

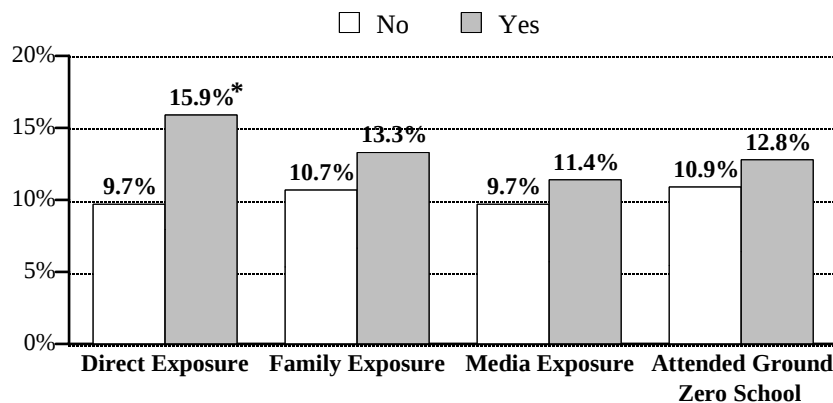
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

NYC Public High School Students Directly Exposed to World Trade Center Attack Report Increase in Alcohol Consumption in the Six Months After September 11, 2001

Overall, 11% of New York City public high school students reported increased alcohol use after September 11, 2001, according to the first published study assessing changes in alcohol use among adolescents exposed to the World Trade Center (WTC) attack. Students who reported family or media exposure[†] to the WTC attack or who attended a ground zero school all reported slight, but statistically insignificant, increases in alcohol use compared to those who did not have such exposure. However, students who were directly exposed[†] to the WTC attack were significantly more likely to report an increase in their alcohol consumption in the six months after September 11, 2001, “which suggests that alcohol was used as a way of coping with the immediate effect of the attack” (p. 805). The authors note that while the study is limited by its retrospective, self-report design and the lack of detailed information on changes in drinking, the findings suggest that “targeted substance-use interventions for youths may be warranted after large-scale disasters” (p. 804).

Percentage of New York City Public High School Students Reporting Increased Alcohol Consumption in the Six Months After September 11th 2001, by Exposure Level (N=2,731)



*Difference is significant at $p = .01$.

[†]Family exposure: Having a family member witnessing but escaping unharmed, injured, or killed in the attack. Media exposure: Having spent “a lot of time” watching television coverage of the attack. Direct exposure: (2 or more of the following) personally witnessed the attack, hurt in the attack, in or near the cloud of dust and smoke, evacuated to safety, or being extremely worried about the safety of a loved one.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Wu, P.; Duarte, C.S.; Mandell, D.J.; Fan, B.; Liu, X.; Fuller, C.J.; Musa, G.; Cohen, M.; Cohen, P.; and Hoven, C.W. “Exposure to the World Trade Center Attack and the Use of Cigarettes and Alcohol Among New York City Public High-School Students,” *American Journal of Public Health* 96(5):804-807. For more information, contact Dr. Ping Wu at pw11@columbia.edu.

•• 301-405-9770 (voice) •• 301-403-8342 (fax) •• CESAR@cesar.umd.edu •• www.cesar.umd.edu ••
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