

In 2011, the U.S. Department of Education awarded the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) funding to support Connecticut college campuses establish and expand evidence-based strategies to reduce alcohol and other drug usage. With this funding, DMHAS established the Connecticut Healthy Campus Initiative (CHCI).

The Center for Public Health and Health Policy at UConn Health conducted a [program evaluation](#) to assess whether the CHCI sub-grantee campuses reduced alcohol and other drug use and related problems between 2011 and 2014. As part of the evaluation, ten CHCI sub-grantee campuses administered the Core Alcohol and Drug Survey to students aged 18 to 24 in the spring of 2011 (n=6,073), and eight did so in 2014 (n=3,968). The response rate was 21.0 percent in 2011. The response rate for 2014 is unavailable.

This fact sheet focuses on social norms and alcohol use. Specifically, it reports student responses to their beliefs about the alcohol consumption of the typical student, the general attitudes toward alcohol on their campus and the attitudes towards alcohol use by their close friends. It further examines the association of these beliefs and respondents' self-reported drinking behaviors.

Beliefs about the typical student and alcohol consumption

Perceived frequency of typical student's alcohol use

The vast majority of respondents indicated a belief that the typical student on their campus consumes alcohol regularly. More than 90 percent of respondents in 2011 and 2014 believed that the typical student consumed an alcoholic beverage at least once per week.

Beliefs about the frequency of typical student's alcohol consumption and respondents' alcohol consumption (Figures 1 and 2)

There does not appear to be a close connection between the respondents' beliefs about the frequency with which the typical student consumes alcoholic beverages and respondents' number of alcoholic drinks per week or respondents' binge drinking behaviors.

Beliefs about the campus social environment and alcohol consumption

Respondents' beliefs about the campus environment (Figure 3)

About three-quarters of the respondents thought that students on their campus generally cared somewhat or slightly about alcohol problems. The distribution of these beliefs was similar in 2011 and 2014.

Figure 1. Respondents' beliefs about the frequency of a typical student's alcohol consumption and respondents' self-reported number of drinks per week consumed^{1,2}

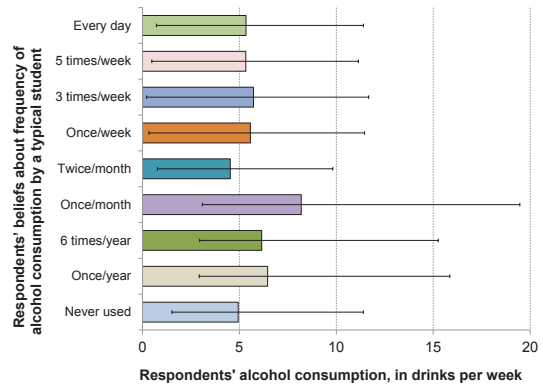


Figure 2. Respondents' beliefs about frequency of typical student's alcohol consumption and respondents' self-reported binge drinking episodes in the prior two weeks^{1,2}

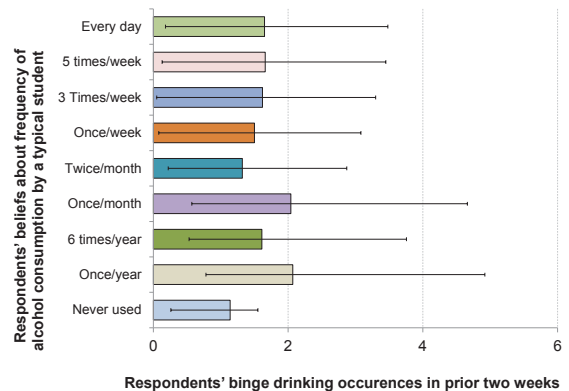
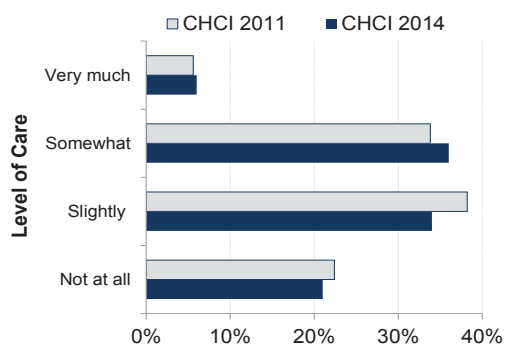


Figure 3. Respondents' beliefs on whether other students care about alcohol related problems



¹ Combined response from 2011 and 2014.

