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Youth Scan

March 2008

From the National Youth Council

"Developing a Vibrant, Highly-Connected, and

Self-Sustaining Youth Sector, and Nurturing World-Ready Youth"

Bringing you snippets of youth trends and issues compiled from
diverse sources such as news reports, journals and press releases,

Youth Scan aims to help you stay in touch with the constantly evolving youth scene.

1. Youth drinking is stirring calls to action

The New York Sun, May 11 2007

2. No thought of a problem: 'We all just get wasted'

The New York Sun, May 09 2007

3. Drunkorexia: The worrying phenomenon where young women replace food with booze

Daily Mail, March 17 2008

4. Drinking and aggression among university students often depends on the context

Medical News Today, March 9 2008

5. College drinking problems could be curbed by parental supervision during high school

Medical News Today, March 7 2008

1. Youth drinking is stirring calls to action

Hope, Bradley

The New York Sun, May 11 2007

Several studies are showing new trends in alcohol use among youths. Of those youths that already drink, many are drinking greater amounts of alcohol more often, a study by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University found. It was also reported that about 49% of college students in America binge drink.

The director of the center remarked that the age at which youths start binge drinking has been inching lower as well. 'The younger you drink, the likelier you are to abuse alcohol, to become an abusive alcohol drinker as an adult.'

Students are also taking more prescription medication than in the past; a problem that clinicians say is exacerbating the problems of alcohol use. Alcohol mixed with prescription or illegal drugs, like cocaine, can create compounds in the body that are more addictive and toxic. Other than direct health consequences of binge drinking, alcohol intoxication is also a leading cause of car accidents, homicides, suicides, violence and sexual assault.

(Source: The New York Sun, Accessed on 16 March 2008,
http://www.nysun.com/article/54255?page_no=2)

2. No thought of a problem: 'We all just get wasted'

The New York Sun, May 9 2007

The following interview with college students shed light on the kind of attitudes and behaviours undergraduates have with regards to drinking.

For Corey Dozier, a sophomore, and his friends, weekends start early on "thirsty Thursdays," when they begin the drinking binge that often leaves them too hung over to go to class on Friday morning, but ready to tip the bottle again by Friday and Saturday nights.

During one of their drinking binges, Dozier and his friends invented a theme: a "vomit party," in which the students who gathered in a friend's apartment were encouraged to drink nauseating amounts from a shared bottle of vodka.

Another freshman, Andrew Beale, said that while most of his former high school classmates drank to get drunk on some weekends, his college peers binge drink far more often. He said they not only have easier access to alcohol, they also have more free time to consume it. He also remarked that his peers often brag about "blacking out," or drinking to the point that they experienced some short-term memory loss — a state that has been linked to permanently damaging a young person's memory, spatial skills, and ability to focus.

Explaining the temptation to gloat about "blacking out," he said: "Part of that might have something to do with trying to get some sort of image as someone who parties often, and knows how to have a good time. But I think it might be mostly because nights like those can lead to some amusing situations when you ignore the brain damage aspect of it."

A senior undergraduate explained, "I know plenty of people who just can't control themselves," he said. "They have to drink. They can't have a good time unless they are getting drunk....College is a time for students to experiment and discover their limits and also a time when the consequences seem far away."

(Source: The New York Sun, Accessed on 16 March 2008,
<http://www.nysun.com/pf.php?id=54067&v=2392436021>)

3. Drunkorexia: The worrying phenomenon where young women replace food with booze

Macrae, Fiona

Daily Mail, March 17 2008

Experts have warned that there is a growing number of young women who are skipping meals to allow them to binge drink without putting on weight. The phenomenon of "Drunkorexia" is most common among university students faced with the conflicting pressures of heavy drinking and staying slim. Realizing that they are going to have to drink to fit in but not wanting to put on any weight, "drunkorexics" will cut back on calories ahead of a night in town.

The lack of food in their system ensures that those young women get drunk quicker and raises the risk of them passing out with all the dangers that entails. Said Mrs Noble, an expert in eating disorders, “it seems to be socially acceptable to drink a lot and be seen falling out of a club drunk in the early hours of the morning...The social pressure seems to be very much in favour of drinking being OK.”

Recent studies have shown links between eating disorders and alcohol abuse, with up to a third of bulimics struggling with alcohol or drugs and 36 per cent of women receiving treatment for alcohol abuse also confessing to eating problems.

(Source: *Daily Mail*, Accessed on 19 March 2008, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/health/womenfamily.html?in_article_id=537029&in_page_id=1774&ICO=HEALTH&ICL=TOPART)

4. Drinking and aggression among university students often depends on the context

Medical News Today, March 9 2008

To better understand what may increase the risk of aggression among students, a team of researchers rehashed data collected from the 2004 Canadian Campus Survey and analyzed participants' responses, focusing on students' three most recent drinking events.

It was found that aggression is more likely to occur:

- the more drinks students consumed;
- when students are with their partners;
- when students drink at three or more places on one occasion;
- when students drink at a fraternity, sorority or campus residence;
- when attending parties, especially for women.

Conversely, students are less likely to experience aggression when they had a meal.

Researchers pointed that measures to reduce the risk of aggression and violence need to address not only reducing the conflict and stress in drinking situations but also moderating the amount of alcohol people drink. Both the amount and the drinking context – for example, the size of the drinking group, type of drinking setting, whether or not a partner is present – can play important roles in mediating the levels of alcohol related aggression and violence. Programmes that focus also on preventing partner violence and other relationship related conflicts will also be highly effective. In addition, programmes that promote the consumption of food, and encourage people to stay in one place rather than going from one drinking place to another, may reduce the occurrence of alcohol-related aggression.

(Source: *Medical News Today*, Accessed on 21 March 2008 <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/99821.php>)

5. College drinking problems could be curbed by parental supervision during high school

Medical News Today, March 7 2008

Parental monitoring can reduce high school drinking and, as a result, have a protective effect on students' drinking at college. The findings of a recent study strengthen the idea that certain parental practices

throughout high school and perhaps college could be used to curb high risk drinking in older adolescents. Underage drinking is linked to a number of negative outcomes in this group, including suicide, high risk sexual activity and an increased chance of alcohol dependence.

Researchers from the Center for Substance Abuse Research at the University of Maryland College Park, Maryland, USA interviewed over 1,200 students for the research which forms part of the College Life study, an ongoing, longitudinal, prospective investigation of health risk behaviours in college students, including alcohol and other drug use.

Higher levels of parental supervision were associated with lower levels of high-school drinking, independent of sex, race and religiosity. Although parental monitoring did not directly influence alcohol consumption in college, there was evidence that high school drinking mediates the relationship between the two factors. Thus, the higher the drinking in high school, the higher the drinking in college. The authors point out that these results call into question the opinion of many parents who think "responsible drinking" should begin in high school.

(Source: *Medical News Today*, Accessed on 19 March 2008
<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/99821.php>)

For the full report, please click on the following link:

http://www.nyc.gov.sg/research/college_drinking.pdf

(Source: *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy 2008*, 3:6, Accessed on 21 March 2008
<http://www.substanceabusepolicy.com/content/pdf/1747-597x-3-6.pdf>)

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