



News Alert

Northeast Community Challenge Coalition

Teen Drinkers Suffer Brain Damage

Adolescents, whose brains are still developing, are at particular risk for brain damage resulting from alcohol use. Researchers at the University of California at San Diego studied the brains of 12- to 14-year-olds, starting before they began drinking and following them as some began to use alcohol. The study found that young alcohol users suffered damage to nerve tissues, causing attention deficits among boys and faulty visual information processing among girls. In addition, researchers found that drinking negatively affected the hippocampus, a region responsible for memory and learning.

This research offers empirical evidence that initiating even moderate alcohol use during adolescence may adversely influence neurocognitive functioning. These deficits, caused by heavy drinking during this developmental period, may directly or indirectly change the neuromaturation course of the brain and the effects will ultimately extend into adulthood.



Source: Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, December 2009

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