohol Use in College Students

Young adults aged 18 to 22 enrolled full time in college were more likely than their peers not enrolled full time (i.e., part-time college students and persons not currently enrolled in college) to use alcohol in the past month, binge drink and drink heavily. Past month alcohol use was reported by 64.4 percent of full-time college students compared with 53.2 percent of persons aged 18 to 22 who were not enrolled full time. Binge and heavy use rates for college students were 44.8 and 19.5 percent, respectively, compared with 38.3 and 13.0 percent, respectively, for 18 to 22 year olds not enrolled full time in college. (2)

The pattern of higher rates of current alcohol use, binge alcohol use, and heavy alcohol use among full-time college students than the rates for others aged 18 to 22 has remained consistent since 2002. (2)

Nationally, 31 percent of college students met criteria for a diagnosis of alcohol abuse and six percent for a diagnosis of alcohol dependence in the past 12 months, according to questionnaire-based self-reports about their drinking. (3)

Although extremely heavy drinking occasions may seem rare, on a campus with 10,000 male college drinkers, research shows there will be 500 or more occasions on which more than 24 drinks may be consumed. These are levels of drinking at which most people will have passed out or become comatose. (4)

Research has shown that students who are athletes, sorority members or fraternity members are at higher risk for alcohol problems. Seventy-three percent of college fraternity and 57 percent of college sorority members are binge drinkers. Fifty-eight percent of male college-aged athletes and 47 percent of female college-aged athletes are binge drinkers. (5)

On a college campus a small minority of the student body accounts for most of the heavy drinking. Frequent binge drinkers constitute less than one-quarter of all students (23 percent) but consume three quarters (72 percent) of all the alcohol college students drink. (5)

Analysis of self report surveys have shown that 10 percent of all college drinkers may have 12 or more drinks at least one time in a month. (4)

In 2005, 6,021 youth 12-20 years old were admitted for alcohol treatment in New York, accounting for 4.4 percent of all treatment admissions for alcohol abuse in the State.

Consequences of Underage Drinking

Underage drinking cost the citizens of New York State \$3.2 billion dollars in 2005. (7)

Problems associated with alcohol are not only experienced by heavy drinkers (college setting), but also by abstainers and moderate drinkers who have had their sleep or studying interrupted, have had to take care of a drunken student, have been insulted or humiliated, have had a serious argument or quarrel, have experienced an unwanted sexual advance or sexual violence (females only), have experienced physical violence, and have been the victim of property damage. (8,5)

Injury/Death

Alcohol use among youth is associated with the three most common causes of youth death: accidental deaths (such as car crashes), homicides and suicides. (9)

Research in the past few years estimates that 1,700 college students between the ages of 18 and 24 die each year from alcohol-related unintentional injuries, including motor vehicle crashes, and 599,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are unintentionally injured under the influence of alcohol. (10)

Violence and Criminal Justice Problems

Of the violent crimes committed on college campuses, it is estimated that 95 percent are alcohol-related. The majority of college rapes (90 percent) involve alcohol use by either the victim and/or the assailant. (11, 12)

More than 97,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape and more than 696,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are assaulted by another student who has been drinking. (10)

About 11 percent of college student drinkers report that they have damaged property while under the influence of alcohol. (13)

About five percent of four-year college students are involved with the police or campus security as a result of their drinking (13) and an estimated 110,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are arrested for an alcohol-related violation such as public drunkenness or driving under the influence. (11, 12)

Sexual Behavior

Higher levels of alcohol use are associated with unplanned or unprotected sexual activity among adolescents. This poses increased risk for teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. (14)

Research studies have estimated that each year 400,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 have unprotected sex and more than 100,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 report having been too intoxicated to know if they consented to having sex. (11, 12)

Nearly 25 percent of sexually active young adults ages 18-24 in the United States report having had unprotected sex because they were drinking or using drugs at the time. (15)

Academic-Related Problems

Alcohol use and higher levels of use among adolescents is associated with poor grades, absenteeism and higher rates of school dropout. (14)

About 25 percent of college students report academic consequences of their drinking including missing class, falling behind, doing poorly on exams or papers, and receiving lower grades overall. (16, 17, 18, 5)

Health Problems/Suicide Attempts

More than 150,000 students develop an alcohol-related health problem each year (11) and between 1.2 and 1.5 percent of students indicate that they tried to commit suicide within the past year due to drinking or drug use. (19)

It has become clear over recent years that alcohol impacts both behavior and brain function differently in adolescents and adults. Adolescents are more vulnerable than adults to the effects of alcohol on learning and memory. (20)

Alcohol may encourage aggression by disrupting normal brain mechanisms that normally restrain impulsive behavior such as aggression. (21)

Drunk Driving

2.1 million students between the ages of 18 and 24 drive under the influence of alcohol each year. (10)

Alcohol Marketing & Youth

Underage drinking accounts for 12 percent of all alcohol sales in the U.S., or approximately 3.6 billion drinks per year. (22)

On television from 2001 to 2004, the average number of alcohol ads seen by young people ages 12 to 20 per capita in the course of the year grew from 209 to 276, an increase of 32 percent. (23)

Long-term studies now show a direct link between alcohol advertising and youth drinking. Young people who see and hear more alcohol ads are more likely to drink (and in many cases drink more heavily) than their peers. (23)

Services in New York State

The New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) oversees the most comprehensive network of chemical dependence prevention and treatment services anywhere in the nation. OASAS plans, develops and regulates New York's chemical dependence and gambling prevention and treatment agencies, including 13 state-operated Addiction Treatment Centers, which treat more than 10,000 patients annually. The agency administers the credential for New York's pool of prevention specialists and treatment counselors, and offers continuous training to these dedicated professionals. OASAS also works in collaboration with federal, state and local entities to strengthen New York's addiction recovery efforts through housing, vocational rehabilitation and other linkages within the recovery community.

New York State Laws

Underage Alcohol Possession

In New York State, if you're under 21 years old, it is a violation of the law to possess alcohol with the intent to consume. If caught, youth can be fined, required to complete an alcohol and drug education seminar, and/or required to complete community service.

Zero Tolerance

If you are under 21 and drink and drive, you face strict penalties. Under the Zero Tolerance Law, for small amounts of alcohol, teens can lose their license up to six months to one year. For larger amounts of alcohol, DWI penalties apply, including possible jail terms.

Lowering Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) for Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) from .10 To .08

In New York State, the BAC for legal intoxication while driving has been lowered from .10% to .08%. This law allows for the suspension of a license pending prosecution if the BAC at arrest is .08% or more.

Keg Registration

This law requires that an identification tag be attached to every keg sold at a retail store that contains the name and address of the retail store, the name of the purchaser and a keg identification number.

This allows our law enforcement professionals to track keg sales, especially those purchased and then given to people under age 21 for consumption.

* Unless otherwise noted, statistics in this fact sheet are based on national studies.

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