

Violence Linked to Underage Drinking and Illicit Drugs

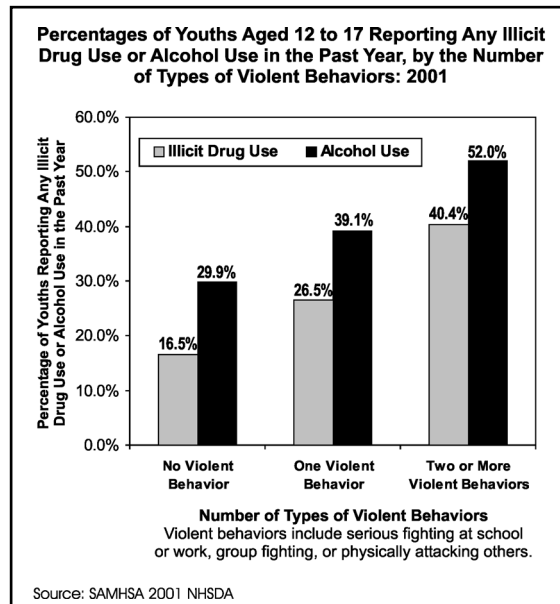
- According to a national survey, the more violent behaviors the youth 12 to 17 exhibited, the more likely he or she was to have used alcohol or illicit drugs in the past year. For example, while 30 percent who drank did not get violent, 52 percent got violent at least twice (see chart).¹
- Almost 12 percent of adolescent drinkers (about 1.2 million 7th to 12th graders) engage in alcohol-related physical fighting.²
- A national study indicates that those who began drinking before age 14 were 11 times more likely to have ever been in a fight while drinking or after drinking than adults who began drinking after the age of 21.³
- Youths ages 12 to 17 who had engaged in past month binge alcohol use were almost four times as likely to have carried a handgun in the past year compared with youths who had not engaged in binge drinking.⁴

Studies suggest that boys who drink are prone to fighting and sexual aggression

- In one study, males were almost twice as likely as females to engage in alcohol-related physical fighting (15.6 percent of males and 8.0 percent of females).⁵
- Among male high school students, 39 percent say it is acceptable for a boy to force sex with a girl who is drunk or high.⁶

Studies suggest that girls who drink are more likely to be victims of self-inflicted violence

- Among eighth grade girls who drink heavily, 37 percent report attempting suicide, three times the attempted suicide rate of girls who do not drink (11 percent).⁷



- Researchers estimate that alcohol use is implicated in one- to two-thirds of sexual assault and “date rape” cases among teens and college students.⁸

¹ Office of Applied Studies. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *NHSDA Report. Youth Violence and Substance Use: 2001 Update*. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2002.

² Swahn MH. Epidemiology of alcohol-related fighting among adolescents. Paper presented at the 129th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association, October 23, 2001, Atlanta, GA.

³ Hingson R, Heeren T, Zakocs R. Age of drinking onset and involvement in physical fights after drinking. *Pediatrics* 108(4):872-877, 2001

⁴ Office of Applied Studies. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *NHSDA Report: Youths Who Carry Handguns*. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2001.

⁵ Swahn. Epidemiology of alcohol-related fighting among adolescents.

⁶ Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Youth and Alcohol: Dangerous and Deadly Consequences*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1992.

⁷ Windle MA, Miller-Tutzauer C, Domenico D. Alcohol use, suicidal behavior, and risky activities among adolescents. *J Res Adolesc* 2(4):317-330, 1992.

⁸ Office of the Inspector General. *Youth and Alcohol*.

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