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ALCOHOL & CRIME

THE ROLE OF ALCOHOL IN CRIME VICTIMIZATION

- About three million violent crimes (including rapes and sexual assaults; robberies; and aggravated and simple assaults) occur each year in which the victims perceive the offender to have been drinking at the time of the offense; about two-thirds of these crimes are characterized as simple assaults.
- Based on victim reports, on average each year about 183,000 (37%) rapes and sexual assaults involve alcohol use by the offender, as do just over 197,000 (15%) robberies, about 661,000 (27%) aggravated assaults, and nearly 1.7 (25%) million simple assaults.
- Among violent crimes the offender is far more likely to have been drinking than under the influence of other drugs, with the exception of robberies where other drugs are as almost as likely to have been used as alcohol.
- Alcohol is more likely to be a factor in violence where the attacker and the victim know one another: two-thirds of victims who were attacked by an intimate (including a current or former spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend) reported that alcohol had been involved whereas only 31% of victimizations by strangers are alcohol-related.
- Nearly half a million incidents of violence between intimates involve offenders who have been drinking; in addition, 118,000 incidents of family violence (excluding spouses) involve alcohol, as do 744,000 incidents among acquaintances.
- 1.4 million incidents of alcohol-related violence are committed against strangers.
- Individuals under age 21 were the victims in just over 13% of incidents of alcohol-related violence, and the offenders in nearly 9%.
- 70% of alcohol-related incidents of violence occur in the home and begin with the greatest frequency at 11 p.m.; 20% of these incidents involve the use of a weapon other than hands, fists, or feet.
- Victims were injured in 60% of alcohol-related incidents of violence, with men and women equally represented, but with men more than twice as likely to have sustained a major injury due to a greater number of severe lacerations.

USE OF ALCOHOL BY CONVICTED OFFENDERS

- Among the 5.3 million convicted offenders under the jurisdiction of corrections agencies in 1996, more than 36% were estimated to have been drinking at the time of the offense for which they had been convicted. This translates into just under 2 million convicted offenders nationwide on an average day, including 1.3 million individuals on probation; 85,000 in local jails; 360,000 in state and federal prisons; and more than 200,000 under parole supervision.

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- Male offenders are more likely to have been drinking than female offenders when they committed their crimes, except among inmates of state prisons where women were more likely to have been drinking.
- Four in ten violent crimes involve alcohol use by the offender; alcohol use is even more common in public order crimes (such as driving while intoxicated, weapons offenses and commercial vice) and assault.
- State prisoners convicted of murder reported that alcohol was a factor in about half of the murders they committed; those who murdered intimates reported drinking the largest quantity for the longest period prior to the offense.
- Among convicted offenders, beer is the most commonly used alcoholic beverage, by itself and in combination with distilled spirits; 30% of probationers, 32% of local jail inmates and 23% of state prisoners had been drinking beer before committing their crimes.
- Inmates of state prisons reported drinking the equivalent of as many as 15 beers up to eight hours before committing their crimes.
- 30% of state prisoners described themselves as daily drinkers; this population began drinking before age 17 and were the most intoxicated at the time of their arrests.
- About half of all state inmates who described themselves as daily drinkers prior to entering prison had received some form of treatment--most often participation in a self-help group--at some point in their lives.
- Among the 1,196 confinement facilities nationwide in 1995, 192 (16%) indicated that providing treatment for alcoholism and other drug addictions was central to their missions; 39 prisons described their primary function as providing treatment.

ALCOHOL AND CRIME IN COLLEGE

- College students reported about 463,000 (31%) alcohol-related incidents of violence in 1995.
- 90% of alcohol-related incidents of violence involving college students occurred off campus.
- Per capita arrest rates for alcoholic beverage law violations (including prohibited manufacture, sale or possession of alcohol and maintaining illegal drinking places but excluding public drunkenness and driving-related offenses) are highest at public, four-year colleges.
- Just over half of campus law enforcement agencies at four-year universities and colleges with at least 2,500 students report that they operate alcohol education programs; public universities (59%) more often reported the availability of such programs and services than private colleges (43%).

Source:

NCADD FYI: Alcohol and Crime
U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Alcohol and Crime," 1998.

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