

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

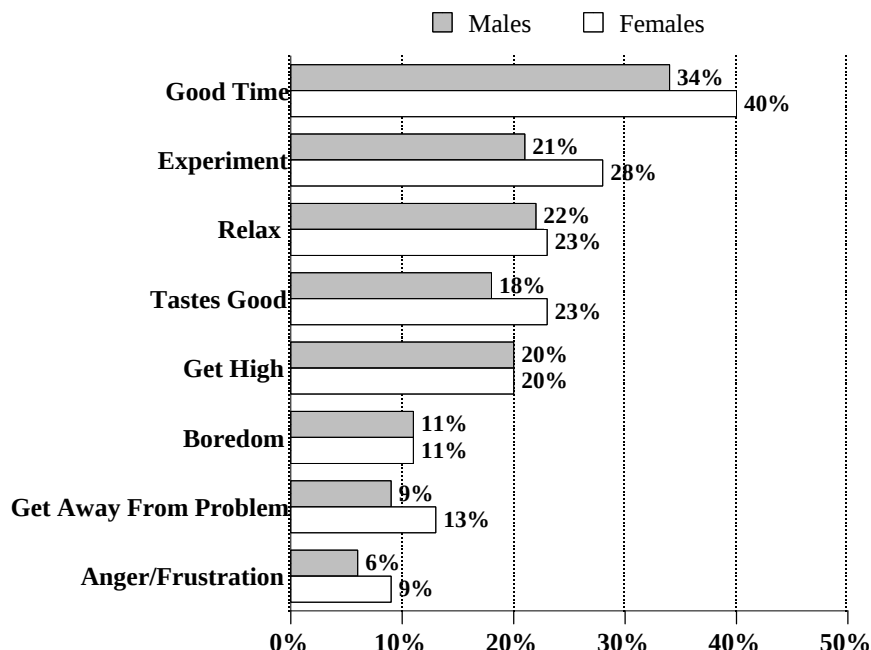
University of Maryland, College Park

Study Finds Distinctly Different Drinking Motivations Among U.S. 12th Graders; Suggests Motivation-Based Interventions Could Be Effective

High school seniors have distinctly different reasons for drinking, according to an analysis of data from the 2004 Monitoring the Future survey. The most common reason for drinking cited by both male and female 12th graders was to have a good time, followed by to experiment and to relax (see figure below). A statistical analysis* of these motivations resulted in four profiles of drinking motivations: 1) experimenters; 2) thrill-seekers (drink to have a good time and to get high); 3) relaxers; and 4) multi-reasoners (drink for a combination of escape and pleasure-seeking motivations). Youths with the lowest levels of risky drinking behaviors[†] were more likely to be classified as experimenters while those with the highest levels of such behaviors were more likely to be classified as multi-reasoners (data not shown). The authors conclude that “targeted interventions that tailor program content to the distinct drinking motivation profiles...may prove to be effective in reducing risky drinking behavior among high school seniors” (p. 241).

“What Have Been the Most Important Reasons for Your Drinking Alcoholic Beverages?”

(N=1,877 U.S. 12th graders who reported drinking alcohol at least once in the past year)



*Latent class analysis was used to determine to identify profiles of meaningful drinking motivations.

[†]Risky drinking behaviors were defined as early initiation of alcohol use, past year drunkenness, and drinking before 4 pm.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Coffman, D.L., Patrick, M.E., Palen, L.A., Rhoades, B.L., and Ventura, A.K. “Why Do High School Seniors Drink? Implications for a Targeted Approach to Intervention,” *Prevention Science* 8(4):241-248. For more information, contact Donna Coffman at dlc30@psu.edu.

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