

I've only had a couple! Students underestimate their bad drinking behavior

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Credit: Wikipedia

That is the key finding of research conducted by Dr Emma Davies, along with Dr Sarah Hennesly and Emma-Ben Lewis, which is being presented today at the British Psychological Society's Annual Conference in Brighton.

Dr Davies, from Oxford Brookes University, said: "Excessive [drinking](#) is known to be an issue within [student](#) populations, and this research suggests some of the reasons for campus drinking culture and why previous intervention attempts have tended to be unsuccessful."

An online survey was completed by 416 students, 68.5 per cent of them female, from universities across the UK, who were asked to compare both their consumption of alcohol and their behaviour when under the influence to that of other drinkers.

The greatest misperceptions were found in males, particularly those aged 21 and under, with a significant proportion of them also reporting that their behaviour when they drank alcohol was less unruly than others.

Further analysis suggested that they also considered themselves to be more in control of their own actions when drinking than other students.

There was a desire to distance themselves from negative drinking stereotypes such as loud and aggressive behaviour, with the students instead seeing themselves as fun or energetic after consuming alcohol.

Dr Davies added: "This research shows that students consistently view their behaviour whilst drinking in a positive light when compared with that of others. "They also suggest that their own drunken [behaviour](#) is generally motivated by a desire to have fun but judge others more harshly, as deliberately aggressive or out of control. "Future interventions aimed at reducing [excessive drinking](#) must take these factors in to account, rather than exclusively focusing on [alcohol consumption](#), if they are to be successful."

More information: Presentation: "I am quite mellow but I wouldn't say everyone else is": A mixed methods exploration of normative misperceptions of alcohol consumption and selfevaluation of drinking

behaviour compared to others' www.bps.org.uk/ac2017

Provided by British Psychological Society

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