

Effects of binge drinking in college

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Surveys suggest that over 80 percent Of college students drink alcohol, and that 15-25 percent of college students participate in heavy or binge drinking. College students appear to have higher rates of binge drinking than other young adults, and rates of binge drinking among college students appear to be on the rise. Binge drinking in colleges across the nation has been brought to everyone's attention by the media. This has resulted in campus officials searching for solutions. Therefore, campus presidents have chosen to introduce Alcohol 01 , reduce the availability of alcohol, give correct statistics, and build partnerships between colleges and their surrounding communities. Some contributing factors of binge drinking are the targeting of students by the alcohol industries, false or misleading statistics, and the raising of the legal drinking age to 21 2 Few researchers seem to notice that when the legal drinking age became 21 nationwide, bingeing by young adults became more common. For underage drinkers, this style of drinking is encouraged due to the fact they must consume all the alcohol in their possession before going home in fear of eating caught. It is common for people in the 18 to 21 -age group to partake in adult choices.

Upon turning 18 one can now vote, serve in the armed forces, and many other activities. If one is considered old enough to die for our country and decide who runs it, he/she should be able to go to a bar or restaurant and order a beer. It would be best if these young adults drank moderately or not at all. However, the decision must legally be up them; otherwise the binge drinking and other consequences will continue. Many physicians have discovered that a student's consumption of alcohol is heaped, in part, by how much they think other students on campus drink.

This is due to the fact that campuses and researchers publish misleading statistics about drinking habits of college students. Several studies have proven that some students over estimate alcohol use among their friends and others on campus, and that this misconception is the reason binge drinking is so highly rated. If students think binge drinking is the usual behavior of their peers, they maybe more likely to engage in this behavior. Students who believe that more drinking occurs than actually does provide themselves with n excuse for drinking more because everyone is doing it.

3 Another factor that may add to the college setting as a high-risk environment for binge drinking is that young students on college campuses are targeted by heavy marketing of alcoholic beverages. Beer companies are especially active in promoting to college students. Student newspapers and campus bulletin boards have ads for many clubs with price reductions and other incentives that promote heavy drinking. Representatives Of the alcohol industry, including producers, whole sellers, and retailers, sponsor campus social, sporting, and cultural events, even on campuses where the majority of students are under the age of 21 . Binge drinking has been found to put students at an even greater risk of negative consequences.

Students who binge drink are more likely to damage property, have more trouble with authorities, miss classes, and have hangovers more than those who do not binge drink. Binge drinkers have been found to engage in more unplanned sexual activity and to forget about safe sex practices more often than non-binge drinking students. Students who report binge drinking are more likely to drive when intoxicated and to idée as a passenger with an

intoxicated driver. Researchers have found that more than 60 percent of college men and almost 50 percent of college women who reported binge drinking three times in two weeks reported drinking and driving. Moreover, students living on campuses with high proportions of binge and heavy drinkers experience more incidents of assault and unwanted sexual advances and more often have their studies disturbed or have to take care of a drunken student. In reaction to the rise in binge drinking, Alcohol 101 was established. A non-profit group called The Century Council started alcohol 101. The Century Council tries to educate college students about the dangerous effects of underage drinking, binge drinking, and more.

Over 1,100 campuses across the nation are currently using the program this fall. Alcohol 101 is taught through an interactive CD-ROM program. It will guide students through a bar, putting them into different drinking situations. A blood alcohol concentration estimator provides information about how the effects of alcohol, according to gender, weight, food consumption, time and amount of alcohol impacts a person's reactions. Students are then faced with aging decisions about different alcohol related situations such as driving drunk, unsafe sex, alcohol overdose, and aggressive behavior. Other prevention strategies in response to binge drinking by college students include actions to reduce alcohol availability, such as increases in price, and responsible beverage service practices, especially at parties.

Especially troublesome are fraternities and sororities, those locations where underage and intoxicated students are served alcohol. On some campuses,

measures to reduce the availability of alcohol in these settings may be unpopular but will be essential in cleaning up this problem. Some communities require keg tagging, which requires kegs to be labeled with a serial number identifying the purchaser in case the keg is discovered at a underage drinking party.

Some campuses have gone to the extreme of a zero tolerance policy. Policies stating that whatever the age of the student he/she will not have alcoholic beverages in the dorms. The best on campus policies cannot succeed if off campus retail outlets continue to serve alcohol to underage or intoxicated students, or if students are shielded from the law enforcement consequences of their behavior. School administrators need to reach out to local officials to invite their participation in developing a community wide approach to this problem. A Matter of Degree is such an approach. A Matter of Degree is the only national program designed to reduce binge drinking on college campuses. It is a seven- year, ten million dollar initiative in which universities have formed partnerships with their surrounding communities to address the factors that contribute to binge drinking. Therefore, many universities no longer sell alcohol at sporting events.

Many communities have bought out clubs and bars in the local area to attempt to keep the drinking to a minimum. Another approach has concentrated on changing students' perceptions about drinking practices and attitudes of their peers. This approach is based on a series of studies that have associated the alcohol use of friends and peers and a student's perception of that use with the student's own drinking patterns. Studies have

found that student's consumption of alcohol is based on how much he/she thinks his/her peers are consuming. This misconception is dangerous because when young people go off to college falsely thinking that everybody is drinking and bingeing, they are more likely to drink and binge in order to fit in. Fixing this misconception is important.

Individual students almost always believe that most others on campus drink more heavily than they do and the difference between the perceived and the actual behaviors tend to be quite large. Conducting surveys of actual student behavior and publicizing the results can quickly reduce the extent of heavy drinking. The most carefully assessed abuse prevention project on campus has demonstrated a 35 percent reduction in heavy drinking, a 31 percent deduction in alcohol related injuries to self, and a 54 percent reduction in 6 alcohol related injuries to others. At North Illinois University', over a six-year period binge drinking that used to involve 45 percent of the student body has dropped by 35 percent and alcohol related injuries have fallen 31 percent. The School's approach has been replicated at the university in Tucson, which in only one year reduced drinking by seven percent. Another two-dozen or so colleges across the United States are in early stages of using it as well.

The problem of binge drinking continues to be widespread on college amuses throughout the country. As long as there is alcohol in circulation there Will be binge drinking. Colleges can do all they want to keep young students from participating in binge drinking, but they need to realize that much of the

problem starts before college. It is like one student said, “ College and drinking go together like rum and coke.. .

It’s been going on as long as there have been colleges and it will keep going on. ” As long as students have this attitude changes will be minimal. As a society we need to look at what we are doing to help if help is needed.