

Alcohol

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1.

"Slightly more than half of Americans aged 12 or older reported being current drinkers of alcohol in the 2005 survey (51.8 percent). This translates to an estimated 126 million people, which is higher than the 2004 estimate of 121 million people (50.3 percent).

"More than one fifth (22.7 percent) of persons aged 12 or older participated in binge drinking at least once in the 30 days prior to the survey in 2005. This translates to about 55 million people, comparable with the estimates reported since 2002.

"In 2005, heavy drinking was reported by 6.6 percent of the population aged 12 or older, or 16 million people. This percentage is similar to the rates of heavy drinking in 2002 (6.7 percent), 2003 (6.8 percent), and 2004 (6.9 percent)."

These categories are defined thus:

"Current (past month) use - At least one drink in the past 30 days (includes binge and heavy use).

"Binge use - Five or more drinks on the same occasion (i.e., at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other) on at least 1 day in the past 30 days (includes heavy use).

"Heavy use - Five or more drinks on the same occasion on each of 5 or more days in the past 30 days."

Source:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, US Department of Health and Human Services, Results from the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings (Rockville, MD: Office of Applied Studies, Sept. 2006), p. 27.

2.

"When an alcoholic beverage is consumed, approximately 20% of the alcohol is absorbed in the stomach and 80% is absorbed in the small intestine (Freudenrich, 2001). After absorption, alcohol enters the bloodstream and dissolves in the water of the blood where it is quickly distributed to body tissues. When alcohol reaches the brain, it affects the cerebral cortex first, followed by the limbic system (hippocampus and septal area), cerebellum, hypothalamus, pituitary gland, and lastly, the medulla, or brain stem. Some of these regions are similar to those affected by cannabis, but alcohol also affects sexual arousal/function and increases urinary output. When BAC is near toxic levels, lower order brain regions are affected, which is often followed by sleepiness, lack of consciousness, coma, or death."

Source:

Laberge, Jason C., Nicholas J. Ward, "Research Note: Cannabis and Driving -- Research Needs and Issues for Transportation Policy," *Journal of Drug Issues*, Dec. 2004, pp. 973.

3.

2006! : "In 2006, a total of 22,073 persons died of alcohol-induced causes in the United States (Tables 23 and 24). This category includes not only deaths from dependent and nondependent use of alcohol, but also accidental poisoning by alcohol. It excludes unintentional injuries, homicides, and other causes indirectly related to alcohol use as well as deaths due to fetal alcohol syndrome."

Source:

Heron MP, Hoyert DL, Murphy SL, Xu JQ, Kochanek KD, Tejada-Vera B. Deaths: Final data for 2006. *National vital statistics reports*; vol 57 no 14. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2009, p, 11.

http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57_14.pdf

4.

"The data are quite consistent with the view that Prohibition at the state level inhibited alcohol consumption, and an attempt to explain correlated residuals by including omitted variables revealed that enforcement of Prohibitionist legislation had a significant inhibiting effect as well. Moreover, both hypotheses about the effects of alcohol and Prohibition are supported by the analysis. Despite the fact that alcohol consumption is a positive correlate of homicide (as expected), Prohibition and its enforcement increased the homicide rate."

Source:

Jensen, Gary F., "Prohibition, Alcohol, and Murder: Untangling Countervailing Mechanisms," *Homicide Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA, February 2000), p. 31.

5.

"Juveniles using drugs or alcohol committed 1 in 10 of the nonfatal violent victimizations against older teens. This was 2-1/2

times higher than the percentage of victimizations against younger teens perceived to be committed by a juvenile who was using drugs or alcohol.

"Younger teens were more likely than older teens to report that their juvenile offender was not using drugs or alcohol. In about 4 in 10 victimizations against younger and older teens committed by juveniles, the victim could not ascertain whether or not the offender was using drugs or alcohol."

Source:

Baum, Katrina, PhD, "Juvenile Victimization and Offending, 1993-2003" (Washington, DC: US Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Aug. 2005), p. 8.

6.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that in general, the heavier the alcohol use, the more likely an adolescent will be involved with criminal behaviors.

