

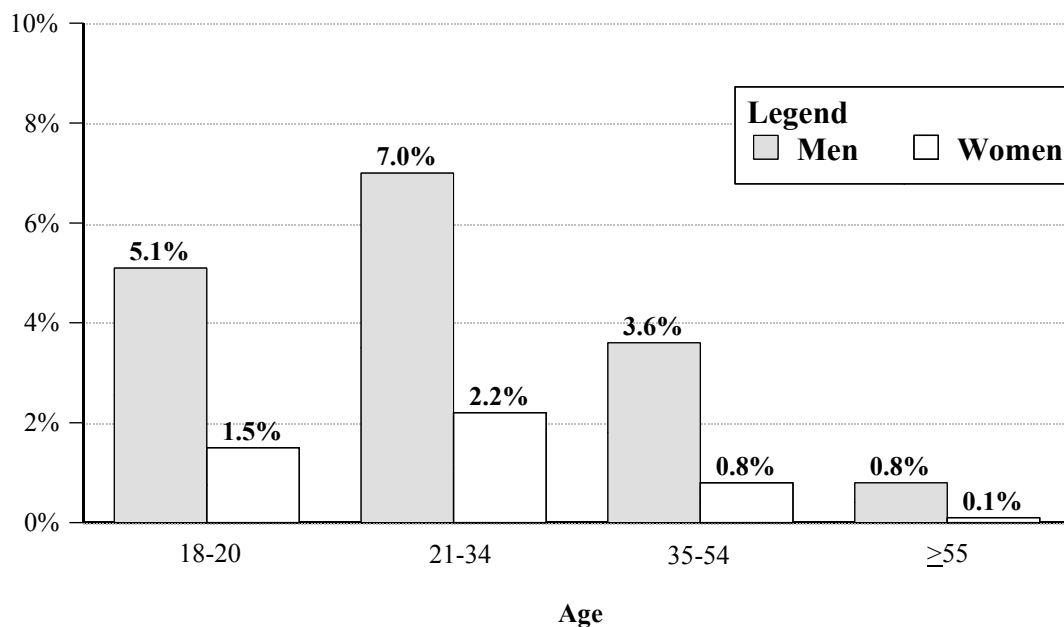
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland at College Park

Study Finds High Rates of Alcohol-Impaired Driving Among Underage Drivers

According to a recently published report, there were over 123 million episodes of alcohol-impaired driving among U.S. adults in 1993, and nearly 10 million of those episodes occurred among drivers aged 18 to 20 years. The report analyzed data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), an annual household telephone survey of adults aged 18 or older, to calculate state and national estimates of self-reported alcohol-impaired driving. Alcohol-impaired driving was most frequently reported among men and women aged 21 to 34 years and declined with increasing age. However, the second highest rate of reported alcohol-impaired driving for both male (5.1%) and female (1.5%) drivers occurred among drivers aged 18 to 20 years. Based on these results, the authors recommend "strict enforcement of minimum drinking age laws and the passage of 'zero tolerance' laws, which lower the legal alcohol concentration for drivers younger than 21 years of age" (p. 125).

Estimated Percentage of Male and Female U.S. Household Residents Reporting Alcohol-Impaired Driving,* by Age, 1993



*Percentage of respondents who gave a response (not zero) to the question: "And during the past month, how many times have you driven when you've had perhaps too much to drink?"

SOURCE: Simin Liu et al., "Prevalence of Alcohol-Impaired Driving: Results from a National Self-reported Survey of Health Behaviors," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997, 277(2):122-125.

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