

One in 25 middle school children binge drinking

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Four percent of Canadians aged 12 to 14 years old had consumed five or more drinks on at least one occasion in the preceding year, according to a new study from the University of Toronto. The study was published this week in the journal *ISRN Public Health*.

The findings also indicated that the odds of binge drinking were twice as high among youth with three or more chronic conditions.

"We are particularly concerned that the young adolescents most likely to [binge drink](#) are those who have substantial physical [health](#) challenges" says lead author Esme Fuller-Thomson, Sandra Rotman Chair at the University of Toronto's Factor Inwentash Faculty of Social Work.

"Clearly, pediatricians and other health professionals need to be particularly attentive to screening for binge drinking in these vulnerable youth."

The investigators examined a range of factors associated with binge drinking in a representative community-based sample of 6,172 Canadians aged 12 to 14, using data drawn from the 2005 Canadian Community Health Survey.

"We also found that youth with mood disorders had three times the odds of binge drinking, says co-author Matthew Sheridan, a manager at a children's mental health centre. "This should signal that mental health is an important factor to consider in targeting outreach for binge drinking prevention and cessation programs."

Binge drinking is a major public health issue because it is an important risk factor for alcohol-related injuries, accidental death, unsafe sexual behaviour, and long-term substance abuse problems. Co-authors Cathy Sorichetti and Tamara Grundland emphasize that there are many promising prevention strategies including life skills training for middle schoolers, comprehensive community-based interventions addressing children, schools, and the larger community, education of parents about the risk of supplying alcohol to teenagers, and greater enforcement of laws prosecuting those who sell liquor to minors.

More information: Paper: www.hindawi.com/journals/isrn.health/2014/646250/

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