Binge Drinking Among College Students: Differences By Gender

Amanda Sawicki
Montana Tech of the University of Montana

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.mtech.edu/stdt_rsch_day_2013
Part of the Psychology Commons

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.mtech.edu/stdt_rsch_day_2013/10

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the Highlands College at Digital Commons @ Montana Tech. It has been accepted for inclusion in Posters by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Montana Tech. For more information, please contact sjuskiewicz@mtech.edu.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find out if binge drinking effects behavior in college students based on gender by assessing the behavioral patterns and numbers of male and female participants when engaging in alcoholic beverages. There are three research questions guiding this study: 1. Does binge drinking effect males more than females? 2. Does binge drinking lead to unnecessary injuries? 3. Does binge drinking lead to unsafe sex under the influence? Most research suggests males have more issues with alcohol than females. Surprisingly the statistics for this research project showed female participants outnumbered or ran close to the statistics with the male participants.

BACKGROUND

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) defines binge drinking as “A pattern of drinking alcohol that brings blood alcohol content levels to about 0.08 gram-percent or above in approximately two hours” (NIAAA, 2002, NO.02-5010). For the typical adult, this pattern corresponds to approximately five or more standard drinks for males or four or more standard drinks for females. Concerning the amount of liquor constituting a standard drink, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), NIAAA, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA, 1995) consider a standard beer to contain 12 ounces, a standard glass of wine to contain 5 ounces, and a standard shot of liquor or mixed drink to contain 1.5 ounces. Other countries utilize different definitions, with the United Kingdom recognizing binge drinking as a male’s consumption of eight or more alcohol units, and a female’s consumption of six or more units in 1 sitting, with a standard unit equaling 8 grams (0.2824 ounces) of ethanol. Frequent binge drinking is defined as binge drinking three or more times over 2 weeks (Wechsler, Dowdall, Maenner, Gledhill-Hoyt, & Hang, 1998). Many individuals acknowledge the high proportion of college students who binge drink and deem it a normative behavior for this age group, despite research that posits strong associations between binge drinking and a myriad of harmful consequences that pervade various aspects of their life.

METHODS

The sample included all students who filled out the entire survey (n=43) at North and South Campuses of Montana Tech, Butte, MT, USA. All volunteers were enrolled at the college for the spring semester of academic calendar year 2014-2015. Researchers were not present during the distribution and collection of all surveys. Participants viewed the survey and wrote their answers down on a volunteer basis. All human subjects were protected following Institutional Review Board Guidelines (IRB) through the University of Montana. The study included participants age 18 or over with no participants under the age of 18. All students were asked to participate, but could waive their right to participate.

RESULTS

The results for the data analysis are displayed in five tables. Table 1 reviewed the descriptive analyses by the entire sample and by two subgroups. Correlation table 2 reviewed the questions about male or female binge drinking. Correlation table 3 reviewed questions about males or females being injured while under the influence. Correlation table 4 reviewed questions about males or females being more impulsive with alcohol. Correlation table 5 reviewed male or female had unsafe sex under influence. The entire sample is described for the independent variables which showed females were the majority in this sample with 69% and males at 30%. Correlation samples showed that the males and females had no significant difference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Entire Sample (n=43)</th>
<th>Male (n=13)</th>
<th>Female (n=30)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION

There has been a considerable amount of education about the drinking habits of college students and the consequences that follow since NIAAA first reported the matter in 1976. Excessive drinking results in a wide range of consequences, including injuries, assaults, memory blackouts and unsafe sex. Binge drinking can either be acquired or avoided in college among students who report that they did not binge drink. Reducing binge drinking may require efforts to limit access/availability, control cheap prices, and maximize substance-free environments and associations.

FUTURE STUDIES

Many researchers, reporters, writers, bureaucrats, and others have vested interest in inflating the extent of “binge” drinking. But scare tactics are actually counter-productive and it turns out that the most effective way to reduce alcohol abuse is simply to tell the truth and make sure the young people understand the facts (Santa, A. F., & Cochran, B. N., 2008). A future study could include a control group of college students with scare tactics and one without to clarify differences.

REFERENCES