



News Alert

Northeast Community Challenge Coalition

New Middle-Age Crisis: Drinking Over 50

Binge drinking does not occur just among teenagers or college students. A recent study indicated that drinking large amounts of alcohol is now more prevalent among middle-aged adults than previously thought. The study defines binge drinking as someone having five or more drinks during the same occasion within the past 30 days.

Twenty-three percent of men and nine percent of women between 50 and 64 years old reported drinking at least five alcoholic beverages in the same day, in the previous month, according to a recent study published in the American Journal of Psychiatry. Although the study indicated there are more men who binge drink than women, the women are often more secretive about their drinking.

“A surprising number of older Americans are engaging in drinking patterns that are putting their health at risk, yet these problems often go unrecognized,” said Dan G. Blazer MD, PhD, the study’s lead author and JP Gibbons Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Duke University. “With this study we’ve learned that adults, especially those in their fifties, are carrying a heavier drinking burden into late life.”

Blazer explained that this trend illustrates a potentially greater problem in the future as the baby boomer generation ages. He said that if their current drinking habits continue into their senior years, they could be compounding health problems that typically arise as the body’s natural defenses are weakened. The negative health effects of binge drinking can range from minor injuries to more serious problems, such as stroke, cardiovascular disease, liver disease, neurological damage and poor diabetes control.

Source: American Journal of Psychiatry

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