Source:

Greenblatt, Janet C., US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Patterns of Alcohol Use Among Adolescents and Associations with Emotional and Behavioral Problems (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, March 2000), p. 6.

7.

Even after controlling for other factors e.g., age, gender, family structure, income, past month marijuana use, etc.!, there is "a relationship between past month alcohol use and emotional and behavioral problems. The relationships were particularly strong among heavy and binge alcohol use and delinquent, aggressive, and criminal behaviors."

Source:

Greenblatt, Janet C., US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Patterns of Alcohol Use Among Adolescents and Associations with Emotional and Behavioral Problems (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, March 2000), p. 9.

8.

On an average day in 1996, an estimated 5.3 million convicted offenders were under the supervision of criminal justice authorities. Nearly 40% of these offenders, about 2 million, had been using alcohol at the time of the offense for which they were convicted.

Source:

Greenfield, Lawrence A., US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Alcohol and Crime: An Analysis of National Data on the Prevalence of Alcohol Involvement in Crime (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, April, 1998), p. 20.

9.

About 6 in 10 convicted jail inmates said that they had been drinking on a regular basis during the year before the offense for which they were serving time. Nearly 2 out of 3 of these inmates, regardless of whether they drank daily or less often, reported having previously been in a treatment program for an alcohol dependency problem.

Source:

Greenfield, Lawrence A., US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Alcohol and Crime: An Analysis of National Data on the Prevalence of Alcohol Involvement in Crime (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, April, 1998), p. 27.

10.

About a quarter of the women on probation nationwide had been drinking at the time of their offense compared to more than 40% of male probationers. For those convicted of public-order crimes, nearly two-thirds of women and three-quarters of men had been drinking at the time of the offense.

Source:

Greenfield, Lawrence A., US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Alcohol and Crime: An Analysis of National Data on the Prevalence of Alcohol Involvement in Crime (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, April, 1998), p. 24.

11.

For more than 4 in 10 convicted murderers being held either in jail or in State prison, alcohol use is reported to have been a factor in the crime. Nearly half of those convicted of assault and sentenced to probation had been drinking when the offense occurred.

Source:

Greenfield, Lawrence A., US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Alcohol and Crime: An Analysis of National Data on the Prevalence of Alcohol Involvement in Crime (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, April, 1998), p. 21.

12.

According to a literature review of the effects of alcohol on driving, "As with cannabis, alcohol use increased variability in lane position and headway (Casswell, 1979; Ramaekers et al., 2000; Smiley et al., 1981; Stein et al., 1983) but caused faster speeds (Casswell, 1977; Krueger & Vollrath, 2000; Peck et al., 1986; Smiley et al., 1987; Stein et al., 1983). Some studies also showed that alcohol use alone and in combination with cannabis affected visual search behavior (Lamers & Ramaekers, 2001; Moskowitz, Ziedman, & Sharma, 1976). Alcohol consumption combined with cannabis use also worsened driver performance relative to use of either substance alone. Lane position and headway variability were more exaggerated (Attwood et al., 1981; Ramaekers et al., 2000; Robbe, 1998) and speeds were faster (Peck et al., 1986).

"Both simulator and road studies showed that relative to alcohol use alone, participants who used cannabis alone or in combination with alcohol were more aware of their intoxication. Robbe (1998) found that participants who consumed 100 g/kg of cannabis rated their performance worse and the amount of effort required greater compared to those who consumed alcohol (0.05 BAC). Ramaekers et al. (2000) showed that cannabis use alone and in combination with alcohol consumption increased self-ratings of intoxication and decreased self-ratings of performance. Lamers and Ramaekers (2001) found that cannabis use alone (100 g/kg) and in combination with alcohol consumption resulted in lower ratings of alertness, greater perceptions of effort, and worse ratings of performance."

Source:

Laberge, Jason C., Nicholas J. Ward, "Research Note: Cannabis and Driving -- Research Needs and Issues for Transportation Policy," *Journal of Drug Issues*, Dec. 2004, pp. 978.

13.

