

Patrick, M. E., & Schulenberg, J. E. (2010). Alcohol use and heavy episodic drinking prevalence and predictors among national samples of American eighth- and tenth-grade students. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 71, 41–45.

Abstract

Objective. Given the public health impact of adolescent alcohol use and heavy episodic drinking, we sought to identify the prevalence of types of alcohol use among national samples of 8th- and 10th-grade American students. In addition, a range of known risk factors was used to predict the most problematic type: heavy episodic use.

Method. Monitoring the Future data on lifetime, past-year, and past-30-day alcohol use and on past-2-week heavy episodic drinking were available for 505,668 students from 1991 to 2007 (weighted $N = 505,853$; 51.5% girls; 65.3% White, 12.3% Black, 11.1% Hispanic). Logistic regression was then used in a representative subsample of 110,130 students to predict heavy episodic drinking in the previous 2 weeks.

Results. In the most recent cohorts, about 1 in 10 8th graders and 1 in 5 10th graders had engaged in heavy episodic drinking in the past 2 weeks. Explanatory variables in logistic regression were largely invariant across cohort, grade level, gender, and race/ethnicity, accounting for 48% of the variance in heavy episodic drinking.

Conclusions. Heavy episodic drinking continues to be a prevalent behavior among the nation's youth, with consistent risk factors over time, highlighting the continued necessity of effective screening and prevention efforts.