

The more friends you drink with... the more you drink

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Sometimes it is useful to show in a well conducted study something which one suspects could well be true. A new study published today by the scientific journal *Addiction* shows that alcohol consumption of individuals appears to increase with the number of friends in their drinking group. The impact of drinking group size on alcohol use is stronger for men than women.

Most alcohol use among young people occurs in a [social context](#), and peer substance use has long been established as an important predictor of alcohol and other substance use among youngsters. Past research suggests that the mere presence of others seems to have an effect on [drinking behaviour](#), but most of those studies relied on data gathered from experiments performed in artificial laboratory settings or from surveys conducted after drinking sessions have ended, which are notoriously inaccurate.

This new study used internet-based questionnaires that study participants completed on their own smartphones to survey almost 200 young adult drinkers in Switzerland every hour while they were drinking in real-life situations, asking them to report the number of friends present and number of drinks they had consumed.

Results showed that as the number of friends present increased, so did the number of drinks an individual consumed per hour. This suggests that messages aimed at reducing risk among young drinkers should aim to combat this tendency. The arrival of more [drinking](#) buddies at the

college bar on a Friday night may be cause for delight, but not necessarily a call for another round of drinks.

More information: Thrul J. and Kuntsche E. (2015) The impact of friends on young adults' drinking over the course of the evening: An event-level analysis. *Addiction* 110: [DOI: 10.1111/add.12862](https://doi.org/10.1111/add.12862)

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