"When compared to alcohol, cannabis is detected far less often in accident-involved drivers. Drummer et al. (2003) cited several studies and found that alcohol was detected in 12.5% to 79% of drivers involved in accidents. With regard to crash risk, a large study conducted by Borkenstein, Crowther, Shumate, Zeil and Zylman (1964) compared BAC in approximately 6,000 accident-involved drivers and 7,600 nonaccident controls. They determined the crash risk for each BAC by comparing the number of accident-involved drivers with detected levels of alcohol at each BAC to the number of nonaccident control

drivers with the same BAC. They found that crash risk increased sharply as BAC increased. More specifically, at a BAC of 0.10, drivers were approximately five times more likely to be involved in an accident.

"Similar crash risk results were obtained when data for culpable drivers were evaluated. Drummer (1995) found that drivers with detected levels of alcohol were 7.6 times more likely to be culpable. Longo et al. (2000) showed that drivers who tested positive for alcohol were 8.0 times more culpable, and alcohol consumption in combination with cannabis use produced an odds ratio of 5.4. Similar results were also noted by Swann (2000) and Drummer et al. (2003)."

Source:

Laberge, Jason C., Nicholas J. Ward, "Research Note: Cannabis and Driving -- Research Needs and Issues for Transportation Policy," *Journal of Drug Issues*, Dec. 2004, pp. 981.

14.

"In 2002 and 2003, an estimated 88.2 percent of persons aged 21 or older (175.6 million) were lifetime alcohol users, whereas an estimated 11.8 percent (23.5 million) were lifetime nondrinkers. Over half of lifetime alcohol users (52.7 percent) had used one or more illicit drugs at some time in their life, compared to 8.0 percent of lifetime nondrinkers. Among persons who had used an illicit drug in their lifetime, the average age at first illicit drug use was 19 years for lifetime alcohol users, versus 23 years for lifetime nondrinkers."

Source:

"Illicit Drug Use Among Lifetime Nondrinkers and Lifetime Alcohol Users," Office of Applied Programs, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, US Dept. of Health and Human Services, June 14, 2005, p. 2.

15.

"Lifetime alcohol users aged 21 or older had a significantly higher rate of past year illicit drug use (13.7 percent) compared with lifetime nondrinkers (2.7 percent). In addition, lifetime alcohol users had significantly higher rates of past year use across all illicit drug categories, with the exception of inhalants (Table 1). Nonmedical use of pain relievers was the illicit drug used most often by lifetime nondrinkers, whereas lifetime alcohol users reported using marijuana most frequently."

Source:

"Illicit Drug Use Among Lifetime Nondrinkers and Lifetime Alcohol Users," Office of Applied Programs, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, US Dept. of Health and Human Services, June 14, 2005, p. 2.

16.

A study by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University confirms what many criminologists have long known: alcohol is associated with more violent crime than any illegal drug, including crack, cocaine, and heroin. Twenty-one percent of violent felons in state prisons committed their crimes while under the influence of alcohol alone. Only 3% were high on crack or powder cocaine alone and only 1% were using heroin alone.

Source:

Califano, Joseph, Behind Bars: Substance Abuse and America's Prison Population, Forward by Joseph Califano, The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (1998).

17.

Federal statistics show that a large percentage of criminal offenders were under the influence of alcohol alone when they committed their crimes (36.3%, or a total of 1,919,251 offenders). Federal research also shows for more than 40% of convicted murderers being held in either jail or State prison, alcohol use was a factor in the crime.

Source:

Greenfield, Lawrence A., Alcohol and Crime: An Analysis of National Data on the Prevalence of Alcohol Involvement in Crime (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, April 1998), pp. 20-21.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ac.pdf>

18.

Federal research shows that the ONDCP's anti-drug media campaign is ineffective. According to NIDA's 1998 Household Survey, "exposure to prevention messages outside school, such as through the media, was fairly widespread but appeared to be unrelated to illicit drug use or being drunk". NIDA goes on to report, "Nearly 80% of youths who used illicit drugs and more than three-fourths of youths who were drunk on 51 or more days in the past year reported being exposed to prevention messages outside school."

Source:

Office of Applied Studies, National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Household Survey on Drug Abuse: Main Findings 1998 Rockville, MD: SAMHSA, US Department of Health and Human Services, March 2000!, p. 174.

Related Chapters:

- [Overdose](#)