

Poor sleep could lead to heavier drinking in young adults, study finds

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A shortened night of sleep may increase young adults' risk of heavier drinking, according to a new Yale study that assessed reciprocal variations in sleep and drinking over time in young adults.

The study, conducted by Lisa Fucito, PhD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, found that young adults consumed more [alcohol](#) following nights of less sleep and had more delayed sleep timing following heavier drinking occasions.

Prior research has demonstrated important sleep-alcohol associations among older adults with a history of chronic alcohol use disorders. This is the first study to identify a potential bidirectional association between [sleep problems](#) and heavy alcohol use in young adults at risk for an alcohol use disorder.

In the study, published in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 42 young adults who reported heavy alcohol consumption in the last month monitored their sleep and alcohol use daily for one week. Participants wore a validated, ambulatory sleep-wake activity monitor (i.e., Philips Respironics Actiwatch) and completed daily web-based sleep diaries that included questions about alcohol use.

Sleeping less and waking earlier, but feeling well rested, predicted greater subsequent alcohol consumption, according to the study, funded by the NINR-sponsored Yale Center for Sleep Disturbance in Acute and Chronic Conditions. Heavier drinking predicted going to bed and waking later compared to no or moderate drinking occasions.

"These preliminary findings support further investigating sleep as an alcohol risk pathway in [young adults](#) as well as the potential for improved [sleep](#) to reduce this risk," the authors wrote.

More information: Reciprocal Variations in Sleep and Drinking Over Time Among Heavy-Drinking Young Adults. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*. Advance online publication.
[dx.doi.org/10.1037/abn0000312](https://doi.org/10.1037/abn0000312)

Provided by Yale University

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