



The truth about alcohol

by Derek Olson

What percentage of UO students do you think binge drink? How many drinks do you think a typical student has while drinking? If you are like most students, you will overestimate both answers.

There is a misconception on this campus that all students get drunk. Unfortunately when we hold this false belief we tend to consume more alcohol in order to fit in. The concept is known as a "social norm". It's not a new concept, but we have yet to fully learn from it.

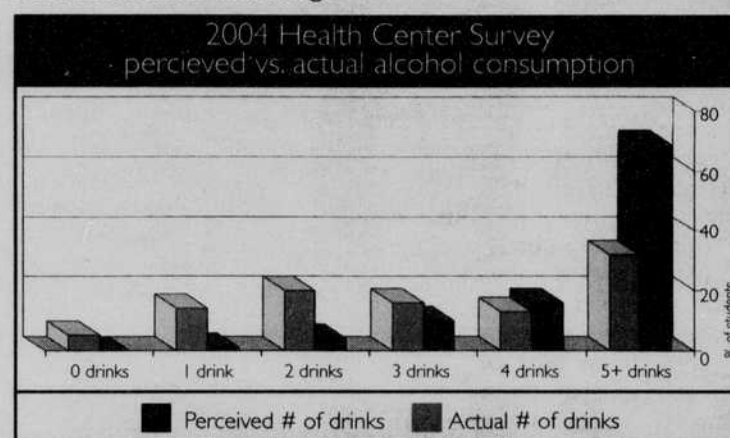
A 1989 landmark survey at Northern Illinois University (NIU) showed that 45% of the

undergraduates were classified as binge drinkers, but students estimated that the percentage to be 70%. (Binge drinking is considered the consumption of five or more drinks in a sitting for men, and four for women.) For the next six years, NIU put forth a major awareness campaign to show students that the actual percentage of binge drinkers was much lower than their estimation of 70%. In 1995 students had the idea that only 43% of their peers were binge drinkers and the actual binge drinking rate dropped to 28%. This evidence clearly suggests that students will "drink up" or "drink down" to fit into the perceived social norm.

Our conception of drinking norms on this campus is also exaggerated. Over the last 10 years UO has been doing studies, including the UO Health Center survey, on the misconception of high risk drinking. As more and more students realize that binge

drinking is actually in the minority, the actual percentage of high risk drinking will ideally decrease.

Contact the Peer Health Ed office for ideas on risk reduction with alcohol and other drugs.



Pearly whites get brighter

by Jane Cornwell

A killer smile won't always help you get the girl, the guy or the job... but it can't hurt. First impressions, both good and bad, leave a lasting image. According to some psychologists, people see and analyze teeth first.

We all know that the key to a healthy smile is regular brushing, flossing and dental checkups. There is no substitute for the benefits of regular dental care. Yet teeth whitening has become one of the nations hottest cosmetic trends for those who want to brighten up the room. The many varieties of

whitening toothpastes, which use abrasives to wear away stains, can be very convenient. However, test results of all toothpastes resulted in only a minimal changing in tooth color. Whitening strips can be a quick over-the-counter solution. They cost about \$40 and can whiten teeth 3-4 shades in just days. Crest Whitening Strips are a popular choice, especially among college students on a budget.

If you are looking for something more dramatic or have badly stained teeth, the professional route is a good way to go. Dentists offer bleaching gels with

customized trays for around \$250. The treatment can then be done in the home and be completed in about a week.

Laser treatments are also available, costing anywhere from \$600 to over \$1000. These treatments can be done in two to three hours, and teeth have the potential to whiten by as much as eight shades.

One side effect of any kind of whitening is that it can leave teeth sensitive to temperature for up to 2 weeks, which is caused by the hydrogen peroxide used. According to Debra George, dental hygienist at the UO Health Center Dental

Clinic, it is always a good idea to schedule a dental appointment before whitening to ensure the teeth are in good shape to begin treatment. This also helps in making sure there is no decay or chemical staining on the teeth.

Health Center dental staff, including dentist Jan Halverson, are very helpful. They can instruct you on what products to use or refer you to get additional professional care. They will provide tips and care procedures to help keep your teeth white after treatment. For the UO Health Centers dental clinic, call 346-4432.

Factoids

Using iron pots for cooking will help your body better absorb iron.
—(webmd.com)

Some antibiotics used to treat urinary tract infections may make birth control pills less effective.
—(webmd.com)

Massage therapy reduced anxiety, depressed mood and salivary cortisol (stress hormone) levels and resulted in decreased body dissatisfaction associated with anorexia.
—(Hart, S., Field, T., Hernandez-Reif, M., Nearing, G., Shaw, S., Schanberg, S., & Kuhn, C. (2001).

Massage therapy decreased the occurrence of headaches, sleep disturbances and distress symptoms and increased serotonin levels.
—(Hernandez-Reif, M., Field, T., Dieter, J., Sverdlov, & Diego, M., (1998).

Between 30 to 50 million Americans suffer from lactose intolerance. In fact, 75 percent of adults worldwide do not produce adequate amounts of the lactase enzyme, and therefore may experience some or all of the symptoms of lactose intolerance.
—(http://www.eatright.org)

Up to one out of six men report having had unwanted direct sexual contact with an older person by the age of 16. If we include non-contact sexual behavior, such as someone exposing him- or herself to a child, up to one in four men report boyhood sexual victimization.
—(http://www.malesurvivor.org)

Average # of drinks per week by GPA
• 3.3 drinks for "A" grades
• 4.8 drinks for "B" grades
• 6.1 drinks for "C" grades
• 9.0 drinks for "D or F" grades.
—(Cite: Meilman PW. Alcohol and Drugs on American College Campuses: Southern Illinois University, 1999.)

Lung cancer is now the leading cause of cancer death in women.
—American Cancer Society

Melanoma is the most common cancer among people 25 to 29 years old.
—(http://www.cdc.gov/chooseyourcover/skin.htm)

It has been estimated that at least half of all new HIV infections in the United States are among people under age 25, and the majority of young people are infected sexually.
—American Social Health Association

2004 UO Health Center survey shows that 56% of sexually active students did not use a condom for protection against sexually transmitted infection during last intercourse.

Health experts estimate that there are more cases of genital HPV infection (aka genital warts) than of any other STI in the United States. Approximately 5.5 million new cases of sexually transmitted HPV infections are reported every year. At least 20 million Americans are already infected.
—American Social Health Association

Nearly 40,000,000 Americans commonly suffer from bad breath, also known as oral malodor or halitosis. Snacking on celery, carrots or apples clears away loose food and debris during the chewing process and can help keep breath fresh.
—American Dental Hygienists' Association

You can reduce eye strain by holding your reading material 30 to 40 centimeters away from your face and ensuring that you have adequate soft light coming from a source behind or beside your left shoulder. Take a break every hour or so by looking at distant objects for 3 or 4 minutes.
—Canadian Ophthalmological Society