

Alcohol abuse in college

[Food & Diet](#), [Alcohol](#)



Alcohol abuse in college students is an important public health concern, especially in today's media-oriented era. Nearly every day we hear about new pharmaceuticals, drug clubs, HIV and AIDS, and the effects of alcohol abuse, and most of us have some personal experiences with this issue: through family, friends, or co-workers (Ksir et al., 2006).

College life is a period of achieving independence, experimentation, and taking risks. A crucial type of experimentation associated with college students is the alcohol use and abuse. One of the many challenges that college students face is the decision about whether to use alcohol or not. A lot of normal students experiment with alcohol; however, many college students progress past experimentation and become alcohol abusers. Alcohol abuse does develop problems and that substantially affect college students' activities and their future adult lives.

This paper provides a deeper understanding of the issue of alcohol abuse particularly in college students and examines their collegiate drinking experiences in relation to family backgrounds.

Review of Related Literature

Most college students are exposed to substances such as alcohol and marijuana at some point in their young lives and subsequently, make decisions about their use of them. One important source of information on the prevalence of adolescents alcohol use comes from the Monitoring the Future National Results on Adolescent Drug Use: Overview of Findings, 2002 (MTF) study (Johnston et al, 2003).

MTF is a longitudinal research project that has consistently collected data on the reported use of substances in national samples of adolescents since 1975, and the data from the MTF provide a reasonable picture of the level of substance use for adolescents across the United States. According to this study, the most frequently reported drugs used by adolescents in each grade were alcohol. The data on lifetime use provide an estimate of the number of adolescents who have experimented with a particular substance. Alcohol drinking was reported as being the most used substance across all adolescents in the sample.

For example, more than 70% of college students reported having used alcohol in their lifetime, and almost 50% reported using alcohol in the past month. The above data clearly indicate that many college students report an experimental use (Johnston et al, 2003).

An emerging body of research on children of alcoholics documents persistent negative consequences of parental alcohol abuse on drinking. A majority of existing of these studies are limited by their focus on families who seek treatment or who come to the attention of the health and legal systems, thus neglecting other children of alcoholics who may not have behavioral, emotional, or substance abuse problems (Russell et. al, 1985).

The literature on children of alcoholics is further limited by the fact that there has been very little research on collegiate children of alcoholics, a group that has been academically successful despite any negative effects of family alcohol abuse. Yet there may be a tendency for children of alcoholics to begin problem drinking in late adolescence, the age at which most students begin college.

Indeed, Pandina and Johnson's (1989) longitudinal research on the general population of New Jersey adolescents (ages 12-21) suggested that the negative effects of an alcoholic family on one's own drinking may not emerge until late adolescence (18-21).

This tendency might be intensified on entering the college environment, where academic pressures can be severe, where adolescents are struggling with the development of adult identity, and where alcohol use is often a prominent feature of social occasions. Yet despite an extensive literature on alcohol use among college students in general, only few studies have attempted to examine the approximate size, drinking patterns, or alcohol-related problems of collegiate children of alcoholics.