

20.25: Young People and Binge Drinking

Learning Objectives

- Binge drinking and serious public health problems

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Overview

Binge drinking is a serious public health problem bringing harm to both the individual and society. It compromises a person's health, increasing the risk of many diseases, injury, and death. It also results in a greater incidence of motor vehicle crashes, violence, the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases, and unintended pregnancies. Binge drinking is prevalent among both young and older adults, men and women, and high and low income levels. Governments have formulated guidelines for moderate or sensible drinking levels. The government of the United Kingdom (UK) issued guidelines for sensible drinking as 2 – 3 alcohol units per day for women and 3 – 4 units per day for men, an alcohol unit being 10 milliliters of ethanol. A binge drinking episode is when a person drinks above double the recommended daily guidelines in a short period of time.

Questions to Answer

What can we learn about the binge drinking patterns of university students in England? Do the bingers and non-bingers differ in their knowledge of the sensible drinking guidelines issued by the UK government?

Design Issues

The university students in the sample "self-selected" to participate in the study by responding to recruiting efforts made via email messages and requests in lectures.

Descriptions of Variables

Table 20.25.1: Description of Variables

Variable	Description
Sex	Female or male
mo_binge_n	Number of times the university students did binge drinking in the last month (using sex-specific definitions)
modrunk	Number of times the university students drank in the last month
wk_unit_prop	Familiarity with alcohol unit-based guidelines (measured on a 5-point scale)
k_unit_sum	Knowledge of alcohol unit-based guidelines (score out of 7)
u_fam	Familiarity with alcohol unit-based guidelines (measured on a 5-point scale)

Data Files

Binge.xls

Links

de Visser et al. article

References

- de Visser, R. O., Birch, J. D. (2012). My cup runneth over: Young people's lack of knowledge of low-risk drinking guidelines. Drug and Alcohol Review, 31, 206-212.

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