² The lines on the graph represent 95% confidence intervals for mean.

Beliefs about campus social environment and peers' alcohol consumption

Respondents who indicated that their campus's social atmosphere promotes alcohol use consumed an average of two drinks more per week than those who reported that their campus did not. Respondents who believed alcohol use in their campus was greater than on comparable campuses drank somewhat more than their peers. Respondents who believed that other students did not care about alcohol related problems consumed more alcohol than those who thought that other students did.

Perception of campus environment	Respondents' average number of drinks per week - Mean (C.I. ^b)
<i>Social atmosphere on campus promotes alcohol use</i>	
Yes	6.8 (6.5, 7.0)
No	4.3 (4.1, 4.6)
<i>Compared to other campuses, alcohol use on this campus is:</i>	
Less than	5.4 (5.1, 5.7)
Equal to	5.8 (5.6, 6.1)
Greater than	6.1 (5.6, 6.7)
<i>Extent to which students on campus care about problems associated with alcohol</i>	
Not at all	7.2 (6.7, 7.7)
Slightly	6.0 (5.7, 6.3)
Somewhat	4.7 (4.5, 5.0)
Very much	5.6 (4.8, 6.5)

^a Combined response from 2011 and 2014
^b 95% confidence interval for mean

Beliefs about the attitudes of close friends and alcohol consumption

Number of alcoholic beverages consumed per week and close friends' attitudes on alcohol use

While the amount of students' alcohol consumption does not appear to be correlated closely with their beliefs about how often a typical student may drink, and is only somewhat associated with their beliefs of the campus social environment; it appears that respondents' drinking behaviors may be highly

influenced by the attitudes of their close friends. For example, respondents who indicated that their close friends would strongly disapprove of them drinking one or two drinks nearly every day reported consuming an average of 3.28 drinks per week. In contrast, students who believe that their friends would not disapprove of this behavior reported drinking more than twice as much, 8.11 drinks per week.

Drinking Activity	Don't Disapprove Mean (C.I. ^b)	Disapprove Mean (C.I. ^b)	Strongly Disapprove Mean (C.I. ^b)
One or two drinks nearly every day	8.1 (7.8, 8.5)	5.1 (4.9, 5.4)	3.3 (3.0, 4.0)
Four or five drinks nearly every day	12.1 (11.1, 13.0)	6.8 (6.5, 7.2)	4.2 (4.0, 4.4)

^a Combined response from 2011 and 2014

^b 95% confidence interval for mean

Binge drinking and close friends' attitudes about alcohol use

Respondents indicating a greater level of disapproval from their close friends for drinking reported fewer binge drinking episodes. For example, respondents who reported that their friends would strongly disapprove of them taking one or two drinks nearly every day reported less than one binge drinking episode within the prior two weeks. Respondents who believed that their friends would not disapprove reported more than two binge drinking episodes in the same time period.

Drinking Activity	Don't Disapprove Mean (C.I. ^b)	Disapprove Mean (C.I. ^b)	Strongly Disapprove Mean (C.I. ^b)
One or two drinks nearly every day	2.2 (2.1, 2.3)	1.4 (1.3, 1.5)	0.9 (0.9, 1.0)
Four or five drinks nearly every day	3.1 (2.9, 3.3)	1.9 (1.8, 2.0)	1.2 (1.1, 1.2)
Binge drinking	2.4 (2.3, 2.5)	1.1 (1.0, 1.2)	0.7 (0.6, 0.7)

^a Combined response from 2011 and 2014

^b 95% confidence interval for mean

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