Early Alcohol Users Five Times More Likely to Be Alcohol Dependent in Lifetime

Early alcohol use increases the likelihood of developing alcohol dependence at a later age, according to an analysis of data from the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC). Nearly one-half (47%) of persons who began drinking before age 14 were alcohol dependent at some point in their lifetime, and 13% were dependent in the past year, compared to 9% and 2%, respectively, of those who began drinking after age 20. Early drinking was also related to higher rates of dependence within 10 years of onset of drinking and dependence before age 25 (data not shown). These findings held after controlling for family history of alcohol and other relevant factors, suggesting that “this relationship may not be solely a by-product of greater risk-taking behavior among early drinkers reflected by tobacco or drug use or predisposing psychological characteristics or disorders” (p. 743).

Percentage of U.S. Adults Aged 18 and Older Dependent on Alcohol, By Age of Drinking Onset

NOTES: The NESARC was a face-to-face survey of a multistage probability sample of 43,093 adults age 18 years and older conducted in 2001–2002. Data in the figure are based on the 26,829 respondents who reported ever drinking alcohol.


CESAR Seeking PhD-Level Candidate to Analyze Data on Alcohol Use Among College Students

CESAR is seeking a Research Associate to analyze and publish data from an ongoing, longitudinal prospective survey of alcohol use among college students. A PhD-level candidate with post-doctorate experience in public health and/or epidemiology is preferred. If you are interested in working in a supportive and stimulating, university-based team environment, please send a letter of interest and a resume to Dr. Amelia Arria at CESAR, 4321 Hartwick Rd, Ste 501, College Park, MD 20740; 301-403-8342 (fax); cesar@cesar.umd.edu.

**CESAR FAX** may be copied without permission. Please cite CESAR as the source.

The Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention funded this project under grant BJAG 2005-1206. All points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of any State agency.