

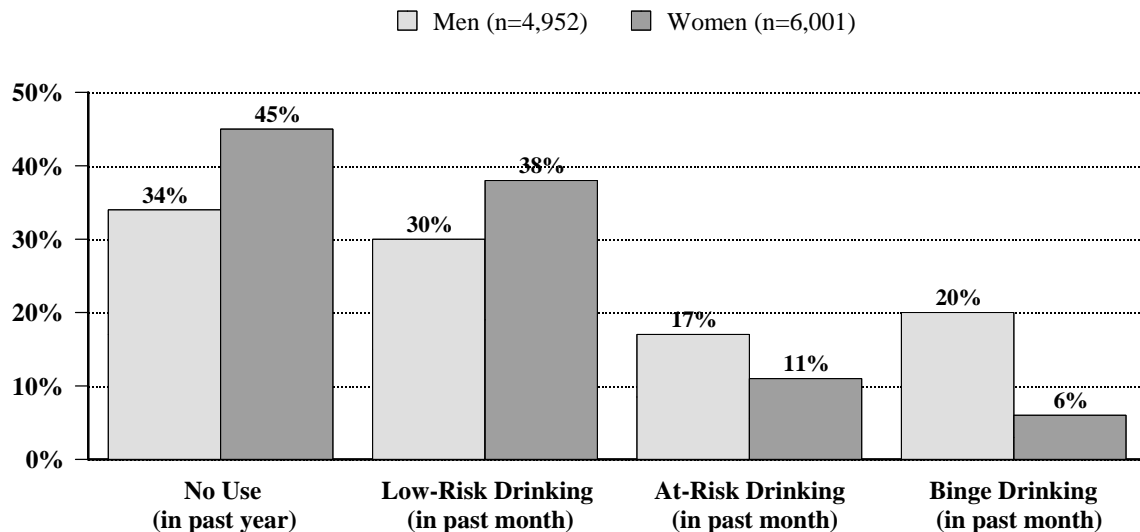
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

***Binge Drinking Not Just a Youth Problem;
One-Fifth of Men Ages 50 and Older Report Binge Drinking***

While binge drinking is typically thought of as a problem among youth, data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health show that this behavior is also prevalent among older adults. One-fifth of men and 6% of women reported binge drinking, defined as consuming five or more drinks on the same occasion on at least one day in the past month. The survey also found that 17% of men and 11% of women ages 50 and older reported at-risk drinking in the past month, defined as consuming two or more drinks per day (see figure below). Since many alcohol screening instruments used to assess alcohol problems in older adults (such as the CAGE questionnaire), do not address binge drinking, the authors suggest that “clinicians working with middle-aged and older adults who screen for alcohol problems would be well advised to specifically ask about binge drinking” (p. 8).

Percentage of Men and Women Ages 50 and Older Reporting Alcohol Use, 2005 and 2006



SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Blazer, D.G. and Wu, L.-T., “The Epidemiology of At-Risk and Binge Drinking Among Middle-Aged and Elderly Community Adults: National Survey on Drug Use and Health,” *American Journal of Psychiatry* (published online August 17, 2009; doi:10.1176/appi.ajp.2009.09010016), 2009. For more information, contact Dr. Dan Blazer at blaze001@mc.duke.edu.

• 301-405-9770 (voice) • 301-403-8342 (fax) • CESAR@cesar.umd.edu • www.cesar.umd.edu •
CESAR FAX may be copied without permission. Please cite CESAR as the source.

The Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention funded this project under grant BJAG 2005-1206. All points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of any State agency.