

# When it comes to drinking, college men not looking for a 'girl gone wild'

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College women may be drinking to excess to impress their male counterparts on campuses across the country, but a new study suggests most college men are not looking for a woman to match them drink for drink.

A survey of 3,616 [college](#) students at two [American universities](#) found an overwhelming majority of [women](#) overestimated the amount of alcohol a typical guy would like his female friends, dates or girlfriends to drink. The results can be found in the March issue of *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, published by the American Psychological Association.

"Although traditionally, men drink more than women, research has shown that women have steadily been [drinking](#) more and more over the last several decades," said the study's lead author, Joseph LaBrie, PhD, associate professor of psychology at Loyola Marymount University. "Our research suggests women believe men find [excessive drinking](#) sexually attractive and appealing, but it appears this is a giant [misperception](#)."

For this article, the researchers invited the participating students, ages 18 to 25, to complete an online survey during the 2007 fall semester. The students were at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles or the University of Washington. The women answered several questions to determine, on average, how many drinks they thought a typical college man would like his female friends to drink at a typical event, as well as the maximum number of drinks they thought the men would like their female friends to drink. They then had to say, on average, how many drinks they thought a woman would have to consume for a guy to consider being friends with her, consider dating her or consider her sexually attractive. The men were asked their actual preferences.

The researchers also asked the women to estimate

how much they drank in any given week or month, and how much alcohol they thought the average woman at their university drank in any given week.

The results showed 71 percent of women overestimated the men's actual preference of drinks at any given event. The women overestimated by an average of one-and-a-half drinks. When the researchers looked at the different subgroups, 26 percent of women said that men would most likely want to be friends with a woman who drinks five or more drinks and 16 percent said that men would be most sexually attracted to a woman who drank that much alcohol. Both estimates were nearly double what the men actually preferred. They also found the women who overestimated the men's preferences were more likely to engage in excessive drinking.

"There is a great, and risky, disconnect here between the sexes," said LaBrie. "While not all women may be drinking simply to get a guy's attention, this may help explain why more women are drinking at dangerous levels. We believe universities and other public health organizations could use this information to help curb binge drinking among young women."

LaBrie is doing a follow-up study that looks at what men think women want them to drink to see if this perception has a similar effect on increased risky drinking.

Source: American Psychological Association

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