

Binge drinking in college may lower chances of landing a job after college

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Credit: Tel Aviv University

Heavy drinking six times a month reduces the probability that a new college graduate will land a job by 10 percent, according to Tel Aviv University and Cornell University research published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

Previous studies were unable to determine the precise effect of alcohol consumption on first-time employment. But according to the new study, each individual episode of student binge-drinking during a month-long period lowers the odds of attaining full-time employment upon graduation by 1.4 percent.

"The manner in which students drink appears to be more influential than how much they drink when it comes to predicting the likelihood of getting a job upon graduation," says Prof. Peter Bamberger of TAU's Coller School of Business Management and Cornell University, who co-authored the study with Prof. Samuel Bacharach of Cornell University; Prof. Mary Larimer and Prof. Irene Geisner, both of the University of Washington; Jacklyn Koopmann of Auburn University; Prof. Inbal Nahum-Shani of the University of Michigan; and Prof. Mo Wang of the University of Florida.

"Binge-drinking" is defined as ingesting four or more alcoholic drinks within two hours by a woman and five or more [alcoholic drinks](#) within two hours by a man, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

How often, not how much

The research found that a non-binge pattern of drinking does not adversely impact job search results unless and until their drinking reaches binge levels.

Data for the study was provided by 827 individuals who graduated in 2014, 2015, and 2016 from Cornell, the University of Washington, the University of Florida, and the University of Michigan.

"A student who binge-drinks four times a month has a 6 percent lower probability of finding a job than a student who does not engage in similar drinking habits. Those students who drank heavily six times a month increased their unemployment probability to 10 percent," says Prof. Bamberger.

Funded by a \$2.2 million grant from the National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse, the research is the first installment of a

longitudinal study on how alcohol misuse affects the college-to-work transition. More than 16,000 individuals have been contacted as part of the five-year study.

"This paper is consistent with the recent emphasis on the impact of drinking behavior on career transition from Cornell's Smithers Institute," said Prof. Bacharach. "It is in concert with the previous work we've done on retirement, and on-boarding [the entry and socialization of newcomers into an organization]. Most importantly, it is also consistent with the Smithers Institute's continued programmatic interest in substance abuse not only in the workplace, but in the college community as well."

Provided by Tel Aviv University

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