

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

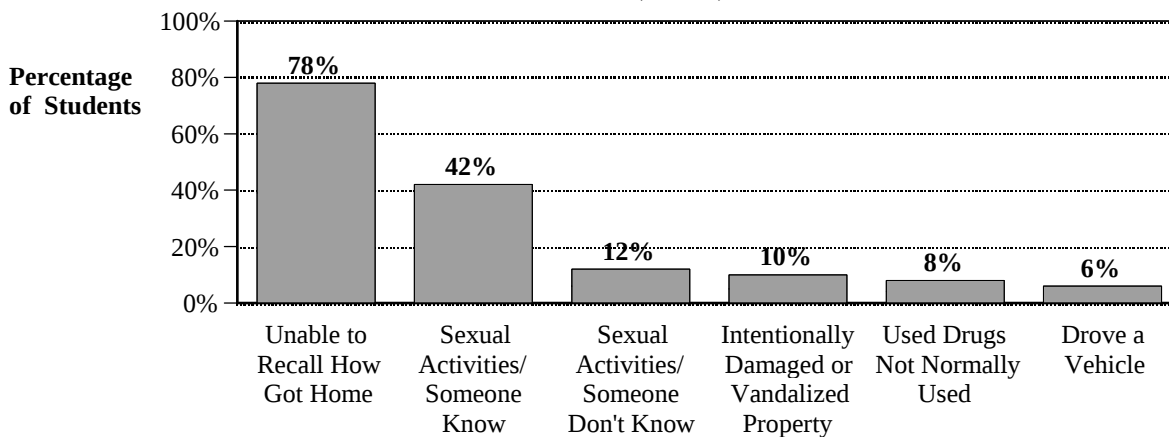
University of Maryland, College Park

College Students Engage in Potentially Hazardous Activities in Midst of Alcohol-Induced Blackouts

"[S]tudents engage in a wide range of complicated, and potentially hazardous, activities in the midst of blackouts," according to one of the first studies of alcohol-induced blackouts among college students (p. 218). Students who reported a history of at least one alcohol-induced blackout were recruited from fliers posted on the campus of a private university in the southern United States. The most common activity students' reported* during alcohol-induced blackouts was their inability to recall how they got home the night before—78% could not remember. Another potentially hazardous activity reported by students was engaging in sexual activities other than intercourse with either someone they did (42%) or did not (12%) know. Other activities included intentionally damaging or vandalizing property (10%), use of drugs that they normally would not use (8%), and driving a motor vehicle (6%). The researchers note that "the experiences of college students in the present study are similar in many ways to those of the middle-aged alcoholics" interviewed from previous studies on blackouts (p. 219).

Percentage of College Students with a History of Blackouts Who Reported Engaging in Specific Activities During Blackouts, 2002

(N = 50)



Reported Activities During Blackout

*While most students recalled some of their activities during blackouts without cueing from others, they still relied on friends (most of whom were also intoxicated) to tell them what happened.

NOTE: A recent study found that 51% of college students who drank alcohol reported having an alcohol-induced blackout at least once in their lifetime (White, A.M., Jamieson-Drake, D.W., and Swartzwelder, H.S. "Prevalence and Correlates of Alcohol-Induced Blackouts Among College Students: Results of an E-mail Survey," *Journal of American College Health*, 51(3):117-119, 2002).

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from the White, A.M., Signer, M.L., Kraus, C.L., and Swartzwelder, H.S. "Experiential Aspects of Alcohol-Induced Blackouts Among College Students," *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse* 30(1):205-224, 2004. For more information, contact Dr. Aaron White at aaron.white@duke.edu.

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