

How serious is binge drinking among college students with disabilities?

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A new study finds that college students with disabilities binge drink more often than their non-disabled student peers. The study, providing the first picture of alcohol use and binge drinking by US college students with disabilities, is out today in *Public Health Reports*, a SAGE Publishing journal and the official journal of the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General and the U.S. Public Health Service.

"Substance abuse is the topic of high public interest, yet little attention is given to the experiences of [college students](#) with disabilities," wrote the study authors Steven L. West et al. "Given that [binge drinking](#) is highly correlated with academic failure, drop-out, and an increased risk for various negative health conditions, such use by students with disabilities may place them at extreme risk for various negative outcomes."

The study authors surveyed 1,285 students with disabilities from 61 U.S. colleges and universities in 2013. The students answered questions regarding alcohol and other drug use and the use of substances by [student](#) peers. The researchers found that 80% reported [drinking alcohol](#) at least once. Among these students:

- 70% reported binge drinking, defined as having five or more drinks in one sitting by males or having four or more drinks in one sitting by females, at least once in the previous year. This number is about 30% higher than the national average of college students as a whole, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 2012 and 2013

- Of those who binge drank at least once in 2012, 10% reported binge drinking monthly, 9% reported binge drinking 2 or 3 times per week, and 1% reported binge [drinking](#) more than 5 times per week
- 42% drank alcohol once a month or less, 14% drank 2 to 4 times per week, 6% percent drank more than 5 times per week, and 10% drank daily

"Alcohol and drug prevention efforts are common on college campuses, and many are specific to the groups they target, such as members of fraternities or sororities or student athletes," continued the study authors. "However, students with disabilities are largely overlooked in such programming. Our finding that students with [disabilities](#) drink and binge drink at considerable rates calls for more preventive efforts targeting this underserved population."

More information: "Rates and Correlates of Binge Drinking Among College Students With Disabilities, United States, 2013," *Public Health Reports*, 2017.

Provided by SAGE

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