

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

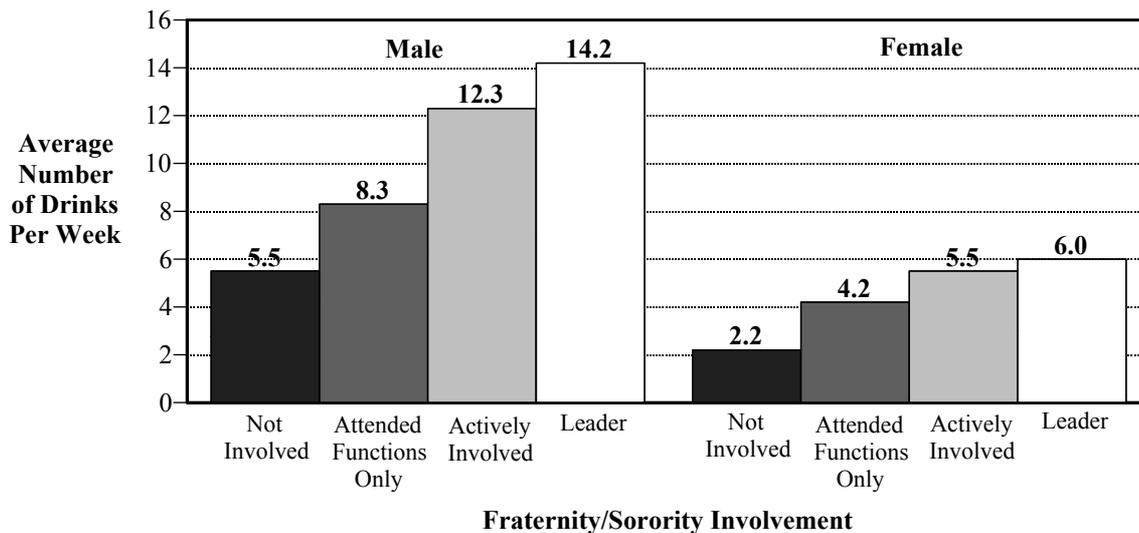
University of Maryland, College Park

Fraternity and Sorority Leaders--Role Models for Heavy Drinking?

Leaders of fraternities and sororities are “participating in setting norms of heavy drinking and behavioral loss of control” (p. 69), according to a recent study of college students. The study found that students involved in Greek societies (fraternities and sororities) drank more and experienced greater consequences of drinking than students not involved in Greek life, findings that are consistent with previous research. A more startling finding was that the prevalence of drinking among fraternity and sorority leaders was higher than among others involved in Greek societies. The authors recommend that substance abuse prevention efforts target the leaders of fraternities and sororities and that future research focus on a “detailed investigation of the belief systems of leaders to come to a better understanding of why they feel compelled to drink so excessively” (p. 70).

Average Number of Drinks per Week Among Male and Female College Students, by Level of Fraternity/Sorority Involvement

(n=25,411)



NOTE: A drink was defined as the “consumption of a bottle of beer, a glass of wine, a wine cooler, a shot glass of spirits, or a mixed drink.”

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from data from Jeffrey Cashin, Cheryl Presley, and Philip Meilman, “Alcohol Use in the Greek System: Follow the Leader?” *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 59:63-70, January 1998. For more information, contact Cheryl Presley at 618-536-7575.

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