



Alcohol Use Disorder and Depression Among UCSD College Students

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Introduction

Depression: Expression of depressive moods, loss of interest, loss of pleasure in daily activities, problems with sleep and energy for a period of time (NIHMI, 2020)

2020: 44% of college students reported depression and anxiety (WHO, 2021)

Alcohol Use Disorder: Medical condition characterized by uncontrolled drinking despite social and health consequences (NIH, 2020)

Studies show that heavy drinking mostly happens during college years, making college a lifetime peak for diagnosable alcohol disorders (Geisner et al., 2012)

Heavy excessive drinking can affect college students' well-being including poor academic performance and depression (Same & Akua, 2022).

Objective

To determine the association between alcohol consumption and depression among UCSD undergraduate students.

Methods

Cross-sectional research study by using data from an anonymous online survey that was distributed to undergraduate UCSD college students in April- May of 2023.

The online survey was distributed through different social media platforms as well as printed flyers on campus targeting undergraduate students.

Results

Table 1.
Participants characteristics (N=79)

Gender	
Female	68.4%
Male	31.6%
Age	
≤ 17	2.5%
21-23	57%
24-26	6.3%
≥ 27	3.8%
Living Status	
On-Campus	35.5%
Off-Campus	64.5%

Figure 1. How often do you think UCSD undergraduate students binge drink alcohol on a weekly basis?

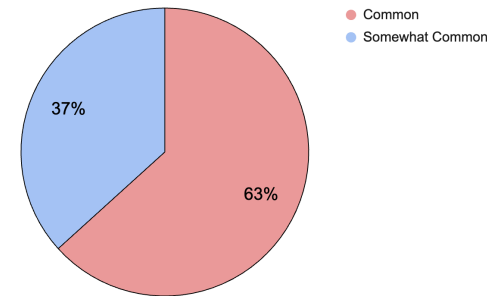


Figure 2. Alcohol use can lead to feelings of sadness or depression

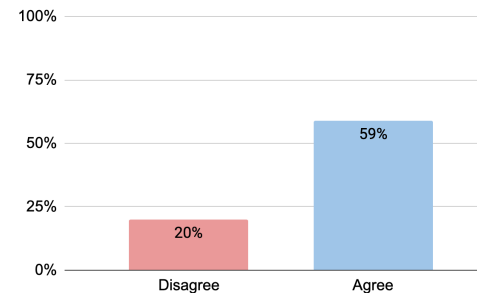
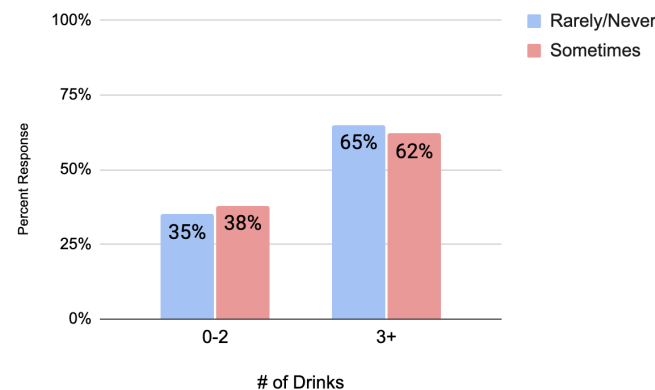


Figure 3. # of Alcoholic Beverages vs. Perception of Feelings of Depression



Conclusion

A majority of the participants reported alcohol use can lead to depression, suggesting the prevalence of misuse within this population. However, we did not find a significant association between perceptions of alcohol consumption and symptoms of depression.

Further research is needed in a larger population to gain a better understanding of the association between alcohol consumption and depression is.

Policy Recommendations

Further interventions should focus on implementing individual-level alcohol interventions for undergraduate students.

Developing policy recommendations on safe drinking in universities can potentially help students consume alcohol responsibly.

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