

Trends in binge drinking among older men and women in the United States

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Binge drinking has increased in recent years among older U.S. men but not among older women, according to a study published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

The study included 18,794 adults aged 65 years and older who participated in the 2015–2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

Binge drinking was defined as consuming 5 or more drinks on the same occasion for men and 4 or more drinks for women.

Binge drinking among older men increased from 12.8% in 2015 to 15.7% in 2019 but remained stable among [older women](#) (7.6% to 7.3%). Having a [college degree](#) was associated with a higher risk of [binge drinking](#) among women but a [lower risk](#) among men. Men who were separated or divorced were also at higher risk, but women were not. Both men and women who reported use of tobacco or cannabis in the past month were at higher risks of binge drinking.

"Our study brings the most up-to-date findings on trends in binge drinking in older age, especially the unnoticed importance of understanding the unique demographic characteristics of binge drinking that differ in men and women given gender norms and expectations of societies that are consistently evolving. For example, we noted an increased frequency in education among binge drinking older women. Women with more education may have more opportunities to drink and may be less constricted by gender norms against women consuming alcohol," said lead author Tala Al-Rousan, MD, MPH, of the University of California, San Diego. "Moreover, our findings would encourage health providers who care for older men and women with [chronic conditions](#) who are at risk of binge drinking to offer tailored messages that are targeted at certain chronic conditions."

More information: *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2021). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.17573](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.17573)

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