

Study examines the relationship between marriage and alcohol

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New research examining relationships and the use of alcohol finds that while a long-term marriage appears to curb men's drinking, it's associated with a slightly higher level of alcohol use among women. The study, led by the University of Cincinnati (UC), will be presented at the 107th Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association.

Based on survey data and interviews, the authors revealed that [married men](#) reported consuming the lowest number of drinks, compared with single, divorced, and widowed men. That's in part because of their wives' lower levels of drinking, write the authors. Men also were more likely than women to turn to drinking after a divorce.

On the other hand, the researchers found that [married women](#) consumed more drinks than long-term divorced or recently widowed women, in part because they lived with men who had higher levels of alcohol use.

The authors of the study are Corinne Reczek, an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Cincinnati; Tetyana Pudrovska, an assistant professor of sociology and demography at The Pennsylvania State University; Deborah Carr, a professor of sociology at Rutgers University; and Debra Umberson, a professor of sociology at University of Texas at Austin.

The researchers analyzed survey data from the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study to explore [population trends](#) in the relationship between marriage and alcohol. They also analyzed data from two in-depth interview

studies, the [Marital Quality](#) Over the Life Course Project, conducted between 2003-2006, and the Relationships and [Health Habits](#) Over the Life Course Study, conducted between 2007-2010.

The researchers also found that:

- In each marital status category, men consumed a greater average number of drinks than women.
- Across every marital status category, a higher proportion of men than women also reported having at least one drinking-related problem.
- Recently divorced men reported consuming a significantly greater average number of drinks than men in long-term marriages.
- Reporting at least one drinking-related problem was significantly higher among long-term divorced and recently divorced women than long-term married women.

The researchers gauged alcohol consumption by total number of drinks consumed in a month.

The researchers suggest that future research should examine more closely how widowhood shapes alcohol use over time, as well as explore alcohol use differences across race-ethnicity.

Provided by American Sociological Association

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