

THE IMPACTS OF ALCOHOL ADDICTION

ALYSSA LEWIS

Child & Adolescent Studies

Department of Behavioral Sciences & Human Services., Bowie State University

ALCOHOLISM STATISTICS

- Americans now drink an average of 2.3 gallons of alcohol per person per year.
- According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, alcohol use disorder impacted 14.5 million people, ages 12+, in the United States alone in 2019. Out of this 14.5 million people, 9 million are men and 5.5 million are women (2022).
- In 2019 the number of Americans who were suffering from alcohol use disorder reads as follows; 56.1% were Caucasian, 42.8 were African, 32.1 were Indian, 41.5% were Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 37.6 were Asian, and 49.5 were mixed with 2 or more races (NIH, 2022).

ALCOHOLISM & PEERS

- The study conducted by the University of Iowa “found that adolescents who get their first drink from a friend are more likely to drink sooner in life, which past studies show makes them more prone to abusing alcohol when they get older”.
- The Framingham Heart Study concluded that “ a person has 50% more chances of being a heavy drinker if a friend is a heavy drinker. The person is 36% more likely to drink heavily if the friend of a friend is a heavy drinker”.
- Perceptions of alcohol use by others are believed to influence adolescents' own use by conveying a sense that drinking is acceptable and expected, leading to a willingness to drink in order to conform to social expectations.
- When a survey was conducted on adolescents to study their drinking patterns, more than half of the teenagers had no alcohol-dependent parents. Tellingly, among those adolescents who reported having had drunk alcohol, nearly four in ten said their best friends also drank.

ALCOHOLISM & THE FAMILY

- Binge drinking results in \$249 billion a year in health care related costs and lowered employee productivity
- In a study from the University at Buffalo, heavy drinking was connected to lower marital satisfaction and is one of the top reasons for divorce in the United States.
- People battling alcoholism tend to lie about their condition, in order to minimize how much it was impacting them. This destroys trust and makes it difficult for other family members to build strong relationships with the individual suffering from the addiction.
- “The World Health Organization reports that 55 percent of physical assault cases between intimate partners occurred when the perpetrator had been drinking.” This is because drinking alcohol lowers their self-control levels by affecting cognitive and physical functioning which makes people who drink more likely to act violent when frustrated
- Children of alcoholics are at a greater risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder, having mental health and childhood trauma, and becoming addicted to a substance themselves, according to the Adult Children of Alcoholics World Service Organization.

ALCOHOLISM & THE MEDIA

- 11- to 13-year-olds watches 27.7 hours and 14- to 18-year-olds watches 20.2 hours of broadcast and taped television programming each week.
- A recent content analysis of primetime television from the 1998-1999 season, for example, indicates that 71 percent of all programming depicted alcohol use and 77 percent contained some reference to alcohol. Among those programs most popular with teenagers, 53 percent portrayed alcohol use; 84 percent of TV-14-rated programming, 77 percent of TV-PG programming, and 38 percent of TV-G programming depicted alcohol use and more episodes portrayed drinking as an overall positive experience (40 percent) rather than a negative one (10 percent), although negative consequences were mentioned or portrayed in 23 percent of episodes.
- With teens show having so much every heavy drinking and being deemed as fun than dangerous, adolescents are more likely to believe drinking is a norm for the teenage life and symbolizes a positive image.
- With the media portraying drinking as normal behavior in adolescents and adults, society is more likely to engage in drinking.

ALCOHOLISM & SCHOOLING

- In the United States, one in four individuals between the ages of 12 and 20 drinks alcohol on a monthly basis, and a similar proportion of 12th graders consumes five or more drinks in a row at least once every two weeks.
- Alcohol damages areas of the brain that are responsible for learning and memory, verbal skills, and visual-spatial cognition, making it harder for the brain to control things like balance, speech, and judgment (Ramapo College & Alcohol Cost Calculator, 2022).
- The 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA - now known as the National Survey on Drug Use and Health), conducted a federal study and found that as rates of alcohol use by 12- to 17-year-olds increase, grade point averages decrease.
- Among drinkers, the lower the GPA, the higher the percentage who drank or were heavy drinkers and the students with 4.0 GPAs consumed a third fewer drinks compared to those with GPAs under 2.0.
- In any given age group, heavy and binge drinkers are 4-6 times more likely than nondrinkers to say they cut classes or skipped school.

